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*Political commitment by the UK's environment cities to the expectations of agenda 21*

PELL, David James

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**Political Commitment by the UK's Environment  
Cities to the Expectations of Agenda 21**

David James Pell

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

December 1997



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I gratefully acknowledge the support of The Wildlife Trusts for acting as informal collaborating organisation for this study and for allowing me access to all of its files and other information on the Environment City Programme. I thank all of its officers who have helped me and especially Chris Wood and Julia Crouch-Smith, National Environment City Managers.

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## PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS THESIS

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(1995) 'How far is it possible to demonstrate that long term sustainability and short term economic growth are not mutually exclusive?', *Planning and Implementing Local Agenda 21 Conference*, 2-3 Oct. IIR Ltd., Park Lane Hotel, London.

(1996) 'Managing Planet Earth, Locally', *The 1996 International Sustainable Development Research Conference*, 18-19 March, The Manchester Conference Centre, Conference Proceedings, ERP Environment, Shipley, West Yorkshire, 195-200, ISBN 187207053.

(1996) 'The Local Management of Planet Earth: Towards a 'Major Shift' of Paradigm', *Sustainable Development*, 4 (3), 111-122, ISSN 0968-0802.

With Wright, G. (1996) 'The Uphill Struggle for Sustainable Development: The Local Economic Dimension', *Local Environment News* 2 (7), 5-11, ISSN 1361-2697.

With Wright, G. (1996) 'Meeting the Commitment to Local Agenda 21: 21st Century Environmental Health', *Environmental Health Congress*, 2-5 Sept., Congress Papers, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, London.

## ABSTRACT

The literature attributes a great deal of *activity* in many UK local authorities to their *commitment* to the sustainable development green ideology of the Earth Summit's Agenda 21 action plan for *managing* our Planet's future. Most studies of this response have focused on *behaviour* and *process*, including that of some of the four UK Environment City local authorities, alleged front runners in this field ie. Leicester, Middlesbrough, Leeds and Peterborough. This thesis, however, examines closely the degree of *actual political commitment* by the leaderships of these local authorities and the effect which the EC Programme has had on them. The assessment of EC leadership commitment is made against the radical assertion that Agenda 21 expects local authorities to lead a *major shift* of both *behaviour* and *attitude*. In part, the assessment relies on a novel use of Schein's (1987) method for uncovering *levels of culture* in combination with a new typology of political commitment. It is found that actual, as opposed to declared and organisational, ideological commitment is generally weak though varying widely between the local authority leaderships and is strongest in Leicester, the 'lead' Environment City. Explanations are presented for this. From public policy agenda building and implementation theory perspectives, the designation of 'Environment City', itself, is judged to have been effective in influencing behaviour and to a more limited extent, deeper levels of commitment. Theory improvement helps to explain this through several newly defined concepts including those of 'public policy franchising', 'issue wooden horsing' the 'politics of embarrassment' and 'grand mastery'. Other insights into how greater commitment by local authority leaderships is encouraged is drawn from the case studies including the utilized opportunity for greater local governmental power offered by the Agenda 21 role and the existence of environmental 'statesmanship'. Citizens in the Environment Cities are found to be more environmentally positive than has been reported of the UK population at large. Also, local level evidence is presented of the nationally observed positive relationship between our concern for each other as 'welfarism' and our concern for the rest of nature as 'environmentism'.



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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## ABBREVIATIONS

APPENDIX ONE     Methodology

APPENDIX TWO     Decision-Makers' Attitudinal Survey Questionnaire

APPENDIX THREE   Citizens' Attitudinal Survey Questionnaire

APPENDIX FOUR    Welfarism / 'Environmentism' Attitudinal Survey Questionnaire

APPENDIX FIVE    Decision-Makers' Attitudinal Survey: Presentation of Findings

APPENDIX SIX     Citizens' Attitudinal Survey: Presentation of Findings

**RESEARCH ISSUE****Background to the Research**

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992) in Rio de Janeiro, the Earth Summit, was probably the greatest ever coming together of human beings, and certainly of world leaders, with a common cause, that of saving ourselves and future generations from a feared catastrophic world environmental crisis.<sup>1</sup> Agenda 21 (A21) was the plan of action for implementing many of the world level *commitments* of that conference into the 21st Century towards the achievement of 'sustainable development' and it envisaged a major role in this for local authorities (A21: Ch. 28). In particular, it expected that they would lead the development of Local Agenda 21's (LA21):

By 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations and achieved a consensus on "a local Agenda 21" for the community. (Ch.28)

In 1990, the UK's National Environment City Programme, however, had already set out to influence four cities (in the event, Leicester, Middlesbrough, Leeds and Peterborough) by designating them as 'Environment Cities' and by:

...gaining the support and *commitment* of statutory bodies, businesses, voluntary sector organisations and individuals towards finding and implementing the best models of sustainable environmental development within the constraints of a working city.  
(*My emphasis.*) (Leicester Ecology Trust / RSNC, 1990: 3)

By inference (See Wood, 1994), the leaderships of the local authorities of these cities set

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<sup>1</sup> It is timely that this thesis is submitted just after world leaders came together at the UN Kyoto Summit on Climate Change. This was, arguably, the second greatest ever coming together of world leaders.

out to be amongst the front-runners, as exemplars, in terms of commitment to the ideology of sustainable development<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Aims of the Research**

The purpose of this research is to examine the political commitment of the leaderships of the four Environment City local authorities to meeting the expectations of Agenda 21 and the requirements of sustainable development. More specifically, the research questions are:

- RQ1 What does Agenda 21 expect of (UK) local authorities?
- RQ2 What is the nature of the commitment of the leaderships of the Environment City local authorities to meeting these expectations?
- RQ3 What insights does the experience of the Environment City Programme give into effective ways of increasing the commitment of a local authority's leadership to meeting the expectations of Agenda 21?

### **The Research Context**

The context is one of a great deal of activity in many UK local authorities. This has been evidenced by the Local Government Management Board's (LGMB) monitoring of progress through annual questionnaire surveys (Tuxworth and Thomas, 1997). In 1994, Worthington and Patton (1995) made a similar questionnaire survey of all County Councils in England and Wales, Metropolitan District Councils and London Boroughs. Rees and Wehrmeyer (1995) also surveyed local authority LA21 activity through local authority environmental co-ordinators. Such activity has sometimes been attributed to the commitment of local authority leaderships to A21 e.g. a councillor (Burstow, 1995) on the commitment and achievements of Sutton LBC.

A number of case studies and accounts of the responses of specific local authorities to Local

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<sup>2</sup>There are other programmes. See, for instance, that run by WWF and pioneered in Reading as GLOBE. See World Wide Fund (1995).

Agenda 21 (LA21) are completed or forthcoming. These include that by Church (1995) who outlines the experience of 7 'communities in action'; Croydon, Gloucestershire, Mendip, Nottinghamshire, Plymouth, Reading and Vale Royal<sup>3</sup>. Also Littlewood (1996) who is monitoring the process of creating a Local Agenda 21 (A21) policy for Manchester City Council. Barker and Moloney (1996) made an initial review of progress with LA21 by Dorset local authorities. Littlewood and Whitney (1996) are making case studies of 6 local authority areas, focusing on the involvement of the private sector in LA21. Reed (M-A, 1996) is carrying out action research into public participation towards a LA21 in Kirklees. Muir (1996) has completed the first stage of her study of the response by Midland's local authorities, concluding that their response has been slow and marginalised within their organisations. Jones (1996) reports the findings of a case study of progress by the London Borough of Hackney focusing on the use of performance review to turn environmental policies into actions.

This study is also one of several case studies, completed or forthcoming, researching aspects of the experience of one or more of the Environment City local authorities. They include that by Rydin *et al.* (1994) of the cultural and economic conditions of decision-making for the 'sustainable city' which was based on case studies of Leicester, Edinburgh, Bologna and Florence. Parker and Selman (1997) are researching policy, process and product in Local Agenda 21 and are relying on four case studies, i.e. Leicester, Gloucestershire, Lancashire and Reading. Alberti *et al.* (1994) were interested in international comparisons at a more general level and described the sustainable city experiences of Leicester, Leeds, 3 German cities, 2 Italian cities and the network of hill towns of Central Italy. Leicester has, thus, attracted considerable interest.

Previous work which touches on the relevance to local authority 'commitment' to the ideology of sustainable development includes a study of the institutional and political barriers to the implementation of an agreed environmental policy by Vancouver Council, Canada (Moore, 1994). The objectives of Kitchen's (1997) current work are similarly allied to my own insofar as he is investigating the practical action by local authorities on A21 in

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<sup>3</sup> See also Allen (1995) on Mendip and Howells *et al.* (1995) on Reading.

competition with other policies such as economic development against the claimed commitment of their decision-makers to LA21. Gibbs *et al* (1995) have surveyed the integration of economic development and the environment by urban local authorities in England and Wales.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

The contribution to knowledge made by this study includes the following. First, it has provided an understanding of the expectations of local authorities by Agenda 21 within what has been perceived to be a 'world management' context. Second, from the experience of the Environment City Programme's 'open experiment' (Wood, 1994: 2), it has provided an understanding of the nature of the commitment of the leaderships of the four local authorities of these cities to meeting these expectations and the requirements of the ideology of sustainable development. Third, it has provided insights into how this commitment has been influenced by the Programme. Fourth, the study has improved theory, and in particular public policy agenda building theory, to help explain these insights. Fifth, it has tested provisionally, at the local level, some national level findings of the strength of environmental concern and also those which claim a relationship between our concern for the environment and our concern for each other. Finally, the research process has resulted in the development of a new typology for aiding our understanding of the attitude of political commitment.

Since this study began, and in spite of a dearth of research into the effectiveness of the Environment City Programme concept in encouraging political commitment, it has been promoted throughout Europe. It has been put forward as the basis of approaches which aim to encourage cities, and especially major cities, to pursue Agenda 21. Beginning in 1995, this had been led by Leeds City Council through its membership of Eurocities, the organisation which has also provided the funding for the work. Similarly, in 1996, a European Commission funded pilot scheme was launched by Environ (ATLAS, 1996) with the aim of motivating the senior officers and elected members of five local authorities here and abroad (Espoo in Finland, Leicester, Nottingham, Derby and Dublin) towards

acceptance of the need to lead a local ideological shift. Moreover, the managers of the Environment City Programme are also currently (late 1997) considering extending it to cover up to 20 UK cities.

As well as aiding theory development, the findings of this study might be expected to help inform these initiatives and especially decisions about the future of the EC Programme. Where positive, they may help to secure the necessary funding which is currently being negotiated with the Department of the Environment's Going for Green<sup>4</sup> organisation. As thousands of people have given their time and energy to the Environment City Programme, this research will help to put their efforts on record and to ensure that we learn from them.

## **SYNOPSIS**

To answer the research questions, a series of sequential steps have been followed and are presented in successive chapters. Hence, Chapter Two guides the reader through the methodology which underpinned the research process. In particular, it argues that as commitment as an attitude is a cultural phenomenon, Schein's (1987) model and method for uncovering levels of culture is, in adapted form, appropriate for my purpose. It goes on to describe this novel use of Schein's regime. A typology is developed through which the attitude of political commitment can be understood.

Chapter Three seeks to provide a yardstick against which the nature of political commitment by the EC local authority leaderships can be judged. In so doing, it attempts to pin down exactly what we might reasonably expect these leaderships to be committed to in this field. To that end, the relevant demands of the Earth Summit are examined against a spectrum of green value positions. Further, to help this local political commitment to be understood, relevant aspects of the wider governmental context within which UK local government must operate are considered. Against this, the way in which UK local government has seized on the expectations of Agenda 21 for its own purposes is explained.

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<sup>4</sup> Going for Green is the Government's environmental awareness campaign. See *Working Together*, the joint Wildlife Trusts / Going for Green newsletter, Summer 1997.

So too is the way in which local authorities, themselves, have used the expectations to advance their own causes.

Chapter Four examines the experience of the Environment City Programme and, whilst providing a background for more detailed consideration of local political commitment later on, seeks to explain what is found through public policy agenda building theory. This reveals inadequacies in the theory and improvements are suggested.

Chapter Five seeks to reveal and explain the nature of the commitment to sustainable development ideology by the EC local authority leaderships. Such ideological commitment is seen as a precondition within public policy implementation theory.

Chapter Six considers some social psychological explanations for behavioural and attitudinal shifts such as those expected by Agenda 21. It then seeks insights from the Environment Cities into the effectiveness of the designation as a precipitator of such shifts.

Finally from the EC experience, this chapter looks, provisionally, at two areas which it is postulated might serve as catalysts for the precipitation of ideological shifts by local authority leaderships towards sustainable development. These areas are suggested as worthy of further research.

Chapter Seven draws together the findings and arguments of the research.

The research findings described in this thesis are derived from a larger study of the experience of the EC local authorities, which grew out of several consultancy briefs for the Wildlife Trusts, the managers of the Environment City Programme. The research experience has demonstrated that this initially wide ranging and thorough investigation was necessary for the identification of those insights which were most likely to result in the useful development of theory. The substantial redundancy of research material which resulted from this approach will provide the basis for further work, some of which I hope to pursue in association with Sheffield Hallam University, the Open University and others.

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## CHAPTER TWO            METHODOLOGY

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### RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Research often begins with some vaguely defined 'puzzle' or 'worry' (Gouldner, 1971: 31). The 'worry' that prompted this study was that, although most UK local authorities claim to be very committed to meeting the expectations of them by the Agenda 21 (A21) action plan and similar calls for 'environmental' action, their political leaderships are not, in fact, very committed at all. In particular, it was suspected that their commitment to the ideology underpinning Agenda 21 was weak and that this would have serious implications for its implementation. Claiming to be leaders in the field of environmental concern, the Environment City local authorities presented an excellent case study opportunity to examine such commitment.

Having recognised the 'problem' which concerns the researcher, it is helpful to be clear about the particular 'interest' with which he/she is coming to it. My interest derived essentially, from my extensive experience in local government with much of this as a first tier chief officer contributing to the policy-making process. By, thus, acknowledging the nature of my interest as a potential source of bias in the research and, also by taking care with the social science, I have attempted to reduce bias to a minimum. In so doing, as Gouldner says, I have recognised that '...in confronting the social world the theorist is also confronting himself.'

Initially, this 'problem' was in mind during a reading of environmental politics prompted by personal interest and my teaching for the Open University. This broad approach continued during the early stages of the PhD study. Progressively, however, certain areas emerged as likely to provide new theoretical insights into my prime area of interest. First, I needed to be clear about the object of the commitment by local politicians which concerned me and, therefore, to examine the nature of the ideology underpinning Agenda 21's expectations of

local authorities. No suitable enquiry into this is available in the literature. Secondly, it became increasingly evident that an examination of political commitment to this ideology within the case study leaderships would need to be not only a study in political science but also in social psychology. My concern was to be with 'attitudes', especially that of 'commitment'.

This second area threatened to be particularly problematical. As Henerson *et al.* (1987: 13) argue: 'When we measure attitudes, we must rely on inference, since it is impossible to measure attitudes directly.' This is true no matter what method we use e.g. observation, interview or questionnaire. Whilst much of this research has relied on these methods of enquiry it has attempted to reveal strong *inferences* of attitudes, by using those methods within the framework for enquiry provided by Schein's (1987) management science concept of three levels of organisational culture and his associated method for revealing them. This is explained later in this chapter. The data derived through the various methods was used to construct cultural profiles of each of the local authority leaderships in relation to the attitudes which interested me.

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## **THE METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS**

It has been argued (e.g. by Gvba, 1985) that, from an epistemological standpoint, combining quantitative research and qualitative research is problematical because they represent divergent paradigms of how social reality should be studied. For those who argue that it is legitimate to combine different methodologies, (e.g. Bryman, 1988; Brewer and Hunter, 1989), however, this does not present a problem. Such a combination within a piece of research is referred to as triangulation, multi-method/multi-trait or convergent validation (Gill and Johnson, 1991). This study makes use of a triangulated approach within a framework for enquiry provided by Schein (1987) as explained later in this chapter.

The most obvious potential benefit of a triangulated approach is that of combining the relative strengths of the different research approaches and of cancelling out their weaknesses. Webb *et al.* (1996), for instance, argued that researchers would feel more

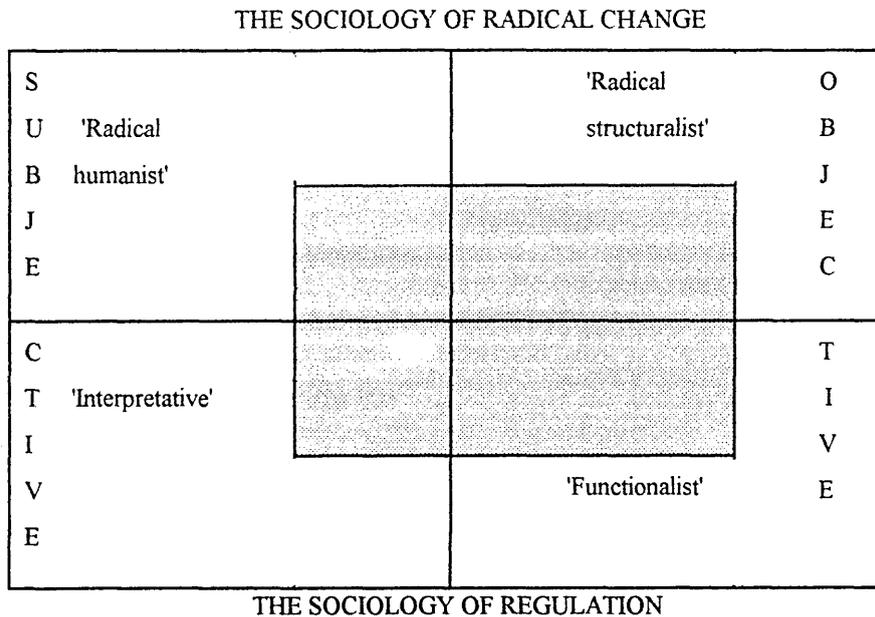
confident in their findings if their study were to employ more than one method of investigation. Similarly, Bryman (1988) claimed that by combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies, and by demonstrating mutual confirmation of results, researchers' claims for validity are enhanced. He cautioned, however, that where one is faced with discrepancies it is not the purpose of triangulation to opt for one set of findings over another. Rather, it should act as a prompt for further probing to determine the causes, an activity which may itself further the inquiry in its own right. Thus, triangulation can be viewed less as a means of placating the factions on each side of the methodological divide and more as a valid methodology in its own right.

The epistemological orientation of this study is, thus, in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) terms, multi-paradigm<sup>1</sup>. As illustrated by the shaded areas of Figure 1., however, it has operated at the moderate extremes of each paradigm. Working within Schein's method for uncovering levels of culture, an essentially 'functionalist' perspective is taken, for instance, through interviews and fairly conventional attitudinal survey approaches, in this case applied to the Environment City local authority leaderships, other 'decision-makers' and citizens. Again within a framework inspired by Schein's method, a moderately ethnographic approach is taken through both participant and non-participant observation to revealing the attitudes of leaderships at the deepest cultural levels. This has been so at both of Burrell and Morgan's 'theory of society' dimensions. The degree of political commitment to the ideology of Agenda 21 has been assessed from a fairly radical perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, Burrell and Morgan postulate that paradigms are organisational mindsets which we use to view organisations and that they can be used singly or in combination with other paradigms though maintaining their own cogency and character. For critiques of Burrell and Morgan's paradigm incommensurability see Reed (1990 and 1992) and Wilmott (1993). For defences see Jackson and Carter (1991), Hassard and Pym (1990). For a study of the practical implications of a multi-paradigm approach to research see Hassard (1991).

**FIGURE 1**  
**POSITIONS ADOPTED IN THIS RESEARCH SHOWN AGAINST BURRELL AND MORGAN'S**  
**FOUR PARADIGMS**



Adapted from Burrell and Morgan (1979: 276)

### **The Balance Between Different Methodological Approaches**

Hakim (1987) noted that qualitative methods are often undervalued because they are frequently assigned only a supporting role to supplement other types of study, or as an exploratory device in the initial stages of a research project. However, she cited the work of Vevers (1973) and Terkel (1974) as examples of studies where qualitative data was the dominant methodology. In this study, approximately equal weight has been given to quantitative and qualitative methods.

## SCHEIN'S MODEL AND METHOD AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ENQUIRY

As an aid to organisational development, Schein describes a method for revealing the nature of *the* culture of a given organisation or of *aspects* of it. Whilst the study has, by no means, been unconcerned to learn as much as possible about the culture of the leadership groups in each of the four EC local authorities, it has used Schein's model primarily to help reveal inferences of attitudes (especially commitment) surrounding specific matters e.g. their EC status, Agenda 21 and sustainable development.

### **Schein's Three Levels of Organisational Culture Model**

Schein seeks to analyse culture by perceiving it as having three levels, where the term *level* refers to the degree to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer. He argues that some of the confusion of definition of what culture is results from not differentiating the levels at which it manifests itself. His three levels are 'artifacts', 'espoused values' and 'basic assumptions'. They are as follows.

#### *Artifacts*

Schein sees a level of *artifacts* at the surface of an organisation's culture. This includes all of the phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels when one encounters a new group such as its physical environment, its language, its technology and products, its artistic creations and its style as embodied in clothing, manners of address, emotional displays, myths and stories, published lists of values and observable rituals and ceremonies. He asserts that the most important point about this level of the culture is that it is *very easy to observe and very difficult to decipher*. The observer can describe what he/she sees and feels e.g. a stone edifice, but cannot reconstruct from that alone what those things mean to a given group. Symbols are ambiguous. The stone edifice could, for instance, be a burial chamber, a worshipped image or be culturally obsolescent to the group. If the observer lives in the group long enough, however, the meanings of artifacts gradually become clear.

In an Environment City local authority the observable artifacts include the written statements of commitment and intent, news sheets, promotional material, staff instructions, committee minutes, organisational structures including partnership working arrangements, an Environment City office / manager and projects proposed and on the ground. At first glance, these are likely to demonstrate ideological commitment to EC, to Agenda 21 and to sustainable development. They are frequently introduced to any interested party as 'evidence' of such commitment.

### *Espoused values*

Schein's second and 'deeper' level consists of the norms and rules that provide the day to day operating principles by which the members of the group operate. Most people have, to one degree or another, accepted these mores from their leaders and the group. In an EC local authority's leadership group they might include the view that ideological commitment to the environmental cause is generally a 'good thing' and that, because of their city's special status, they ought to do more than other local authorities and that they are doing. In this way being an Environment City could be persuasive in shifting the norms of the leadership groups. They might, for instance, have come to readily accept the need for BS7750 or EMAS in their organisation and for much more recycling and for demonstration projects. They would do so not just because it is the policy of the city council but because they have, over time, also come to believe that it is right in their organisation.

### *Basic Assumptions*

Schein points out that many other culture researchers prefer the concept of 'basic values' for describing the deepest levels. He prefers his concept of 'basic assumptions', however, because he believes that they tend to be *taken-for-granted* and are treated as *non-negotiable*. He argues that values can be and are discussed (his espoused values), and that people can agree to disagree about them whereas basic assumptions are so taken-for-granted that anyone who does not hold them is viewed as crazy and automatically dismissed. Environmentalists in the 1960's seeking major shifts of attitude and behaviour in free-

market liberal societies (as well as in totalitarian communist societies) were often regarded as, thus, crazy. This is no longer so. (See argument in next chapter.)

Basic assumptions, as Schein defines them, have become so taken-for-granted that one finds little variation within the cultural unit. In a capitalist state, for instance, it is *inconceivable* that one might design a company to operate consistently at a financial loss. Similarly, it would be inconceivable for Leeds City Council not to promote local economic development. Basic assumptions, like 'theories in use' (See Argyris, 1976) tend to be those we neither confront nor debate. They are norms.

### **Schein's Method for 'Reporting About Culture to Outsiders'**

I have already intimated that this research is not concerned to reveal the whole of any organisational group's culture. Rather, using Schein's terms, it is concerned to reveal the artifacts, espoused values and shared basic assumptions in relation to a leadership group's degree of commitment to the ideology of Agenda 21 and, by inference, to other calls for sustainable development. Schein describes a method which aims to allow the researcher '... to decipher the culture in order to make it visible not only to group members but to scientific colleagues.' (Schein, 1987: 169) He goes on:

How does one get enough data to understand *at least elements* of the organisation's culture? The traditional way, of course, would be to become a participant observer and to proceed as an ethnographer. This is time consuming and, I believe not necessary unless one wants to study the culture in great detail. An alternative is to adopt a *clinical perspective*, attempt to be helpful to the organisation, and conduct a series of interviews with individuals and groups geared to discovering shared underlying assumptions. (My *emphasis*.)

I have explained above that, towards a moderately multi-paradigm approach, I have, indeed, proceeded as an ethnographer through participant and non-participant observation. Nevertheless, Schein's method has formed the basis of my approach and, in particular, his 'clinical perspective' method has been used. This involves 'iterative clinical interviewing' which is '...a series of encounters and joint explorations between the investigator and various motivated informants who live in the organization and embody its culture.' He assumes that '...only a joint effort between an insider and an outsider can decipher the essential

assumptions and their patterns of interrelationships.' to '..avoid the subjectivity bias' and because it can '..overcome the insider's lack of awareness.' Of the 'outsider's' subjectivity Schein (p170) cautions that:

The outsider cannot experience the categories of meaning that the insider uses because she or he has not lived long enough in the culture to learn the semantic nuances, how one set of categories relates to her sets of categories, how means are translated into behavior and how such behavioral rules apply situationally. What the newcomer learns at entry reveals surface layers of the culture; only when inner boundaries are crossed is the member told what really goes on and how to think about it (Schein 1978; Van Maanen and Schein, 1979). Furthermore, the outsider inevitably imposes her or his own categories of meaning on observed events, and these interpretations are incorrect to an unknown degree. Only if the insider and the outsider talk things out explicitly can the insider correct misperceptions or misinterpretations that the outsider may be making.

In similar vein, of the 'insider's' lack of awareness, Schein (p170) also cautions that:

The insider cannot tell the outsider what the basic assumptions are and how they are patterned because they have dropped out of awareness and are taken for granted. The insider can become aware of them only by trying to explain to the outsider why certain things that puzzle the outsider happen in the way they do or by correcting interpretations that the outsider is making. This process requires work on the part of both the insider and outsider over a period of time. The nature of this work can be likened to trying to bring to the surface something that is hidden but not concealed deliberately. It is so taken for granted that it escapes notice, but it is perfectly visible once it has been brought into consciousness...

Schein sets out his method step by step (p171):

*Step 1,2 &3. 'Entering and Focusing on Surprises', 'Systematically Observing and Checking' and 'Locating a Motivated Insider'*

By entering the organisation one begins to experience the culture. For instance, in 1993, on entering the organisation of The Wildlife Trusts, and meeting the national managers of the EC Programme, I was surprised how even their weak ownership of it at that level had still, apparently, been able to influence the activity of four cities in a substantial way. Similarly, on entering each of the local authority organisations, on the one hand, I was impressed by the apparent commitment and political ability of the EC managers in three of the cities. On the other hand, one could not help feeling that the environmental issue had seemingly been

organisationally marginalised, especially in three of the cities.

By then engaging in systematic observation, Schein argues, the outsider can calibrate the surprising events and verify that they are not merely random or idiosyncratic events. My first impressions were tested in this way.

More 'insiders' (although I did not refer to them as such) were used in some cities than others depending on their position in the organisation and, therefore, on the perspective which they could offer. How my 'insiders' were selected is explained in Appendix One.

*Steps 4 & 5 'Revealing the Surprises, Puzzlements, and Hunches' - to the insider, and then 'Jointly Exploring to Find Explanation'*

Schein (p173) explains how the insider elaborates or corrects the outsider's interpretation and both parties then probe systematically for the underlying assumptions. The outsider then acts as a clinician '... who is helping the insider search in his or her own mind for the deeper levels of explanation that can help both people decipher the basic assumptions of the culture.' Ideas about the policy agenda priorities in each of the cities were, for example, tested at length in this way.

*Steps 6 & 7, 'Formalizing Hypotheses' and 'Systematically Checking and Consolidating'*

Schein points out that the product of Step 5 is explanations that make sense, in the form of basic assumptions, and that to formalise these into hypotheses the outsider and insider must determine what additional data would constitute a valid test of whether the assumption is operating. Such testing included the Decision-Maker Survey, the questionnaire for which was designed with the help of my insiders. Taking place in 1996, this exercise gained 87 responses from 160 requests and included over 20 interviews. It aimed to test some of the hypotheses which we had developed from my hunches. An account of the conduct of the survey is given in Appendix One. Interviews of 'decision-makers', including members of the city council leaderships, were also conducted.

Schein (p175) describes the essence of the first of these steps as taking the confirmed hypothesis and attempting to '... state clearly what assumption is operating and how that assumption affects behavior.' In this study, the degree to which assumptions by leaderships about the primacy of their role in leading the development of the local economy affects their attitudes and behaviour in respect of environmental issues was an example. The nature of this assumption was also frequently recalibrated as it was checked against other data sources. These included the Welfarism / 'Environmentism' Surveys of both citizens and decision-makers made for this thesis and new analyses of data from the Citizens' Attitudinal Surveys. These latter surveys were made in response to consultancy briefs and involved over 800 quota sample interviews. The former involved over 400 quota sample questionnaire interviews of citizens and 80 returned questionnaires from city decision-makers. This thesis is Schein's 'formal description'.

### **Reasons for Selecting Schein's Method**

Schein's method was selected for the following reasons.

- a) It relies on a useful theoretical distinction between levels of culture, providing an anthropologically defensible framework for examining and reporting on, if one wishes, just *selected* aspects of culture within organisations. This suited my interest in revealing and explaining only some attitudes.
  
- b) Schein's approach was chosen from others used by corporate culture analysts (e.g. Killman, 1984; Peters, 1980; Tichy 1983), as the most likely to provide *reliable inferences* about attitudes, especially at the deepest levels of culture. It does not, for example, assume that, if one asks the 'right' questions or gives the right sort of questionnaire, one can decipher culture. It allows for the use of a combination of methods e.g. for triangulation.

- c) Relying quite heavily on the use of 'insider' practitioners and on a mutually beneficial working relationship between them and the 'outsider' theorist, Schein's method was seen to recognise the benefits of working closely with practitioners. This was important to me because of my working experience within each of the two 'worlds' of theory and of practice, and of straddling the two through consultancy. This had emphasised how, whilst practitioners and theorists are vital to each other, there is often a serious and unfortunate lack of communication between the two. Dubin's (1977)<sup>2</sup> arguments about the implications of this for the theorist researcher, articulate my concern. Especially persuasive are Dubin's (p37) assertions that 'As theorists we have a much greater chance of dealing with real actions in their many guises if we listen to the practitioners whose daily work is focused upon human interaction.' An opportunity for me to work closely with practitioners was provided by the good relationships already developed through my earlier consultancy work and full advantage was taken of this. As active environmentalists working in key positions in the local authorities, they were all very keen to help find ways of encouraging leaderships towards further commitment. In Schein's terms (p171), they were 'motivated insiders'.
- d) Schein's idea of using 'insiders' was amenable to being stretched to the use of a much larger group of, mostly, well informed 'informants' to whom, again largely through previous consultancy, I had ready access. Through this approach, I was, therefore, able to gain many of the benefits of the Delphi technique<sup>3</sup> which, though used most commonly for forecasting, assumes that insights can be obtained from the intuitive judgements of people knowledgeable in the area of interest<sup>4</sup>.
- e) Schein's model of levels of culture fitted well with my reasoning about the existence of two different forms of the attitude of 'commitment'. (See later in this chapter.)

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<sup>2</sup> See also Dubin (1971).

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix One.

<sup>4</sup> Both pro and anti Delphi viewpoints are contained in a symposium of articles which appeared in *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* (1975), 1 (2). See Appendix One.

- f) To reveal inferences of attitudes in respect of one particular ideology, it was felt important to work with individuals in confidence, as Schein proposes, rather than with groups where the views of some extrovert or higher status members tend to become more influential than others.

## **PARTICIPANT AND NON PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

The research relied on both of these ethnographic methods quite heavily. There was some overlap between the two. The participant role was mostly confined to the National Programme level.

### **Participant Observation**

As a consultant to the Programme, I have worked closely with its strategists.<sup>5</sup> Being commissioned to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the Programme (including what the cities had done in response to it) in early 1994 provided the initial insights. Also in 1994, sharing the investigation of good practice examples of projects aimed at achieving sustainable development in the four cities and in other cities in the UK and abroad drew me still closer to the Programme's strategic management processes. Being involved, in 1995, with making recommendations for the Programme's future drew me into the team still further. This work was followed up with participation in a Think Tank Workshop, in London in July 1996, where many of the UK's experts in the field of 'sustainable development' in the UK considered the future of the EC Programme. Similarly, I participated in the Environment Cities Indicators Workshop which took place in Peterborough in March 1997.

I also benefitted from the 'open door' access which, as informal collaborating agency, the Wildlife Trusts have allowed me and have, thus, been a frequent visitor to their offices in Lincoln. On-going discussions with the officers of the Trusts provided me with an opportunity to keep in touch with what was happening, to get a continuing feel for

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<sup>5</sup> Pell and Wright, five unpublished reports to The Wildlife Trusts (1994-1996).

developing attitudes and to have some input into the future of the Programme. The key officers included the two National Environment City Managers who were, successively, in post during the period of the study and three Assistant Directors of the Trusts who, successively, were responsible for the Programme at the corporate management level.

This access has also allowed me to gain a feel for how each Environment City's organisation is perceived by those who work with them through the Programme every day. I was, for instance, able to witness both sides of the (sometimes quite painful) debate which took place when, first, Leicester and then Middlesbrough applied for the 4 year terms of their EC designations to be renewed. (Also, later in 1996 but with little contention, Leeds and Peterborough had their designation renewed until 2000.)

### **Non-Participant Observation**

My consultancy work also gave me access to the operational level of the Programme, working closely with the many personalities who have been leading the EC initiative in each city. Some have come and gone, some I knew before my involvement with the Programme and (such is the scale of the operation) that there will still be many who I do not know. Having no brief to advise the cities, this contact has been largely non-participative, though informally, many thoughts have been exchanged. These have included ideas in relation to Environ's ATLAS project and Leeds City Council's Eurocities initiative. Again, I have been fortunate enough to be able to visit the local authorities and especially their EC Offices (and Environ in Leicester) in each city often, over almost four years, to keep up to date with what has been going on. Together with the other methods used, this has helped me to gain a feel for the culture of each of the organisations.

## **ATTITUDINAL SURVEYS**

### **The Decision-Maker Attitudinal Survey**

This survey invited a sample of 160 'decision-makers' to answer a variety of questions about

the demands on their council, about its policies and about its behaviour especially, but not entirely, in relation to environmental issues and Agenda 21. It was based on a self completion postal questionnaire and interviews of key people. The method used is described in detail in Appendix One and a copy of the questionnaire is given at Appendix Two.

The sample was selected and the questionnaire was designed with the intention of getting inferences of the attitudes of the political leadership groups firstly from members of those groups (by definition all of whom were part of the local authorities' organisations either as councillors or as first tier chief officers themselves). Secondly, they were designed to get such inferences about the leadership group in each local authority from other decision-makers from both within (non first tier officers) and from outside the local authority's organisation ('others'). For the purposes of the analysis, respondents were, thus, divided into two primary groups. Each of these was then divided into two secondary groups. These were:

1. Leaders of the city council (28 respondents completing questionnaires).
  - a. City councillors (18)

Most of the councillors who responded had sympathy with, knowledge of and/or some particular interest in, their city's EC initiative or in the environmental cause. Those who did not have had been selected for interview / questionnaire completion because of their role as committee chairs and believed influence within their city's leadership. All were Labour councillors.
  - b. First tier chief officers, i.e. chief executives and directors (10)
2. Informants (52 respondents completing questionnaires)
  - a. Other officers of the city council (22)

All were involved with their council's EC initiative.

b. Non city council respondents (30)

They have all been involved with their city's EC initiative albeit to very different degrees e.g. TEC director, the Bishop, local newspaper editor, EC volunteer, bank manager, academics chairing EC Specialist Working Groups and former officers (including first tier) of the councils.

The attitudes of members of both the leaders' (or leadership) group and the informants' group were canvassed in relation to the values and actions of each city council's leaders (i.e. interpreted as being the councillors and first tier chief officers). By comparing and contrasting inferences of the attitudes of each group it was possible to reveal the differences between the way members of each council's leadership group perceives the values and actions of that group with how they are perceived by the respondents outside of each city's leaders' group (i.e. respondents in the informants' group).

The secondary division of each of the primary groups facilitated still closer examination of the values and actions of the leaders (and of the decision-makers in general). It was, for instance, possible not only to ask the leaders' group to estimate the degree of commitment to Agenda 21 by their councillor leadership colleagues but to compare the responses of the councillors within the group about this with those of the first tier chief officers group. Similarly, it was possible to compare both of these sets of responses with those of the other (decision-making) officers within the councils and with those of influential (and to that extent 'decision-making') 'outsiders'. Different responses from each of these different perspectives were expected and received. As some of the questions were the same as those put in the Citizens' Attitudinal Surveys, comparisons between responses from each of the four decision-making groups could be compared and contrasted with those of their citizens. This was also possible on a city by city basis but caution was exercised here when the sample size (albeit of Delphi selected respondents) of secondary groups was reduced.

## **Citizens Attitudinal Surveys**

In June 1994 a consultancy colleague, Geoff Wright, and I completed an attitudinal survey (Pell and Wright, 1994) for The Wildlife Trusts (then RSNC, The Wildlife Trusts), the managers of the, then, BT Environment City Programme. The survey was based on street interviews of a quota of 100 respondents in each city who were selected to represent the social profile of that city. It was carried out in accordance with a brief which was concerned to gain some understanding of how aware citizens in each city were that their city was an EC and whether and how this had changed their attitudes and behaviour. The findings were confidential to that organisation and not published in their entirety. Some of the findings were, however, used in The Wildlife Trusts' publication *Painting by Numbers* (Wood, 1994). This publication explained the workings, including the strengths and weaknesses, of the Environment City 'model' approach and was based on research into the Environment City Programme by my colleague and I (Pell and Wright, 1994).

In November 1995, my colleague was commissioned by The Wildlife Trusts to carry out a follow up survey (Pell and Wright, 1996) and to draw comparisons with the 1994 results. There was a gap of about 18 months between the two surveys. With the consent of the Wildlife Trusts and the support of my colleague, I was able to reanalyse the 1994 data and have access to the 1995 data for the purposes of this research. I was also able to use the opportunity of the second survey to have the welfarism / 'environmentism' attitudinal survey carried out among the same 400 respondents interviewed in 1995.

## **Welfarism / 'Environmentism' Attitudinal Surveys**

This survey was carried out alongside the second Citizens Attitudinal Survey (Pell and Wright, 1996) (400 completed questionnaires) and the Decision-Maker Attitudinal Survey (Pell and Wright, 1996) (80 completed questionnaires). A copy of the questionnaire used is given at Appendix Four.

The questionnaire consisted of 6 multi-choice questions which were all drawn from the

British Social Attitudes Survey 1993 (Jowell *et al.*, 1995). The principal aim was to enable a degree of comparison to be made between the attitudes of EC decision-makers, citizens and the UK population at large on any possible relationship between welfarism (or altruism or by my definition, 'a tendency to be concerned about others') and what I termed 'environmentism' (or by my definition, 'a tendency to be concerned about the rest of nature').

This survey was made of the same profile of 400 respondents to the 1995 EC Citizens' Attitudinal Survey. The questions in this survey were put to respondents after they had answered the CZ questionnaire.

### **Sampling Logic**

The logic of sampling detailed by Pearson and Phelps (1995) was observed. In particular care was taken, as described in Appendix One, to ensure that the samples were reasonably representative of the populations, that they actually came from those populations and that they were large enough to enable reasonable estimates to be made from them.

### **INTERVIEWS**

Structured interviews of 51 key people in the Environment Cities were carried out. This involved a total of 91 interviews (some being interviewed more than once) including 28 'clinical iterative' interviews of 9 'insiders', face to face structured interviews of 20 key people in the Environment Cities using questionnaires as part of the 1996 Decision-Maker Attitudinal Survey and telephone interviews of three key people in the Environment Cities. Guidance on qualitative methods by Easterby-Smith *et al.* (1991) was relied on in conjunction with Schein's iterative interviewing technique. In the interests of confidentiality, which was promised to individual interviewees, they have not been identified in this study. My Director of Studies has been aware of the posts and roles of interviewees. Kimmel's (1988) guidance on ethics and values in applied research has been relied on.

## A TYPOLOGY OF POLITICAL COMMITMENT

The concept of political 'commitment' is central to this thesis. The looseness with which it is commonly used, however, makes assessing the *degree* of commitment by local authority leaderships a very difficult task. For the purposes of the assessment, therefore, it has been necessary to first construct a theoretical framework which distinguishes between the possible *types* of 'commitment' made in *declarations* and also between the *levels* of *actual* political commitment which can be made in response to them.

Focusing on the expectations which Agenda 21 makes of local authorities, this study is interested in *declarations of political commitment* and in the *level of actual political commitment to meeting them*, especially at Schein's deepest level of culture, that of 'basic assumptions'. Such declarations have become common in recent years in the field of environmental politics and many of those relating to local authorities are examined in the next chapter. Some of them have been, or will be, met. Many may never be. Nevertheless, they are an important form of political behaviour because backsliding signatories can be called to account against them by, for instance, pressure groups or better performing signatories. In this way, progress can be encouraged and this is explored and explained in relation to the EC Programme in Chapters Four and Five. For the purpose of that exploration of actual political commitment and for Chapter Three's consideration of declared political commitment, however, a conceptual framework is needed. This section describes that framework which is based on Schein's (1987) concept of three levels of culture.

For the purposes of this study, the *character* of declared political commitments is considered to be nebulous, specific or ideological. Theoretically, each of the resultant *types* of commitment are seen as operating in any local authority's leadership group or organisation at one or more of Schein's three levels of culture and to varying degrees. Figure 2. sets out the resulting matrix.

FIGURE 2

A MATRIX OF TYPES OF DECLARED POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND LEVELS OF ACTUAL POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO MEETING THEM

Types of Declared Political Commitment	'Actual Political Commitment', at Schein's * levels of culture		
	Artifactual level	Espoused values level	Basic assumptions level
1. Declared nebulous commitment	Artifactual nebulous commitment	Espoused nebulous commitment	Basic nebulous commitment
2. Declared specific commitment	Artifactual specific commitment	Espoused specific commitment	Basic specific commitment
3. Declared ideological commitment	<b>A</b> Artifactual ideologically commitment	<b>B</b> Espoused ideological commitment	<b>C</b> Basic ideological commitment

\* Schein (1987)

**Political Declarations of Commitment**

The three *types* of declared political commitment (numbered 1 to 3 in Figure 2.) are:

1. Declared nebulous commitments. These are vague, indistinct declarations making worthwhile assessment of the degree to which they have been met impossible. An example is Principle 1 of the Rio Declaration (UN, 1992): 'Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.' This can be interpreted to suit a wide range of value positions. As argued in the next chapter, so too can the concept of 'sustainable development' if unexplained. Ideologies such as the latter, however, usually have many well versed proponents and a substantial body of supportive literature which strive to counter this tendency.

2. Declared specific commitments. The degree to which these are met can be assessed fairly easily, sometimes quantitatively. An example is the undertaking by over 150 national governments (UN, 1992) that, by 1996, most of the local authorities in each country should have achieved a consensus on a local agenda 21 (Agenda 21, Chapter 28, para 28.2a).<sup>6</sup>

3. Declared ideological commitments. These use terms and phrases which, to the cognoscenti, are ideologically loaded. An example is that of Principle 3 of the Declaration: 'The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet the development and environmental needs of present and future generations.' In essence, this defines the ideology of sustainable development

This third type of declared commitment is particularly important because, on the face of it, it is intended to guide, even direct, the course of *all* future political decisions and actions by those who declare allegiance to it. To be effective, it requires a knowledge and understanding of the ideology. In this way, it is envisaged that political outcomes of situations as yet unforeseen, and/or unprescribed for, will be influenced in favour of the core ideology of the declaration. Such declared commitments need not necessarily be spelled out in the written declarations. They may be *implicit* from an understanding of the context of the other less obviously ideological declarations.

### **Levels of Actual Political Commitment**

Levels of actual political commitment can be identified in relation to each type of declared political commitment, as follows:

*Actual nebulous commitment.* - The nature of a nebulous declared commitment is such that, before actual political commitment to it can exist, a common interpretation of its expectations has to be agreed. It then takes on the form of one or other of the other two types of declared political commitment. Most often, it will not be commonly interpreted,

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<sup>6</sup> The LGMB has attempted to assess, quantitatively, UK local government's compliance with this (Morris, 1997).

will be lost sight of altogether and will be seen as simply rhetoric.

*Actual specific commitments.* - Action by a local authority to achieve a consensus on a local agenda 21 by 1996, is an example of actual political commitment at the artifactual level to meeting a *declared specific commitment*. In such a case, one would expect to find also espoused values in favour of the specific commitment, driving the action i.e. *espoused specific commitment*. It is possible, but very unlikely, that commitment to it may also exist as a basic assumption (a *basic specific commitment*), rendering it unthinkable that it should not be met. Nevertheless, whether or not actual political commitment to the declared specific commitment runs any deeper than the artifactual level, simply meeting it would be considered by most people to be quite sufficient. This thesis argues that it is not.

*Actual ideological commitment.* - Declared ideological commitments can, by definition, be *met* only at the level of basic assumptions but support for them at the shallower levels is more likely to exist and may be sufficient to satisfy observers that the local authority leadership is not simply paying lip service to its claimed support for a particular ideology and is making progress. Actual ideological commitment e.g. to sustainable development, may conceivably exist at the level of basic assumptions as a basic ideological commitment with little or no commitment at the shallower artifactual and espoused ideological levels.

These three *levels of actual ideological political commitment* are the focus of this thesis and are shown at A, B and C in Figure 2. '*Artifactual ideological commitment*' (A) describes *action* which is purposefully consistent with the given ideology. '*Espoused ideological commitment*' (B) describes organisational *acceptance* that the ideology must be embraced. One might reasonably expect the leadership of an EC local authority to have, at least, this level of commitment to sustainable development ideology even if they do not 'take it for granted' as the *only conceivable ideology* i.e. as a '*basic ideological commitment*' (C).

## Revealing Levels of Actual Political Commitment

Whether declarations of specific commitment are met or not at the artifactual level can be tested by examining behaviour. Most local authorities in the UK, for example, had not achieved a consensus on a local agenda 21 by 1996 (Tuxworth and Thomas, 1997). Whilst this suggests, strongly, a lack of basic ideological commitment and probably even more so a lack of espoused ideological commitment, it *does not demonstrate it*. It may be that other factors, such as a lack of available resources, are the cause. Most studies of commitment in the environmental field, however, have focused on comparing and contrasting *actual behaviour* against *declared commitment*, drawing conclusions largely from the artifactual level e.g. Moore (1994) and Muir, (1996). There has, understandably, been an emphasis on comparing fairly readily observed action against political declarations with the aim of identifying the 'obstacles' which stand in the way of action. This thesis attempts to go further, emphasising the importance of understanding also what is happening at the deeper levels, especially that of Schein's basic assumptions. It is, thus, especially interested in the 'obstacles' of a lack of organisational ideological commitment and/or a lack of basic ideological commitment to declared ideological commitments, either expressed or implied. *This is important because, if political commitment is weak at these levels, it is very likely that action will remain at the margins of what the ideology demands.* We might, for example, witness a readiness by a local authority leadership to develop domestic waste recycling facilities because it is a way of being seen to be acting in a politically fashionable way in favour of 'the environment' but does not compromise its dominant ideology which excludes the tenets of sustainable development. The same leadership may, thus, when tested more severely, be unable to meet calls for its declared commitment to sustainable development to be fulfilled. An example of such a test would be the need to decide between the seriously negative environmental consequences of a planning proposal and the local economic development benefits which it promises.

The existence of a *basic ideological commitment* requires a *knowledge* of that ideology. A group cannot be regarded as committed to an ideology if it does not understand it. Knowledge of sustainable development ideology by the EC local authority leaderships was,

therefore, tested. (See Chapter Five.)

## **THEORY TESTING AND MODEL IMPROVEMENT**

After many false trails, political science's agenda building and implementation theories were ultimately found to offer the most appropriate models for improvement to explain what had been observed in the case studies. The improvements offered in this thesis attempt to add some new understandings about how the behaviour and the attitudes of local authority leaderships can be influenced by those, such as pressure groups, who seek to promote change.

Using the experience of the Environment City Programme as case study research towards model improvement was appropriate for two particular reasons. First, as mentioned in Chapter One, the Programme was established to be an open experiment yet vital questions for political science about what difference to ideological commitment the initiative had made, had not been previously addressed in any depth. Second, the pioneer status in this field of the Environment City Programme and the four local authorities enabled me to give particular attention to both deviant cases and likely non-fitting data. As Dubin (1971: 34 ) argues, these characteristics are especially favourable to the theory building process. My experience confirmed his assertion that 'The theory is forced to be modified to incorporate the non-fitting or non-conforming empirical results.' Use of Schein's method for uncovering levels of culture to inform the development of public policy building theory was also novel.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### THE EXPECTATIONS OF AGENDA 21 AND THE UK RESPONSE

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#### INTRODUCTION

We are compelled to *manage* the most important global transition since the agricultural and industrial revolutions - the transition to sustainable development. (My *emphasis*.)

Gro Harlem Brundtland at Rio, 1992.

In pursuance of Brundtland's imperative of bringing about this transition to sustainable development, Agenda 21 (UN, 1992) is the most comprehensive environmental *action plan* ever agreed at world political level. Local government, however, has a vital role in this. It has been estimated that about two thirds of the action contained in Agenda 21 cannot be implemented without the support and involvement of local government (LGMB, 1993: 18). There has, however, been much uncertainty about what it actually expects of local authorities. For example, research into the response of local authorities conducted by the Centre for the Study of Environmental Change at Lancaster University (Macnaghten *et al.* 1995: 5)<sup>1</sup> found that:

There are grounds for serious concern about the adequacy of the government's (central and local) own representations and *understandings* of the concepts of 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development'. Such representations have frequently given the impression that there is an unambiguous 'objective' scientific underpinning to the terms, from which follow equally unambiguous social and political prescriptions which need now to be *implemented*. Highly significant though scientific insights are in this field, current research at CSEC and elsewhere (particularly within the ESRC's GEC programme) is throwing increasing doubt on the adequacy of an approach resting exclusively on such a picture. It neglects the significance of social, political and cultural processes involved in the emergence, definition and development of the concepts, and assumes an authority and effectiveness which may be increasingly questionable. Indeed, it seems likely that some of the difficulties encountered during the present research - for example, the widespread public scepticism about the *good faith of those public bodies who are now seeking to promote sustainability objectives* - are being reinforced by such *inadequacies of official understanding*. If so, there is a need for

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<sup>1</sup> Macnaghten *et al.* also found a lack of trust by the public in local democracy. See also Cairns (1996) who suggests that the public has lost faith in local governance as a democratic institution.

*renewed discussion, at both national and local levels, about the basis on which interpretations of sustainability are now evolving. (My emphasis.)*

Research Question 1 (RQ1) requires clarification of what Agenda 21 expects of (UK) local authorities. Research Question 2 (RQ2) is interested in the degree to which the Environment City local authorities are committed to meeting those expectations. In response to RQ1, therefore, this chapter seeks to understand the ideological context as well as some of the key passages of Agenda 21 in relation to its expectations of local authorities. As the first stage of the response to RQ2, an attempt to identify and explain the nature and scale of an hypothesised gap between these expectations of local authorities and the way they have been interpreted and responded to by UK Government and local government is also begun. The explanations put forward are developed further in the next two chapters drawing on evidence from the Environment City case study local authorities.

This chapter focuses on the nature of the declared ideological commitments which have been made by, or on behalf of, local authorities in relation to Agenda 21. It also describes some of the evidence of artifactual commitment by UK local authorities. The next two chapters, use the case studies to examine the nature of, especially, espoused value and basic ideological commitment to Agenda 21 ideology by the Environment City local authority leaderships.

## **CALLS FOR A MAJOR SHIFT OF IDEOLOGY**

### **An Environmental Imperative?**

Every form of life continually faces the challenge of reconciling its innate capacity for growth with the opportunities and constraints that arise through its interactions with the natural environment. (Clarke, 1990)

Yet only our species can intellectualise about the challenge.

Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful* (1973) was the first really influential call but many others have followed (e.g. Robert, 1993; Wall, 1990; Lovelock, 1989; Hawken, 1995 and Jacobs, 1996). They are all predicated on the now widespread belief that our species faces an

environmental crisis, that we are causing it and that there is a concomitant imperative for us to change our behaviour to avert it for our own sakes. The debate surrounding these calls has come to centre not on *whether* we face an environmental problem but rather on the *scale* of that problem and on the scale of social, economic, technical and political change which will be needed to meet it.

The problem is that we are living beyond the carrying capacity of our planet. Our estimated numbers have risen from 1.7 billion at the beginning of the century to 6.3 billion at its close (Sarre *et al.*, 1996). Moreover, our science and technology have given us enormous power to take increasing wealth from the rest of nature. Ehrlich (1994: 53-57), for instance, argues that:

Today's society is not sustainable (that is its impact is too high) by the simple standard that humanity is only maintaining itself by expending natural capital. The most important components of that capital are deep, rich agricultural soils, ice age water stored in aquifers, and biological diversity. The current human enterprise is steadily degrading natural resource stocks and flows and using up the capacity of ecosystems to absorb the inevitable wastes that result from those flows. Those processes can only lead to a steady deterioration in the lives of most people, followed, if the trends are not reversed, by a collapse of civilisation.

Robert (1993), the environmentalist 'guru', similarly contrasts nature's cycles with the linear approaches to resource use that our species has adopted and argues that we are on a collision course with nature. Also in similar vein, Lovelock's (1989) influential Gaia hypothesis maintains that the biosphere might be thought of as a super-organism with the capacity for maintaining its equilibrium and recovering from the damage. In the event of a global disaster, these mechanisms would ensure that life continues on Earth, though not necessarily with the continuance of the human species, in any case a relative newcomer to the face of the planet. We are, thus, seen to have achieved what for any other species we would consider to be plague proportions and should recognise that nature has a habit of putting down such species to restore equilibrium; 'the balance of nature'.

There is no shortage of evidence of the 'environmental crisis'. On many environmental issues scientific consensus exists. A report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (1995), for instance, presents a consensus among 2,000 of the world's scientists.

This holds that the world *is* warming up and that pollution *is*, at least, partly to blame. The report claims that new evidence shows 'a detectable human influence on global climate'. It adds that the warming of the past century is likely to have been, at least partly, caused by increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide. They agree also that warming will have dramatic effects, more droughts and floods for example, and could accelerate out of control. Moreover, they warn that even if we act now to stop any further rise in the anthropogenic emissions that contribute to global warming, the climate will go on heating up and the seas will continue to rise for centuries to come. The result, they believe, will be the end of a period of 10,000 years in which a relatively stable climate has allowed human civilisation to begin and to flourish. Moreover, with an estimated 54% (rising to 70% by 2025) of the world's available fresh water being consumed by man, it is not surprising that even some scientists are forecasting wars over water (Houghton, 1996).

If the reader is any doubt about the need for great caution in our dealings with nature, then it should not be forgotten that science tells us that it was early life forms themselves which removed much of the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, creating the breathable oxygen laden atmosphere on which we depend; a process which science also tells us we are now rapidly reversing (Sarre *et al.*, 1996). Causality has been usefully defined by Oelschlaeger (1991) in arguing that, as hunter-gatherers, societies do not separate themselves from nature, but see themselves as part of it. Agricultural and technological societies, however, separate themselves from nature both conceptually and practically. From this, the idea that we must find ways of shifting our relationship with nature and with each other to an environmentally sustainable one underpins much of the argument which follows.

### **The Scale of the Crisis and Response Needed**

In their seminal work, *Limits to Growth*, Meadows *et al.* (1972) attempted to show that existing attitudes were in danger of leading to economic collapse, from resource exhaustion, pollution and/or population growth. They tightened up their computer models for *Beyond*

*the Limits* (1992).<sup>2</sup> The essential mathematical point, however, hardly needs computer modelling. Ehrlich (1994: 53-7), with references to Holdren (1991), for instance, provides useful formulaic rigour for exploring views of causality and of the *scale of behavioural change* which will be needed.

The scale of humanity's impact (I) on its life support systems is the product of population size (P) multiplied by per capita affluence (A) - or consumption, and some measure of the impact of the technologies (T) employed to supply each unit of consumption i.e.  $I=PAT$ . In large part, Ehrlich, a population scientist, places responsibility for the overshoot of carrying capacity with the overpopulated and overconsuming rich nations by putting figures into his formula derived from energy expert, Holdren's 'optimistic' scenario. Holdren developed his 'optimistic' scenario for containing global energy consumption while closing the rich-poor gap and ending population growth in approximately the next 100 years. It claims to suggest a feasible path to a sustainable world society. Poor nations develop quickly enough to increase their per capita energy use by 2% per year between 1990 and 2025, doubling it from 1.0 to 2.0 kW. Simultaneously, their combined populations increase by two-thirds. Also during the same period, the rich nations have the challenge of reducing their per capita energy use by 2% annually through increased efficiency, reducing their use per person per day from 7.5 to 3.8kW. Population growth for them during this 35-year period has to be held at no more than 10%. In the rest of the next century both rich and poor nations converge on an average per-person energy use of 3kW. By around 2100, the world population would have reached a peak of around 10 billion and decline thereafter. At the peak, total energy use would be 10 billion x 3kW, or 30TW.

As Ehrlich points out, Holdren's optimistic scenario assumes that population size can be limited to 10 billion and that a high standard of living can be achieved with a per capita rate of energy use only one quarter to one third of that now seen in the United States. Ehrlich claims that this could be achieved with an increase in the overall quality of life, using only technologies already in hand. He concludes, however, by questioning whether it will be possible to design *political, social, and economic systems* that will allow a society with a

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<sup>2</sup> See also Cairncross (1991).

population of this size to function smoothly and, indeed, whether in view of its propensity for conflict and self destruction, civilisation can manage to reach such numbers without catastrophe. A Joint Statement by the Royal Society of London and the US National Academy of Science (1991: 5) supports this view by asserting that, whilst science could make a significant contribution to mitigating the stresses that will be caused by environmental and resource problems '...it is not prudent to rely on science and technology alone to solve problems created by rapid population growth, wasteful resource consumption, and harmful human practices.' and that 'Global policies are urgently needed to promote more rapid economic development throughout the world, more environmentally benign patterns of human activity, and a more rapid stabilization of world population.' In short, these are calls by a leading scientific authority for Ehrlich's A factor to be *managed* for our own good.

The Earth Summit and Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) was the first significant global effort to attempt to introduce such '*rationality*' into the way humanity conducts or *manages* its relationship with the rest of nature. The Brundtland Commission (U.N., 1987), however, made an earlier attempt. (See later in this chapter.)

### **A Spectrum of Green Ideologies**

How must our values change for the well-being and prosperity of future generations to be secured?  
Discussion topic for UNCED-UK Symposium 2.06.94 Values for a Sustainable Future.

#### *The Choice is Ours*

Ehrlich's identity stresses that, to live in harmony with the rest of nature and with each other, the human species needs to make enlightened, rational choices. If we take it as given that we can do little about the population factor (P) in the medium term, because the explosion to 10 billion by 2100 is built into our future, then only the affluence (A) and technology (T) factors remain as variables which we can conceivably do anything significant about. The second of these, the rate of technological advancement, especially in

terms of making use of renewable resources, will be crucial and the value of 'technofixes', in general, should not be underrated. Nevertheless, as Ehrlich says, we cannot (yet?) make the T factor infinitesimally small. We are, thus, left with the essentially economic choices of the A factor which, without compromising Ehrlich's meaning, we can replace with a C, representing choice. The identity can thus be rewritten as:  $I = PCT$  where the choice component (C) is seen as the major variable and, properly, central to the identity. The choices (C) are about how we live. They include, for instance, choices about the vigour with which we pursue technofixes or the means for limiting population growth; the means of production which we adopt; how we view 'quality of life'; the degree to which we refrain from using the Earth's 'capital', increasingly living off its 'interest' instead; and the way we distribute the available resources. The choices (C) element, then, includes Ehrlich's considerations of affluence (A) but also makes explicit the other choices which are implicit in his identity.

### *The Environmental Spectrum and Sustainable Development*

An examination of this, theoretically, wide choice of responses to the environmental 'crisis' helps us to locate the ideology of sustainable development which underpins the declarations and expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.

Many models are available including those of Eckersley (1992) which define types of (sometimes overlapping) environmental standpoint, and Shrivastava (1993). O'Riordan (1981) initially suggested a simple dichotomy between ecocentric and technocentric approaches where the latter implies trust in scientific and technology fixes. Gibbs' (1994) adaptation of O'Riordan's (1992B: 306)<sup>3</sup> later more sophisticated environmental spectrum is used here, however, to present the broadest spectrum of possible ideologies (Figure 1.) At one end is the human centred 'dry green' approach which, he claims, relies on 'sound'

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<sup>3</sup> O'Riordan (1991) first presented what was effectively, a 'spectrum' of green values in 1991 as 'modes of greenness'. This was developed further by O'Riordan (1992A: 12). See also O'Riordan, 1989.

Figure 1. THE ENVIRONMENTAL SPECTRUM

	DRY GREEN	SHALLOW GREEN	DEEP GREEN
Environmental Management Strategies	Relies on science, modelling, prediction	Design with nature, audits for accounting and assessment	'whole earth' view, global stability
Philosophy	Human-centred		Earth-centred
Characteristics	Self-regulation through a corrected market economy	Adjustments to management and business via environmentally sound products and consumption	Green rights , new age economics and self-reliant communities
Political Structure	Centralised national power with new international structures	Devolved power in internationally federated structure	Self-reliant communities connected to global programmes

Gibbs, D. (1994) 'Towards the sustainable city; Greening the local economy', *Town Planning Review*, 65 (1), p100, adapted from O'Riordan, T. (1992) 'The Environment', In Cloke, P. (Ed.) *Policy and Change in Thatcher's Britain*, Pergamon, Oxford, p306.

scientific judgements to inform policy. This is consistent with the scientific materialism of, what is often referred to as, the dominant model or paradigm (Moore, 1994 and Jacobs, 1996) At the other end of the spectrum are the radical Earth centred 'deep green' approaches.<sup>4</sup> The concept of sustainable development, as the 'flagship' idea of shallow green ideology, is seen to rest somewhere between the dry and deep green extremes. Ideologically, it is still human-centred and is, arguably, much closer to dry than to deep green.

Whilst O'Riordan's use of the terms 'dry', 'shallow' and 'deep' green is followed in principal throughout this thesis, it is believed that the term 'shallow green' does not convey the strength of commitment to the environmental cause which the achievement of sustainable development demands. The term 'sustainable development green' is, therefore, used instead.

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<sup>4</sup> For a collection of key articles and chapters from books on environmental politics including Naess, Schumacher and Hardin see Goodin (1994).

O'Riordan (p308) describes shallow green as a human centred approach, but one which sees a potential for:

constructing, transforming and replacing the natural world in a manner which is consistent with its life protecting functions....The aim is to combine natural and economic science to provide a more secure approach to valuing the intrinsic merits of natural processes and functions.

He adds that:

Central to a shallow green approach is the concept of sustainable development as an organising principle for the economy.

The idea of an *organising principle* suggests a presumption in favour of scientific *management*.

The economist, Schumacher (1973) was an influential pioneer of sustainable development, laying the foundations for much of today's environmentalism. He was among the first to advocate organic farming and to warn of the dangers of nuclear waste, of a throw away society and of global poverty, especially the West's obsession with quantity rather than with quality. Importantly, however, his advocacy of a technical revolution to intermediate technology emphasised the need for localisation of economic activity, the much discussed 'small is beautiful'. Emphasising the nature of reciprocal altruism, Heinen and Low (1992) take this further by presenting valuable psychological arguments in support of the small scale as the only way in which we will be able to shift our behaviour to achieve sustainable development. Hardin's (1988) 'tragedy of the commons' seeks to illustrate how narrow self interest, when not consistent with the common good, brings about not only the destruction of an environment on which we all depend but also does so irretrievably. The ideology of sustainable development has, thus, been seen as offering a reconciliation between our individual needs and of the need for a pact with each other to share fairly and care for our common environment. Whilst, I have indicated the strength of the arguments which stress that such pacts require small scale organisation, however, the trend since Schumacher has

been violently towards the ever larger. Globalisation has increased, massively, the scale of our economic management activity and we now look to large scale (global) management, e.g. through Earth Summits, to manage 'sustainable development' into this activity for our own salvation.

Whilst the concept of sustainable development<sup>5</sup> is frequently and variously defined to suit different value positions, the Earth Summit (UNCED, 1992) relied on Brundtland's definition (UNWCED, 1987: 43):

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts:

- \* the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which over-riding priority should be given;
- \* the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organisations on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.

As Smith (1991: 221) explains, this definition contains at least four serious concerns:

- a) a concern about the relationship between resource use, population growth and technological development and advancement;
- b) a concern about the production and the distribution of resources of food, energy and industry amongst the developed, developing and underdeveloped nations of the world;
- c) a concern about uneven development, about the gross imbalances between rich and poor nations, about economic dominance and ideological differences;
- d) a concern about environments; degradation and ecological disaster.

From this perspective, the concept of sustainable development can, thus, be seen as a response not only to the environmental imperative but also to the 'moral imperative'. It is development which respects the need for both intergenerational equity and for equity for the

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<sup>5</sup> See Nath *et al.* (1996) for an excellent attempt to grapple with various dimensions of the sustainable development debate, including its history, the disjuncture between theory and practice, the role of technology and policy application. See also Wilcox (1992) and Basiago (1995) for definitions of sustainable development.

present human inhabitants of our planet. It sees an indivisible relationship between a concern about human 'welfare' and a concern for the human environment. The approach focuses on human need rather than human want and, interpreted as intended by Brundtland and the Earth Summit, it offers a fundamental challenge to the materialist and consumerist values of much of the developed world. It is consistent with the view of the environmental crisis and imperative presented above.

Perhaps the most significant characteristic of the approach is that it is difficult to pin down ideologically. The woolliness of the term 'sustainable development' is, though, a strength as well as a weakness for its advocates. It is a weakness insofar as it is very susceptible to hijacking by proponents of dry or deep green and the former, in particular, as illustrated later in this chapter in relation to Agenda 21 and government. A strength, however, is that it has a 'wooden horse' capability. Firstly, its potential looseness of meaning makes it acceptable to a wide range of value positions including those of 150 national governments signing up to it in Rio, almost all of whom have a tendency towards free market and dry green ideology. Secondly, proponents of true 'sustainable development green' then have a good beginning for leading these semi-convertees down the 'path of true virtue'. This thesis argues that those with a dry green tendency who champion the concept defined by them in their own terms, are especially vulnerable to being drawn incrementally closer to *bona fide* sustainable development greenness.

The roots of sustainable development green extend further into the Utilitarian tradition than do those of a dry green approach and less into Imperialist assumptions than dry green. It can, however, be seen that both are essentially anthropocentric. It can also be seen as the conscience of the harsh values which underpin the dominant paradigm and thus dry green. It presents as a civilised and humanitarian response appealing to our prevailing sense of rationality, sanity and justice. The ideological battle ground, thus, rests essentially between sustainable development green and dry green.

### *Dry Green Approach to Sustainability*

Dry green ideology is unashamedly human-centred though it could hardly be claimed to be humanitarian. It trusts in science and 'technofixes'. It also trusts self regulation to deliver sustainability and to that extent is well suited to unfettered free market ideology. The dominant paradigm is, ideologically, quite close to this pole of the spectrum though environmental regulation, ethical investment, consumer pressure, pressure groups and a genuine concern by some business people for environmental issues are forces which have tempered that extreme.

Pearce *et al.* (1989), are the best known UK exponents of what might be described as 'moderately regulated' dry green ideology and their Blueprint for a Green Economy was originally prepared as a report for the Department of the Environment. It received a great deal of publicity for its perceived practical, down to earth approach to sustainable development in terms of economic appraisal. The report was commissioned by a Thatcher government which wanted to test the practicability of sustainable development and the result, though by no means giving unqualified support to dry green ideology, was sufficiently acceptable to its free market philosophy that Pearce was made economic adviser to the, then, Environment Secretary.

The neo-classical economic assumption which Pearce *et al.* rely on is that the environment can be independently valued in financial terms but the reality is, as Blowers (1993) argues, that decision-making is never independent or impartial. Someone, somewhere has to make a value laden decision. Finally, the Pearce approach clearly works better for developed than for developing countries seeming to disregard any need for equity and to seek intellectual purity rather than political reality.

### *A Deep Green Approach to Sustainability*

The other pole of the spectrum describes an ectopia. Fundamentally, the belief is that the only solution to the environmental crisis is an immediate and radical restructuring of the

economy and society. It is that we have to change our behaviour substantially, for example, to one of Gandhian simplicity or face catastrophic consequences. Such deep green stances are extremist, for example, Goldsmith (1972: 34):

The principal defect of the industrial way of life with its ethos of expansion is that it is not sustainable. We can be certain that sooner or later it will end, whether against our will, in a succession of famines, epidemics, social crises and wars; or because we want it to.

Naess (1973: 95), a Norwegian philosopher, coined the phrase 'deep ecology' in contrast with the 'shallow ecology' from which the term 'shallow green' came. He sees the shallow ecology form of environmentalism as having as its central objective 'the health and affluence of people in the developed countries'. In deep ecology, however, the perspective is not human centred. Naess describes it as 'the equal right to live and to blossom' for every living thing.

Although Naess goes further, the deep green perspective embraces the traditional ideas of Stewardship. Tokar (1988: 32) claims that 'A wide spectrum of artists, philosophers, animal rights advocates and spiritual seekers have embraced deep ecology as a call for a stronger personal link to the natural world'. Gaian ideas are generally consistent with the perspective as is the need for some form of population control. See also Devall and Sessions (1985).

Returning to Ehrlich, it is difficult not to see the need for a move towards deep green values. Even Gibbs (1994: 101)<sup>6</sup> in his rejection of a deep green approach and his advocacy of a shallow green approach towards the development of the sustainable city, does so on the basis of realism rather than a belief that shallow green will be enough - certainly in the longer term.

From a deep green perspective the term sustainable development is typically viewed as self contradictory and, therefore, valueless. Referring to a 1990 colloquium Stren *et al.* (1992: 4) explain:

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<sup>6</sup> See also Gibbs, 1991 and 1994.

Thus discussion of the concept led some participants to reject it outright as a virtual oxymoron of two irreconcilable opposites: development (understood to mean more use of natural resources for short run economic benefits) and sustainability (understood to mean respect for the biosphere through modification of current patterns of production and living).

Also close to the radical end of the spectrum and rooted in the history of industrialised society, neo-Marxist perspectives are, unlike an ecology centred viewpoint, human-centred whilst still demanding fundamental change to patterns of consumption and production, emphasising especially distributive aspects in the interests of a more just society. Whilst Gibb's analysis does not expressly allow for this perspective, writers like Redclift (1987, 1989 and 1994) stress the structural inequalities of the global economic system and especially the economic dependence of the less developed countries on the developed. Such inequalities were well recognised by Brundtland and to a lesser degree at the Rio Summit, but Redclift points to the former as not going far enough. Whilst Brundtland and the Earth Summit implicitly recognised the dominance of capitalism, they assume that this system can accommodate the *major shift* in behaviour which is needed. The neo Marxist view requires revolution for fulfilment but to claim this would have been politically unacceptable. (See also Kuper, 1996 for a critique of red/green politics.)

Although the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 made some concessions towards the transfer of technology and redistribution of wealth it has so far been at the level of gestures rather than any real movement towards social and economic, let alone environmental, justice. As the US Vice President admitted in a more general context it is not politically feasible to do more (Gore, 1992: 305). Moreover, even though consumerism lies at the root of all environmental problems, the clamour in both the Second and Third Worlds is increasingly for 'market orientated' growth. It is hard to see how that clamour might be successfully handled in the interests of the environment but the evidence suggests that sustainable development offers the best chance of a good beginning.

## Progressing Towards An Alternative Sustainable Development Green (Welfarist) Paradigm

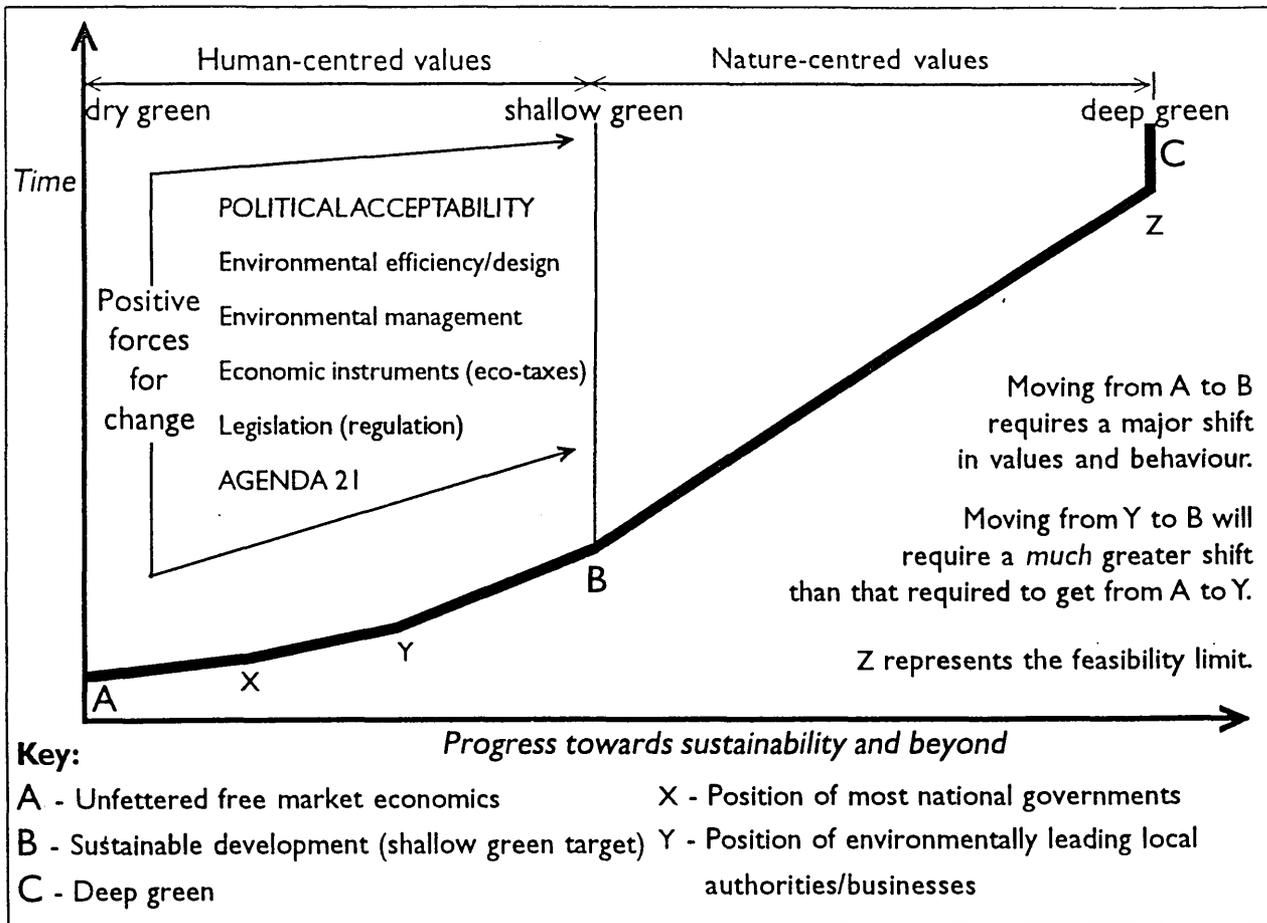
An idea of the nature of the global *management* challenge envisaged by Brundtland (See opening quotation to his chapter) is given in Figure 2. (Pell and Wright, 1996B), being represented as an uphill struggle for sustainable development. This is offered as a development of O'Riordan's (1991 and 1992) and then Gibb's (1994) green value 'spectrums' into a dynamic representation of the conceptual journey which will have to be travelled if environmental sustainability is to be achieved. Figure 2., thus, emphasises that the first part of the climb is up the least steep foothills of progress. It presents the view that in terms of ideology, values and behaviour (which are by no means usually coincidental), most national governments and local authorities have reached somewhere between X and Y. These positions (and X in particular) are not far advanced from unfettered free market economics and less so from the dominant paradigm which rests between A and X. This research into the values and behaviour of people (and especially the local authority leaders) in the Environment Cities indicates that they are, at Y, ideologically closer to B than most national governments. (See p328.) The climb from Y to B requires a *major shift* in values and behaviour. It presents a much steeper climb than that which has already been achieved.

Materialist lifestyle goals have to be substantially modified in favour of a less materialistic quality of life goal (Mitchell, 1996). If our species chooses to manage its relationship with nature beyond that point ie. to benefit nature for its own sake and not ours, then the slope becomes still steeper and, because to live at all, we have to have at least some impact on the rest of nature the slope reaches a theoretical feasibility limit at Z<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> See also Blowers (1993) for an account of the 'quest for sustainable development'.

Figure 2. THE UPHILL STRUGGLE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Pell, D. and Wright, G. (1996B) The Uphill Struggle for Sustainable Development: The Local Economic Dimension, *Local Environment News*, 2 (7), 6.

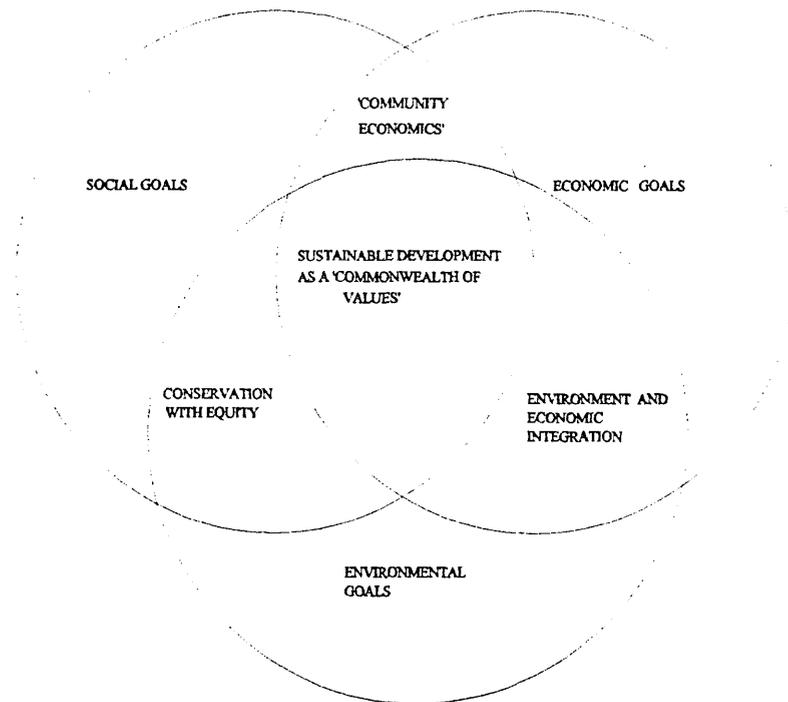
Crucial to making progress towards sustainable development is recognition that it will increasingly challenge dominant ideology. As Secrett (quoted from Church, 1995) says:

Ecology teaches us that there are no environmental solutions to environmental problems, except over geological timescales. There are only economic, social and political solutions because the causes of environmental degradation are economic, social and political by nature.

Similarly, a systems perspective of sustainable development (Figure 3.) can be constructed to show the need, as Pinfield (1996) argues, to reconcile social, economic and environmental goals for its achievement.

### Figure 3. A SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The 'three spheres' model.



Adapted from International Council for Local Initiatives (1996) *The Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide*, Toronto, Canada.

As Littlewood and While (1997: 101) point out, however:

...the extent to which this ideal model can be achieved in local decision-making is unclear, not least because the imperatives which guide each sphere are not necessarily complementary and are often contradictory. In practice, without a *strong commitment* to prioritising sustainable development the economic, environmental and community spheres are unlikely to coalesce. On the contrary, in the past there has been a tendency for the spheres to move apart or for the model to explode, as a result of inherent stresses. (My *emphasis*.)

In defining the nature of the 'dominant model' of development, Jacobs (1996: 117) <sup>8</sup> is right to argue that any alternative model must start by addressing the unquestioned pursuit of

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<sup>8</sup> See Chapter Six for discussion of the 'dominant scientific materialist paradigm'.

economic growth, pointing out that, over the last 50 years, it has become the main objective of politics not just as the source of wealth creation but also as the automatic solution to all other problems. On behalf of the Real World Coalition, however, he argues that, from each of the substantive fields of environmental degradation, global poverty, inequality, unemployment and quality of life in Britain, a different picture emerges. This is that '...economic growth *per se* does not achieve wider objectives; on the contrary, current patterns of growth actually generate many of the problems.'

Jacobs asserts that this is so because of one of the most long-standing assumptions of contemporary politics; that social and environmental issues are essentially questions of distribution. He reasons that, where the processes of production themselves are the causes of these problems, concentrating resources on increasing production in order to have more resources available to redistribute only adds to the problems with which such distribution is meant to deal. From this, he reaches some conclusions about the nature of the alternative, sustainable development led, model:

The priority given to economic growth in political and economic life therefore needs to be changed. Instead of economic policy overriding all other, with wider objectives relegated to mere derivatives of growth, these objectives should be regarded as the priorities themselves. Not just social and environmental but (crucially) economic policy should then be addressed directly to them. Domestically, the new direct objectives should start with achieving environmental sustainability, reducing inequality and poverty, and increasing and redistributing employment and work. In general, the primary aim should be, not private income growth, but improvements in the quality of life; that is, in the overall wellbeing of individuals and in the social and cultural development of society as a whole. Internationally, our first objectives should be to eradicate poverty and to protect environmental resources, so as to ensure security, both within and between nations.

Dry green views of the route to sustainable development (e.g. Pearce *et al.*, 1989) tend to get to their destination by redefining the concept to take it closer to their own ideology. As argued above, this can help it to become accepted by those, in government for instance, who would not be able to accept it as shallow sustainable development green ideology. Examples are given later in this chapter.

Drawing on the arguments of Johnson (1991), Baxter (1996: 68) is right to assert that some ideological distance towards sustainable development green has already been travelled. He

asserts that it is now intellectually unacceptable to develop political theories in which the sole focus of concern is human well-being and values, ignoring the issues which greens have pushed to the fore concerning the well being of other species:

Just as all political theories must take a view about liberty, justice, autonomy, equality and so on, with respect to human beings, so they must now take a view about the impact of human political, social and economic arrangements on the biosphere and seek to show that these views are at least defensible.

This suggests that the need to defend the environmental integrity of all political policies is now a basic ideological commitment in political groups. As argued in the next section, all of the UK political parties and the nearest thing we have to world government, the UN, now appear to accept this. This is undoubtedly progress, even if the steepest part of the road has yet to be travelled.

## **A PYRAMID OF DECLARED IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT**

### **The Hope**

A new world order, as we move into the 21st century, must unite us all in a global partnership - which always recognises and respects the transcending sovereignty of nature, of our only one Earth. We have to make sure that the road from Rio is a fast track, if we are to realise our hope that the United Nations Earth Summit really was a quantum leap forward on that road to sustainable development.'

Maurice Strong, Secretary-General of The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. (quoted from Foreword to Quarrie, 1992)

Referring to the proposed Declaration of Principles:

It could be accepted by governments and embraced by people throughout the world as a historic symbol of their *commitment* to, and hope for, the future of life on our planet.'

Maurice Strong, 1990 (Johnson, 1992: 24) (My *emphasis*.)

### **The Fear**

I would sooner see a goat as the custodian of the garden than humans as stewards of the Earth. We know what to do but lack the will to do it.

James Lovelock (quoted by Crispin Tickell, 08.01.96, Doomsday Lecture, Radio 4)

Only after the last tree has been cut down. Only after the last river has been poisoned,

Only after the last fish has been caught. Only then will you find that money cannot be eaten.

Cree Indian. unattributable.

If people are still here to keep writing them, we must hope that the history books have reason to record 14 June 1992 as the date of a momentous occasion for humanity and that Maurice Strong's hoped for 'fast track from Rio' ultimately became a reality - even though it got off to only a very slow start. We must hope that, ultimately, our post-Rio action causes us to look back on the declared commitments made there as being at least as significant as the landing of the first man on the moon. Perhaps we were spurred by those wonderful pictures relayed to us from the moon of our only planetary home, to at last begin to realise how precious our Earth is to us and that humankind has a collective need to put right the *mismanagement* which has put us on a collision course with nature. Environmental politics is littered with declarations of commitment to do so<sup>9</sup>.

The output of the Summit, and especially the Agenda 21 action plan, was encouraging and can be viewed as a set of declarations of political commitment to *managing a major shift* of behaviour and ideology to lead us out of the perceived environmental and development crisis. These commitments can be viewed as sitting at the apex of a pyramid of commitments made by major groups in society and by all tiers of government most of which included declared ideological commitments. Politically, much of the broad base of the theoretical pyramid, however, is made up of the declarations of commitment made by local authorities with the intermediate levels comprised of declarations made by regional governments, national level associations of local authorities, the governments of nation states, groupings of nations such as the European Community and world level associations of local authorities. Some of these other political declarations were made before the Earth Summit e.g. by the Environment City local authorities and by the UK's national level associations of local authorities. Most followed the Summit's lead. Examples of such declarations include the UK Local Government Declaration on Sustainable Development which was signed up to by all five local authority associations (LGMB, 1993: 82). It declares that UK local government is '...ready and willing to work with central government

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<sup>9</sup> For an account of the international response and the UK's see Hughes (1996).

and the whole community to achieve sustainable development.' The EC's Fifth Environmental Action Programme (1993)<sup>10</sup> and the Maastricht Treaty (Wilkinson, 1992), declared the EU's commitment. The Common Declaration on Behalf of Cities and Local Authorities and the associated Curitiba Commitment (1992) by local authority associations, worldwide, was presented to the Rio Summit and was used as the basis for Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 (see below). In particular, it was an agreement by most local authority associations (including the UK's) that each local authority should develop an action plan - a Local Agenda 21. The associations committed themselves, for instance, to:

promote the implementation by cities, metropolitan and local authorities, of measures needed to alleviate the impact of economic development on the environment..

and to

...develop jointly with their member authorities, decentralized cooperation as an instrument of international policy for the environment, to show solidarity among local authorities and to enable them to take their rightful place in the action being undertaken through the United Nations.

There was clearly, therefore, a recognition by local government world wide that the environmental agenda, and especially Agenda 21, offered an opportunity to press for greater freedom to govern. This is referred to again, in more detail, below.

This was a much more detailed commitment than was incorporated in Agenda 21 including, for instance, a requirement to undertake regular environmental audits involving all sectors of the community and also one to establish an environmental curriculum to be taught in schools and other institutions about environment and sustainable development issues.

This pyramid of commitments can usefully be viewed as a massive management enterprise which is consistent with the 'scientific managerialism' of the dominant paradigm. Certainly, Agenda 21 adopts a managerial style in delegating a role to most 'major groups', many of which are not governments and more is said of this later. A particular utility of this perspective is that, with obvious limitations, it allows public policy implementation theory

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<sup>10</sup> See also The LGMB's Guide to the Fifth Action Programme (1993) which explains the expectations which the Programme makes of local authorities. The LGMB claims that 40% of the proposed actions would involve them.

to be applied to the endeavour. This throws light on some of the factors which have influenced the scale and nature of progress especially at the local authority level.

Realistically, it must be recognised that the nature of these declarations of commitment was very ambitious in relation to the likely actual commitment of national or local governments.

Before examining the more specific expectations of the Earth Summit, and Agenda 21, it is helpful to consider, briefly, the work of the Brundtland Commission (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development; *Our Common Future*, 1987) which set the scene for this world level apparent push for a change of behaviour.

### **Brundtland**

In late 1983, Gro-Harlem Brundtland, then Prime Minister of Norway, was called on by the Secretary of the United Nations to establish and chair a commission to formulate a 'global agenda for change'. Whilst this, at first, seemed to her to be unrealistic and much too ambitious, she felt it was '...a clear demonstration of the widespread feeling of frustration and inadequacy in the international community about our own ability to address the vital global issues and deal effectively with them.' (UN, 1987: Chairman's Foreword, ix) The Commission was to build on the work of the Brandt Commission on North / South issues ('Programme for Survival' and 'Common Crisis) and that of the Palma Commission on security and disarmament issues. Brundtland's 'Common Future' (UN, 1987) followed. Brundtland was especially keen to produce an essentially socialist call for action and, in many respects, this was carried through to Rio's call for action.

At the close of its final meeting, in Tokyo, the Commission issued the Tokyo Declaration (27.02.87) including the following statement which, importantly, began to legitimise the idea of humanity (and especially the First World) being asked to make a *major* (even *massive*) shift of attitude and behaviour (UN, 1987, Annex, 363):

As we come in Tokyo to the end of our task, we remain convinced that it is possible to build a future that is prosperous, just and secure. But realizing this possibility depends on all

countries adopting the objective of sustainable development as the *overriding goal of and test of national policy* and international co-operation. Such development can be defined simply as an approach to progress which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A successful transition to a sustainable development through the year 2000 and beyond requires a *massive shift in societal objectives*.

While the definition of sustainable development contained in that passage has been frequently quoted, the attendant assertion that a *massive shift* will be required is usually overlooked - conveniently for the prevailing dry green 'business as usual' approach.

### **The Earth Summit and Agenda 21**

The Earth Summit took place in Rio de Janeiro under the auspices of the United Nation's World Commission on Environment and Development (1992). World leaders, representing more than 150 countries set for the population of our planet what, in contemporary management jargon, amounted to a *mission statement and strategy*. The declarations of commitment (nebulous, specific and ideological) included those of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development which sets out a series of 27 principles defining the responsibilities and rights of States in this area; a set of principles to support the sustainable management of forests worldwide and two legally binding conventions which aim to prevent global climate change and the eradication of biologically diverse species. They also agreed a comprehensive *action programme* (Agenda 21) made up of 150 work programmes and 2,504 activities.

The Preamble to Agenda 21 claims a global consensus and political commitment at the highest level on environment and development, what might be regarded as its *mission statement*. This includes the following expectations:

1.1 Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can - in a global partnership for *sustainable development*....

...1.3 Agenda 21 addresses the pressing problems of today and also aims at preparing the world for the challenges of the next century. It reflects a *global consensus and political commitment at the highest level* on environment and development cooperation. Its successful *implementation* is first and foremost the responsibility of Governments. National strategies, plans, policies and processes are crucial in achieving this... The broadest public participation and the active involvement of the non-governmental organizations and other groups should also be encouraged. (My *emphasis*.)

Pursuing the call for *management* further, some extracts from a speech by Maurice Strong, the Secretary General of UNCED, help to explain the *scale* of the *change management* which is envisaged of culture and economies, in particular, (Quarrie, 1992: 9):

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro early this year offered a unique opportunity to establish the basis for the *major shift* required to put this planet on the path towards a more secure and sustainable future.

At the core of this *shift* there is a need for *fundamental change*. Change to our *economic* life, a more careful and more caring use of the Earth's resources and greater co-operation and equity in sharing the benefits as well as the risks of our technological civilisation. Of particular importance is the need to integrate the ecological dimension into education and *culture* as well as into *economics*.

... overall, Agenda 21 constitutes the most comprehensive and far reaching *programme of action* ever approved by the world community.

And the fact that their approval was at the highest political level lends it special authority and importance. For the first time in international politics we have *consensus* that the future of the planet is at stake if we do not reverse the trend of abusing it.

The real measure of success will be what happens now, after Rio, when government leaders and citizens alike have returned to their countries, to their organisations, to their immediate preoccupations. It is up to all of us to build on the foundations laid by the Earth Summit to ensure that the decisions that have been taken at the global level *be translated into national politics and practices at all levels*. (My *emphasis*.)

Agenda 21 is a 'comprehensive blue print for global actions to affect the transition to sustainable development.' (Strong, 1992). It is a voluminous document and, as the product of many trade offs and compromises, it contains many 'nebulous declarations'. Nevertheless, word by word and chapter by chapter (all 36) it sticks to the line of encouraging governments and all other sections of society to seek to moderate free market economics in favour of social justice and salvation from environmental disaster by 'managed' progress towards 'sustainable development'. The result is a document which does not interpret sustainable development at its deepest green but at a point which, whilst being on the dry

green side of this, is well in advance of what most governments, (central or local) and businesses are, in practice, able to make strong actual ideological commitments to, especially at the level of basic ideological commitment.

The main operative parts of Agenda 21 are Section I which sets the philosophical framework and Section II which sees the way forward as managing 'resources' for development. The chapter titles in Section II use the word 'management' eight times. Section III urges partnership in this common cause and Section IV describes some of the mechanisms which should be used to aid implementation.

If the reader still doubts that a *managerial* process towards change is envisaged, Strong said (Johnson, 1990: 25) that:

Agenda 21 would go well beyond the kind of "Action Plans" which have traditionally emerged from UN conferences. It should provide the basic framework and instrumentality which will guide the world community on an ongoing basis in its decisions on the *goals, targets, priorities, allocation of responsibilities and resources* in respect of the many environment and development issues which will determine the future of our planet. It should therefore incorporate provisions for *monitoring of progress and periodic review and revision*. (my emphasis)

The Earth Summit's management model necessarily gave the responsibility to the governments of sovereign, nation states. Nevertheless, in dealing with implementation in detail, it is not just a call to governments. It makes an unprecedented opening for the involvement of all people under the pluralist concept of *major groups*, nine of which are cited as needing special attention in *civil society*. Examples are women, NGOs, science and technology, communities, children and youth and local authorities. In this way it makes achieving sustainability a duty and responsibility for everyone. In every case *objectives* and *activities* aimed at achieving them are prescribed by Agenda 21<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> A series of comprehensive handbooks has been produced by IUCN (The World Conservation Union) and its partners (e.g. International Institute for Environment and Development) to assist countries and communities to implement A21 e.g. *Strategies for National Sustainable Development* (Carew-Reid *et al.*, 1994).

These, then, are *management targets* which governments will be judged on by the monitoring process which has been set up. This centres around the requirement for governments to make annual reports on progress to the Sustainable Development Commission. There is, though, no legal sanction for the failure of governments to meet their A21 responsibilities<sup>12</sup>. As Johnson (1993: 127) points out, however:

There is, nevertheless, a case to be made for considering that Agenda 21 is an example (possibly the most far-reaching and voluminous of its kind ever to be attempted) of 'international soft law', a text which has moral if not legal force and which may subsequently serve to underpin both national actions and subsequent, possibly more stringent, international agreements in specific areas.

Since Brundtland and the Earth Summit, other UN Summits on specific environmental / development topics have 'kept the pot boiling'. Each has attempted to push the call for a 'massive' or *major* shift a little further. They have included Vienna (1993) on human rights, Cairo (1994) on population and family, Copenhagen (1995) on social development, Beijing (1995) on women and, in Istanbul, Habitat II (1996, Second UN Conference on Human Settlements). The latter focused especially on sustainable cities with the aim of making '...the world's cities, towns and villages healthy, safe, equitable and sustainable.' and a Global Plan of Action was agreed. The New York 'Earth Summit Plus 5' (UN, 1997) and the Kyoto Convention on Climate Change (UN, 1997)<sup>13</sup>, were the most recent of the series and, arguably, the most significant.

Outside of the UN's machinery, other groupings have also picked up the challenge. The European Union's Fifth Environmental Action Plan (EU, 1993) and the Maastricht Treaty (Wilkinson, 1992) are EU examples which make strong environmental demands on

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<sup>12</sup> See Lang (1995).

<sup>13</sup> Overall, a 5.2% cut in annual 'greenhouse' gas emissions was agreed by 30 developed nations (e.g. 8% for the UK, 7% for the USA and 6% for Japan) in 1990 levels by 2012. These quotas will be tradeable e.g. with developing countries. When ratified by the governments of these countries, they will form a legally enforceable protocol. At the time of writing it seems very likely, however, that the USA (which accounts for about 25% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions) will not ratify the agreement entered into by its negotiators. The US Senate, heavily influenced by the oil and car industries, seems likely to resist the protocol. See Schoon, (Independent, 12 December, 1997: 9 and 19)

member States and on their local governments. The latter introduced as one of the EC's basic tasks the promotion 'of sustainable development and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment' (p i). Also, the principle of subsidiarity which seeks to confine EC intervention to those areas where it will be more effective than national action was introduced. So too was an undertaking to base environmental policy on the 'precautionary principle'<sup>14</sup>. In Aarlborg (1993) the Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference produced a Charter which was signed up to by cities across Europe including Leicester and Leeds. In Lisbon (1996) the Second European Sustainable Cities and Towns Conference heard a presentation from the Leader of Leeds City Council on how to produce and implement a Local Agenda 21. The City also received an award for its achievements. Leicester was the only UK city to be represented at the Earth Summit.

## **ACTUAL IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BY THE UK GOVERNMENT**

Before an action is taken we need the best possible scientific assessment otherwise we may make matters worse.... we need to get the economics right. First we must have continued growth in order to generate wealth required to pay for the protection of the environment.... it is industry which will develop safe alternative chemicals for refrigerators and air-conditioning, devise biodegradable plastics and find the means to treat pollutants and make nuclear waste safe. We think it is important that this should be done in a way which enables all our economies to grow and develop.

Margaret Thatcher, UK Prime Minister, 8 November 1989 addressing United Nations Assembly (Gourlay, 1992: 20)

On the five year anniversary of the first Earth Summit, Schoon (The Independent, 26 May 97) presented the negative view that the hoped for 'fast track' had not been taken. The second Earth Summit (UN, 1997), this time in New York, caused over 60 presidents and prime ministers to jet in and then quickly out again having made grand speeches while their ministers and officials haggled over the precise words of a long impenetrable text, full of 100 word sentences, sub clauses and evasive provisos. They also produced a shorter,

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<sup>14</sup> This principle requires that where decisions have to be made concerning the environmental risks of activities, they should err on the side of caution because environmental consequences are hard to predict. It was founded on the German Federal Government's 'Vorsorgeprinzip'.

punchier 'political' declaration which pledges them '... to work together in good faith and the spirit of partnership to achieve our *commitments*. We decide to move on now from words to deeds.' (My *emphasis*.)

Schoon argues that, from the leaders' point of view this was mainly about image. Merely to turn up and make a speech is to show concern about saving the world. In accordance with normal practice, they did not actually meet as a group to debate and problem solve at all. They flew back home and, judging by the experience of the last Earth Summit, what was said will soon be forgotten. Two examples can be cited. First, the *declared specific commitment* of the developed nations (Climate Treaty, 1992) to bring their rising annual emissions of 'greenhouse gases' back to their 1990 level by the year 2000. With only three years to go, it is now certain that most are going to break their word. Second, the *declared specific commitment* of the developed nations to 'reach the accepted United Nations target of 0.7% of GNP for overseas development assistance' has been seriously breached. In 1992 they were giving 0.34% of their collective GNP to the poor nations but overseas aid has fallen to 0.27% since. This is also the UK's current figure.

To add further gloom to this picture, 'Earth Summit Plus Five' concluded that most of the commitments had been broken (UN, 1997). There was a stalemate between what the First World and the Third World countries were seeking. The Kyoto Summit, however, in the first two weeks of December 1997, provided a further test of commitment and an agreement which was better than most environmentalists expected was achieved.

On the positive side, however, the Rio Earth Summit has helped to secure both attention and legitimacy for the environmental issue, giving it a place on most political agendas. Moreover, could we realistically have expected much more? As Jacobs (1996B: 2) infers, in promoting the Real World Alliance, there remains a massive gap between what I have referred to as the *declared ideological commitments* to Agenda 21 and the perceived *actual ideological commitment*:

There's certainly something wrong about the whole business. For those people involved in it, sustainable development is intended to be a new objective of economic and social policy,

almost of politics itself. It makes big claims: you could hardly get bigger. That economic growth is no longer the be-all and end-all of economics. That environmental sustainability, quality of life and social justice should be prior goals. That traditional methods of government decision-making must be overhauled in favour of community-based, participative and 'stakeholder' models. All the major political parties are signed up to this. At local level they all run local authorities which are engaged in providing it through LA21.

Yet would you know this from listening to our politicians at national level? You would not. *We* might think that sustainable development is about changing the world, but it hardly registers a blip on the screen of 'real' politics at Westminster, in the press or on the TV. The only conclusion one can reach is that for the national political parties, and the media which reports them, it's just warm words. Sustainability? Yes we agree with that. Now can we get back to the real world?

Well it so happens that many people don't believe that what goes on in Westminster and in the media is the real world and don't think this attitude is good enough. On the contrary the real world is the one in which .... global and local environmental degradation is storing up ever more serious problems for the future...

Evidence of this 'gap' is provided by the unwillingness to be shifted from 'business as usual' by John Major, then Prime Minister, in his response to Real World's November 1996 letter to party leaders. He accused the Real World charities of meddling in politics with the result that the leading charities, including Oxfam and Save the Children, were questioned by the Charity Commissioners. Mr Major's letter (*New Statesman*, 28 November 1996) attacked Real World's agenda for reform and said 'I believe, for example your economic proposals undermine Britain's economic competitiveness.'

This tendency of national politicians to pay only lip service to the call from Rio is explained by Walker (1989). He argues that one of the distinctive features of the role of the state in environmental politics is a '...central paradox of an inherent, continuing potential for conflict between the states role as developer and as a protector and steward of the natural environment on which its existence ultimately depends... Posterity is a poor second to political survival or economic indicators.' Moreover, with many people within the state apparatus concerned with environmental sustainability we have a 'matrix of contradictions', a situation which is still more complex as a result of the globalisation of the economic system. Nevertheless, a beginning has been made. As Scott (1990) recognised, even then 'It is the integration and 'normalization' of previously excluded 'exotic' issues such as ecology into mainstream politics that constitutes a *fundamental shift* in the character of conventional politics.'

An example of a previously important player in this 'matrix of contradictions' was John Gummer. Throughout his period as Secretary of State for the Environment he showed increasing willingness to embrace the ideas of sustainable development green and (in spite of his insistence to the contrary) almost certainly had many very significant differences with his much less committed Cabinet colleagues. One might suppose that hearing the very persuasive 'Real World' line of argument every week of the year had its influence on him.

Evidence of John Gummer's growing commitment probably included his influence on securing the Land Fill Tax, The Road Traffic Act 1996, The Energy Conservation Act 1996, the annual 5% (environmental) increase on petrol prices, the (final) cessation of planning consents to out of town shopping sites and the massive reductions to the road building programme. His words to the UK Roundtable on Sustainable Development (1997: 37), which he co-chaired, also showed considerable 'on-the-record' support for a major shift. He described *the* objective as being '..to create the right circumstances for a *fundamental change in lifestyles.*' (my emphasis)<sup>15</sup>

As North says (Independent 24.04.97) Gummer was quite brave because 'Conservatives naturally enough like firmness best when it is applied to the lower orders not to their own, but 'Perhaps, as a Christian, Mr Gummer is drawn to an area in which private morality must overflow into policy.'

New Labour has, in opposition, been cautious with environmental promises and its 1997 Election Manifesto was weak on the subject<sup>16</sup>. There were some encouraging recognitions, however, including:

Taxation is not neutral in the way it raises revenue.... just as, for example, work should be encouraged through the tax system, environmental pollution should be discouraged. (12) (On the other hand it pledged to cut the rate of VAT on domestic fuel and this was done in the June 1997 Budget.)

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<sup>15</sup> See also Gummer (1994).

<sup>16</sup> See Boulton, 'Common agenda' (Financial Times, 13 March, 1996), who argued Blair and Clinton had similar environmental agendas.

A sustainable environment requires above all an effective and integrated transport system...that is what we would establish and develop. (29) All needs must be addressed in transport policy to ensure the best mix of all types of transport, offer quality public transport wherever possible and help to protect the environment. (29) We will conduct an overall strategic review of the roads programme against the criteria of accountability, safety, economy and environmental impact.

We will lead the fight against global warming through our target of a 20% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010. (39) We will support a major push to promote energy conservation.... We are committed to an energy policy designed to promote cleaner, more efficient energy use and production, including a new strong drive to develop renewable energy sources. (17) (Again the pledge to decrease the tax on domestic fuel runs against this.)

We will ensure greater protection for wildlife. (30) (No specific provisions.)

Some early indications are quite positive. Mr Prescott's announcement (Independent, 19.05.97) that the water authorities are now to be set waste reduction targets (over 5 years) shows actual, at least artifactual evidence of ideological commitment. The statement by the Secretary of State for International Development, Claire Short (Independent, 29 May 1997) that Labour's target for overseas aid is to match that set by the UN of 0.7% of GNP, albeit no date was given by her, is encouraging. Similarly, the Chancellor's undertaking to consider a quarry tax for the next budget and the Government's intention to issue a Green Paper on the Environment as a priority place environmental issues firmly on the public policy agenda. Meacher's (Independent, 3 September 1997) announcement that the Government wants further controls on nuclear waste discharges to sea from Sellafield and Dounreay and that oil and gas rigs will have to be brought to shore for dismantling and recycling were widely welcomed. Greenpeace Director, Peter Melchett (Independent, 3 September 97), for instance, said that 'The UK Government is, for the first time, giving British industry a clear, positive and accurate signal about the long-term need to stop polluting our seas.'

The New Labour Government's proposals and the early indications are, then, to be welcomed from an environmentalist standpoint but they are by no means sufficient to suggest that a *major shift* of attitude and behaviour is envisaged and that the Government has a basic ideological commitment to sustainable development green. The Manifesto as a whole, for instance, was concerned to promise personal prosperity framed in conventional 'standard of living terms'. This contrasts with the promise in the Liberal Democrats' Manifesto to issue a new measure of economic welfare which includes social and

environmental factors together with an annual published account of the contribution made by government economic and social policy towards it - as advocated by Real World (Jacobs, 1996) and designed by the New Economics Foundation (1995)

Secrett (Independent, 7 May 1997: 9) gave the environmentalist's view of the minimum which the new Government now ought to do towards sustainable development. He argues that there is now an opportunity which has even greater potential than the post-war reform programme which elevated the Atlee administration above all other governments in its service to the people proposing '... a progressive agenda, rooted in Labour's mandate, which dovetails environmental priorities at the heart of policy-making with the programmes flourishing in the Liberal Democrat's Manifesto.' These included, for example, increasing land fill tax, reducing taxes on energy saving goods, raising taxes on pollution, switching agro-subsidies to organic farming and husbandry, national traffic reduction targets, greening the economy and giving citizens the right to clean air, pure water, uncontaminated land, wholesome food and peace and tranquillity<sup>17</sup>. He sees these as the foundations of a 'Good Society'. Crucially, Secrett argues that this agenda can be fulfilled within the self imposed discipline of existing spending limits and no general tax increases. He points out that 'In Britain, as elsewhere, it is the poor who live down hill, down wind, down stream. It is the old, the young and the frail who suffer the worst consequences of pollution and blight.' He clearly sees a connection between welfarism and environmentalism, which ought to appeal to a Labour Administration and which is considered in greater depth in Chapter Six.

When Michael Meacher MP became the new Secretary of State for the Environment this was to be part of a new high profile, 'mega-ministry' of Environment and Transport under the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott MP. North (Independent, 24 April 1997), however, reports that when, provocatively, Mr Meacher was asked whether New Labour was a good child of the spiritual (and environmentalist) socialism of Morris who argued that 'One must cast away riches and regain wealth.' he replied:

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<sup>17</sup> For socialist arguments for green taxes / labour tax cuts see Tindale (1996), Tindale and Holtham (1996).

I have a lot of sympathy with people who want peace and quiet and the opportunity for tranquillity, but they'll always be a minority. Winning elections is a pretty hard-headed business.

North concluded that '...in this century the Western World has convulsed itself to both deny and defend the right in people to be grossly vulgar if they like. They like.'

There has, however, been progress with environmental concern in the early months of the New Labour Government. Before the 1997 Earth Summit Plus Five, for instance, Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary promised that the UK would aim 'to provide a lead for agreement on firm, tough targets..' and the Prime Minister's speech was consistent with this (Independent, 21 July 1997) even though the Summit did not reach such agreements. Also in the Queen's Speech, the Government promised a White Paper on environment and development policies and this is due before the end of 1997. Also credit worthy were the last minute and successful efforts before the Kyoto Summit, of Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott to broker a new agreement against the considerable resistance of countries such as Australia and to a lesser but still significant extent the USA. With its 'dash for gas' policy to power production the UK was, however, much better placed than any other nation to achieve large cuts. These efforts were well received. For example, Dr Michael Grubb, the respected head of energy and environment at the Royal Institute of International Affairs said on 29 November 1997 (Lean, G., Independent on Sunday, 30 November, 1997, 4) that he had never seen such a level of commitment. He added that 'The Government's actions are both welcome and essential. They have picked the right issue, one of the key challenges of the next century.' Similarly, Secrett, Director of Friends of the Earth, described the outcome as 'a political breakthrough' (Letter to The Independent, 16 December, 1997). As Prescott said (Lean, Independent, 14 December, 1997) there is now a 'window of credibility'.

In summary, then, Christie (1994: 4) described well the former UK Government's position after it had published the first UK Strategy on Sustainable Development -Taking Rio Forward (1994, DoE)<sup>18</sup>:

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<sup>18</sup> On introducing the UK's Strategy a British Government Panel on Sustainable Development was set up to advise the Government (see Cm. 2426 January 1994). This has produced reports including, First, 1995; Second, 1996 and Third, 1997.

The UK Strategy is just the first step on a *long road* of rethinking for government and opposition, and for all citizens, who are, as the Dutch National Environment Plan observes *defacto environmental managers*. This rethinking process is likely to be much more radical than many policy-makers have so far bargained for. (*My emphasis.*)

The New Labour Government has made welcome promises and has shown evidence of real commitment e.g. in respect of the global warming issue. Nevertheless, we seem to be still at the beginning of Christie's 'long road' rather than making reasonable sustainable development green, progress down it or down Strong's (1992) 'fast track' from Rio. UK local authorities, however, have progressed further down that road than Government.

## THE AGENDA 21 ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Agenda 21 implies that sustainability will be the overriding policy consideration for the next millennium, the primary objective out of which all other policy initiatives - social, economic and environmental - will cascade. As yet, however, most politicians still associate it with the environment, and in Labour authorities in particular it can be seen as a middle-class preoccupation - a luxury irrelevant to the needs of the disadvantaged or the unemployed. .... In such political circumstances the challenge is to demonstrate real and effective links between sustainability, job creation and poverty, and to link these to the concerns of other interest groups. Unless this is done, LA21 will be marginal to the political priorities of the authority. (Williams, 1996)

Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 (UN, 1992), 'Local authorities' initiatives in support of Agenda 21', states that the basis for action by local authorities is that:

As the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in *educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development.*' (*my emphasis*)

It sets the following *objectives* for local authorities:

- a) By 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a *consultative* process with their populations and achieved a *consensus* on a local agenda 21 for the community;
- b) By 1993, the international community should have identified a consultative process aimed at increasing co-operation between local authorities;
- c) By 1994, representatives of cities and other local authorities should have increased levels of *co-operation and co-ordination* with the goal of enhancing the exchange

of information and experience between local authorities:

- d) All local authorities in each country should be encouraged to *implement and monitor programmes* which aim at ensuring that women and youth are represented in *decision making, planning and implementation processes*.  
(my *emphasis*)

Activities aimed at achieving each of these *objectives* include the following important expectation concerning the local authority / citizen relationship:

Each local authority should enter into a *dialogue* with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt 'a local Agenda 21'. Through consultation and *consensus* building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best *strategies*. The process of consultation would increase household *awareness* of sustainable development issues. Local authority *programmes, policies, laws and regulations* to achieve Agenda 21 *objectives* would be assessed and modified, based on local programmes adopted. Strategies could also be used in supporting proposals for local, national, regional and international funding. (My *emphasis*.)

Use of the terms 'consensus' in both the specific requirement {a) above} and the more general expectation above is significant. So too are the terms 'consultative' and 'dialogue'. They all require the development of ways of working with citizens and their institutions<sup>19</sup>.

Representatives of associations of local authorities are encouraged to 'establish processes to increase the exchange of information, experience and mutual technical assistance among local authorities.' The chapter also refers to the *funding* and *human resource development* requirements for implementation.

A Common Declaration by world local authority associations promoting the interests, functions and role of local authorities on issues on the UNCED agenda was ratified by world mayors at Curitiba, Brazil in January 1992 and presented to UNCED in June. It was accompanied by the Curitiba Commitment which encourages local authorities to report back annually via their associations on their action programmes. Both of the documents place a strong emphasis on cities and the latter advocated the idea of a LA21 - an idea which was then progressed by UNCED (UN, 1992). The frequent use of the word 'commitment' in these

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<sup>19</sup> See Young (1996) for a discussion of this.

documents, and in others referred to below, is especially significant. The Curitiba Commitment records a 'solemn pledge' to ensure effective follow up action *will* (emphasised in the document) take place in local communities (p1). The need for 'good governance' at the local level is seen as vital and that the commitment requires that it be strengthened (p2).

The UK national and local government is required not only to meet the environmental expectations of the Earth Summit and A21. The EC's Fifth Action Plan (1992), which came into operation in early 1993, embodies similar principles to Agenda 21. The second part, 'Towards Sustainability', sets the objectives, policy and implementation programmes for the environment for the period 1992/6. It has been estimated that 40% of this is to be directly implemented by local government. (LGMB, 1993: 18) At the time of writing, the Plan is being reviewed and the Sixth Plan is due soon. It is expected to be much more demanding than the Fifth. Moreover, the Maastricht Treaty amended Article 2 to include as one of the Community's tasks the promotion of 'sustainable and non-inflationary growth respecting the environment' (Wilkinson, 1992).

From the above, it can be reasoned that a full response by a local authority to the *specific* expectations of Agenda 21 would include the following:

1. Following a dialogue (through a consultative process) with its citizens, local organisations and businesses, the local authority should have achieved a consensus on a Local Agenda 21 for the local community by the end of 1996. It is vital to note that it is expected not just that an LA21 will be adopted by the local authority but that it will be the product of consensus achieved through *dialogue and consultation so that the community has a real stake in it*.
2. Women and youth were expected to be involved in this process and in implementing the Agenda 21. A full response would, thus, give special attention to including these groups which are typically under represented in decision-making at the local (as well as the national) level.

3. The local authority's programmes, policies, laws and regulations should be assessed and modified towards the achievement of the LA21 objectives. This is a demanding expectation requiring that the local authority's leadership accepts that sustainable development is a new and major objective of its social and economic policy. A full response would show *real commitment to sustainable development by the leadership at a strategic holistic level as opposed to a superficial, marginalised, segmented, 'bolt-on', approach*. Just as the leadership would almost certainly, these days, accept that it must show real attention to racial and sexual equality then so too must it now *show* real attention to respecting the requirements of sustainable development in all it does and plans to do.

Even more importantly, arising not only from these specific expectations but also from the call for a major shift of ideology and behaviour which underpins Agenda 21, the local authority leadership making the 'ideal' response would *understand* the full implications of what is needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'<sup>20</sup> and have a *basic ideological commitment* to meeting these requirements progressively and urgently in all that it does.

In 1992, The Local Government Management Board set up a LA21 Steering Group. The Board has also offered central support to local authorities on LA21<sup>21</sup> including the publication of a 'Step by Step' Guide (1994) on the 'Principles and Process' of LA21 for local authorities. This set out 6 key elements for making progress. Step 1 was clearly vital but easier said than done, that of 'obtaining *complete commitment* from members and officers.' One can only presume that this requires, at least, '*espoused ideological commitment*' and preferably some '*basic ideological commitment*'. Step 2 required that sustainable development be integrated into policies and activities and Step 3 that awareness raising and education take place. Step 4 required that the 'general public' be consulted and involved. Step 5 required the development of partnerships with the local authority. Finally, Step 6

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<sup>20</sup> For a guide to what is expected of local authorities see Morphet (1994).

<sup>21</sup> See also the LGMB's (1992) Information Packs on the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 and the LGMB's (Stewart and Hams, 1992) guide for local authorities on A21.

required measuring, monitoring and reporting on progress towards sustainable development. Through this document, the LA21 Steering Committee invited every local authority to send to the LGMB a local strategy or action plan for sustainable development (in effect, an LA21 if one had been developed) and/or a report outlining progress by the end of 1996. These would then form the basis of the required report to the Sustainable Development Commission and the EU Fifth Action Plan, in fulfilment of the international role required by Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 (Jordan, 1994 and Aydin, 1995). The LGMB has also encouraged local authorities to introduce Environmental Management and Auditing Schemes (EMAS - similar to BS7750)), an approach which, with the DoE, it adapted from the (European) business model to suit the operations of local authorities. The latter was piloted in six authorities including Leeds CC (and Bassetlaw where the author was lead chief officer). The LGMB has also developed an extensive data base on local authority activity in these areas<sup>22</sup>.

The considerable activity of local authorities in this field, certainly at the artifactual level, (see next section) and the emphasis on *managing* sustainable development into place is evidenced by the Audit Commission's interest in auditing environmental stewardship by local authorities. The focus is not on whether or not local authorities are meeting the expectations of Agenda 21 but is, essentially, on 'identifying ways both to improve value for money and to lessen environmental damage.' (Audit Commission, 1997: 1). In late 1995, Leicester City Council was one of a small number of councils involved in a pilot study which helped the Commission to develop its auditor's manual on this topic. During 1997, all local authorities received requests for management information on the environmental activity topics selected. On the basis of that information, overview reports will now be prepared for each authority highlighting areas where the Commission thinks they are weak and selecting some authorities for detailed audit. The study is to focus on areas such as the council's management arrangements for LA21 and staff awareness of the council's environment strategy as well as more clearly cost related topics such as the council's record

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<sup>22</sup> The Central and Local Government Environment Forum, which was set up jointly by the DoE and the LGMB to coordinate governmental action in response to Agenda 21 produces a Newsletter which is a useful source of information on national activity.

on managing its energy and water consumption and arrangements for waste recycling. Whilst this initiative is, undoubtedly, cost focused it will (probably largely as a result of input from the 'environmentalist' officers in the pilot authorities) also provide a means for comparing the most effective environment policy managing councils with the least effective. In the Commission's usual style, this will aim to 'embarrass' the latter into performing as well as the former. Moreover, this attention by a body which is, typically, quite feared by elected members will help to test and to push commitment. This is likely to remain the case even if the title and role of the Commission is amended by the New Labour Government.

### **ACTUAL IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BY UK LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

On the basis of evidence derived from a survey of 96 urban local authorities in the UK (60 of which responded) Gibbs *et al.* (1995: 13) argued that '..the implementation of sustainable development by local authorities in England and Wales currently falls far short of the policy prescriptions made for local level action.' They were, however, right to point out that 'Nevertheless it could be argued that this simply represents the start of what will be a lengthy process of adjustment and experimentation with an ill-defined concept.' They were also right to recognise that there are obvious limits to a local authority's influence on private business and individual behaviour which are '..compounded by central government placing limits upon a local authority's ability to restrain 'unsustainable' activities.' Moreover, they were right to express the fear that 'The challenge may necessitate more radical measures than either local or national governments think.' Their findings showed little evidence of acceptance of the 'major shift' of ideology envisaged by A21 or of commitment to sustainable development (p6). We should not be too surprised, however, because as O'Conner (1994: 168) argues '..the idea of an ecological capitalism, or of sustainable capitalism, has not even been coherently theorised, not to speak of becoming embodied in an institutional infrastructure.' There are also jurisdictional contradictions. Solving an environmental / sustainable development problem in one's own local authority area might simply export it elsewhere (Dryzek, 1994), following a national pattern of exporting dirty

industries overseas (Miller and Garside, 1996). No wonder, then, that Gibbs *et al.* assert that 'It is thus premature to expect it to be delivered through local authority action!'

The response of local authorities to Agenda 21, thus, has to be seen in the context of the nature of the political challenge and of wider local governance. In particular, as the creatures of statute, their difficult relationship with central government affects this<sup>23</sup>. Specifically, as Littlewood (1996: 134) says, there has been a prolonged period during which urban local government and public provision in the UK have been severely challenged by a persistent tide of centralisation by government and a commitment to neo-liberalist 'strongly de-regulatory, market orientated overall ideology'. He is right to argue that this process is '...typified by the expansion of a non-elected local state to control discrete areas of policy *implementation*, the promotion of the private sector to the forefront of both policy creation and implementation, and local authorities having both a reduction of powers and responsibilities and subjection to severe spending constraints.' (My *emphasis*.) Problems in our cities have, thus, been addressed under the banner of 'urban regeneration' and, from 1979, were characterised as not an inherent failure of the market system but as the overbearing dominance of a dependency culture and too much local authority involvement (Nevin and Shiner, 1995). This led to local authority spending constraints and liberalised planning (e.g. Enterprise Zones, TECs, UDCs, CCT, City Challenge, SRB and 'Government Offices' in the Regions) to bring the private sector to the fore. Gradually, representative local government lost the capacity to define the urban agenda and citizens became even more estranged from decision-making with quangos, the private sector and voluntary agencies picking up different areas of urban activity with local authorities playing a diminishing role (Davis and Stewart, 1993, 1994 and Rhodes, 1991). Davis and Stewart (1994: 30)<sup>24</sup>, for instance, argue:

The fragmentation of the government of cities, towns and rural areas between different organisations and institutions is reducing the capacity of the system to deal with issues that require different functions or institutions to work together. Yet many of the emerging issues

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<sup>23</sup> See Bosworth, T. (1993)

<sup>24</sup> Stewart (1996) argues that local authorities should develop innovative ways of strengthening local democracy and building institutional allegiances.

in our society require just such a capacity for integration. The environmental issues and the aspiration to sustainable development, the growth of crime and the aspiration to safer communities, racial discrimination and the aspiration to equal opportunities, are all issues which require different organisations and institutions to work together. They cannot be solved on a functional basis.

In contrast with the important constitutional position of local government in most developed countries (including some such as France which have a reputation for centralism) UK local authorities are creatures of statute and have, thus, never enjoyed such security. They have, thus, been vulnerable to attack by central government and have become increasingly marginalised. Local authorities have, for instance, lost the legal power to provide electricity, gas, water, further education and personal health services whilst they have gained powers which are largely administrative or regulatory on behalf of central government, for example, the distribution of means tested benefits and environmental health enforcement (Chandler, 1995). Many countries have protected the constitutional position and rights of local self government through written constitutions or specific Bills of Rights. Such rights frequently prescribe for local government a 'core domain' of responsibilities which cannot be touched by central government.

It is often argued that UK local government has lost touch with its citizens. In its *Blueprint for Leicester Citizens' Survey*, Environ (1996A: viii) for instance, found that<sup>25</sup>:

There was a profound lack of awareness of and involvement in the local democratic process. Only about one in three people knew the names of their local councillors, and amongst young people the proportion was lower. Groups noted increasing apathy and cynicism with 'established institutions'.

Littlewood and While (1997) see the potential for LA21 to deliver greater governmental power to local authorities:

Although it is primarily concerned with sustainable development, LA21 has the inherent potential to reinvigorate local decision making in a number of ways. First, it offers an holistic approach to local policy making which integrates economic, social, land use, urban policy and environmental decision making. Second, it is inclusive, and is based on the promise that 'the pursuit of sustainable development must be founded on community involvement

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<sup>25</sup> See also Macnaghten *et al.* (1995) for similar findings in respect of Lancashire County Council.

encompassing trade unions, business and local people' (Tuxworth, 1994). Equally important, LA21 enshrines the importance of local democratic principles, reasserting the centrality of local authorities in local decision making, and seeking to develop the role of all local stakeholders, particularly offers 'a new mandate for local democracy' (Tuxworth, 1994) and appears to meet the criteria for an effective local policy 'bonding agent'.

The 1995 European Charter of Local Self Government (EC, 1986) was the first multilateral legal instrument to define and safeguard the principles of local autonomy. Unfortunately, however, whilst the UK played a leading role in watering down the text it refused to sign. The primary aim of the Charter (p2) is to protect:

The existence of local authorities with democratically constituted decision-taking bodies and possessing a wide degree of autonomy with regard to their responsibilities, the ways and means by which these responsibilities are exercised and the resources required for their fulfilment.

Importantly, it requires that local authorities shall have full discretion to exercise their initiative with regard to any matter not excluded from their competence or assigned to any other authority, that is a 'power of general competence'. To underpin these powers, the Charter states that:

The financial systems on which resources available to local authorities are based shall be of a sufficiently diversified and buoyant nature to enable them to keep pace as far as practically possible with the real evolution of the cost of carrying out their tasks.

On 3 July 1997, the newly elected New Labour Government announced that it would sign the Charter (Independent, 4 June 1997). Moreover, Hilary Armstrong MP, Environment Minister, said that this would bring in a new era in the relations between Whitehall and councils. She also said that she plans a series of joint studies by government and councils on city regeneration, planning and new ways of involving the public in decision-making. Local authority leaders have also had discussions about this new beginning, with Cabinet Committees. All of this has resulted, in large measure, from pressure from the increasingly Labour local government especially through their associations. The limitations on the freedom of local authorities to act against the expectations made of them by Agenda 21 has also, however, been an important plank in their successful argument. The battle by UK local government is an important thread which helps to explain their greater readiness than

central government, and indeed than most of their European counterparts, to make both declared and actual, probably mostly artifactual level, ideological commitments to sustainable development.

### **Commitment to Agenda 21: Helping to Deliver Freedom of Action to UK Local Government**

In 1989, Friends of the Earth produced a Charter for Local Government and, over the next four or five years, many local authorities adopted this, or their own adaptation of it, as their 'green charter'. They were already running ahead of national government on the 'environment issue'. All four Environment City local authorities adopted a version.

The 1990 DoE White Paper on the Environment 'This Common Inheritance' was the first comprehensive UK Government document on environmental issues. It was widely criticised as a dry green document (See 'This Common Incompetence, Greenpeace, 1991:7, for a summary of these widespread condemnations.) The annual progress reviews of 'This Common Inheritance' confirm that the approach has remained essentially dry green although the Gummer period at the DoE undoubtedly saw some softening of this (See for example Fifth Year Report, DoE, 1996)

In 1992, before Rio, UK local government (LGMB, 1992) began to use the opportunity presented by Agenda 21 to press its long held claim for greater powers. It said that a strategy for sustainable development must require central governments to assure a recognition of local authorities' concern for the environment, society and the economy in their areas, to give them powers to match these concerns and resources commensurate with their environmental responsibilities. This was to be a 'new mode of governing'. The statement was put forward by the ACC (Counties), ADC (Districts), ALANI (Northern Ireland), AMA (Metropolitan) and COSLA (Scotland).

In 1993, in its initial submission to the Sustainable Development Commission (LGMB), UK local government pressed further by emphasising the need for the principles of 'subsidiarity'

and 'residuary' to operate in respect of policy making for sustainable development expressing the view that:

Local government action is hampered however by restrictions on its freedom of operation imposed by central government, particularly its ability to choose how it spends its funds. It seeks the flexibility of operation, and where necessary the support, to continue its role in the formation of *policy* for and *implementation* of sustainable development. (Pt. 5, 5.6)

Moreover, also in 1993, in their response to the Government's First Strategy for Sustainable Development (LGMB), the local authority associations expressed similar concerns and asked central government to place a duty on them and on central government to 'have regard to sustainability in all its activities' (3.50). Also to give local government '.... the freedom of action to make the greatest possible contribution to sustainable development.' (p5) This was requested in response to the stated belief that (p5):

... local authorities are essential partners in sustainable development. They are the level of government closest to the people, they have democratic legitimacy and well-developed methods of consultation and partnership, and their functions and activities give them unrivalled knowledge of their local environment and capability of its management.

Local government's adoption of a sustainable development green stance in this document was clear in its request to the Conservative Government (LGMB, 1993, 4.3) that it '... must actively manage markets to create a framework within which other actors can choose and promote sustainable behaviour.' Similarly, it argued that (pIII):

The world faces an environmental and developmental crisis. There is more and more evidence that the way the human race is using energy and resources, altering ecosystems and releasing wastes is jeopardising the future ability of the planet to support life. Moreover these same actions which are threatening the future *security* of life are eroding the *quality* of life here and now - especially for less wealthy people and nations.

This is an avoidable and unnecessary crisis. We know in broad principle what kinds of practical measures and behavioural changes are needed to reduce environmental threats. If we use the resources of human ingenuity to the full, these changes do not require intolerable sacrifices: on the contrary, most of them will improve the quality of life for most people here and now, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Sustainable development ....is perfectly feasible, if only we *understand* its requirements, *commit* ourselves to achieving them, and consciously *plan* for them. (*My emphasis*)

In its guide to Agenda 21 (1993: 39) the LGMB argued that 'Agenda 21's emphasis on the

need for participation at all levels of government implies an extensive and active contribution by local government....It would appear to provide justification for local government to *take the lead* where central government cannot or will not.' (my emphasis) The much discussed issue at the root of these reactions is UK local government's long standing belief that it should have a 'power of general competence' which is enjoyed by its European counterparts (See Chandler, 1995). Weight is given to this argument through the sustainability debate and this has been seized upon by the associations. For instance, in the last mentioned response they note that 'Government endorses the subsidiarity principle, that decisions should be taken as locally as possible.' and argue that 'The other side of this is that if the most appropriate level of government cannot or will not act, others are entitled to fill the gap as best they can.' (p5).

Comparative evidence of what UK local government could achieve in this field if only it were given the freedom to act is often presented. In Germany, for instance, there is far greater political decentralisation imposed, ironically, by the British occupation after World War II. This has enabled the local authorities of German cities and towns to develop environmental policies and strategies which are well beyond what is legally and financially possible in the UK. This is especially noticeable in the fields of land use planning, transportation strategies and energy.

In 1994, in response to Rio, the Conservative Government published four reports (DoE):

- \* Sustainable Development - The UK Strategy; "Taking Rio Forward";
- \* The Climate Change Programme;
- \* The Biodiversity Action Plan;
- \* Sustainable Forestry - The UK Programme.

Together, these documents were seen by the Government as constituting the first national programme for sustainable development in the UK.

Chapter 30 of The UK Strategy recognised the 'vital role of local authorities' in responding

to environmental issues and, in particular, it accepted the ability of local authorities:

..to innovate, to anticipate problems, to provide local *leadership* and processes like Local Agenda 21 for involving other groups' and that this ability, 'represents an important contribution towards the development of *strategies* for sustainability which reflect local needs and priorities. (*my emphasis*)

Positively, The UK Local Agenda 21 Steering Group (Local Government Management Board, 1994), which reviewed the 'national programme' by the UK Government commented that (p3):

The tone of the local government chapter is very supportive and the Local Agenda 21 initiative has gained a lot of credibility with government in a short time.

On the other hand, this Group also again argued for greater freedom for local authorities to meet their Agenda 21 responsibilities. It thought the overall *strategy* to be quite disappointing, especially in relation to local government, and complained that (p6):

There is no indication of real *commitment* by all Government departments to set *targets and timetables* for action. There is no evidence that central government is seeking to remove current restrictions on local authorities or to give them a meaningful framework within which to operate. In many areas such as investment, in energy efficiency, in housing and in recycling infrastructure, local government is prevented from spending its resources and *managing* its assets in a wise, efficient and sustainable way. (*My emphasis*)

Overall, the Group was unconvinced about the commitment behind the Government's words concluding with the sentiment that: 'Central and local government working together with other sectors can make a significant and valuable contribution to achieving sustainable development.' but that 'It remains unclear whether the *strategies* contained in 'Taking Rio Forward' will do enough to make that achievement more likely.' (p7)

Two of the key principles which the Group argued are necessary for the achievement of sustainability were (p6):

- a) Local government needs flexibility of operation and the freedom to make local decisions in local circumstances.

b) Local government needs stronger powers. For example, the planning system must become a tool for strategic land use, transport and resource management, able to consider the broader energy and resource implications of development. Planning decisions aimed at preventing unsuitable development should be supported rather than overturned on appeal. Urban regeneration policies, currently fragmented and unaccountable, should be reintegrated with local authority planning and economic development functions under local democratic control.

In 1995, New Labour proposed to give local authorities much of what they had asked for in terms of new powers (Dobson, 1995: 27):

We intend to introduce a new power of Community Initiative giving councils greater freedom to respond to local needs providing what they did was not unlawful and did not duplicate the duties of other statutory bodies.

Such powers would, of course, be subject to the rules governing public borrowing and spending and to scrutiny by the audit service and Audit Commission. The law might also require councils to carry out special public consultation procedures before exercising such powers.

This is virtually a 'power of general competence' and, together with the other new freedoms, will provide the Government with much of the legitimacy to sign the European Charter of Local Self Government.

The Party also promised a new environmental duty on local authorities (Dobson, 1995: 27):

We intend to place on councils an overall duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the communities they serve. This would enhance both their status and their capacity to respond to the needs of local people. It could provide a powerful boost to local partnerships for environmental and economic renewal.

Local authorities will also be required to produce community plans which will have to include service targets and be subject to audit by the Audit Commission.

The report of Labour's 'Regional Policy Commission' (Millan, 1996) recommended that an incoming Labour Government should commit itself to providing a regional dimension to Agenda 21 with an emphasis of land use policies that are sustainable in nature, the promotion of sustainable industries, a programme of energy efficiency in buildings and an emphasis on recycling. These responsibilities at regional level could take away some of the

'environmental' responsibilities of local authorities. Overall, these changes were seen by New Labour as part of a challenging 'big shift' of culture in which local authorities would work in the future (Clive Betts MP, 15.02.96). The Party also promised to (Betts):

1. allow local authorities to keep the proceeds of the business rate aiming to return their locally raised revenue to about 50% of their expenditure rather than the 10% to which it had progressively fallen as a result of the centralist attacks of the Conservative years,
2. abolish CCT,
3. end Council Tax capping, albeit with a reserve power for extreme cases of excessive spending,
4. release, on a phased basis, capital receipts (especially those from the sale of council houses),
5. return to local government the powers taken away and given to development corporations e.g. Leeds Development Corporation,
6. introduce annual elections for all councils on a rolling basis,
7. ensure the setting of targets for services with the Audit Commission 'enforcing' the achievement of these,
8. introduce citizens juries and user group surveys,
9. introduce elected mayors for big cities and, ultimately, unitary councils across the whole country .

In September 1996, the ACC, ADC and AMA continued the push for power by local authorities through Agenda 21 by issuing a consultation document on an Environmental Manifesto for Local Government, as part of a series designed to stimulate debate in the run up to the General Election and influence the agenda for the next Parliament. The general claim in respect of the environmental role of local government was (p1):

Local government's activist role as stewards and enablers for sustainable development needs to be recognised and supported by central government. In addition a clear division of labour, or partnership, between central and local government is needed if the goal of sustainable development is to be attainable.

More specifically, however, it asked that local authorities be given a 'power of community initiative' to *lead* and enable local action to protect and enhance the environment including the development of the LA21 process and the development of local strategies for sustainable development taking account of environmental, economic and social concerns. It also asked that local authorities should be given a duty to '...promote the social, economic and environmental condition and wellbeing of their areas taking into account the need to promote the overall objective of sustainable development.' (p2) In support of these new powers and duties, the associations asked that there be a review of local government

financing with the aim of seeing how sustainable development might be supported and to consider the potential for local 'green' charges, for example on pollution and waste, while allowing a greater proportion of local expenditure to be raised locally.

The Manifesto asked that both the power of community initiative and the requested new general duty to promote the well being of the local authority's area be included in an early local government Bill.

These new responsibilities and freedoms for local authorities were clearly the brokered product of what (almost totally Labour controlled) UK local government expected of a New Labour Government. This illustrated, well, the opportunistic way in which UK local government had successfully woven its long time hopes for them into the LA21 debate. This has been a successful campaign. It now appears that the power (or freedom) of community initiative and the related general responsibility to promote the well being of the area and improved local tax raising ability will all be given to UK local government within the first two years of the Government elected to power in May 1997.

Finally, it was claimed in the local government Environmental Manifesto that 'Regeneration programmes, such as the Single Regeneration Budget should, where appropriate, be subjected to full environmental assessment and sustainability criteria.' (p4) The way in which regeneration schemes neglect the environment and contradict the aims of LA21 were frequently cited by respondents to this research.

### **Local Authorities' Seizure of the Agenda 21 Opportunity (for Becoming More Governmental.)**

Many UK local authorities had most likely, either consciously or not, through their pursuit of Agenda 21 and other environmental objectives, made a contribution to securing this victory. As Ward (1993: 466) argues, A21 has been seized on by many UK local authorities because:

It provides an opportunity to prove to a sceptical local electorate and an unsympathetic central government that they have a useful and popular role in a democratic society. Developing and promoting environmental policies is, therefore, a way of creating new political space for local authorities through the concept of local guardians of the environment and equally a way of defending their traditional service role.

Others have also argued that, faced with a crisis of their democratic role as manifested in low turn outs at local elections and with the professions embattled by contracting out, UK local authorities have responded well to the environmental challenge (Cairns, 1996; Hambleton, 1993; Stewart, 1993: 21-23 and 1994: 49-50).

Comparative evidence, certainly, indicates that local authorities have responded actively to the Agenda 21 requirements and that there is considerable apparent enthusiasm if not necessarily very much basic ideological commitment; probably more so than almost anywhere else in Europe. At the LA21 UK Environmental Coordinators Meeting in Norway (UNCED, 1996: 15), for instance, it was estimated that only in Sweden had 100% of local authorities taken up the challenge against 10% in Germany, 30% in Italy and 60% in the UK and Denmark.<sup>26</sup>

This activity is also demonstrated by Tuxworth and Thomas' (1997) analysis of the most recent survey by the Local Government Management Board into the progress of the Local Agenda 21 initiative (November, 1996)<sup>27</sup>. All UK authorities (475 at the time) were questioned and 297 responded. Of the 297, 96% claimed that their authority was committed to participating in the Agenda 21 process. 42% claimed that this commitment took the form of strong support and commitment to change in the authority's operations but 48% claimed only more tentative support (4% said 'no support yet'). Bearing in mind that authorities returning the questionnaires are likely to be more committed than those which do not, it seems that a very clear majority of authorities are not considered, even by their own

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<sup>26</sup> See also Adams (1993) for a UK - Canada comparison of the responses of public authorities (and industry) to environmental issues.

<sup>27</sup> See also Agyeman and Evans, B. (1994) for an account of local environmental policies and strategies.

commentators, to be strongly committed to LA21<sup>28</sup>. Only 24% said that they were committed to producing a strategy document through the LA21 process by the end of 1996 although a further 44% claimed that they were committed to producing one by some later date. These figures can be compared with the 40% and 14% respectively which resulted from the January 1996 survey (Tuxworth and Thomas, 1996). This clearly indicates a tendency by councils (or their officers on their behalf) to be over optimistic and to massively exaggerate what they might achieve. 39% had appointed new staff to take on the LA21 responsibilities. When asked about the degree of integration of sustainability principles in their local authorities this was seen as greatest in environmental services, then in land use planning, waste management, energy management, and transport strategies. Economic development was tenth in the list of 18 areas. Investment strategies came last. Only 29% had formal partnerships with the business sector and 33% with NGO's in relation to LA21. More encouragingly, 53% said they had started work on developing sustainability indicators for their area but only 40% of them could reply that the local community was involved in this work. Awareness raising events had been organised by 68% of local authorities. 49% had established community forums and 33% had conducted public consultation exercises on LA21. 25% had begun visioning / future search exercises. 16% had begun consensus building exercises. In spite of this overall picture of activity, however, as Voisey *et al.* (1996: 36) say, although there is evidence of *enthusiasm* for the vision and potential for linking social, environmental and economic agendas most local authority environmental policy still follows 'traditional' environmental protection lines and the approach is often only *tentative*. As Head of Environmental Development at the Local Government Association, Swann (1997)<sup>29</sup>, observed, it is time that sustainability is '..taken out of the portacabin and into the Chief Executive's office..' if real progress across the board is to be made. We might conclude that whilst artifactual commitment to both specific and ideological declarations is strong, it is much weaker at the level of espoused, and certainly

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<sup>28</sup> This tendency was, probably, counter balanced to some extent by the fact that most of the questionnaires were completed by local authority environmental coordinators.

<sup>29</sup> Swann, P. quoted by Gilliver, D., (24 October, 1997) *Environmental Health News*, 12 (41). Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, London.

basic, ideological commitment<sup>30</sup>. Littlewood and While (1997: 106) take a similar view in asserting that:

The picture which is emerging in the UK suggests that LA21 is not yet being placed at the heart of local decision-making processes. Instead, as it emerges, immense effort is being expended to create a consultative structure between local authorities and the wider community which tends to sit to one side of mainstream policy agendas whose principal concern is often to prioritise economic development.

This is explained in relation to the EC local authorities in the next chapter.<sup>31</sup>

As Ward (1996: 855) suggests, part of the reason for the high level of visible activity by UK local authorities in this field, in comparison with most others overseas, is probably that they have made use of their environmental role, legitimised especially by Agenda 21, to side step the UK Government's reluctance to increase their freedom by developing links between the international and the local:

In the face of a perceived lack of enthusiasm from national government for environmental action, authorities have tended to see supra-national bodies as allies, having similar environmental aspirations. Consequently, EC programmes such as 'Towards Sustainability' are regarded as methods of legitimising and supporting their own local environmental activities.

Evidence from the Environment City local authorities, however, indicates that this use of Agenda 21 in the quest for greater freedom should be viewed in the context of serious pessimism amongst local authorities that they would actually achieve it even if New Labour, which was increasingly becoming the dominant Party controlling local government, gained power. Almost none of the respondents interviewed, for instance, had even heard that New Labour had proposed substantial new, at least *de facto*, powers. In mid 1996, and thus before New Labour came to power, in addition to evidence from the interviews, the responses to two questions in the Decision-Maker Survey made this clear.

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<sup>30</sup> For some accounts of the response of some individual local authorities to A21 see Allen, 1995, in respect of Mendip DC, Howells *et al.* (1995) on Reading BC and Colman (1995) Leader of Merton LBC.

<sup>31</sup> See Kitchen (forthcoming) for a development of the argument that A21 is being marginalised.

Q19 asked decision makers to indicate the degree to which they felt their city council was free to act as it would choose. The choices given to them were 'Very Free; Quite Free; Moderately Free; A Little Free; Not at All Free.' Q20, then, sought to reveal whether decision-makers felt that they would be given, at least, a fairly substantial increase in local governmental freedom by an incoming Labour Government; the chances for which, from what has been argued above, seemed very good indeed at the time the survey was made. The choices given, in this case were 'Substantially; Fairly Substantially; Moderately; Not at All; Would Reduce it.'

Tables 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix Five present a detailed analysis of the responses to these two questions. Table 3, which includes 'don't know' responses and 'question not answered' returns, analyses the degree to which responses to the two questions meshed together. Only 2 respondents, for instance, answered that they thought their city council was 'quite free' to act and (in response to Q20) that an incoming Labour Government would 'substantially' increase this degree of freedom. The inference here might, then, be that these two respondents felt that, if a Labour Government were to come to power in 1997, local government will be very free indeed to act. The table, however, shows that such views were 'outliers' with the largest group of respondents (32) saying that they felt their city council was 'a little free' to act now and that a Labour Government would increase that power only 'moderately'(14), 'a little'(16) or 'not at all'(2). Even more pessimistically, 12 respondents said that they felt their city council is 'not at all free' and that a new Labour Government would increase that very limited degree of freedom only 'moderately'(3), 'a little'(4) or 'not at all'(5) to act now. Taking these two last mentioned groups together, then, 44 (56%) of the 72 respondents who answered both questions were quite pessimistic about the current freedom which their city council has to act and about its prospects of gaining greater freedom under New Labour.

The first bar chart in Figure 4, shows, diagrammatically, that most respondents in each status group said they believed that their city council is only either 'a little free' (the most popular choice of all but the first tier officers' group) or 'not at all free' (the, just, most popular choice of the first tier officers' group). The second bar chart in Figure 4, shows, on

Q19 Please indicate the degree to which you feel the City Council is free to act as it would choose. All repondents, 72 (8 did not answer).

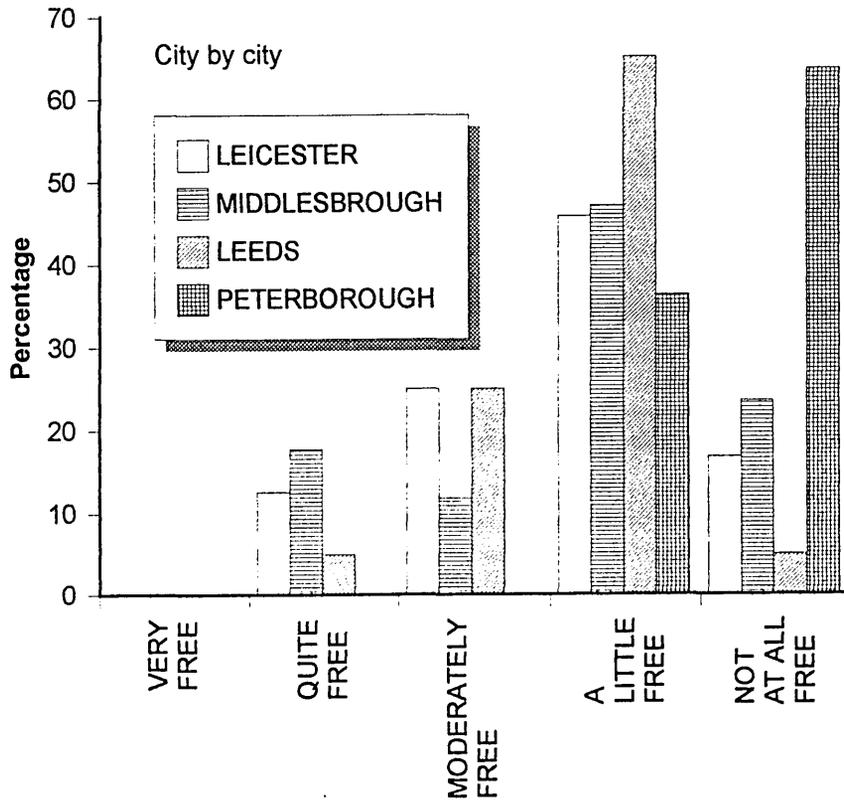
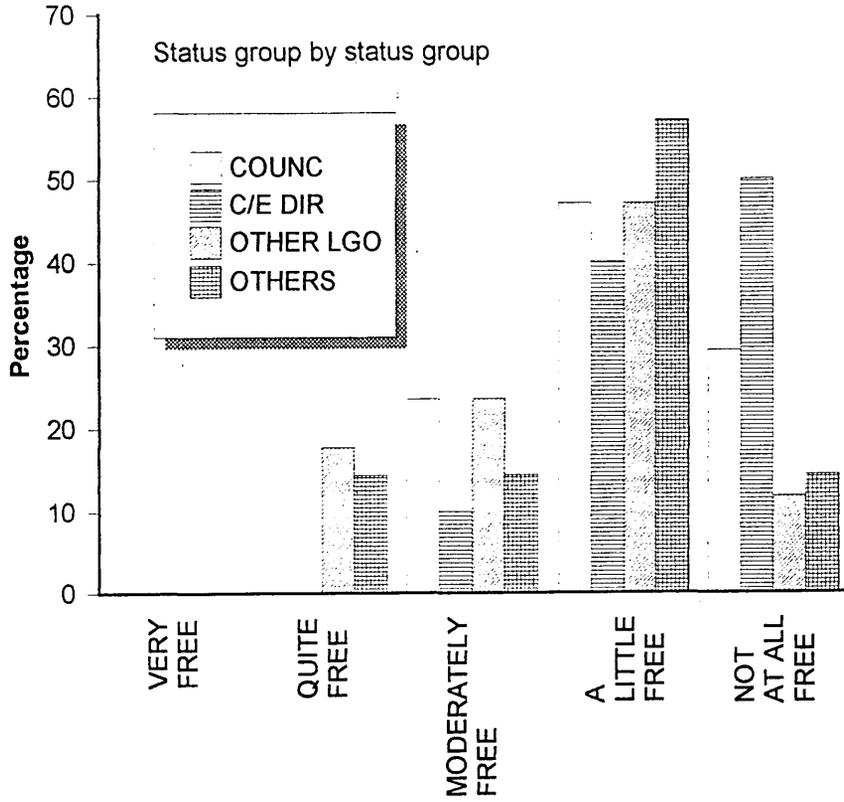
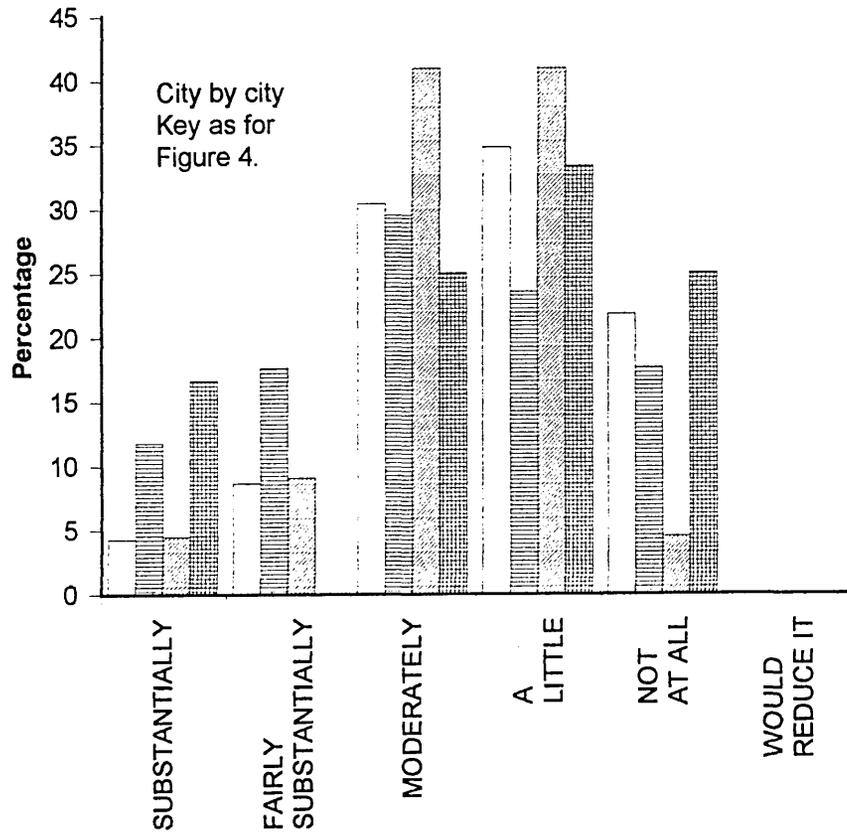
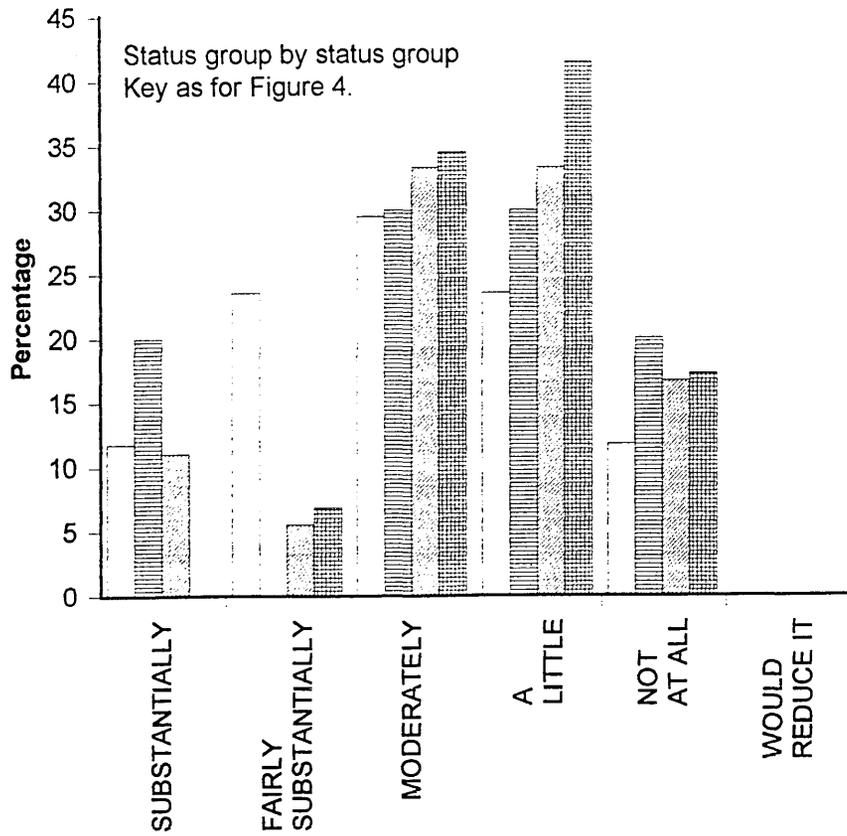


Figure 5

Q20 Please indicate the degree to which you feel an incoming Labour Government would increase the degree of freedom which the City Council has to act.

All respondents, 74 (6 did not answer)



a city by city basis, that most respondents in each city selected either 'a little free' (the most popular choice of all but Peterborough respondents) or 'not at all free' (by far the most popular choice of Peterborough respondents).

The first bar chart in Figure 5. shows that there was a different pattern of responses to the question about the difference a New Labour Government would make to their freedom to act. Approximately similar proportions of each group selected either 'moderately' or 'a little' and a smaller but still approximately similar proportion of each group selected 'not at all'. There was, thus, general agreement between the members of each group that a Labour Government would increase their city council's degree of freedom 'moderately' or 'a little'. Also, whilst on the one hand there was a significant proportion of each group which felt a Labour Government would not increase it at all, on the other, an approximately similar proportion claimed to feel that it would increase their city councils' freedom either 'substantially' or 'fairly substantially'. The two leaders' groups were the most optimistic. The 'other' ('outsider') group was the least optimistic.

The pattern of responses described above shows no significant deviations between respondents when analysed city by city as in the second bar chart in Figure 5. Peterborough's respondents, however, appeared to be the least optimistic, overall, even though a higher percentage of them than of the respondents in any other city selected 'substantially'. Middlesbrough's respondents appeared to be the most optimistic.

The interviews confirmed that *none* of the decision-makers, even those in the city council's leaderships, had heard about New Labour's proposals to give authorities a 'power of community initiative'. They were, however, very aware of New Labour's caution that little or no extra financial resources would be made available, even though the return of the Business Rate and the phased release of capital receipts were welcomed. It seemed that, after so many years of constant cut backs and attacks by a Conservative central government, they had all but given up the fight and had reached an all time low in their expectations of support. They were far from optimistic that a renaissance of local government might be achievable.

Leading the production of an LA21 is a governmental task and one would expect a prerequisite for this response by local authority leaderships to be a perception by them that they have, at least, moderate freedom to govern. Even when the new powers are given, however, this pessimism may mean that it will be some time before shell shocked local authority leaderships or their citizens will be ideologically ready to respond to the opportunity. One interpretation of the reasons for this luke warm response to a major enhancement to their role would be that they have come to rely on being able to blame central government when they could not meet the expectations of local people; something which local authorities have with much legitimacy, been able to do for some years now. With the vast majority of local authorities now being Labour controlled and a Labour Government, however, this will be very difficult especially as the latter will argue that it is a friend of local government and is enhancing its freedom (see earlier in this chapter). Early signs of this remain promising. It was, for instance, reported (Independent, 24 July 1997) that:

The love in between England's predominantly Labour controlled councils and the new government reached new heights of passion yesterday ... Mr Prescott said a joint Whitehall-local authority plan would set out the ways in which councils could carry forward Agenda 21... Since May, the 18 year old 'cold war' between councils and central government has given way to a warm summer of mutual appreciation.

## CONCLUSION

For the purposes of this study, 'declared' and 'actual' political commitments were distinguished in Chapter Two. Three *types* of declared political commitment have been identified: '*nebulous*', '*specific*' and '*ideological*'. Using Schein's three levels of culture model, a matrix has been constructed against which the level of actual political commitment to each of these types of declared political commitment can be assessed. The three *levels* of actual commitment which this study is particularly interested in relate to declared ideological commitment, e.g. to 'sustainable development'. These are described as '*artifactual ideological commitment*', '*espoused ideological commitment*' and '*basic ideological commitment*'.

This chapter began by defining the ideological context of the *expectations* of (UK) central government and local authorities by Agenda 21. This was done against a spectrum of green value positions which, themselves, are explained as deriving from different perceptions of an environmental crisis and of our 'proper' relationship with the rest of nature. It is argued that the ideological context of Agenda 21 is that of 'sustainable development green' and that this value position is a huge ideological distance from the dry green ideology of the dominant paradigm. Calls from the world level Earth Summits for a *major shift* of behaviour and ideology require this distance to be travelled. It is argued that reasonable progress away from dry green behaviour and ideology has been made in the UK by central and, especially, local government but that it has fallen well short of the expectations of the Earth Summit. Such progress is seen to be easiest in its early stages when it is non-threatening to 'business as usual'. Beyond that, it promises to be extremely difficult. To help explain this, a presentation of the dynamics of the '*uphill struggle for sustainable development*' has been developed from the spectrums of green values and in particular those of O'Riordan (1991 and 1992) and Gibbs (1994).

A principal tendency of dry green ideology is seen to be that of '*hijacking*' the term 'sustainable development' through its redefinition, thus requiring a lesser degree of shift. These features of a reluctance to shift ideology are argued to be characteristic of the actual political commitment of the last Government. The lack of clarity about the *actual ideological shift* which the achievement of sustainable development requires, is also presented, however, as what might be termed a '*wooden horse opportunity*'. This is an opportunity which has been taken to, at least, get sustainable development on the policy agenda of institutions such as the last Government, which would, otherwise, find it ideologically unacceptable. Once on the agenda, the proponents of sustainable development green can then use the policy commitment as a lever for securing increased *behavioural commitment* and, to a more limited extent, *actual ideological commitment*. This Trojan '*wooden horse*' opportunity is pursued further in the next chapter in relation to the Environment City local authorities.

Calls for this *major shift* of ideology have been described as existing as a *pyramid of*

*declared commitments* with many of the signatories probably not understanding what they have declared commitment to. These *declared commitments* are described as often being made as the result of political trade offs and compromises with *actual commitment* to them, in any case, thus likely to be weak. It is argued that the pyramid evidences a *managerial* approach on a world scale to *implementing* sustainable development, an approach which is consistent with the thinking of a *dominant scientific materialist paradigm*<sup>32</sup>. Similarly, it is argued that the ever increasing dominance of global economics runs counter to the beliefs of many advocates of sustainable development (and deep) green who emphasise the importance of smallness of scale in encouraging *self interested altruism*. This argument is pursued further in Chapter Six. In this thesis, this top down perspective of what is happening is also seen as useful for explaining *actual political commitment* against *declared political commitments*, e.g. through public policy agenda building and implementation theories.

The role envisaged for local authorities by Agenda 21 has been explained.

It has been argued that the response of UK local government to the calls from Rio has been apparently very positive but that this response has been inextricably linked with its long waged battle with central government for greater freedom to govern. This has been evident not only at the national level of the local authority associations but also at the level of individual local authorities, helping to explain the activity that has been observed in the EC local authorities. The world level political calls have legitimised the apparent pursuit of wider environmental goals by local authorities and the expectations of Agenda 21 in particular, adding considerable legitimacy to their, largely successful, campaign for more power. The nature of these powers has been described in relation to the environmental role of local authorities. It has also been argued that much of the considerable amount of action by local authorities on LA21 has been of a marginalised nature; that it has not been at the heart of their policy making as envisaged by A21. This is examined further in the next chapter in relation to the ECs. It is further argued that much of the action on environmental issues by UK local authorities has been motivated by their quest for greater freedom to act. Consequently, as even the apparently most actually committed local authorities appear to

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<sup>32</sup> See p264 for a more detailed explanation of this idea.

have travelled only the easiest part of the journey from dry green to (shallow) sustainable development green, progress is now likely to stall. This is especially so because the next steps of the 'uphill struggle' will present greater challenges to 'business as usual' and the perceived need for local economic development to remain the prime policy goal.

Notwithstanding these newly won freedoms, however, evidence from the Environment City local authorities is presented to show that, in 1996, their leaderships were not only very negative about their current freedom to act but also pessimistic about New Labour giving them any significant additional freedom. It has been concluded that, these new powers are, therefore, unlikely to be exploited quickly by local authority leaderships; another factor which may mitigate against further behavioural and ideological progress with Agenda 21 in the EC local authorities and others. The next chapter focuses on assessing the actual *espoused* and especially the *basic ideological commitment* of the leaderships of the EC local authorities.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE ENVIRONMENT CITY EXPERIENCE AND PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA BUILDING THEORY

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#### INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s, environmental pressure groups and policy entrepreneurs have attempted, vigorously, to influence the political agenda in favour of that depth of green ideology for which the term 'sustainable development' progressively became the rallying call. The last chapter explained the nature and development of this ideology and some of its consequences for local authorities and their political agendas. These included the expectations made of them by the Earth Summit (UN, 1992) and Agenda 21. It also began to explain the behavioural and policy responses to those expectations by UK Government and local government and especially their declared commitments to a major shift of ideology. More specifically, this chapter considers firstly, how well public policy agenda building theories serve to explain the political response by the Environment City local authorities and, by inference, probably also by other local authorities. From this, improvements to the theory are suggested. Secondly, a beginning is also made at using the experience of the EC local authorities to assess the *nature and degree of actual commitment* which the leaderships of these and probably other local authorities have to meeting the expectations of Agenda 21. This is pursued in greater depth in the next chapter. From both perspectives, the chapter begins to consider what insights this experience provides into how such commitment might be encouraged.

#### PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA BUILDING THEORIES

The experience of the Environment City Programme demonstrates the importance of aspects of four related concepts from agenda building theory to *policy entrepreneurs* and *pressure groups* trying to manipulate the political agendas of local authorities. These concepts are

*issue emergence and definition; ways in which issues reach the political agenda; the decision-making venue and issue management, inertia and fade.* Each of these is described below so that they are in mind when the EC experience is examined. First, however, a brief description of the nature of the agenda building concept, itself, is needed.

### **Public Policy Agenda Building Concepts**

There are various models. Cobb, Ross and Ross (1976), for instance, distinguish between two kinds of agendas. First, the *public agenda* is made up of those issues and demands which achieve a 'high level of public interest and visibility'. Second, the government (for my purposes *local* government) is seen to have a *formal agenda* which is comprised of the 'list of items which decision makers have formally accepted for serious consideration'. The aim of the supporters of issues and demands is to get recognition of them on the formal agenda either directly or, more usually, via the public agenda.

Solesbury (1975) was influential in the development of the agenda building concept by arguing that the continuing change in the public agenda of environmental issues arises partly through changes in the state of the environment and partly through changes in views on the environment. Recognition of this, was one reason why the current state of both the environment and of views about it were examined, in some depth, in the last chapter. Against that examination, the relevance of Solesbury's explanation of how changes in the state of the environment can influence the formal agenda, can be seen. He differentiates between *environmental situations, issues and responses*. An example of a *situation* is global warming. The last chapter described how such situations can, in Solesbury's terms, give rise to consequences to which people do not feel neutral e.g. a fear that global warming will lead to droughts, famine, rises in sea levels and wars for water. These *situations*, thus, become *issues* and the language used to describe them is often strongly value laden e.g. a global environmental *crisis*. Issues call for *responses* from governments which are essentially policies and the decisions which derive from them. The essence of the response of the UK Government and local government to key aspects of the 'global environmental crisis' has also been explained in the last chapter.

As this chapter demonstrates, the transference of matters from the public to the formal agenda is a complex matter. What follows also emphasises that *it is possible for some issues to get on the formal agenda without having been on the public agenda*. Ward's (1996) conclusions about the *emergence, management and fade* of the environment on UK local policy agendas begin to provide a way through this complexity.

### **Issue Emergence and Definition**

Issue emergence (or in Solesbury's terms, changing environmental *situations* into environmental *issues* and then *policies*) is, generally, linked with two concepts:

1 *Attention*. Referring to the task of problem recognition brought about by triggering events such as disasters and accidents, issue visibility, the media, pressure groups, policy entrepreneurs and whether it affects (or 'touches a chord' with) the public.

Considerable attention was given in the Press to the threats of global warming and ozone depletion in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The Brundtland Commission (UN, 1987) and the Earth Summit (UN, 1992) were also well reported. Environmental *situations* were rapidly becoming *visible* as environmental *issues*. Protesters on the sites of the Newbury Bypass, Manchester Airport's third runway and elsewhere have, similarly, made issues visible.

2 *Legitimacy*. Depending, largely, on the *value systems* of policy makers and the power and status of those seeking to force issues onto the agenda. The shifting of public opinion on the roads issue, for instance, linked to the popular protests referred to above, has no doubt played a major part in seeing a reduction of the roads programme from £23bn. p.a. 5 years ago to £6bn p.a. today. When viewed against the interests of large scale government, financial institutions and companies this has been a very real achievement for the environmentalist movement (Open Saturday, Open University Broadcast, 13 September 1997).

In the case of all four of the Environment Cities, the Green vote in the 1989 European

elections and the production of the Friends of the Earth Charter for Local Government sparked a significant interest (towards a *'ripe issue'* climate) in respect of 'the environment'. As Ward argues, these events did so throughout UK local government. Whilst Friends of the Earth was, in terms of Grant's (1975) typology<sup>1</sup>, still an *'outsider group'* it was acting increasingly as a *'potential insider group'*, within his broader outsider category. This was in contrast with the much more removed *'ideological outsider'* groups such as Greenpeace. Friends of the Earth was, thus, becoming much more accepted by the 'establishment' and had groups in all of the Environment Cities working largely 'within the system'. That organisation had developed working contacts with insiders in the local authorities, especially some officers in the environmental health departments. In these cities, as elsewhere, the Greens, thus, provided the political push. They demonstrated that votes were available through claiming the environmental 'high ground'. The FoE Charter then gave Councils a readily adoptable policy especially because it was written in fairly general and, therefore, not too demanding terms. Adopting it as *policy* gave them a timely opportunity to give their politics a valuable 'seal of approval' of their greenness from an important but not too radical pressure group.

This is not to suppose that the *basic assumptions* (Schein, 1987) of local politicians had necessarily shifted in favour of sustainable development green, though they probably had to some degree. Much of this new legitimacy was derived from a pragmatic political recognition that issues which at one time were the province of a perceived eccentric minority were now, to one degree or another, the concern of many voters and, therefore, on the *public agenda*.

Whilst, on the face of it, this could be seen as massive progress by the environmental movement, it is important to understand exactly *what* environmental issue(s) were being transferred to the formal (policy) agenda of local authorities. In particular, were the 'saving the world' sustainable development green issues of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21's call for a *major shift* of ideology being transferred to the formal agenda at the local authority level, as, at least on paper as *public declarations of commitment*, they had been at world

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<sup>1</sup> See later in this chapter for an account of Grant's typology.

level? Alternatively, were the issues being transferred at the local level largely amenity issues such as litter clearance and specific pollution control issues with which local authorities have, in any case, been traditionally involved? As Ward (1996: 849) argues, the latter has tended to be the case:

In the emergence of local environmental policies two competing issues of environmental agendas tended to emerge. Environmental activists within local authorities have defined the environment as a *broad agenda*, seeing environmental considerations as a prerequisite to all the authority's activities. They were... keen to promote community ownership and partnership... The majority view, however, tended to see a *limited agenda* where environment was essentially an add on, to be traded against primary economic concerns. This *limited agenda* was based on environmental policies to statutory functions and concentrated on local impacts. (My emphasis.)

Importantly, from this, it can be seen that the progress of an issue from the public to the formal agenda will, to a large extent, depend on how it is defined. Again, as Ward says:

The definitional debate has significant effects on environment's agenda position. Overt opposition to the development of environmental policies has been minimal, partly because politicians wanted to appear environmentally concerned, but also because of confusion over what corporate environmental agendas might entail... (This) allowed some authorities to pay little more than lip service to vague concepts...

The next chapter argues that in the case of all of the Environment Cities, and especially in Middlesbrough and to a lesser but still significant extent in Peterborough, it seems that there is a large gap between the *declarations of ideological commitment* and their *basic ideological commitment* to meeting the expectations of them by Agenda 21. Moreover, the case study findings suggest that they *do not understand* the ideology involved. The issue for them has come to be defined in terms of Ward's 'bolt on'<sup>2</sup> *limited agenda*.

Ward also argues that there has been an interconnected definitional debate about the role of local government and I have explained this, in the last chapter, in terms of UK local government's use of the broad environmental agenda in its quest for greater freedom to govern. This has happened whether or not there is real understanding of, or commitment to,

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<sup>2</sup> See Voisey *et al.* (1996)

the ideology of that broad agenda by the leaderships of individual local authorities. This is also explained later in relation to the experience of the case study authorities and their efforts to create *new issue space*.

An alternative model is offered by Hall *et al.* (1975). They argue that governments assess three main factors in determining their priorities for policy: *legitimacy, feasibility and support*.

'*Legitimacy*' decides whether or not, in a normative sense, a government *should* be involved with a particular issue. With so many expectations of local government, Agenda 21 can be seen to have added greatly to the legitimacy of local authorities to embrace its objectives on their policy agendas, including the ideology of sustainable development green.

Two aspects of '*feasibility*' were identified by Hall *et al.* The first concerned the '*state of the art*': whether the necessary theoretical and technical knowledge exists. Many aspects of the *specific declared commitments* of Agenda 21 are, thus, clearly feasible for local authorities e.g. achieving a local agenda by the end of 1996. Doing so on the basis of achieving a *consensus* on a Local Agenda 21, however, is much less likely to be feasible. The second aspect of feasibility concerned the *ideological and value positions of those deciding which policies to pursue*, how to allocate limited resources and when to implement specific policies. For this reason, making an actual commitment to sustainable development green ideology, for example, and thus by implication applying it to all of the council's policies, is unlikely to be seen as feasible. It would conflict too fiercely with the dominant ideology of encouraging local economic development, almost at any cost. As Hall *et al.* say:

Particular ideology, interests, prejudices and information will affect the kinds of conclusions which are drawn about the feasibility of different alternatives.

'*Support*' refers to the electoral consequences for governments of acting, or of not acting, in a certain way. They will be concerned especially about retaining the support of the electorate, investors and Party members. This is not universally true, however. Hall *et al.* cite the example of the abolition of capital punishment and the introduction of health

service charges. I refer to this later as a form of *statesmanship*.

A particular means of generating support identified by Hall *et al.* is that of *issue joining* as *issue redefinition*. They claim that:

It can modify the legitimacy of one issue by linking it with or divorcing it from issues with different levels of legitimacy.

In essence, this enables protagonists to gain political support for their issue by defining it as simply another aspect of one which already has support. It could be argued that, as local authorities have traditionally had an environmental role, for example through their environmental health and planning functions, the new environmental agenda could be seen to be simply an updated form of this; a '*new public health*'<sup>3</sup>. Knowingly or not, this has been used by many environmental health professionals acting as policy entrepreneurs from within and without local authorities<sup>4</sup>. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) see such '*issue-joining*' as a form of '*issue redefinition*'.

### **Ways in Which Issues Can Reach the Political Agenda**

Cobb *et al.* (1976) identified three mechanisms by which issues might reach the political agenda. First the '*outsider initiative*' where:

issues arise in non-governmental groups and are then expanded sufficiently to reach, first, the public agenda and, finally, the formal agenda.

Secondly, the '*mobilisation model*', where issues are:

initiated inside government and, consequently achieve formal agenda status automatically.

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<sup>3</sup> See Pell and Wright (1996C)

<sup>4</sup> This was suggested by my own experience as a local government director of planning, health and housing and confirmed by my interviews of chief officers and councillors in the four case study local authorities.

Thirdly, they describe an '*insider initiative model*' where issues are placed on the agenda from within government with the intention that the general public is not to be made aware of them. Nuclear defence policy is an example (Jordan and Richardson, 1987).

Hogwood and Gunn (1984) describe six mechanisms through which an issue can reach the political agenda. Firstly, where a '*crisis*' has occurred. We might see traffic congestion in cities as nearing that point. Secondly, where an issue has achieved '*particularity*' highlighting a wider problem; they cite acid rain as demonstrating atmospheric pollution. Thirdly, an '*emotive element*' to an issue helps e.g. the abuse of children. Fourthly, where it seems likely that there will be '*widespread repercussions*' e.g. the BSE/CJD link (Lean, G., 'Deadly peril in our culture of denial', *Independent on Sunday*, 24 March 1996). Fifthly, where the issue concerns '*who wields power in society*' e.g. the central / local government debate discussed in the last chapter. Sixthly, an issue may achieve '*fashionability*' e.g. animal rights which was at one time a fringe concern but is now causing 'sensible' people to take to the streets (Tudge, C., 'Rights and Wrongs', *Independent on Sunday*, 16 March 1997).

## **Policy Venue**

Baumgartner and Jones (1993) have developed a '*punctuated equilibrium model*'. Within this, policy venues are the institutions which have authority to make decisions on particular issues. The venue may be '*monopolistic*' or '*shared*' and they use a USA example of how a shared policy venue may create opportunities for the policy entrepreneur. If the entrepreneur fails to achieve success at the desired level another can be tried. This idea is related to '*policy image*' i.e. how policies are 'understood and discussed'. They note that:

So images may be accepted or rejected depending on the institutional arena in which they are raised....Each institutional venue is home to a different image of the same question.

From the account in the previous chapter, it should be clear that the world level of politics, through Earth Summits, has proved to be much more amenable to sustainable development green ideology than has that of the UK's national Government. Similarly, local government

has proved to be more amenable, albeit through a more functionally based, *image* of the requirements of sustainable development. The European Community has also proved to be more amenable to sustainable development green having a policy image much closer to that given to it by the Earth Summits. This is demonstrated by the text of the Fifth Environmental Action Plan (EC, 1993). National governments are, typically, dominated strongly by demands on them to lead the creation of conditions for continuing economic growth and have, therefore, had much greater difficulty in shifting their ideology in that direction. The difficulties of President Clinton in the run up to the Kyoto Climate Conference in the face of opposition, especially from the US car industry, to CO2 reductions illustrates this barrier (Arthur, C., Is the global warming rhetoric just hot air?, *Independent*, 1 October 1997. Also Karaks, I., Dejevsky, M. and Schoon, N., 'America reveals her policy on global warming: too little, too late' *Independent*, 23 October, 1997).<sup>5</sup>

Baumgartner and Jones also point to the importance of structural institutional change, thus:

Those left out of the original system may not be heard there, but if the structures are changed, then dramatic changes in mobilization of bias may result.... when (institutional structures) do change, these changes often lead to dramatic and long-lasting changes in policy outcomes.

By inference, the opposite will also be possible, where those included in the original system are excluded as the result of a restructuring such as that brought about by the last reorganisation of UK local government. This can be a reason for '*issue fade*'.

### **Issue Management, Inertia and Fade**

Agenda management is usually seen to be achieved through *policy networks*, which are

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<sup>5</sup> In essence, at the time of the December 1997 UN's Kyoto Climate Conference only the UK and Germany were on target to meet the 1992 Climate Treaty pledge to reduce CO2 levels to those of 1990 by the year 2000. In the UK, however, this was due largely to a change of fuel to natural gas for much of the power industry and in Germany has been due to the phasing out of dirty and inefficient manufacturing processes within the former East Germany. President Clinton proposed that developed countries should together return their emissions to 1990 levels by between 2008 and 2012, with unspecified reductions in the five years after that. In the event, developing countries were excluded from the new protocol altogether. 30 developed nations were included.

made up of insider groups but also, sometimes, potential insider groups (Grant, 1990). As Ward says however, traditionally, it has been difficult to identify an environmental policy network at the local authority level because environmental policy has been fragmented throughout authority structures. Much environmental policy has been dispersed between wildlife / countryside management, planning and environmental health. Policy networks are usually also seen to be forces for agenda inertia. As Ward (1996: 851) adds, however, the emergence of corporate environmental plan documents has begun to see shifts in these network patterns and that at least two levels now operate:

...new networks in the local environmental field are paradoxically seen as both *radicalising agents* and *policy protectors*, in that they incorporate new groups, increase participation, incorporate new information and keep awareness high. Yet the new networks are about routinising a new generation of relations between groups and local authorities and protecting policies set out in environmental policy networks. (*My emphasis.*)

In arguing that there was a national trend towards *issue fade* in respect of environmental issues in the early 1990's, Ward (p851) presents many of the reasons why it can occur:

The overall position of environmental policies on local agendas was undoubtedly weakened after 1991, by a combination of recession, lack of resources, and an erosion of enthusiasm caused by the realisation of an inability to realise policy preferences. The recession helped to submerge environmental concerns beneath the need to try and protect employment and business needs within localities. Despite rhetoric to the contrary and acknowledgement of the importance of environmental problems, environmental concerns have not been absorbed into the primary economic arena in many local authorities. One of the tasks of the current Local Agenda 21 process, begun in 1992/3, has been to legitimise fully the connections between environmental and economic agendas.

These various agenda building theories help to explain the experience of the Environment City Programme as follows.

## **THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT CITY PROGRAMME**

### **Designating the Environment Cities**

In July 1990, Leicester was designated as the first and 'lead' Environment City. Middlesbrough was designated in May 1992, followed by the double designation of Leeds

and Peterborough in October 1992.

### **The Two Dominant Features of the Environment City National Programme**

The Environment City Programme has a remarkable history which has been dominated by two closely related features.

First, in spite of the involvement of four cities, the history of Environment City is, to a considerable extent, the history of an environmental movement in just one city; Leicester. This does not imply that the efforts and activities of the other three cities have been of no consequence; far from it. It does, though, recognise that Leicester's involvement has dominated the EC idea. It was conceived and developed in Leicester. Leicester then virtually gave itself the designation as (the first and lead) Environment City and it has, thus unsurprisingly, had a substantial influence on the leadership of the National Programme and has, itself, followed the ideals and organisational 'model' much more closely than any of the other cities. Moreover, Leicester has secured the consistent investment of far more energy and resources into the pursuit of the aims of the Programme than any of the other cities. In 1996, however, Peterborough saw the greatest overall investment by securing massive resources from the Millennium Commission. Most importantly, though, Leicester is the only one of the four cities which can fairly claim to put its environmental concern identity above other identities. Again, this does not imply that this is always the case. Such concern in Leicester, as in the other cities, has to compete with many other concerns on its formal agenda, especially economic ones, and the former often loses out. Nevertheless, the research shows that there is a strong feeling among civic leaders (and especially the City Council's leaders) that being an Environment City, which is genuinely concerned about environmental issues, is central to its purpose. (See Chapter Five.) The research also shows that Leicester citizens tend to support this view. (Similarly, see Chapter Five). This contrasts considerably with the situation in the other three cities where their professed environmental concern is real but viewed by both leaders and citizens as more peripherally relevant to their purpose.

Second, and of particular importance for this thesis, the EC Programme's progress has also

been a history of the development and use of a particular public policy agenda manipulation arrangement which is not adequately explained by the literature. *I have termed this observed approach 'public policy franchising'*. Its aim has been to secure the commitment of decision-makers, and especially city council leaderships, to behaving differently in response to calls to work towards sustainable development. Whilst this arrangement was not seen consciously as such until the Review of the EC Programme (Pell and Wright, 1994) drew attention to it, the efforts of the protagonists showed all of the characteristics of a 'franchising' arrangement from the beginning of the EC idea and its predecessors in Leicester. Essentially, the Environment City designations characterised this approach by laying down *challenges* to the leaderships of these cities to meet *declared ideological commitments* to the environmental broad agenda which, in competition with the leaderships of other cities, they had *volunteered* to enter into in return for the enhanced standing and potential political power which came with the title. The designations (or 'franchises') were not awarded to them as *accolades* although past performance was, inevitably, taken into account as well as their readiness to embrace the ideals of the Programme. Moreover, the designations could be withdrawn if the cities failed to live up to these ideals. The potential of this 'franchising' is explored further, below, as is the need for its inclusion within public policy agenda building theory.

Each city was required to base its approach to leading its citizens towards more sustainable lifestyles on the Environment City 'Model' albeit each city was allowed considerable scope to tailor this to suit its local political circumstances. In particular, each city was required to establish an Environment City Forum and a number of Specialist Working Groups. This organisational model and the tenets which underpin it are described in the subsection 'The Environment City Model Approach' below and each city's variation of it is then described.

It is significant that only in Leicester has the EC approach led to the voluntary sector having any real say in its leadership (See next chapter). In each of the other three cities, the city councils have, to one degree or another, held the designation quite closely to themselves. The reason why this has been the case in Leicester is rooted in the history of the Programme.

## Development of the Environment City Approach

In 1982, David Nicholls, the current Co-Director of Environ, moved to Leicester to work as an urban ecologist on a one year contract with Leicester Urban Study Centre, an NGO. The Centre carried out a survey of all spaces, education in schools, demonstration projects and some landscaping work. It was, in effect, an urban wildlife charitable trust and was one of only five in the country<sup>6</sup>. The others were in London, Avon, Birmingham and Liverpool. Traditionally, wildlife trusts have been rurally based bodies and it was not until the early 1980's that it became actively recognised that wildlife conservation was also needed in urban areas, even major cities. Nature conservation has, however, continued to be dominated by rural interests. It is culturally linked to country life and interests<sup>7</sup>. The urban trusts have never, for instance, been fully integrated into the national organisation of the wildlife trusts but have their own 'arm's length' national committee under the, overall, umbrella of The Wildlife Trusts. The Wildlife Trusts would not accept the LUSC as a wildlife trust.

In 1983, the Centre developed the City Wildlife Project which gained Manpower Services Commission funding through the much larger county and country life interests dominated Leicestershire Royal Trust for Nature Conservation which was much better respected in this field by the establishment than were urban interests<sup>8</sup>. This funding enabled LUSC to create 24 steady jobs (at one time 44). The Trust needed a ready made organisation capable of managing a large number of employees and of securing useful work for them and LUSC had positioned itself to do this. Half of the new employees were gardeners and half were labourers. Ecologists were employed and BTCV volunteers were also involved. Ponds were saved, woods were managed, trees were planted and work was carried out to protect wildlife habitats across the city.

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<sup>6</sup> There are many more now.

<sup>7</sup> The existence of this culture was confirmed through my experience of working closely with the Wildlife Trusts and its board.

<sup>8</sup> This was confirmed by several interviewees and by records of the debate which took place at the time.

In 1986/7, the Centre set itself up as Leicester Ecology Trust, a legal company. The interest and commitment of David Nicholls moved the aims away from narrow conservation to interests which promoted his broader green vision. It won an MSC contract for a waste recycling programme and set up a low energy demonstration home (the Leicester Eco-house) in partnership with the City Council. As the urban trust grew, however, it became increasingly clear that the LRTNC was a 'tail wagging the dog' and that the urban initiative had much more holistic environmental aims than the rurally based county trust. It was also becoming unnecessarily expensive running two organisations and so, in 1989, efforts were made by the managers of the Leicester Ecology Trust to break free from the LRTNC. The matter became controversial and LET took advice from Queen's Counsel which confirmed that it was already legally free of LRTNC and could decide its own constitution. This ended a long period of wrangling with county interests such as LRTNC, the County Council and (the rurally biased) national RSNC on one side and the city / urban based LET and Leicester City Council as ever closer allies on the other. The seeds for the Environment City idea were, thus, beginning to be sown with the idea that environmental concerns are not only rural concerns. It was being recognised that city life has a profound effect on the countryside which supports it and that wildlife exists and is equally, if not even more, precious in urban as it is in rural areas for both its own sake and for that of human city dwellers. It was also being recognised that we are increasingly becoming city and urban dwellers and that there is, thus, a need to reflect that fact in the way we seek to manage our impact on the rest of nature.

The Riverside Park scheme was a watershed in the evolution of the EC idea. It began in 1989 and was a good example of the increasingly good working relationships which were developing between the LET and the City Council. In particular, informal relations between key City Councillors and officers of LET were developed by the latter to considerable advantage<sup>9</sup>. This green wedge in the south of the city is 12 miles long and has an area of 2,400 acres. It had become an area where people were afraid to walk for fear of crime, a tipping area and was more used by motor cycle riders than walkers. The City Council

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<sup>9</sup> The MSC working arrangements, in particular, gave the LEC protagonists the opportunity to meet and get to know key officers and councillors within the City Council.

wanted to turn it into a conventional park but LET persuaded it to accept a nature trail, a broad walk of half a mile and a habitat management scheme. The park is now generally recognised as the most important green asset in the City and this has been achieved largely through partnership working involving, for instance, British Waterways, the National Rivers Authority, the Countryside Commission, the County Council and major landowners along the river. There have been many initiatives to care for this green space and, in 1995, the partnership appointed a Riverside Development Officer. The early work by LET was an undoubted success with Leicester citizens and served as a splendid demonstration, painting a picture worth more than a thousand words of what could be done for both wildlife and people in cities. Importantly, it also brought the prestigious Europa Nostra Diploma of Merit and a great deal of kudos for city councillors and chief officers. As a result they wanted to do more. The recycling scheme was boosted and core funding, at one time (1993/4) of £60,000 p.a., from the City Council supported first LET and then its successor, Environ.

David Nicholls, in particular, saw the potential to exploit this willingness of decision-makers to change their behaviour in response to schemes which bring credit to them.<sup>10</sup> He also saw the potential for, what is referred to throughout this thesis, as the '*politics of embarrassment*'. Putting it plainly, when once a decision-maker has publically declared his or her *commitment* to a cause (preferably voluntarily and formally, in writing) in this case the cause of caring for nature, it is then extremely difficult for him/her to refuse to go along with any proposals which are consistent with that *declared commitment*. To do so would be very embarrassing, politically. This is especially so if the proposal is such that it is difficult to put a lack of resources up as a reason for not supporting it (either justifiably or unjustifiably). Nicholls developed the EC idea for this purpose although some other key players at the time had similar views to his. Tim Cordy, a previous Chief Executive of Leicester City Council, but then Chief Executive of the RSNC, The Wildlife Trusts, for example, was a powerful ally and so too was Brendan Joyce in that organisation. A group

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<sup>10</sup> The source of most of the information used in this section was interviews with former officers of LET, the Wildlife Trusts and Leicester City Councillors as well as the Consultation Brief (1990) and correspondence which expressed the formal negotiations and outcomes.

of six interested organisations including FoE (Jonathon Porritt) and the Civic Trust formed an EC Steering Committee. It became something of a farce, however, when some of the organisations were not prepared to work with some of the others. Working to different political ideologies, the Government sponsored Groundwork<sup>11</sup> and the City Council, for instance, would not work with each other. The Civic Trust also had a more business orientated background to that of Friends of the Earth who were seen by the former as too radical. LET was also much closer to the Labour City Council than the Conservative County Council which caused some friction.

The ambitious hope behind the EC idea, then, was that if small specific awards could persuade leaders to do fairly small specific things differently (e.g. in support of conservation) then, perhaps, a very large and comprehensive award could, progressively, persuade them to take a comprehensively different approach to all or most of what they do (in favour of sustainable development green). The founders were thus, in part unconsciously, using the power of '*cognitive dissonance*' to encourage different behaviour (and then, hopefully, also beliefs) among decision-makers, an idea explored in greater depth in Chapter Six. This approach is evidenced by the contents of a letter (22 June 1990) to the Leicester Bidding Group, on behalf of 'The Environment City Campaign', from Tim Cordy. In announcing the designation of Leicester as the first and leading Environment City he not only commented on Leicester's environmental achievements to date but made it clear that substantial prestige was on offer but only *in return for commitment* to meeting a very large and urgent *challenge*.

Over the next four years, we would expect to witness wholesale environmental improvements over the eight areas covered by the Environment City Specialist Working Groups. We anticipate that this work be phased in over the coming months so that in a year's time key areas to be worked upon will have been identified and specific projects be underway. In four years time Leicester should look noticeably different. It should rival the best of European cities, and should be famously celebrated in Britain as an example of what

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<sup>11</sup> As an organisation funded mostly by, and actively supported by a Conservative central government, The Groundwork Foundation (Birmingham) was seen by many local authority chief officers and councillors to be in business to usurp their own role in working with voluntary groups and communities towards job creation and environmental improvement schemes. Whilst the potential benefits were, thus, recognised it was clear from interviews and experience of working with the authorities that their relationship with Groundwork was an uneasy one.

can be achieved when resources and the expertise to implement solutions to environmental problems are combined with civic will to work towards the concept of sustainability within the constraints of a working city.

This challenge is a very large one; and one that has not been addressed in any systematic way to date. Environment City will enable the realisation of the concept to begin to take shape in Leicester in developing this unique initiative. There now lies before us the challenge of making it work well. I am sure that Leicester is a sound test bed for a project of this magnitude and diversity. On behalf of the National Steering Group, it gives me pleasure to accept this bid for Leicester to be designated the first and lead Environment City and to look forward to the national launch of Environment City in November.

Prior to Cordy's letter, the EC Steering Group had progressed the EC idea in a Consultation Brief on an Environment City Campaign (Leicester Ecology Trust, 1990). It made clear this idea that a challenge was envisaged in giving the mission statement of Environment City as:

Environment City is a national campaign. Locally it will work by gaining the support and *commitment* of statutory bodies, businesses, voluntary organisations and individuals towards finding and implementing the best models of sustainable environmental development within the constraints of a working city. The first Environment City will be established in 1990, and will strive to be the best practicable model in order to provide a lead role for other cities. (My *emphasis*.)

The Summary of the 'Campaign', within the Brief, explained the 'Programme', as it has since become known, and an *ideology* which was consistent with Brundtland:

There is now a growing awareness that the way we live is contributing to the destruction of our planet. The products we buy, the way we travel and the energy we use are all having an effect on the environment. Densely populated cities and towns cause most problems for the environment and, ironically, it's in the urban areas where people are furthest removed from the environmental consequences of their lifestyle.

Good environmental practice in our towns and cities is therefore vital if we are to go some way towards reversing the damage already caused. 'Sustainable development' - progressing in a way which reconciles the requirements of the population with the need to conserve resources - is one solution for the planet's problems.

...Up to four cities will earn the status 'Environment City'. Each of these will need to meet the criteria demanded by the designation and will have to demonstrate their *commitment* to the environment by adopting good practice in the eight following themes:- energy; transport; waste and pollution; food and agriculture; economy and work; built environment; natural environment; social environment. They will also need the support and co-operation of the local public, private and voluntary sectors. The first and lead Environment City will be designated in 1990 and will hold the status for four years, providing that it continues to

maintain standards and achieve new targets. Three more awards will be made between 1991-1993. One of these cities will then be selected National Environment City (NEC), representing the best model of sustainable development in the UK, and will help to extend the campaign into Europe and beyond. (My *emphasis*.)

Even before the title had been established, it anticipated that Leicester would be the first EC, thus:

Leicester has been proposed as the first and lead Environment City. The range and quality of environmental activity already established in the city provides a solid base on which to build the concept, and its medium size and central location make Leicester an ideal role model for other cities to follow.

The Brief went on to introduce this major new, early, ambitious and comprehensive initiative by saying:

Despite the excellent environmental work achieved in the UK by a large number of diverse bodies and agencies, the practical implementation of sustainable development has proved difficult. There are few examples of an integrated and co-ordinated approach which simultaneously address a broad range of environmental issues. Most projects and initiatives tackle a single issue such as wildlife conservation or water pollution. Yet the inter-relationship of such issues is fundamental to sustainable development and has been emphasised by The World Conservation Strategy and the Brundtland Report.

The timing was good. Political opinion was becoming *ripe* for such an initiative<sup>12</sup>. FoE's Environmental Charter for Local Government (1989), IBM and BT's burgeoning interest in the commercial benefits of environmentalism, the establishment of Business in the Environment (by DoE/DTI) and Giradet's influential work (e.g. see 1992) characterised the new climate. The eight SWG themes, for instance, were probably derived from FoE's (1990) work<sup>13</sup>.

The Brief (p2) explained the envisaged practical nature of the Environment City Campaign as:-

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<sup>12</sup> See, for instance, McGrew's (1993) account of the development of the 'New Environmentalism'.

<sup>13</sup> FoE's 'Briefing Pack for Local Government' (1989) gives this impression.

The EC campaign is more than just another set of environmental recommendations. It will aim to demonstrate realistic and practical solutions on a local scale to the challenge of sustainable development within the constraints of a working city.

and

The EC campaign takes further the concept of local action to bring about sustainable development, and tackles head on the challenge of practical implementation within existing cities.

These statements, and their amplification in the Consultation Brief, make clear the three main tenets of the Environment City approach which continue to be emphasised by the Programme's national managers, the Wildlife Trusts (Wood, 1994). These are the need for partnership working, an holistic approach and for the production of practical examples of sustainable development 'on the ground'.

'Holism' needs explanation. If we accept that 'holism' is 'a tendency.... to form wholes that are more than a sum of the parts by ordered grouping'. (Oxford English Dictionary, 1987) then, perhaps, this was over ambitious for the EC Programme's model. Wood's later use of the term 'integrated' instead was intended, essentially, to make this aim both more understandable and less (but still very) demanding. The latter is clear from the meaning of 'integrate' i.e. 'combine (parts) into a whole' (Oxford English Dictionary, 1987). Meeting this demand for an integrated approach might, then, reasonably be interpreted as requiring application of Ward's (1996: 849) environmental *broad agenda* to all that the council does. In essence, sustainable development green ideology should be applied corporately.

According to the Brief (p6), it was envisaged that the Campaign would be managed by 'Key national organisations and a small number of individuals with specific expertise, knowledge or status..' who would '..be invited to participate in the EC National Steering Group.' Also that 'Each designated Environment City will ... be invited to elect representatives onto the EC National Steering Group.' This group was to be '...responsible for the co-ordination of the EC campaign' and for the selection of each designated city. It was also to '...oversee the quality and coherence of the individual Environment City *action plans*..' and to '..monitor their implementation. (My *emphasis*.)

This idea of action plans was ahead of the Local Agenda 21 action plan idea.

Unfortunately, after the selection of the last two cities, the Steering Group ceased to meet. No organisation had been established or nominated to own the Campaign and to call meetings of the Steering Group which, therefore, lost its purpose and momentum. The RSNC, The Wildlife Trusts, the managers of the Campaign, (or at least one or two of the officers within that organisation), however, without any real authority to do so, picked up its ownership (and, thus, ownership of the 'franchise') in default. The relationship between Nicholls, Cordy and Joyce was influential in achieving this outcome.

In 1992, sponsorship from British Telecom was secured largely through the efforts of the Leicester based protagonists, especially Ian Roberts (Co-Director of Environ with Nicholls) who had been recruited to Leicester Environment City Trust. This amounted to £50,000 p.a. for the next four years and most of this was used to fund the management of the Programme by The Wildlife Trusts. A further £25,000 p.a. was made available by the Department of the Environment for the same period and was similarly used.

In March 1993, the Executive Committee of RSNC The Wildlife Trusts Partnership (renamed The Wildlife Trusts in 1995) agreed a BT Environment City Strategy which restated the Programme's objectives as (Wood, 1993):

Objective 1 (National)

To shift the focus of sustainable urban development from the academic debate to pioneering projects designed to test the theory.

Objective 2 (Local)

To develop rigorous analysis within the four BT Environment Cities and foster multilateral action.

Significantly, these restatements of the *raison d'etre* of BT Environment City were phrased as if to remind participants who might be 'straying from the path of true virtue' that the emphasis is on pioneering practical projects 'on the ground' and a corporate approach to achieving sustainability in an urban context. This initiative was taken largely on the instigation of the EC Programme officers at the Wildlife Trusts who were concerned to

remind not only the cities but also the Board of the Trusts that the Programme was still very much a going concern. Had they not continued to do this, the Programme could easily have withered through neglect<sup>14</sup>.

It is significant that RSNC The Wildlife Trusts Partnership, in liaison with the managers of the four BT Environment City organisations, felt able to make a decision about the objectives of BT Environment City. This gives weight to the proposition that this organisation not only manages the Programme but came to 'own' it, if only by the absence of its clear ownership by any other 'higher' body e.g. the EC Steering Group which ceased to meet.

### **The 'Environment City' Designation as a Potentially Very Influential Franchise**

For my purpose here a '*franchise*' is regarded as being the public policy equivalent of a commercial franchise i.e. an authorisation to sell a company's goods or services in a particular area *in return for a price and a readiness to do so in the way prescribed by that company*. Franchises such as those offered to people to open outlets for McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken or Rentokil pest and damp control are examples.

Although the Wildlife Trusts had legally protected the EC title, giving the organisation a powerful 'franchise' opportunity to influence the actions of the cities, its potential was considerably under exploited. Had the Steering Committee set up to oversee the Programme not faded away, then it may well have been used much more vigorously. The Board of the Wildlife Trusts, a national association of county and rurally based organisations, did not appreciate the potential power of this city related 'franchise' which fate had delivered into their control. Moreover, as argued above, the organisation as a whole had little interest in Environment City or, for that matter, any urban concerns. Evidence of The Wildlife Trust's

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<sup>14</sup> The clear impression was gained from interviews with the various 'players', from conferences and from the paperwork that it was the officers at the Wildlife Trusts and within the city councils, *usually working together*, who have continued to keep the pot boiling for the EC Programme. Whilst there has often been disagreement between the two sets of officers, they have *shared an interest* in keeping the Programme alive.

reluctance to have anything to do with urban matters was provided by the fact that, as mentioned earlier, it set up an arm's length organisation as the association to represent urban wildlife trusts rather than taking them directly into the fold. It was only the persistence of two or three of the Trust's officers who were committed to the cause of Environment City who kept the national level alive and still in the hands of The Wildlife Trusts. They included the former Chief Executive, Tim Cordy, (now Chief Executive of the Town Planning Association) and Brendan Joyce. On their departure, Chris Wood, the National Environment City Manager, appointed in 1993 picked up the cause and carried it for about three more years. These protagonists saw, not only the potential influence of the designation but also its importance for the standing of The Wildlife Trusts. It was also in their own interests to keep this prestigious programme within their brief. Nevertheless, they could not exercise the same 'clout' as the national EC Steering Committee of the 'great and good' in this field nationally could have done, had it survived.

Some of the power of the franchise was also, however, picked up within each of the cities by supporters of the '*environmental broad agenda*', and especially some city council officers, who have been able to use the *declared ideological environmental commitment* of their council leaderships and the '*politics of embarrassment*' to push them. It is very difficult for city councillors and chief officers, for instance, to turn down pleas for the environmental consequences of policy choices to be given heavy weighting when these leaders have '*voluntarily*' signed up to being an Environment City. It is potentially too politically embarrassing. A good example of how this was used in Peterborough is described later in relation to Star Pit.

Also, as suggested earlier, part of the effect of this 'franchising' arrangement has been the, unconscious, use of the psychological concept of 'cognitive dissonance' to bring about changes in values. Decision-makers in the cities '*chose*' to act in a certain way e.g. by signing a declaration of commitment to the ideals of the EC Programme and by establishing a comprehensive local organisational structure to help meet it. According to dissonance theory, having adjusted their behaviour in this way *voluntarily*, it would then be difficult for them not to *believe* e.g. at Schein's (1987) deeper levels, that, to at least some degree, what

they were doing was right and worthwhile. (See Chapter Six.)

The largely unappreciated potential for the designation, then, gave the Wildlife Trusts a 'David-like' power over the 'Goliath' of four cities. This was somewhat resented by the cities, especially by many key people in Leeds. It was also resented by those leaders in each of the cities who felt that The Wildlife Trusts was taking all of the British Telecom sponsorship money (which began in 1992) and using it to support its general work when at least some part of it should have been directed to the cities in recognition of their success in 'winning' the designation. Some commentators in Leicester were convinced that this represented a renegeing on the agreement which was entered into when, effectively, Leicester Ecology Trust was largely responsible for securing the sponsorship in the first place.

### **The Environment City Programme in Crisis**

More recently, in spite of the need for questioning the future as a result of the expiry of all sponsorship in March 1996 and the departure of Chris Wood, some new officers at the Wildlife Trust have fought hard to keep the 'ownership' of the EC national role with the organisation. The Review of the experience of the EC Programme commissioned by Wood (Pell and Wright, 1994) was built on, after his departure, by a commission from Mary Cornwell, Assistant Chief Executive, for a review of the alternatives for the future of the Programme (Pell and Wright, 1996). The arrival of Peter Shirley, to the new post of Director of Community Affairs in 1996, though, marked a period of serious consideration of ways and means of reviving and developing the Programme and four particular events illustrate this.

First, a 'Think Tank' Day was held in London on 17 July 1996. Key people in the field, nationally as well as from the cities, were invited to consider what role the EC Programme was best fitted to play towards the national effort of bringing about a shift towards sustainable development. This was a good way of getting the 'great and good' involved in the Programme again. It was concluded that the future role should be that of 1) providing a model for integrated strategic city management, 2) a test bed for innovation, 3) a model

for good practice and 4) a focus for equal partnerships.

Second, a National Development Strategy for the EC Programme was published in November, 1996 (Shirley, 1996) updating its purpose, especially by confirming its relevance to Local Agenda 21. This set out a new agreed mission statement (p2):

The Environment City Programme seeks to demonstrate practical ways of implementing local sustainability in towns and cities. Its work will contribute to the development of Local Agenda 21 and be based on the principles of partnership, an integrated approach, and participation by all sectors of society.

The strategy set out the timetable and resources (£300,000 p.a.) needed to achieve the role which was agreed by the 'Think Tank'. It proposed that a new trust be established in early 1997. This is currently progressing. Beginning with the 'think tank' then, the idea was to bring about the survival and regeneration of the Programme by sharing it with other interested groups who, for their own reasons, would be attracted to becoming involved and would invest time and, most importantly, money in it. The Programme is to be expanded by allowing new cities to join in 1998 and onwards through a process of accreditation. Sixteen more Environment Cities are envisaged and will include London Boroughs and, possibly Counties. This would extend the scope of the power of the franchise considerably.

Third, from April 1996, the Wildlife Trusts had funded the Programme mostly from its own resources but, by early 1997, as a result of Shirley's efforts to draw in the great and good, Going for Green<sup>15</sup> had been successfully drawn in. It agreed to fund at least the National Environment City Officer's post to help the transference to the new trust and a joint

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<sup>15</sup> 'Going for Green', initially named the 'Citizen's Environmental Initiative' was established by the Government in February 1995 with the aim of fostering interest in sustainable development and 'in the things people can do in their own lives'. This was originally a DoE arm's length agency developed alongside another of its agencies, Tidy Britain. It was run with the aid of an advisory committee and had a pilot phase during 1995/96. It was then expected to go nationwide (See DoE press notice 268, 20 June 1996, 'Environmental education is the key to our future survival'). From 1 April 1996, Going for Green Ltd was set up and, for 1996/97, it had £0.5m core funding; £300,000 for area projects and £700,000 to match private sector sponsorship income. In 1997/98 and 1998/99 the DoE was expected to give the company up to £1.5m. (DoE press notice 362, 19 July 1995, Next Steps in the Government's 'Going for Green' campaign.)

EC/Going for Green News publication (the quarterly newspaper). The new trust will be seeking major sponsorship and will be at 'arms length' from The Wildlife Trusts, thus helping to remove some of the country life domination referred to above. The cities, and especially the EC Managers in each, have had a major input into the proposals. As environmentalists and officers with a keen interest in the growth of environmentalism in their councils they have, to some extent, been able to use this opportunity to 'pull the strings' of their own city councils. Hopefully, regular meetings of the Chairs of each of the Environment Cities will take place if the revitalised Programme gets off the ground, allowing peer pressure to help push them forwards.

Finally, on 5 March 1997, an Environment City Indicators Workshop took place in Peterborough. Officers from all of the cities made presentations. The end of the day produced a coup for The Wildlife Trusts' management of the Programme. It was agreed by representatives of the cities that sustainability indicators would be set which all of the cities would be required to meet (if they wished to retain EC status). The franchise could, therefore, be used much more vigorously, to push each of the cities (and especially their city councils) towards sustainability, on an ongoing basis rather than being able to bring such pressure to bear only when the designation came up for renewal every four years. Pell and Wright (1996A) recommended that approach, suggested by the managers previously<sup>16</sup>.

The process for doing this was to be carefully designed and, without saying so, it was clear that it would enable the EC managers in each city to use the designation to push their own city council leaderships along. Each city was to be asked to ratify the decision that indicators can be used and each would produce a list of possible indicators which would be circulated between them. Once agreed by all of the cities, their success against each of them would then be monitored annually. At the time of writing, a provisional set of indicators has been agreed by the City EC managers and they are being presented to their responsible

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<sup>16</sup> The EC managers were much more aware than their councillors of the world and national level debates about environmental sustainability indicators. The work of the New Economics Foundation (e.g. 1995) has been influential in the UK. These indicators have come to be seen as a crucial part of the process of environmental management at both the organisational and societal scales, with some support by UK Government. See LGMB (1995).

Council committees and EC committees for agreement.

### A Typology for Examining The Environment City 'Model' Approach

By prescribing a 'model approach' the architects of the Environment City initiative, clearly, intended to ensure that in each city there would be a strong driving force for change in *all* sectors; public, private and voluntary. It would include members from all sectors and (through 'equal partnership') would seek to get sustainable development green progressively accepted by as many policy makers, business decision makers and interest groups as possible. The various organisational arrangements were not, therefore, set up just to influence the decisions of the local authorities. It will be clear from what follows that, in fact, it has been the local authorities which have led the EC initiative in each of the cities and that the focus of much of the activity has been on influencing their decisions. It has also been on attempts by them to be *seen* to be involving local citizens and institutions and to be environmentally caring. Significantly, but largely unwittingly, therefore, the model served to encourage the setting up of a range of *pressure groups* in each city to influence policy outcomes from any of the sectors but especially from the local authorities, and to a more limited extent, those of the private sector. This was so even though many of the fora were proposed as multi-sectoral to encourage partnership working. It is, thus, useful to consider each of these proposed EC groups in terms of a typology based on their envisaged relationship with their local government i.e. their local authority policy / decision makers. That typology proposed by Grant (1990) is the most suitable for this and is used both here in relation to the model structure and in considering the specific organisational structures which have been set up by each of the cities. It was selected as providing the most comprehensive model for this purpose but supplemented with ideas from the standard work by Stewart (1958) who distinguishes between sectional and promotional groups. It has also relied on the contribution by Lowe and Goyder (1983) concerned especially with environmental pressure groups and that made by Solesbury's (1975) formative work on environmental agenda setting.

Stewart's (1958) typology remains a useful beginning to the consideration of the types of pressure group. He saw sectional (or 'interest') groups to represent a section of the community whereas promotional (or 'cause') groups are viewed as representing some belief or principle. In the local context, the local branch of the CBI and resident's groups are examples of the former. The local branch of FoE and local nature conservation groups are examples of the latter. The various fora set up often envisaged the inclusion of group types.

Grant (1975) distinguishes, first, between '*insider*' and '*outsider*' groups. The former are those groups which are consulted by government and that, in exchange for that opportunity, adhere to an '*unwritten code*' of moderate and reasonable behaviour. Other groups are outsiders. Grant divides insider groups into three sub groups. Firstly, '*prisoner groups*' are those which find it particularly difficult to break away because they are dependent on government for assistance of various kinds e.g. office accommodation or staff. Such prisoner groups sometimes attempt a 'break out' but often cannot survive on the 'outside'. Grant then distinguishes between the other two insider groups on the basis of whether they have a low or a high profile. '*Low profile insider groups*' have a tendency to concentrate on working behind the scenes rather than using the media. '*High profile insider groups*' make conscious use of the media to project the group's position, albeit still sticking to the insiders' unwritten code. Outsider groups are not bound by any such 'rules of the game' and Grant, again, identifies three types. '*Potential insider groups*' are a transitional category. They would like to be insiders but have yet to gain government's attention. '*Outsider groups by necessity*' may also wish to become insider groups but they are less well endowed with political skills than are the potential insider groups. Finally, '*ideological outsider groups*' are careful not to become too closely entangled with government because they wish to challenge the system itself, e.g. Greenpeace, which refuses funding other than public.

### **The Environment City 'Model' Approach**

In describing the organisation of the campaign, the Consultation Brief (Wildlife Trusts,

1990) sets out in diagrammatic form the Programme's proposed organisational structure. (See Figure 1.)

It emphasises that 'Where appropriate, existing working groups, which already carry out a similar role to those proposed, will form the template of the local structure.' and envisaged the following principal components:

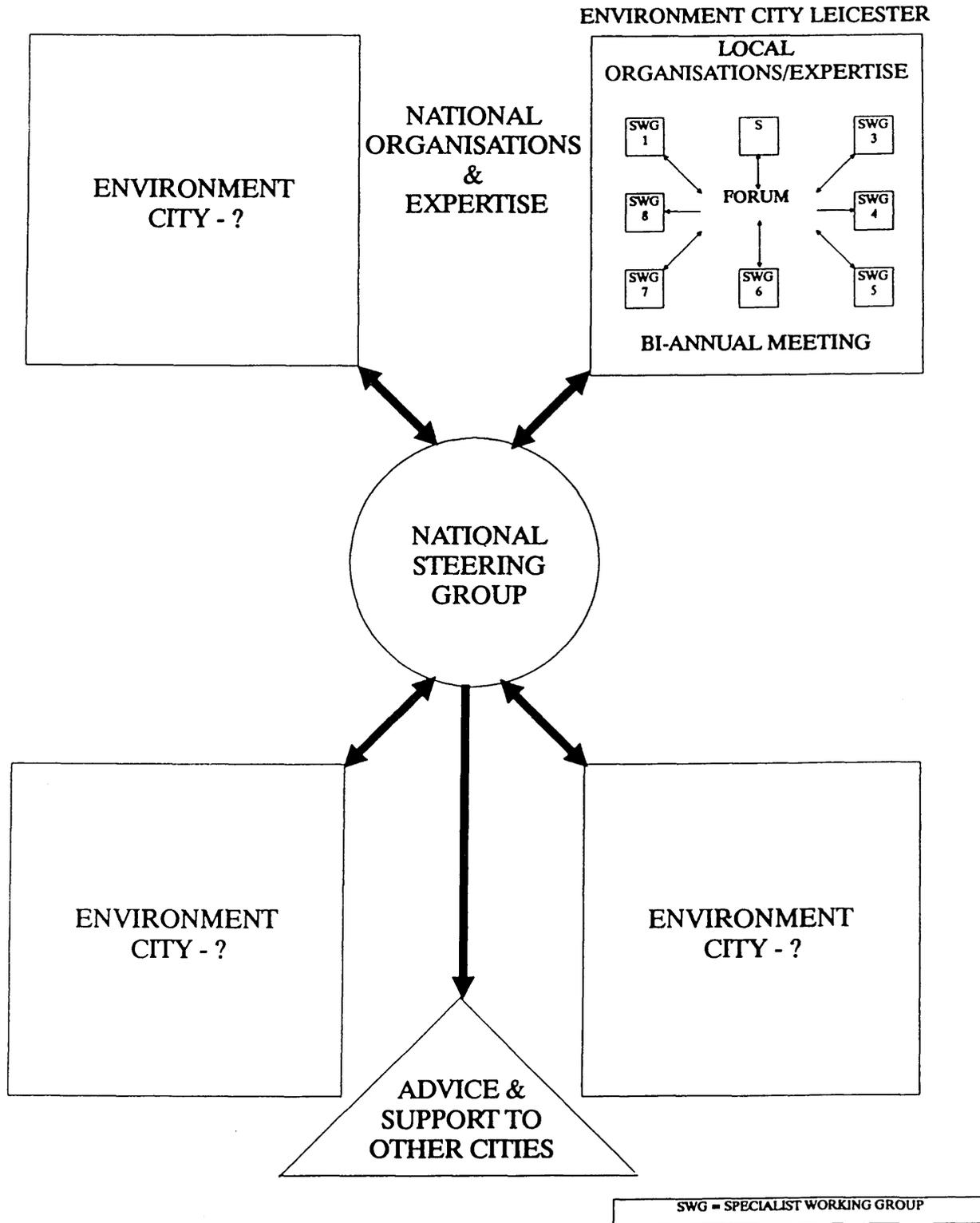
- a) Participating local organisations will contribute to one or more appropriate *Specialist Working Groups (SWG)*. Each SWG will develop a *strategy* for one of eight themes, *monitor their implementation*, assist local organisations and identify good practice. The EC campaign will also be able to call on national experts to contribute to these SWGs, to complement the local expertise involved.
- b) To determine each Environment City's targets, and hence the action needed to reach them, an *audit* of current environmental standards is vital.
- c) An *Environment City Forum (EC Forum)* will be established as the vehicle to *bring together the varied interests within all sections of the city*. This Forum will be the principal body overseeing and co-ordinating the EC campaign locally, and will serve to bring together all eight environmental themes. This will assist the development of a *fully integrated approach to sustainable development*.
- d) A mechanism will be determined locally to ensure that *all local organisations participating in the EC campaign will have the opportunity to have their interests represented on the Forum*. This might, for example, involve a formula to allocate a set number of places per sector. The EC Forum must also include representatives from each of the SWGs.
- e) There may be a need for a smaller *Executive Committee* to meet more regularly than the EC Forum in order to deal with day to day matters. The need for an Executive Committee would be decided, and elected, by the EC Forum, to which it would report.
- f) The EC Forum will only establish a *strategy towards achieving local targets of sustainable development*. The *responsibility for action lies with each participating organisation*. It will therefore be up to each of these to determine their own level of involvement.

(My emphasis)

The eight SWG themes identified were - Energy, Transport, Waste and Pollution, Food and Agriculture, Economy and Work, Built Environment, Natural Environment and Social Environment.

Figure 1.

### STRUCTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENT CITY CAMPAIGN



Source: Leicester Ecology Trust / Royal Society for Nature Conservation (1990) *Consultation Brief on Proposal for a National Environment City Campaign*, (Unpublished).

## Interpretations of the Model by Each of the Four Environment Cities

At the time of designation, each of the four cities already had a track record of achievement in taking initiatives to protect or enhance the local environment. Each also had an organisational structure in place which they claimed was aimed at partnership working, an holistic approach (in Ward's {1996} terms the *environmental broad agenda*) and to producing 'demonstration projects'. Indeed, cities competed for the designation largely on the basis of how far advanced they were considered to be in these respects. It was not, therefore, surprising to find that, as perhaps anticipated by the architects of the campaign, existing structures and methods of working greatly influenced the way in which the model was applied. Nevertheless, as each city became designated the parties to the bid (which in each case included the city council) had to sign a statement<sup>17</sup> *declaring their commitment* to the Programme and its principles and to pursue them.

The structures in place were, generally, established in the first place to implement Green Charters which were based largely on the Friends of the Earth model. They were not developed for the purposes of an Environment City or to develop and implement Local Agenda 21 action plans, both of which came after the FoE Green Charter (1989) idea.

A large part of the learning experience has, thus, derived from the way in which these four very different cities have applied the model. Not only did they each have different starting points in terms of the organisational structures which they already had in place on becoming Environment Cities but their size, cultures and politics vary enormously. The size of their populations, for instance, range from 143,000 in Middlesbrough, 153,000 in Peterborough, 280,000 in Leicester and 710,000 in Leeds. The next four sections describe the principal features of the approach to EC and LA21, including the organisational models used by each of the four cities.

It is especially important to appreciate that this research has taken place at a time when

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<sup>17</sup> The signed statements of commitment are available to be viewed through the EC managers in each city.

three of the councils have been in the process of seeking, gaining and implementing unitary status and that this has been a major preoccupation for each of them as well as for much of UK local government.

## LEICESTER ENVIRONMENT CITY

As an 'environment' city, Leicester still faces the legacy of a 'dirty' industrial past though by no means as dirty as that faced by Middlesbrough. Additionally, it faces the challenges and opportunities of a multicultural society. The civic leadership of Leicester has used its EC status to help encourage its economic development by promoting it as a clean city at the centre of England. This has also been aided by the shrinking of Leicester's traditional industrial base which was built around the hosiery, knitwear, footwear and mechanical engineering industries. Leicester's manufacturing base has shrunk with a shift to service industries. Nevertheless, there are still more than 2,000 manufacturing industries in the Greater Leicester area including many in the hosiery industry which are run by citizens with ethnic origins in the Indian sub continent. 35% of the City's workforce is employed in the manufacturing of goods and Leicester's industries came through the economic recession of the early 1990s in better shape than many in other regions. Leicester's EC challenge has, therefore, benefitted from the City's moderate prosperity.

As argued above, Leicester virtually awarded itself the designation. A strange, but productive, sequence of events in 1989 and 1990 resulted in the Leicester based initiative going national under the 'ownership' of a specially established National EC Steering Committee which then received a well prepared bid from Leicester. No competition was invited and Leicester was designated the first and lead Environment City in July 1990.

As shown below, a major feature of Leicester's experience has been the scepticism with which the claims of environmental achievements by Leicester City Council in particular have been viewed by officers and councillors in other councils. Before I had come to know the Council and Environ, I was aware of this<sup>18</sup> and, thus, ready to be disappointed. In the

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<sup>18</sup> An impression gained from working for and with other local authorities.

event I was not.

The Leicester publicity 'machinery' has, however, undoubtedly helped to ensure that, nationally and internationally, the City's environmental record is known about. The glossy (albeit on recycled paper) literature, the video films, the good practice quoted in many of the local government environment good practice manuals and journals (e.g. Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, 1995) the City's representation at major events such as the Earth Summit, the conference papers, the press reports<sup>19</sup> and the studies have been prolific<sup>20</sup>. The ability of Ian Roberts, one of the Co-Directors of Environ, in particular to 'sell' to prospective funding bodies, the City's achievements and claimed commitment has brought in substantial funds. The focused attention of Leicester Promotions Ltd (an 'arms-length company' set up to promote the City) on promoting environmental concern as Leicester's claim to fame has also been vigorous.

On the other hand, the promotion has sometimes been so 'over the top' and slick that it has, understandably, been viewed as 'hype', throwing doubt on whether there could possibly be anything of real substance behind it. This has been especially so because officers and councillors in other local authorities have not had the benefit of the 'head of steam' which these almost unique circumstances have created in Leicester. Some of the leaderships of the 50 or so other City Councils (including, for instance, Croydon and Swindon) which subsequently aspired to join this elite group of Environment Cities were spurned in spite of the fact that many of them had been able to put forward very good cases<sup>21</sup>. Leicester's advantage as first mover in this field and the EC's limitation to only four cities, thus, also alienated many city local authorities. Many of the cities which failed to achieve designation went on to join the much less exclusive, but nonetheless potentially as valuable, programmes advocated by other organisations, such as the Worldwide Fund for Nature's model (Church, 1995) which allowed 12 local authorities into its fold just as a beginning.

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<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Financial Times, 31 January, 1996.

<sup>20</sup> For a list of some of the most significant of these see 'References' by Environ (1996).

<sup>21</sup> This was evident from an examination of the unsuccessful bids from other cities.

As explained above, the Environment City Programme is now, perhaps too late, seeking to follow a similarly much less exclusive programme.

Evidence of the counterproductive aspects of the exclusivity of the Environment City Programme is provided by some of the comments recorded from the senior officers of some other local authorities such as 'We are hostile to Environment City in general, and to Leicester in particular.' and 'Sick of having Leicester rammed down my throat.'<sup>22</sup>

Another result of this scepticism has been that much of the networking of good practice by Leicester and the Environment City Programme has 'fallen on stony ground'. Moreover, it is doubtful whether even the attempts by Chris Wood, the very committed National EC Manager between 1993 and 1995, to redress some of this were successful. He attempted to do so by publishing guides which presented the learning experience from the Environment City Programme stressing its failures as well as its successes.

This reputation is unfortunate because, behind this apparent 'wall of hype', there has been a great deal of very genuine activity and, as this study shows, a real shifting of attitudes amongst Leicester's leadership in comparison with that found in the other Environment Cities towards the ideology of sustainable development green.

### **Overall Organisational Structure**

A diagram illustrating Leicester's Environment City organisation, in dynamic form, is given at Figure 2.

### **Environ and the 'EC Forum'**

The Leicester Environment City Trust was formed in 1990 as the partnership organisation to manage and co-ordinate LEC. It provided the forum and associated officer support of the 'model'. In Grant's (1975) typology, it was created to be a *prisoner insider group* with no

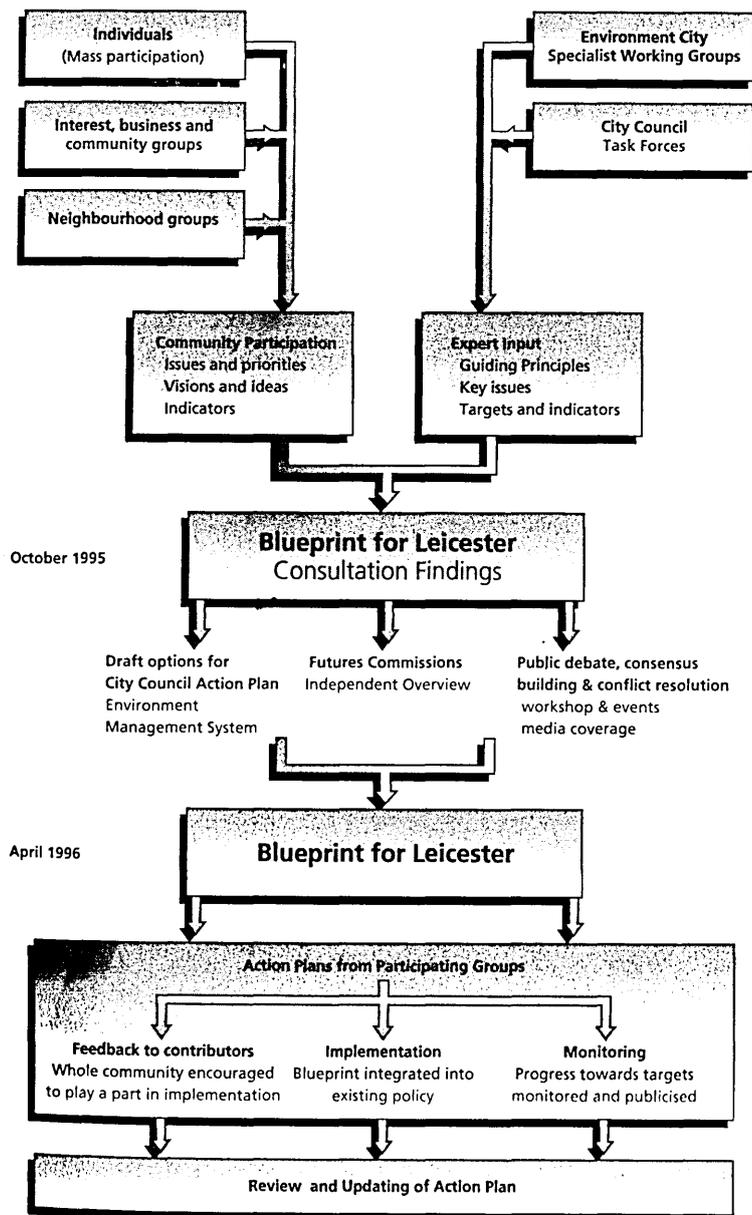
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<sup>22</sup> Obtained during Review of 'Environment City Programme' (Pell and Wright, 1994).

Figure 2. Dynamics of Structure of Leicester Environment City towards Blueprint and Vision 2020.

# blueprint for action

## Summary of Participation in Local Agenda 21



The publication of this Findings Report is the start of the next stage of the Blueprint process. A shorter Summary will be sent to all those that have been contacted through the Blueprint™ process and groups will be asked to look at the key areas of conflict and build consensus on the way forward.

All groups in the city, including businesses, community groups, local authorities, will then have the opportunity to take positive action and produce action plans. These will be published as part of a comprehensive, city-wide programme of action.

A 'Futures Commission' is also set to meet to discuss the Blueprint Findings report. This commission will be made up of leading organisations and individuals in the city. Tackling key issues in partnership will be its priority. The Futures Commission will also assist in the development of partnerships to create action plans for the city.

The final Blueprint Action Plan will emerge from the combination of all the actions plans from across the whole of Leicester, and will form the city's Local Agenda 21 document.

The implementation of those action plans, feedback to the public, and continued debate throughout the city, will ensure that the Blueprint process continues to help Leicester on its path towards sustainability.



Source: Environ (1996) *Blueprint for Leicester: Findings*, (p5) Environ, Leicester.

will to 'break out'. The Leicester Ecology Trust, referred to above, as playing a major part in 'inventing' the Environment City idea still worked with Leicester City Council, the County Council and voluntary organisations on a variety of ecological projects. Having evolved from the Leicester Ecology Centre and continuing to ally itself with the (Labour) City Council e.g. against County and rural (often Conservative) interests, it had all the characteristics of being a *low profile insider group*. Both trusts were registered charities and companies limited by guarantee. As there was much overlapping in activities, however, the two organisations were merged in September 1993 and the individual directors (David Nicholls of LET and Ian Roberts of LECT) became the co-directors of the new organisation, Environ. In the early days, Environ showed itself to be essentially a *prisoner insider group*. It was very dependent on the City Council for funding and had the successes of the LEC behind it, emphasising the benefits of working with the Council. Progressively, however, Environ gained financial independence from the City Council through funding from Europe (DGXI<sup>23</sup>) and consultancy. It also became frustrated with some of the Council's actions and showed the characteristics of a *low profile insider group*<sup>24</sup>. Even from the earliest days of Environ, however, its *declared* mission was consistent with, at least, that level of independence (Environ, 1993):

Environ is an independent charity which seeks to improve the quality of life, while minimising damage to the environment through:

- \* understanding people's needs
- \* creating solutions to meet those needs through environmentally sustainable projects
- \* communicating environmental issues and problems while promoting positive alternatives

No mention of closeness to the City Council was made. Environ's character has, however, tended to be rather schizophrenic. It has, for instance, had a formal relationship with the City Council, working as a contractor for it. This has included carrying out much of the

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<sup>23</sup> The Life programme of DGX1 of the European Commission is a financial instrument to support European Community environmental policy, especially that of the Fifth Action Programme (1993). It seeks to focus its efforts on concrete actions aimed at the integration of environmental issues in different socio-economic fields.

<sup>24</sup> This was clear from interviews with key Environ officers.

consultation for Blueprint, developing many demonstration projects, managing Leicester's recycling schemes and carrying out a great deal of research e.g. into what might motivate people to switch from cars to other forms of transport. On the other hand it has acted independently, for example as an environmental consultancy to business and to other local authorities and in serving the, supposedly multi-agency, Leicester EC Programme. The latter has included a great deal of work in servicing and 'jollyng along' the Specialist Working Groups. To do all this, Environ employs about 35 people, has many more volunteers and student placements and is organised into five divisions. *Environ Local Government Service* supports the work of the Specialist Working Groups, provides consultancy services to the City Council and networks the experience here and abroad. *Environ Attractions* supervises the Eco-house, the Eco Roadshow, the Big Green Bus, the City Centre Ark (Shop and Cyber Café) and the Eco Experience. *Environ Business Services* offers a telephone help line and information service, a good practice award, an environmental business advisor, a business waste recycling service and organises seminars and workshops. *Environ Community Action* organises recycling, education, community conservation, community grants, Grassroots, Faith in Nature and Leicestershare (car sharing scheme). Finally, *Environ Corporate Services* manages finance, administration, marketing, communications, fund raising, research and development.

Environ has done extremely well with funding, winning it not only from the European Commission and the Leicestershire City Council (£50,000 p.a.) but also from Leicestershire County Council and the World Wide Fund for Nature. The EC DG XI LIFE funding of £300,000 p.a. from autumn 1992 for 3 years had a major influence on Environ's development. The Environ office, which is based in old school buildings in one of the City's country parks, is bustling, lively and full of enthusiastic well informed people working hard for 'the environment'. The Trust works nationally and internationally, examples including the ATLAS Project<sup>25</sup>, which has EC funding and aims to bring about attitudinal and behavioural change in the leaderships of six local authorities.

City Council officers have very much appreciated the expertise and support which has been

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<sup>25</sup> See Chapter One and Environ (1996B).

available to them through Environ and the links between the two have been sound and based on mutual respect<sup>26</sup>. Environ's position has also helped it to achieve good relationships with the voluntary sector and concerned members of the business sector. On the other hand, the merger of LET did, to some extent, also *reduce* the opportunity for voluntary sector input because a key part of that sector had become, virtually, a part of the establishment. The danger that it would be seen as simply an arms-length agent of the City Council has been minimised by its independence both legally and, increasingly, also financially. From the point of view of many of the internal environmental protagonists in all of the cities, however, moving outside of the direct control of their local authority has been an appealing option to pursue. It has been seen to offer the possibility of entrepreneurial freedom to work with the other sectors, to free themselves of tedious and frustrating committees and party politics and to develop their own careers<sup>27</sup>. Two of the three Environment Cities have since followed a similar route by establishing independent trusts. Only Leeds has not sought to do so. These moves were also consistent with the idea of the 'enabling council' which developed strongly in the 1980's and 90's quite successfully challenging the idea of the 'providing council' (Stewart and Stoker, 1995).

The position of Environ, however, appears even more schizophrenic as a result of the Board of Environ's role as the Environment City Forum of the model partnership including membership from the City Council (Leader of the Council and the Director of Environment and Development). Other members are the County Council, Leicester Promotions Ltd., Voluntary Action Leicester (Chair), DeMontfort University, Leicester Health Authority, four representatives from private companies and representatives from the staff of Environ. As the EC model expects the Forum to be an independent equal partnership drawn from the

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<sup>26</sup> Whilst, inevitably, some City Council officers with relatively little sympathy for environmental issues were found to be sceptical about the value of the initiative, all respected the sincerity of the beliefs of Environ personnel. The same was true of Environ staff in respect of these City Council officers.

<sup>27</sup> It was evident from the interviews that most of the initiatives for the establishment of 'arms-length' organisations stemmed from the frustrations of officers with high environmental idealism, entrepreneurial aspirations and high sensitivity to the loss of reputation of local authorities under attack from central government. It was also evident that this group of local government officers were, in this respect, different from those in the local government professions who, nevertheless, saw their futures as best served by continuing to work for local authorities.

various sectors, this is another major complicating factor in any attempt to define Environ's position or purpose. It has, thus, become an environmentally concerned organisation with a character which means 'all things to all people'. This has enabled the two co-directors, in particular, to define Environ's role to suit the purpose of the moment in furtherance of their first and second loyalties which are to sustainable development green ideology and Leicester rather than to any of the partners, including the City Council. An important outcome of this is their ability to demonstrate their uniqueness and their detachment from the Council. These have proved to be strengths when bidding for funding from the European Commission and when working for other councils. Also, in spite of this schizophrenia, if ever a city had a powerful resource for truly attempting to meet the expectations of Agenda 21 for a major shift, then Leicester has it. It is a model which every European City has reason to watch and this is one reason why it was funded by DG XI.

Having a much more radical position on green issues than the Council, Environ takes great care not to express them publically to local issues in a way which challenges the City Council. Grant's (1990) '*unwritten code of moderate and responsible behaviour, to informal rules of the game*'.<sup>28</sup> is observed. Much of the time Environ's staff work behind the scenes in an effort to shift the policies of the Council, especially through the various joint working arrangements. Environ is, thus, something of a 'cuckoo' in the Council's 'nest'. This position is, of course, a double edged sword and Environ's officers also come to understand and to become frustrated by some of the practical difficulties which the Council has in adopting green approaches<sup>29</sup>. In efforts to overcome these difficulties, however, they tend to work with the environmental policy entrepreneurs within the Council at both officer and Member levels and on both policy development and *implementation*. As Grant argues, the final impact of a new policy 'depends as much on the way it is *implemented and enforced* as on the content..' Being closely involved in the delivery of many of the City Council's

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<sup>25</sup> Grant (1990) argues that 'Apart from maintaining confidences, and ensuring that claims made by the group are properly backed by evidence, insider groups usually 'screen out' demands from their members which they know government would regard as unreasonable or unacceptable.'

<sup>29</sup> This has resulted in considerable frustration by Environ's officers, especially with the time consuming political hurdles (e.g. Labour Party Group meetings and City Council committees) which have to be negotiated before ideas can be converted to practical action.

environmental initiatives, either by managing them or advising Council officers on them, this insider group is, therefore, as Grant says of such groups, at its most influential.

### **Specialist Working Groups**

8 Specialist Working Groups were developed covering the topics of Built Environment, Landscape and Ecology, Energy, Social Environment, Pollution, Waste, Economy and Work and Transport. The Food and Agriculture SWG of the 'model' was amalgamated with the Natural Environment SWG in September 1993 to form the Landscape and Ecology SWG. The Waste and Pollution Group of the 'model' was divided into two. The Transport SWG has been the most successful. Between them, and with the considerable support of Environ, the SWGs produced well over 100 demonstration projects and some strategies. Nevertheless, as recorded above, the SWG system has, otherwise, had only limited utility. The availability of Environ has meant that Leicester has not needed them as a source of expertise as much as the other cities and they have not been sufficiently high powered to *set strategy* and *monitor its implementation* as required by the EC model. In Grant's typology the SWGs in Leicester are, virtually, *prisoner insider groups*. They have not sought to challenge the City Council in any significant way and, largely because of the driving force provided by Environ have not taken a leading role. They have been used largely as 'sounding boards' by Environ and as a means of giving the appearance of partnership working. Their future has recently been seriously questioned (Environ, 1996D).

### **Leicester City Council**

Within the City Council, there has also been an air of enthusiasm, although it took a serious knock during the reorganisation period. There has, nevertheless, been strong political support and senior officers have felt that 'the environment' has a high priority within the Council. The analysis in the next chapter explores this in greater depth. The former Leicester City Council established a much more comprehensive structure of groupings to respond to its Environment City and Agenda 21 roles than have any of the other cities. It had a core group of senior officers and the Directors of Environ which co-ordinated the

Council's environmental programmes and considered task force initiatives. Also an Environmental Strategy Implementation Team (ESIT) comprised of senior officers from across the Council to provide strategic and corporate direction on environmental issues e.g. environmental grants, management systems, progress monitoring and Task Force findings. The Task Forces mirrored the SWG subject areas and were responsible for the integrity of the Council's contribution to them. They comprised officers from the relevant departments and Environ representatives. They prepared assessments of existing policy and practices, the aim being to ensure that the Council 'puts its own house in order'. One product of this was action plans to integrate the principles of sustainable development into all areas of the Council's services and policies. It was a real attempt to achieve 'holism'. Another aim of this was to lead towards the preparation of a Local Agenda 21. The Members Environment Policy group was set up to consider Task Force findings and papers from ESIT with the aim of providing strategic direction for the Council. The Chief Officers Management Board also considered ESIT papers. Several departments had environmental groups to oversee their contribution to the Action Plans and to develop environmental projects related to the department. Many of these groups were disrupted as a result of local government reorganisation and the establishment of the new unitary authority of Leicester City Council on 1 April 1996. It is expected that a new and equally comprehensive structure will emerge.

The County Council was also involved but this cooled off in 1993/94 when the local debate about reorganisation began and the relationship between that council and the City Council deteriorated. The City had ambitions to see the County Council abolished or at least to lose its jurisdiction in respect of the City, with the major services of education, social services and transport moving to the City Council. A similar situation existed throughout the UK including the relationship between Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council and, much more intensely, between Middlesbrough Borough Council and Cleveland County Council.

The following paragraphs describe, in relation to each of the three tenets which underpin the EC (and to a large extent also the LA21) philosophy, the most significant aspects of Leicester City Council's approach and experience to date.

## An Emphasis on (Equal?) Partnership

Environ's (in effect, the Co-Directors') own review (1996D: 8) of lessons from LEC points out that the Board of Environ (effectively, the EC Forum) has brought together 'key players' and has been '*... theoretically* well placed to make strategic decisions affecting the future of the City and to *commit* the resources necessary to implement *major change*' (my *emphasis*). It adds that this has provided '*... visible*, senior support for the Environment City campaign, and helped to ensure the campaign has not been divorced from the driving-forces of decision-making in the City.' (My *emphasis*) On the other hand, Environ clearly expresses frustration that the Board has had some serious shortcomings. It says, for instance that '*... the Board has not always proved as effective as might have been hoped. The realities of organisational politics mean that many key decisions are made outside the Board structure. Individuals and organisations retain their own agendas...*' (My *emphasis*.)

Environ itself, however, was viewed more positively by the Co-Directors who see it as having '*.. aided the development of the LEC campaign through research, in the development of projects, in fund raising and in awareness raising.*' They add the view that 'Though it may have been easier to base the EC co-ordination function within an existing organisation such as a local authority, the independent organisation offers some clear advantages.' Partnership, fund raising and independent vision are given. They also, however, describe (p9) a number of potential drawbacks of such independent co-ordination:

It opens up potential for conflict between the co-ordinator and its should-be partners, and it can be difficult to attract sufficient and secure resources. Also, *too much time can be spent looking for funding* and trying to placate all sides of the partnership. (My *emphasis*.)

It is difficult for Environ, in a public report, to be too critical of the degree to which partnership has failed to enjoy the commitment of the partners, but the interviews confirmed what can be read between the lines of Environ's review. Most of the partners are not really very committed. Most of the time they are 'going through the motions' and see the EC initiative as a good cause which produces some nice projects. They do not support it as a radical cause which is, justifiably, pressing for a *major shift* of values and behaviour away from the dominant paradigm into which they are firmly locked.

Environ makes the point that, whilst Specialist Working Groups were designed to apply the concept of partnership at a working level and that at least 150 people (from a wide range of organisations) have attended them (p11), 'In Leicester, it is probably fair to say that the extent to which the SWGs have been able to lead the process of change has not been as great as was originally anticipated.' It adds, however, that there is much of value in the principles of partnership embodied by the SWGs and it sets out some lessons which have been learnt from LEC's attempts at partnership working. These include recognition of the unique role of local government, thus (p15):

Given the unique role of local government as a service provider and regulator and as a democratically accountable voice of the people; it should have a strong role in partnerships. It should, however, not exert too much dominance or the participation of and action by other sectors will be reduced.

It is significant that Environ, as an NGO, recognises that local government *should* be 'dominant' at all. Although this view might be expected from an organisation which has developed with the support of the City Council (from the Ecology Trust and the Environment City Trust), this *low profile insider group's* directors and most of its staff have never worked for a public authority. They might, thus, be expected to be strong defenders of the voluntary sector role. This is especially so because, as argued above, many of the staff at Environ express their extreme frustration with, and distrust of, local 'politicking'. This theme of partnership with a degree of 'dominance' by the local authority is picked up again in Chapter Six.

Environ had a key role in a proposal to the European Commission by the City Council for an urban pilot project under Article 10 of the ERDF DG XVI (1996C) for over 2m ECU. Whilst the outcome is unknown, the way in which the EC status of Leicester was drawn into the bid illustrates how this standing has been used to give weight to bids for funding for public expenditure. Even more significantly, the bid which envisaged economic and social as much as environmental progress for poor areas in the City, serves the EC aim of an

holistic approach (in this case to urban renewal).<sup>30</sup>

This initiative showed a willingness by the City Council and Environ to work with the local business community. Like the other cities, however, Leicester has experienced great difficulty getting the business sector involved beyond a measure of 'do-gooding'. Whilst some keen individuals from business have served on the Board of Environ and the TEC is clearly very keen on developing its environmental credentials<sup>31</sup>, it cannot be claimed that businesses in general, or even the businesses from which these individuals have come, have bought into the idea.

### **Demonstration Projects**

The SWG's and the organisations involved in them, Environ and the City Council have produced far more environmental projects than any of the other Environment Cities can boast. Of course, with a well resourced NGO like Environ, this might have been expected. Whilst few, if any, of those involved with these projects would claim that this is the prime goal of being an EC, they have undoubtedly lifted the profile of environmental issues in the City. Some are also led by the City Council and some by the County. A smaller number have been led by the voluntary sector and one by the business sector.

There is a fundamental difficulty in deciding which projects in an EC are the direct result of its status and aims, which would have happened anyway and which of these have happened sooner as a result of the status. This is a very subjective matter. There has, for instance, been a strong tendency in all of the cities for those concerned to promote a success story by 'rebadging' every possible environmentally related scheme as an EC scheme. The

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<sup>30</sup> The partners in the bid were Leicester City Council, Business Link Leicester, Environ, Leicester City Challenge Ltd. and Leicester Training and Enterprise Council. The aim of the bid was given as '..to address the economic and social issues' in 14 inner city wards by 'building on Leicester's successful role as Britain's first EC' as a 'demonstration to other Member States'. This was to 'achieve environmental and economic sustainability'.

<sup>31</sup> This was very apparent from the interviews as was Leicester TEC's claim to be the UK's frontrunner in this field.

degree to which being an EC has produced more 'projects' was tested through the decision-maker attitudinal survey and the findings are examined in the next chapter. To give a picture of the nature and scale of the overall activity (no matter what or who motivated it) in each city 'on the ground', however, examples are given in this chapter. Examples of the hundreds of Leicester projects include:

Greendrive campaign to reduce the impact of drivers; 11km of Green Ringway orbital pedestrian and cycle route; bus/rail interchange improvements; vehicle emissions surveys and testing centre; audit of transport; Leicestershare car sharing scheme; attitudinal research into cycling; traffic calming; research into road pricing, light rail, pedestrianisation and trade; Transport Choice policy; 10 year Cycling Strategy; major recycling network - 60 sites; Recycling Plan with ambitious 35% of waste by 2000 target; materials reclamation facility; research into waste minimisation best practice, composting toilets, attitudes to recycling, domestic water conservation options; kerbside recycling trials; 'green accounts' for schools; private nappy collection, cleaning and reuse service; CFC extraction from white goods by County Council; £37m City Challenge funding for urban regeneration - much of it environmental; Green Development Guide; Affordable Options for Green Housing guide; model play streets; green housing layout feasibility study; linear park development; code of practice for verge management; research into conservation value of local gardens, peat free potted plants; green space audit; studies of railway corridors; Community Woodland Programme to double woodland in Leicester over 10 years; 56,000 trees p.a. planted; English Nature habitat survey and help to 14 community groups, checking planning applications for affect on habitats, surveying 200 sites; joint project with Barcelona on city energy flows; energy consumption audit of the City; eco-feedback project in 7,000 homes; feasibility study on renewable energy for the City; low energy light bulbs sold at low cost; combined heat and power to two leisure centres; low energy street lanterns; thermographic survey of City Challenge area; agricultural assessment of 'green wedges'; peat free policies by City and County councils; grazing regimes on City land to benefit wildflower conservation; trials of peat alternatives; 'Faith in Nature' projects involving religious buildings, conferences, declarations, 'Friends of Vrindavan' - a local north-south project, practical conservation projects; 100 nature areas; Natural Curriculum Guide for schools, Environmental Education Officer appointed by County Council; Women's Environment Network founded; Community Grant Scheme launched and managed by Environ leading to pond renovation, planting schemes, events, can recycling, permaculture day at Leicester City Farm, cycle parks; Cycle storage and showering facilities in city centre; Local Economic Trading Scheme (LETS) set up; survey of environmental awareness of small business; Environ Business Advisory Service pioneering of method for low cost environmental reviews, 50% grants for businesses conducting reviews; environmental reviews for 30 businesses including Leicester City Football Club; national conferences e.g. on green housing; Business Centre Network with seminars e.g. on environmental auditing; awards e.g. for business environmental performance; recycling directory, advisory leaflet on pesticides, Eco-House to raise awareness of environmental good practice in the home, tree leaflets; guided walks in natural areas and open spaces; wildlife surveys; eco-roadshow display; Energy Advice Centre with Energy Savings Trust funding; Energy Week; green consumer guide for Leicester; good practice guide for voluntary groups; schools' environment forum and schools' Earth Summit; Environment 'Citizens' Guide; schools renewable energy competition; Environment for All programme of events.

## Holism (or Integration) and a Local Agenda 21

Local Agenda 21, is a challenge which, like EC, demands an integrated approach to environmental concern and much can be learned about a local authority's acceptance of sustainable development ideology by the way it leads LA21 activity. Leicester, for instance, has responded to the challenge to secure the production of a Local Agenda 21 quite differently from the other three ECs.

In early 1994, a small working group led by Environ and Leicester City Council started to develop ideas for a possible Local Agenda 21 process and, by October 1994, proposals had been agreed by the City Council and the process was launched under the banner of 'Blueprint for Leicester'. This title was used to get away from the relatively meaningless (to most people) title of Local Agenda 21 and, very significantly, to allow a focus on overall 'quality of life' rather than just on environmental matters. Most local authorities have come up with different names for their LA21 'campaigns' (See Morris, 1997, for a long list of these) but, as Environ (1996D: 67) explains, in this case it describes an approach which is very uncommon if not unique amongst approaches in terms of an integrated approach or 'holism':

The overriding theme of the Blueprint is 'quality of life' rather than 'green issues'. It was felt to be vital that participants were given a blank canvas on which to paint their own picture of Leicester as they would like it to be. By focusing on quality of life, the Blueprint could avoid being pigeon-holed as an environmental project, which could have limited the scope of people's input. *'Quality of life' suggests no distinction between environmental issues, social issues or economic ones.* Coupled with this the theme of 'sustainability' was introduced in a jargon free way by highlighting the need for participants to 'think about future generations, as well as today's citizens'. In essence then, the process is about identifying local needs and aspirations and implementing sustainable solutions to meet them. (My *emphasis.*)

The idea for this approach came largely from Environ with the support of the Environment Policy Officers in the Environment and Development Directorate. Importantly, it quickly gained the support of the leader and the Chief Executive. From the point of view of the principal insider group and the organisationally quite junior, environment policy entrepreneurs in the City Council, the idea provided an excellent opportunity to aim for the

integration of the *broad environmental agenda* with the broadest possible agenda of concern for local politicians, that of the future overall wellbeing of the City as determined by its citizens. The Environment City designation provided strong legitimacy for this aim.

Blueprint for Leicester's two main strands were described (Chartered Institute of Environmental Health, 1995) as a public participation approach and specialist input (especially through the SWGs, Environ and the City Council 'Task Forces'). These are seen as the key to real progress. It has included a programme of awareness raising and participation. Everyone in the City was given the opportunity to contribute to arriving at a consensus for its future. Campaign literature was sent out in October 1994 in the Council's magazine 'Link' which goes to every home with the local free newspaper. A questionnaire was included together with an invitation to people to write to the Council with their vision. 1,800 individuals and households expressed their views. A media pack was produced. Also a vision pack guiding groups on how to formulate their vision for passage to the Council was produced and circulated widely. 88 local groups and organisations made comments. The eight SWGs, together representing 29 organisations, also contributed. 'Neighbourhood appraisals' were carried out in 8 sample wards, the aim being to provide a bench mark measure of citizens' visions for the future of the city. 100 households were selected in each case for interview. There was no attempt to involve everyone in the City through community initiatives. This was recognised as being impracticable and, in any case, it was recognised that geographically defined communities are only one of a multitude of types of community in the City, many of which are often stronger than these e.g. religious and ethnic communities. Because of this, selected 'communities of interest' were approached. These might be regarded as '*associations*' (See Littlewood, 1996). They represented communities of some of the city's women, youth, senior citizens, businesses, cultural / ethnic groups, disabled, unemployed and economically disadvantaged and unions. Presentations were made to them about what they were being asked to do. They were given consultation packs and asked about their likes and dislikes about the City.

In 1996, two 'Shared Vision Workshop' days were held. They invited 13 specially created 'Topic Groups', made up of practitioners from key local organisations, to draft 'Vision'

statements and 'Guiding Principles' for the future. The wide range of organisations involved helps to show the broad environmental agenda which was envisaged. They included:

Environ; Business Link Leicestershire; Everards Brewery; Fosse NHS Health Trust; Leicester City Challenge Ltd.; Leicester Constabulary; Leicester Community Project Trust; Leicestershire County Council; Leicestershire Health Authority; Leicestershire Probation Service; Sava-can Recycling Ltd.; Small Business Crime Initiative; De Montfort University; The Haymarket Theatre; Leicester City Bus; Leicester City Council; Leicester Energy Advice Centre; Leicester Housing Associations Liaison Group; Leicester Victims of Crime Support; Leicestershire Economic Development Partnership; Leicestershire Training and Enterprise Council; Shelter, Youth Clubs of Leicestershire; The Environment Agency; European Energy Agency.

This quite comprehensive grouping might be seen as associations working together as a collective 'local governance' (See, for instance, Littlewood, 1996). Whilst the City Council was, especially through its close relationship with Environ, leading this initiative it was also giving a strong signal that it wanted to move towards a consensus, enlightened through public consultation, with the City's other 'movers and shakers'. This was entirely consistent with the Agenda 21 expectations for LA21's.

The aim of the Topic Groups was to translate the consultation results into a broad strategic direction for specific topics and to provide a foundation on which detailed LA21 action plans could be based. The topics selected were those which emerged from the consultation but, in time, more were to be added. They included economic development; crime and community safety; housing; health; arts, culture and leisure; opportunities; transport; land use, planning and buildings; the quality of the city centre, energy; waste and resources; pollution control; wildlife, parks and open spaces. From the assembled information, Leicester 2020 was then developed to set the vision arrived at in competition with a 'business as usual' vision. This was, in effect, an attempt to produce a city-wide 'community plan' (See Pell, 1990) in the 1980s jargon for much smaller community planning initiatives.

In late 1995, a multi-sectoral 'Futures Commission' was set up by the City Council with the aim of bringing the product of the consultation together. Environ was excluded from this, being seen as a consultant / contractor to the City Council rather than as a 'partner'. This provides strong evidence of Environ's position as a *low profile insider group* and it was paying the price for its schizophrenia. Without the driving force of Environ, however, The

Commission made little progress. Meetings were cancelled and considerable frustration accumulated, especially among those who had put a great deal of work into Blueprint. When the former Leader regained the leadership of the City Council, in 1996, however, Environ was returned to the fold and things began to move again. The shift back to a more moderate Labour control on reorganisation, however, was not sufficient to secure the appointment of the City Council's Chief Executive to the post of Chief Executive for the newly constituted City Council. The indications were that, being seen as the 'City Council's man', made it difficult for him to be accepted by the incoming ex County Councillors and officers. As a result, he left without giving notice several months prior to the establishment of the new authority. An officer from another authority was appointed to the post.

On 28 April 1997, a Leicester Millennium Partnership met for the first time. 13 key people attended including Peter Soulsby, the City Council's Leader, Rodney Green, its new Chief Executive, Ian Roberts, Co-Director of Environ, David Nelson, Chief Executive of Leicester TEC, Dr Kenneth Edwards, Vice-Chancellor of Leicester University, Mike Froggart, Chief Executive of Leicester Health Authority and Nick Carter, Editor of Leicester Mercury. The aim was agreed to be '...to both set a long term vision and direction for Leicester that builds on strengths and achievements, and also seizes new opportunities and achieve shorter term gains'<sup>32</sup>. The second meeting was held on 18 June 1997 and was assisted by a facilitator from Environ whose task was to appraise the LMP of '...the current issues in the three related areas of economic, social and environmental interest and through active participation by the Group, seek to develop an agreed vision for Leicester'. It was agreed at the first meeting that, in the interests of continuity and workability, only those people who attended the first meeting would be invited to attend the second but other partners, with an ability to shape the future of Leicester, would be brought in after the draft vision had been prepared. This approach to consensus building follows quite closely that used successfully at national level by Robert (1993) and advocated by the Natural Step<sup>33</sup>. This suggests that

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<sup>32</sup> This quotation and the next taken from the Summary of Meeting (of 18 June 1997)document.

<sup>33</sup> The Natural Step is an affiliate of the Swedish organisation founded by research oncologist Dr. Karl-Henrik Robert in 1989. Its purpose is to teach and support environmental systems thinking in corporations, cities, government, unions and academic institutions through an easily understood dialogue process. A cyclical society through consensus building is the aim.

by getting the 'movers and shakers' to agree on what should be done, and expecting them to take many of the local opinion formers with them, it should then be possible to persuade the key 15%, or so, of the local people to accept it. Whilst it remains to be seen whether this will work in Leicester, it represents a very serious effort to ensure that the Local Agenda 21 action plan is truly supported as an agenda for a real shift of attitudes and behaviour by the population of the City. The broadness of the approach and proposed 'ownership' of it also makes it quite clear that it is intended to be an holistic or integrated agenda. It will include 'A statement of intent demonstrating the city's *commitment* to secure a prosperous, just and sustainable future.' (Leicester City Council, 1997) (My *emphasis*.) This has been driven forward especially as a result of a clear determination by the key players in LEC to ensure that an holistic vision for the future of the City and the development of a LA21 action plan to meet it, does not get lost in the details of day to day concerns. Such concerns were likely to include local government reorganisation, a lack of sufficient resources and a lack of commitment by many elected members and officers. The influence of Environ on all this was very evidently considerable. Having the substantial and reasonably well funded low profile insider group of Environ, sitting very close to the City Council and, currently, the sympathy of some key elected members including the Leader, as insider policy entrepreneurs undoubtedly made an enormous difference to progress. Middlesbrough's experience provides a good example of how difficult it is to make progress with a shift of behaviour, let alone ideology, without these driving forces.

## **MIDDLESBROUGH ENVIRONMENT CITY**

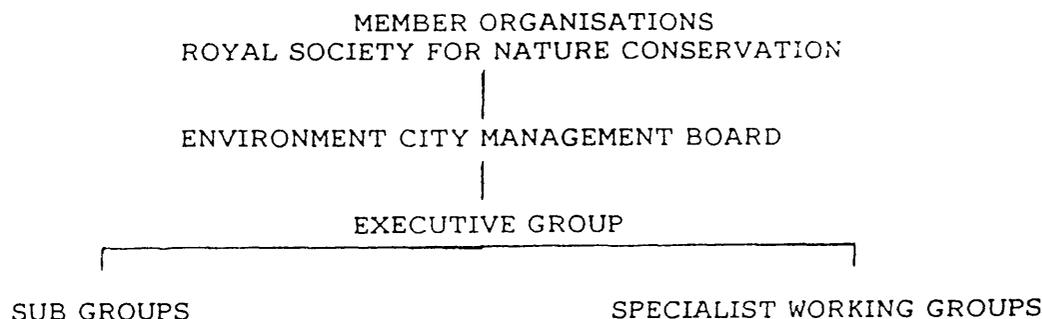
Like most major settlements in the North East, Middlesbrough is still, having to cope with the handicaps of a massive heavy and 'dirty' industrial legacy including the stigma which this 'image' presents, hindering its development as an attractive place to live and work. Evidence of this stigma was provided by the interviews and the DM Survey which revealed that leaders of the City Council were very concerned to persuade citizens that air pollution standards are very good. As good, in fact, as Eastbourne which they believe to be socially and environmentally well up market of Middlesbrough. Leaders believe that citizens have got stuck with the idea that atmospheric pollution is bad in Middlesbrough even though the

problem is now much improved. (See Chapter Five for the results of a questionnaire survey by MEC which revealed this.) The EC designation was seen, especially by local politicians, as having potential to counter Middlesbrough's reputation as a dirty place. In 1801, the town (it is not, in fact, a city) was an agricultural community of 25 people, yet by the end of the 19th Century it was a booming iron and steel town with a population of 90,000. People came from Wales, the Midlands and Yorkshire to work in this new and vibrant industry, made possible by the advent of the railway and the proximity of raw materials. Whilst most of the industry has since moved out of town to the deep water berths at the mouth of the river the town has continued to grow and prosper and has developed as Cleveland's 'capital'. Much of Middlesbrough's industrial development aims at the diversification of job opportunities e.g. away from reliance on the chemical industry and ICI's massive plants. The Teesside Development Corporation set out to spend upwards of £150 million over seven years to help to regenerate the area's economy by attracting major new investment. As a result of its history, the town has a high proportion of 'blue collar' workers and a relatively small middle class. Surprisingly, however, a survey by Glasgow University (Morris, 1990) commented that the town appears to have 'overcome the handicaps associated with its industrial heritage and to have many attractions for those seeking a higher quality of life'.

Middlesbrough beat 40 other applicant cities in May 1992 (including Leeds and Peterborough) to win designation. Middlesbrough was not a unanimous choice by the EC Steering Committee, however, and some members were very unhappy with it. In comparison with some of the other applicants, Middlesbrough had done little in the field to give confidence that it was ready to meet the substantial challenge. On the positive side, however, it was seen as facing a serious economic, social and environmental challenge and so just the sort of place which ought to be given the chance of benefitting from becoming an EC. Much was also made of the Borough's history of working with local people through community councils. Support was given also because, including a deprived Borough in the EC portfolio, would help to give the Programme credibility and, therefore, (especially DoE 'regeneration' sympathetic) funding. Overall, it was seen as a far more interesting and challenging choice than, say, Swindon. This provides evidence for the belief that, at this time, fairly strong ownership of the Programme was being used to develop the strength of the 'franchise'. A diagram illustrating Middlesbrough's Environment City organisation is given at Figure 3A. This is currently being amended to the structure illustrated in Figure 3B.

The MEC initiative, and especially its very small management unit has been very dependent on the Borough Council. The Council paid for this largely through four years Urban Programme funding of £50,000 p.a. which ran until 31 March 1996. The promise of becoming an Environment City had secured this funding from the DoE. With one exception,

Figure 3A. Middlesbrough EC Structure prior to mid 1996.



Notes provided to help explain the diagram at the time it was prepared.

The groups are intended to link with the needs and structure of individual organisations and interest groups. Whilst there will undoubtedly be overlap and cross-referencing we consider that this framework reflects an effective and practical breakdown of functions. Each group will consist of representatives from each sector with additional specialist advisors where this is thought necessary.

We anticipate that the Executive Board will charge them with the following tasks:-

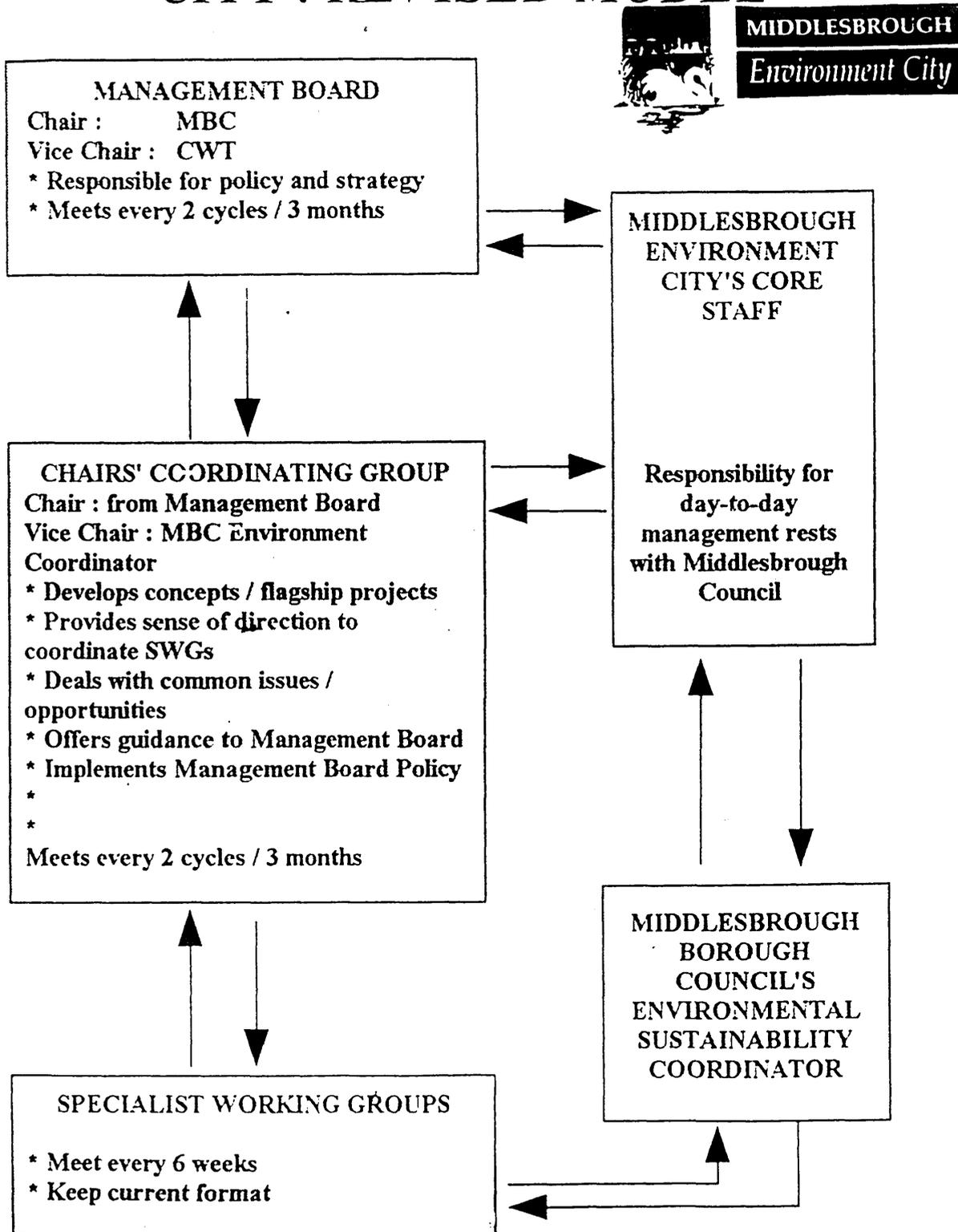
- 1 outline a vision for the future;
- 2 establish and formalise links with appropriate public and private sector organisations;
- 3 prepare plans for relevant environmental audits and have these agreed in principle;
- 4 facilitate and monitor the carrying out of environmental audits;
- 5 evaluate the results of audits and prioritise needs to meet the objective;
- 6 translate priorities into a series of 2 year (rolling) plans;
- 7 evaluate and comment on ad-hoc proposals and issues relative to their remit;
- 8 monitor UK and EEC legislation and regulations;
- 9 keep abreast of developments relative to their objective;
- 10 come forward with specific initiatives which contribute to meeting their objective.

This diagram was prepared in March 1992.

Source: Middlesbrough Borough Council (1992) *Middlesbrough's EC Bid Document*, Wildlife Trusts, Lincoln.

Figure 3B. Middlesbrough EC Structure (Amended Structure, (post mid 1996))

# MIDDLESBROUGH ENVIRONMENT CITY : REVISED MODEL



Source: Middlesbrough Borough Council (1997) *Visions of Middlesbrough*.

the Middlesbrough Environment City (MEC) Manager and a clerical officer have always been employed by the Council (in the Director of Public Protection's Department). They have been assisted by seconded staff from ICI, in particular, but also from NE Electricity and National Westminster Bank. At a time when the end of the Urban Funding was approaching, a Manager left, however, and the Council was not prepared to appoint a new Manager. An early retiring ICI secondee was, therefore, given the responsibility for about a year.

Being so dependent on the Council for accommodation and core staffing there was, thus, no real sense in which successive Managers of the MEC office were independent of the Council. This is in spite of the fact that, from the outset, some attempt to provide a feeling of independence from the Borough Council was made by securing an office base in an MBC park depot remote from the Town Hall. At the same time as feeling constrained by their dependence on the Council, however, the unit has been very ill equipped to tackle such a major initiative. It has had very few staff and little commitment from many other MBC officers and councillors. There was, thus, a feeling of having been marginalised, even abandoned rather than having been given independence. The fact that none of the Managers had the ability / will to win greater financial and decision-making independence from the Council helped to prevent MEC from 'breaking out' of its *insider prisoner group* position. MEC got off to a bad start, partially because the first Manager was not well thought of and had long periods of sick leave. Similarly, the second did not enjoy wide support. Staffing continued to be very tight and had a temporary feel, especially because secondments were so heavily relied on. Even now, at officer level, MEC is led on a temporary basis by MBC's Environmental Sustainability Officer. Rather than a unit designed to drive such a major shift of behaviour and attitude in all that the Council and its partners do, the office has been more on the scale of those used to run anti-litter or anti-dog fouling campaigns.

The aim of MEC was given as '...to enhance the social and economic well-being of Middlesbrough through ensuring sustainable actions which stimulate local innovation and awareness, promote effective sustainable development and achieve national and

international recognition.<sup>34</sup> To lead the achievement of this, the Environment City Board was, on the face of it, set up very much along the lines of the 'model'. It had 13 members chaired by a councillor who was also a local 'environmental champion'. Other members included representatives of Teesside Tomorrow, Cleveland County Council and the Chamber of Commerce. A smaller Executive Group, to deal with the more routine business of MEC, was chaired by the Chief Public Protection Officer. In the early days, the distinction between the Board and the Executive, however, was blurred with overlapping functions. In 1995, it was, therefore, agreed that the former should concentrate on policy issues and meet every 4 months and the that the latter would meet every 2 months to deal with the day to day operations and support the SWGs. Unfortunately, by 1995, both had failed to meet with any regularity. Enthusiasm had fallen off and the management of MEC was, in effect, being run by the small MEC office with some support from a few committed officers in the Public Protection Department including the Director. There was no firmly established organisation such as Leicester's Environ and few champions in any position to influence decision-making in favour of MEC and its aims.

The brief of the Board (the 'EC Forum') demonstrated the narrow view which was taken of MEC from the beginning. It was barely consistent with Ward's environmental *broad agenda*. It was essentially inward looking and concerned more with the environmental *amenity* of the Borough rather than with 'saving the Earth'. Only some *promotional* aims extended beyond the Borough. The Board's mission was given as (Middlesbrough's EC Bid Document, 1992: 5):

Generally, to work in partnership to improve the environment of the Borough of Middlesbrough and, in particular, aims:

- a) To seek to promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and to minimise environmental pollution within or emanating from the Borough.
- b) To support the National Environment City initiative and such networks as may be established.
- c) To promote Environment City locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

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<sup>34</sup> Middlesbrough's Environment City Bid Document (MEC, 1992: 3).

- d) To procure changes in practice in all organisations whose operations affect the Borough of Middlesbrough.

On designation, MEC established 7 SWGs, covering Energy, Education, Environmental Quality, Transport, Natural Environment, Built Environment and Waste Management and Recycling. The Education SWG was derived from the idea of a Social Environment SWG in the 'model'. By the summer of 1994, however, only the Energy, the Natural Environment, the Waste and Recycling and the Environmental Quality SWGs remained. Again, the lack of any driving force from a committed, knowledgeable, full time, and well resourced group such as Leicester's Environ allowed the SWGs to lose their direction and active membership.

On 1 April 1996, Cleveland County Council was abolished and Hartlepool, Stockton, Langbaugh (new name Redcar and Cleveland) and Middlesbrough became unitary authorities. This followed a titanic struggle including legal actions. Reflecting the national situation, the leadership of the Borough Council was determined to take on the County Council's responsibilities and the County Council's leadership was determined to prevent this. The feeling was prevalent throughout both organisations with officers having a great deal to gain or lose from the 'battle'. So ferocious was the conflict that, for over a year, all officers of Middlesbrough BC were under strict instructions not to speak to officers at Cleveland County Council. The scene was set for 'scores to be settled' in the future. For instance, although, the County Council was abolished and the Borough survived, the incoming Labour faction which had held power at County Hall ousted that faction which had controlled the Borough Council. The former were described by senior commentators as traditional moderate Labour and as 'taxi drivers and blue collar workers with no understanding of environmentalism'. The latter were described as intellectual radical Labour and as 'academics and personnel officers' who were much more aware of sustainable green ideology. The former, previous County Council group, took almost all of the committee chairs although one previous MBC Councillor did become joint leader with a former County Councillor. After some painful and much criticised procedures all eight of the previous first tier chief officers, including the Chief Executive, were replaced with either previous County Council officers or outsiders. Inevitably, this was to cause a real set back to the already very

shaky EC and Agenda 21 initiatives.

To make matters still more difficult, on 31 March 1996, the EC designation also expired. Moreover, the new MBC was faced with a very serious financial situation from day one of the new authority, as a result of threatened Council Tax capping. To this was added the loss of Urban Programme Funding for MEC. The new leadership, however, recognised that it was important to the Council to retain the prestigious EC title especially for the town's image, and so the initiative was identified as the only area for additional spending in 1996/97, albeit only about £30,000 to help 'keep the show on the road'. This was to be achieved by making savings and/or staff secondments to MEC from the budgets of other departments. Notwithstanding this effort to hang on to the title for the good name of the Borough, the new leadership knew little about MEC and had little sympathy for its aims, a fact supported by the findings of this study (see next Chapter). On the basis of past performance and any realistic assessment of future performance as an Environment City it was, therefore realistically, very difficult indeed to justify the renewal of the designation.

At a low ebb in its own role as manager of the EC Programme in 1996, however, The Wildlife Trusts did not want any of the cities to be seen to have failed and was not strong enough to take on any political fallout from a refusal to renew. The Trusts were, thus, very anxious to renew Middlesbrough's designation to the year 2000 and the promise of minimal funding and a new plan of action was reluctantly accepted as sufficient. This helps to illustrate how The Wildlife Trusts, as a 'public policy franchisor' had its ability to influence a local authority's formal agenda curtailed by its own vulnerability. At one time the Programme, being backed by a Steering Committee and enjoying a reasonable level of sponsorship from BT and the DoE, could be viewed as an *outsider group by intention*. This was evidenced by the strength and confidence it showed in selecting Middlesbrough, a rank outsider to be an Environment City in the first place. Now, it foresaw that it might have to go 'cap in hand' to the cities for funding and manoeuvre very carefully if it were to keep even its managerial role of the franchise in the face of threats from the cities to set up a new

Programme management body<sup>35</sup>. In such an event, some officers at the Trust stood to lose a major part of their responsibilities. The Trust's own lack of interest, however, had almost caused it to lose its power of *public policy franchise* through the Programme and had almost reduced it to *prisoner group* status, a status which is normative in relation to the many wildlife trusts which make up its membership. The last ditch efforts made by officers at The Trusts to retrieve the situation have been explained above.

On the basis of the three principal tenets of the EC approach, Middlesbrough's experience can, otherwise, be explained as follows.

### **An Emphasis on (Equal) Partnership**

A major feature of Middlesbrough's local government which, in its early days, was much reported (e.g. Shepherd, 1987) was the development of a system of Community or Neighbourhood Councils. Eleven were created in 1984, each having a community budget of a few thousand pounds. They were set up in what were considered to be the most deprived areas in the Borough and served populations between 1,000 and 10,000 people. Annual public meetings are held where local people are nominated and elected to serve. There are now over 30 councils, still mostly in the poorest areas. These voluntary groupings of local people which have been instigated by the Council, on the face of it, to help provide an opportunity for 'community participation' but, as argued later, they might equally be seen as an example of 'blaming the victim' - in this case the victims of deprivation. The Neighbourhood Councils have only limited power to influence the Council's policies and this is mostly informally through their local councillor and the Labour Party. Nevertheless, they are quite powerful in their role of championing the cause of their localities in the fight for resources including those which have involved bids for, first, Estate Action and then SRB<sup>36</sup> funded schemes. Like the EC designation, the existence of neighbourhood councils

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<sup>35</sup> The EC Managers in the cities considered this in response to the 1996 management crisis for the national programme.

<sup>36</sup> Single Regeneration Budget. This is the Government's scheme through which local authorities compete with each other for approval to spend capital.

*look good* when cited in bids. They appeal to the Government's and the European Commission's requirements these days that schemes and projects should be worked up with the involvement of residents. These groups have usually acted as *low profile insiders*.

County wide action and partnerships have been quite progressive. By 1994, Cleveland County Council also had an Environmental Strategy which followed its Environmental Charter adopted in 1991. An environmental audit of the Council's activities was also carried out at that time by an inter departmental officers' working group. The County had helped establish the Cleveland Environmental Forum, a partnership body involving all sectors (including the district councils) in a county wide initiative to co-ordinate their actions towards environmental sustainability. Cleveland's Industry Nature Conservation Society had also been established as a partnership body between the local authorities and industry to work with the Cleveland Wildlife Trust and the Middlesbrough Botanic Centre on nature conservation, especially on industrial sites. With the exception of the Community Councils and the Specialist Working Groups, however, Middlesbrough, itself, has little real partnership working to show for its, now, 5 years of being an Environment City. Nevertheless, the language of partnership is now being spoken again (see below). It remains to be seen whether this largely officer-led new front will gain real political commitment. At the time of writing, this seems to be unlikely for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the words of commitment are important, providing one opportunity for the policy entrepreneurs of Local Agenda 21 to use the 'politics of embarrassment' to push the Council.

The new Middlesbrough Borough Council (1997: 1) has agreed a vision for the town as:

Middlesbrough Borough Council, with its partners, seeks to develop Middlesbrough as a thriving, innovative centre at the heart of Teesside. A centre where everyone is able to fulfill their potential, feel a sense of belonging and pride and where benefits are shared by all members of the community. One where people live, work, play, visit and invest in an attractive environment which is safe and healthy. *Above all, a centre which safeguards the future for our successors. (My emphasis.)*

It is expected that this will:

...provide the direction for the Council's activities over the coming years, and is reinforced by core values and styles for the new unitary authority. Middlesbrough Pride and Enterprise partners, Middlesbrough Environment City partners and other organisations will be

approached to endorse this strategic vision as a town wide theme for improving quality of life.

It is envisaged that comprehensive involvement in the vision will be encouraged and in particular that co-ordination of the community participation exercise will be undertaken by Middlesbrough Environment City. Others will also be asked to contribute to the consultation process. In particular, Middlesbrough Council's community development teams are to include environmental sustainability and Local Agenda 21 in their discussions with local communities.

It is encouraging that, more than in any of the other Environment Cities, some practical involvement of the business sector (essentially through ICI) has been achieved in Middlesbrough.

A telling comment from a senior local government officer in Middlesbrough about the need to influence the business sector was:

The decisions that need to be made to bring about the changes we need will not be made by voluntary agencies or in the local council chambers but in the boardrooms of companies like ICI.

### **Demonstration Projects**

The major focus of MEC has been on demonstration projects. The SWGs produced about 30 projects, many of which were commendable. In comparison with the project achievements of the other three cities, however, they are collectively and individually weaker. Some examples are:

Save Energy at Home / Eco-Feedback project - about 4% of households returning questionnaires; home composting - 100 households; environment questionnaire survey - sent to 560 households - 80% response and received free low light bulbs, University of Teesside; Smokespotters, relaunch of scheme where people report smoky vehicle emissions; Enviroscope, Education SWG funded packs to all schools for teachers to use; Green Transport Fortnight; Southlands Centre energy audit; Marton Primary School, energy saving measure; 2 x one day courses on The Principles and Implications of Sustainable Development; Teesside Environmental Services, consultancy for those with

environmental problems; Local Energy Advice Centre, with Energy Savings Trust funding probably gained as a result of being an EC; students looked at Green Corridors and feasibility of kerbside recyclables collection; Community Forest and Urban Forestry Strategy; promotion of wildlife gardens with demonstrations in City Challenge Area; 42 site hydrocarbon study; St. John's Gate new inner city housing development - two houses demonstrating best energy use; resource bank of recyclable materials for use of schools and other groups.

## **Holism (or Integration) and a Local Agenda 21**

On designation, Middlesbrough Borough Council had a reasonable reputation for its environmental programmes. It had produced a draft Environmental Strategy for Middlesbrough, had an Environmental Co-ordinator in post (seconded by ICI) and an officers' co-ordination group. Each department had been required to incorporate ten environmental actions into its Service Plans for which there was an annual review mechanism. Environmental awareness training was introduced for all staff and made good progress, though it was not seen through to completion. Integration of the broad agenda has, otherwise, not been a strength of Middlesbrough's approach. As explained above, MEC's management has been very weak and the Board lost interest and momentum. Whilst some determined individuals in the few remaining SWGs continued to produce good projects, with reasonable support from the MEC office, 1992 to 1996 was a period of lurching from one crisis to another. A new beginning was sought.

## **A New Beginning for MEC?**

In 1996, on seeking a renewal of the Environment City designation, an idea for revitalising MEC was put forward by the acting MEC Manager. This involved drawing MEC closer to Middlesbrough Borough Council through the adoption of a revised model. The aim was to rely more on the established structure of the Council for the progress of the initiative rather than on the 'less reliable' structures of voluntary involvement.

It was agreed that the Management Board would be reconstituted with 30 members, 7 of whom would be officers and elected members from MBC. It would start to meet every two cycles of Council meetings (every 3 months), would be chaired by MBC with the Vice Chair

from Cleveland Wildlife Trust and be responsible for policy and strategy. A Chairs' Co-ordinating Group would report to it and be responsible for overseeing the work of the SWGs. It would be comprised of all the SWG chairs but be chaired by someone from the Management Board, meeting every 3 months. The whole would be served by MEC staff working within MBC's own organisation. The Environmental Sustainability Co-ordinator would also advise the groups. There were, however, objections to the proposal to take the MEC organisation closer to the Council<sup>37</sup> and some of these are explained in the next chapter. Fundamentally, they argued that this would reduce the incentive for (especially equal) partnership working. It was also argued that, whilst recognition that SWG chairs needed to come together for co-ordination, this should be at Board level, as in the EC 'model'. It appeared that these hard working people in the EC 'engine room' were seen as good enough to develop projects but not policies. Some of this was implemented but there was a reaction to these proposals by some of the voluntary sector SWG members and also a realisation by the insider policy entrepreneurs that the Council might accept the idea of a trust. It was agreed that by moving in the opposite direction i.e. by positioning MEC further away from MBC in this way, some of the political constraints might be removed. Similarly, it was thought likely to provide a more effective base for funding through grant applications and sponsorships. The latter, in particular, found favour with councillors.

In 1997, new words and a new Environment City Trust were, therefore, successfully pushed for by a small group of officers who were also aware of the Council's wish to be seen to be making a new beginning. With the Council's support, on 9 June 1997, a proposal was put to Middlesbrough EC Management Board for the setting up of a company with trust status. A Memorandum and Articles of Association were adopted. Middlesbrough Environment City was registered with Companies' House as a Company Limited by Guarantee. Members of the old Board were asked individually whether they wished to continue to serve under the changed status. MEC is, thus, now broadly following the 'arms length' structural pattern established first by Leicester and then by Peterborough.

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<sup>37</sup> Some strong written expressions of such objections from voluntary sector representatives which were put forward were given to me in confidence.

In spite of the considerable distraction caused by Middlesbrough's local government reorganisation, the new Council and then the serious financial problems, the few officer champions of EC (especially the acting MEC Manager with the support of some senior colleagues in the environmental health section), have managed to keep the initiative alive; just. As argued in Chapter Five, this has been greatly aided by the recognition by the new Council that the designation is valuable for economic development. Current plans are for the development of 'Action 2020 Community Vision' which will be based on a recently produced 'Visions for Middlesbrough' (1997) document. The series of 'visions' has been prepared by the SWGs of MEC, as part of an overall exercise in finding out '...what sort of place Middlesbrough's citizens want the town to be in the next century' (p2). Further work on this is currently being done with elected members, the community councils and with focus groups representing minority interests. The early work on this included an Action 2020 conference on Friday 11 July 1997 involving delegates from community groups, council officers, councillors and specialists with the aim of producing an integrated 'Vision for Middlesbrough' which picks up on key themes identified in local vision projects and identifies new areas for action. Bids to the National Lottery Charities Board for grants for projects which help to improve people's living environment will be made to help with implementation. (The results will be announced in Spring 1998.) Acklam Community Council has been the first to participate in this. Presentations are being made to local groups who have expressed an interest in it, including The Teesside Federation of Womens' Groups and a Young Peoples' Action 2020 is envisaged through visioning exercises in a selection of youth clubs e.g. Hall Garth secondary school. Such 'visioning' involves helping people to describe their vision of the future for the town. The contacts with ethnic minority groups have been described as 'initial'. A 'Draft Framework Document' for developing 'Action 2020: Middlesbrough's Local Agenda 21' (1997) sets out the process.

A particular recent characteristic of Middlesbrough's approach has been the preparation of 'sustainability indicators' to help monitor how well the town is moving towards sustainability. 90 indicators were produced following some, albeit very limited, public consultation and six months' work by the SWGs. Topics covered, range from the natural environment and environmental quality to health, education, and the social environment.

Some of these will require hard, scientific data. Others cover the sorts of issues which the public may be able to notice, such as sightings of skylarks and sparrowhawks.

Prior to local government reorganisation both Middlesbrough BC and Cleveland CC had environmental strategies and these are currently being updated and combined to develop an environmental sustainability strategy that will describe the Council's contribution to Local Agenda 21. Cleveland's included a declaration of *commitment*. This task was a primary responsibility of the Council's Sustainability Officer, in the Public Protection and Trading Standards Department, who is currently also heading up MEC. The Director of the Trust, who was appointed in early 1997, has since largely taken over this latter responsibility. The development of the strategy will take place alongside development of the 'Action 2020' Local Agenda 21 action plan and it is expected that each will influence the other. Both documents will relate to the sustainability indicators project which has been co-ordinated jointly by MBC and MEC.

One would have expected an Environment City to have produced its Local Agenda 21 by the end of 1996 as expected by Chapter 28 of Agenda 21<sup>38</sup>. Even Leicester, however, does not expect to have its LA21 in place until 1998. After a very slow start, Middlesbrough's timetable for producing its Local Agenda 21 is, however, now ambitious and promises that it will be the product of a process of real consensus building through dialogue and the partnership working referred to above. The LA21 was programmed to be in place by the end of 1997 but this was not achieved.

As suggested above, credit for much of this recent activity can be given to the few environmental broad agenda policy entrepreneurs who have used the Council's concern for environmental credentials to gain support for the creation of this arm's length organisation. Effectively, it will aspire to be a *low profile insider group* akin to Environ in Leicester and PECT in Peterborough though, initially at least, it will be relatively poorly resourced and, thus, probably very weak.

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<sup>38</sup> See Chapter Three for an account of the expectations of Agenda 21 and of the specific requirements of Chapter 28 which focuses on the role of local authorities.

## LEEDS ENVIRONMENT CITY

Although, like Middlesbrough, Leeds has also had to cope with the environmental damage of its 19th Century prosperous but dirty industrial past (especially from the ready made clothing and engineering industries) and the need to adjust to the demands of the changed industrial economy, it has benefited greatly from its base as a (if not *the*) financial 'capital' of Yorkshire and Humberside (and to some extent of the North). Though there are many poor areas, the City is now recognised as being 'well off' in economic terms and there is an enormous demand for land in the centre for further commercial development as, for instance, evidenced by its established and rapidly expanding office work (especially head office) economy. Over the last 30 years its service sector in general has emerged as a major factor in the local economy. Leeds also has a strong civic identity and celebrated its Centenary in 1993. Like Leicester, it has a large ethnic minority population. Prior to the Local Government Review, Leeds was the only one of the four cities with a unitary council. Leeds (Metropolitan) City Council has long had responsibility for all major services such as education, transport planning and social services. The City has a population of approximately 750,000 people. The Council employs about 33,000 people and is the largest employer in the City.

Leeds became an Environment City in October 1992. It was the City's second attempt. On the first occasion, a City Council led bid had been made at the same time as Middlesbrough's successful bid. The probable reasons for the latter's success have been explained above. There were 30 applicants the first time and 15 the second. Unlike the case in the other three cities, this second bid by Leeds was led by the private sector and a few champions within the City Council, including Geoff Wright, then the City Council's Green Strategy Officer. A private sector led bid was especially attractive to the EC Programme Steering Group looking for strong evidence of the, in vogue, partnership working ethos. Having on board a city the size and prestige of Leeds was also an attractive proposition.

Like the other cities, Leeds had a structure in place (mostly for developing and implementing its Green Strategy) prior to designation. Some parts of it were, however,

developed specifically for the EC bid. Figure 4. illustrates the general form of the structure.

The Leeds Environment City Initiative (LECI) was set up in 1992 by the City Council as the forum of the 'model', in readiness for the City's second bid. Prior to that bid, however, it was known as simply the Leeds Environment Initiative. Unlike the EC model forum, LECI membership does not include representatives of the SWGs. It is comprised of 3 members each from the City Council, the Leeds Environment Business Forum (LEBF) and the Leeds Environmental Action Forum (LEAF). LECI is always chaired by a City councillor and councillors are resolute that it always will be<sup>39</sup>. It has, so far, been practice for the Chair of the Council's Environment Committee to also chair LECI. When a new Chair was appointed to the Environment Committee in May 1996, the retiring Chair became Chair of the Community and Welfare Rights Group of Committees and took her apparently considerable commitment to Environment City to another area of the City Council's work. This helped to bring the Community Needs Analyses, involving several thousand detailed questionnaires about the social and environmental needs and aspirations of communities, to bear on the Council's LA21 work. In relation to the City Council LECI might, therefore, be identified as a *prisoner insider group*. LECI relates not only to the City Council, however, but also upwards to the Leeds Initiative which is seen as having a broader role than LECI and more is said about this below in relation to an integrated approach.

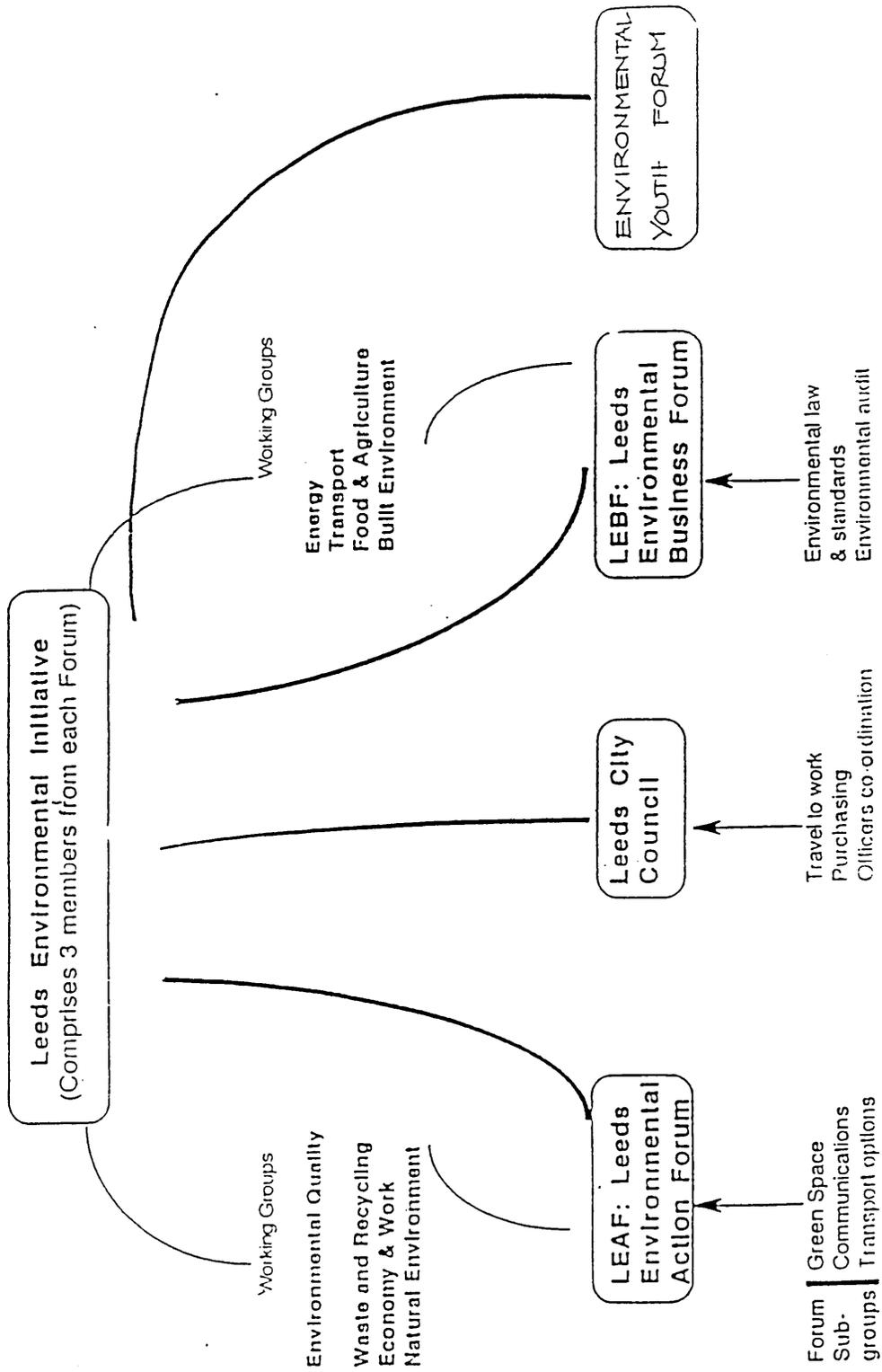
In April 1993, LECI agreed 15 objectives and 3 more were added later in the year. They include ensuring that LEBF and LEAF are on a firm independent footing and establishing and resourcing a Youth Forum (still to be achieved). Also included were maintenance of the SWGs, the development of a city wide Environmental Action Plan for the next 10 years (in conjunction with the other forums and the SWGs) and playing a full part in the EC network and in Agenda 21 (by producing a LA21 by 1996). LECI had to designate 24 'flagship projects' as examples of good practice, achieve a measurable improvement in the environmental awareness of the population of the City, ensure recognition of the image of Leeds as Environment City locally, nationally and internationally and manage a Local Energy Advice Centre.

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<sup>39</sup> A point made by strongly by senior interviewees.

Figure 4. Leeds EC Structure

The co-ordination network for environmental issues in Leeds



Source: Leeds City Council (1992) *Leeds's EC Bid Document*, Wildlife Trusts, Lincoln.

Leeds Environmental Business Forum (LEBF) was established in May 1992 shortly before the City's second bid. In October 1993, with the help of £73,250 'match' funding over three years from ACBE<sup>40</sup>, as one of ten pilot schemes, it became a company limited by guarantee. The reason given for this was the need to accommodate a substantial injection of funds in a more efficient and business-like way. At that time, it appointed a full time Development Director and a Research Assistant. The appointee had previously served on LEBF representing Yorkshire Electricity and his first year in post was sponsored by that company. LEBF attracted further funding (some 'in kind') amounting to about £50,000 p.a. and is seen by its promoters as one of the leading business clubs in the UK. LEBF's Mission Statement (1993: 3) sets out its terms of reference as, broadly:

To promote, encourage and support business practices which are aimed at the improvement of the Leeds and wider environment, and to publicise and disseminate achievements of the Leeds business community...'

LEBF has been especially concerned with 'getting the environmental message across to small and medium sized businesses.' although, unfortunately, there are no representatives of this sector on the Executive Committee. Its membership has risen from about 78 when it was established to about 200 now, but a great many of these are consultants, firms and lawyers specialising in environmental management. The free environmental reviews (or preliminary audits) offered by LEBF are achieved by allowing businesses to select from a panel of environmental consultants most of whom are members. A good practice guide has been produced, environmental legislation, e.g. The EC Packaging Directive, has been explained to businesses and LEBF has been able to make representations to Government on environmental issues on behalf of business in Leeds. LEBF has been chaired by an academic who was formerly Associate Dean of the School of the Environment at Leeds Metropolitan University. He was nominated by the Chamber of Commerce. The Committee included the Chair of the City Council's Environment Committee. LEBF's Committee was criticised by a business person concerned for environmental issues as being 'too low grade' and for not

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<sup>40</sup> Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment is a Government sponsored agency concerned to promote environmental efficiency by UK business, mostly through awareness raising and some 'match' funding of innovative schemes.

including the chief executives of major companies. In relation to the City Council LEBF might, thus, reasonably be seen as a *low profile insider group*.

The Leeds Environmental Action Forum (LEAF) was also launched in May 1992 and it aims to promote amongst the people of Leeds (LEAF, 1992: 3):

- a) Care and concern for the local, national and international environment
- b) Increased awareness of environmental issues
- c) Enhanced opportunities for collective and individual environmental action.

Leeds Environmental Action Forum (LEAF) has no Chair but two co-ordinators, one of whom is the Executive Director of Save Waste and Prosper (SWAP), a 'not for profit' environmental and waste management consultancy established by the City Council (mostly by Geoff Wright) and then 'floated off'<sup>41</sup>. The other is the representative of a local green group. LEAF has no permanent staff but contributes to the City's environmental events such as National Cycling Week, Environment Week and Green Transport Week. Though it has a membership of over 70 organisations, meetings have been poorly attended often with only 6 or so people and it has not been a very active focus for the voluntary sector's contribution to Leeds EC. Again, LEAF might, thus, be regarded as a *low profile insider group* though some of the constituent voluntary groups do challenge the City Council from time to time.

Although Leeds' approach has been essentially sectoral this has been defended on the basis that multi-sectoral groups do not work very well because, for instance, business wants speedy decisions and does not understand the public and voluntary sectors<sup>42</sup>. The voluntary

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<sup>41</sup> This serves to demonstrate that even in Leeds, where the City Council is keen to keep a firm direct control on most activities which it develops, it is still possible for some to be moved outside its organisation. In the case of SWAP the arguments presented by Geoff Wright made it increasingly clear that there was considerable potential to develop the burgeoning consultancy role within the Council's recycling unit. It was much more likely that potential clients (especially other local authorities not wishing to be seen to be relying on another local authority) would be attracted by the services of a skilled outside agency with sound local authority experience than by a City Council run one. Partially as a result of the City Council's success in raising money for charity from recycling and Geoff Wright's role in this, he was made an MBE.

<sup>42</sup> Frustration with City Council procedures was expressed by business people in all of the cities. They were especially critical of the long 'talking shop' type meetings which tended to characterise many of the EC fora and which they felt were too much in the mould of the public sector rather

sector was also suspicious of the motives of the business sector and of politicians and so on. On the other hand, it might be argued that only by really trying to work together will they ever begin to understand each other and develop common ground against the 'common enemy', that of the environmental crisis.

In spite of this sectoral approach, 6 SWGs were established to comply with the standard model; Energy; Transport; Built Environment; The Leeds Nature Conservation Working Group; Waste and Recycling; Economy and Work. They each make presentations to LECI about once every 18 months. The SWGs have tended to take a 'think tank' role although they have also initiated practical projects. Three further SWGs were envisaged in the bid document (MEC, 1992) but were not established; Pollution; Food and Agriculture; and Social Environment. The LNCWG has been the most active SWG. Having been set up in 1987 and developing as the Leeds Nature Forum, it was a going concern inherited by LEC. It has 26 member organisations and is chaired by the representative of the Leeds Urban Wildlife Group. The Group had a strong input into the statutory Urban Development Plan (UDP) and the development of the City's Five Year Nature Development Plan. Though it was the intention of the EC model that SWGs would represent equal partnerships in Leeds they behave mostly as *prisoner insider groups*. This is encouraged especially because they are serviced and largely dependent on the Leeds Environment City Unit which is a part of the City Council's organisation.

The EC Unit was created in 1989 as the Green Strategy Unit in the corporate centre of the Council's organisation but, on taking on the EC role, it was relocated and expanded as a section in the Environmental Department. Several options including the establishment of a charitable trust were considered. In the event, the potentially strong control which the Council has over the activities of the Unit because of its organisational location is somewhat diluted by the Unit's physical location. It is in a separate suite, in the town centre and away from the main offices giving it a feeling of independence and of being a 'bit special'. The Energy / Environmental Advice Centre which is a part of the Unit, also houses some of the staff. The Unit was described by its Manager, as the 'glue that sticks the rest of the EC

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than in that of their own, believed more expeditious, models.

structure together.' It is widely believed that gaining EC status greatly increased the status and power of this Unit especially with elected members, something which the Manager, has very effectively exploited to the advantage of EC. He has been especially successful in seizing on the prestigious European dimension which is especially valued by Members. Trips to Europe with the Leader of the Council have provided this quite junior officer with a wonderful opportunity to exercise influence well beyond his organisational station. This has been an opportunity which he has taken very well, especially for someone who entered local government from the voluntary sector or even, perhaps, because he did. The frustrations of committee procedures were very real for him but use of the 'politics of embarrassment' gently but effectively and the fairly free hand which EC gifted to him have combined to make this possible.

The Environment City Manager reports to the Assistant Director (Environmental Services) whose major responsibility is waste management. This suggests a tendency for the Council to view the environmental issue in terms of Ward's (1996) *limited environmental agenda* rather than his broad agenda. It also, however, reflects the history of the beginnings of the environmentalist concern in the Council's organisation and especially the role and waste management background of its prime mover, Geoff Wright. The Unit has 8 officers. It supports the work of the SWGs, although lead departmental officers are also responsible for this. It produces a news sheet (all of the ECs have these<sup>43</sup>), promotes environmental awareness (through a Promotions Officer), carries out some research, manages the Environment and Energy Advice Centre with additional staffing and, very significantly, is responsible for providing the expertise for the introduction of EMAS throughout the Council's organisation. Including the Energy and Environment Advice Centre the Unit has an annual budget of approximately £350,000 p.a. Funded entirely by the City Council, the Unit is a part of its organisation, albeit staffed mostly by environmental policy entrepreneurs / champions.

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<sup>43</sup> These are Leicester Environment City News, Middlesbrough EC News, Leeds EC News and Peterborough Environment News (PEN News). They provided a useful source of data for this study insofar as they help to demonstrate how each Council's EC managers bring together a wide range of environmental activity by their councils and partner organisations much of which has not really been precipitated by the designation but has been 'rebadged' to the credit of EC. The implications of this are considered in more detail in the next chapter.

The introduction of EMAS<sup>44</sup>, based on the Green Charter, has been a considerable success and Leeds is far more advanced with this than any of the other ECs. Whilst Leeds does not, necessarily, intend to seek certification the 'significant' *direct* and *indirect*<sup>45</sup> effects of the Council's operations have been thoroughly identified, cascaded training<sup>46</sup> is well advanced and success with the process of 'continuous improvement' is very apparent.

### **An Emphasis on (Equal) Partnership**

Leeds City Council has enjoyed a fairly stable political climate for some years and the ruling Labour Group (which has enjoyed a large majority) has focused strongly on the economic success of the City with the aim of securing good jobs and the wealth to support the many still very poor communities. This has been illustrated by the way the Labour Group has not flinched from working with the business community, for example through The Leeds Initiative. Though begun in 1990, this has developed rapidly during the period Leeds has been an Environment City. The aim of the Initiative was, ambitiously, to give Leeds '...the country's most successful local economy creating a vibrant and attractive centre in which all can live and work, and establishing Leeds firmly on the European stage. (Leeds Initiative, 1995/96: 1) It was described to me by a senior officer as 'a breakfast club with bargaining power' and as 'helping Leeds to 'plug in' to many opportunities for funding and promoting itself. It was developed under the leadership of Councillor Jon Trickett until 1996 when he became an MP and then by Councillor Brian Walker who took over. Within its objectives, The Leeds Initiative embraces an environmental concern, but with a tendency

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<sup>44</sup> Environmental Management and Auditing Scheme. Leeds was one of 8 DoE EMAS pilot authorities in 1993. The European EMAS scheme which was designed for business use as a more demanding alternative to BS 7750 was developed for the public sector, and especially local authorities, in the UK (and then elsewhere in the EU), by CAG Consultants (London) under contract to the DoE. A guide was produced and many authorities have followed it. Leeds is a front runner in the field. The Scheme expects 'continuous improvement' of a council's activities towards environmental sustainability.

<sup>45</sup> 'Direct effects' on the environment are considered to be those of a council's own activities, e.g. its use of paper. 'Indirect effects' are those resulting from its services e.g. planning .

<sup>46</sup> I assisted with this in a limited way.

towards an 'amenity', limited agenda sense rather than the broader 'saving the world' agenda sense. Its aims are given as (p1):

- \* Promote the city as a major European centre
- \* Ensure the economic vitality of the city
- \* Create an integrated transport system for the city
- \* Enhance the environment of the entire city
- \* Improve the quality and visual appeal of the city
- \* Develop the city as an attractive centre for visitors

Having unexpectedly won the EC designation on the second time of asking, the City Council, quickly took it into its portfolio of Leeds promoting initiatives. Becoming Leeds Environment City Initiative it was put alongside the other initiatives in the portfolio. There are now 15 of them including Architecture and Design, Engineering, Lighting (ironically<sup>47</sup>), Retail, Financial Services, Opp2K (a women's labour initiative), European, Flower, Regeneration Board, Gateways and Corridors, Station Steering Group, Media, Printing, Education Business Partnership, and Gateway Yorkshire.

There is a great deal of scepticism about partnership working on EC or LA21. Members of the SWGs have often felt that LECI is not really very interested in what they do and the sectoral model which Leeds has developed does not encourage working together. Many of the SWG members said they felt isolated from LECI where the real decisions are made. The enormous political power of the City Council has dominated most of what has happened on EC and shows every sign of doing so in respect of LA21. As described above, most of the pressure groups, including many of those which existed before the EC designation was given, have been captured by the City Council as insider prisoner groups. This has been very effectively achieved through funding and/or their place in the EC structure. In particular, if they wish to retain the ear of influential councillors e.g. through LECI, and remain a part

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<sup>47</sup> The Lighting Initiative seeks to secure the lighting of buildings to improve the attractiveness of major buildings and night time security in the '24 hour City'. This use of energy does not sit easily with the aims of the Leeds EC Initiative and helps to demonstrate the conflict between economic and environmental concerns.

of the EC structure then they have to obey Grant's (1990) 'unwritten code'. As the City Council has, so far, shown reasonable commitment to sustainable development green ideology most of the groups had little reason to challenge that situation. This demonstrates how, with the aid of the EC initiative and the structures and processes which have resulted from it, corporatism has tended to take the sting out of much of the environmentalist movement in Leeds. Whilst this is true also in the other cities, it is particularly evident here where the City Council has become (e.g. through the Leeds Initiative) an experienced operator in absorbing potential opponents within its wide consultation / partnership schemes rather than leaving them outside where they might then be in serious conflict with it. Thus, this moderate but strong and dominant form of local Labour politics might be seen as consistent with the approach of New Labour, now in government.

### **Demonstration Projects**

Leeds has done reasonably well with demonstration projects, through its two sectoral fora as well as through its SWGs. An especially significant 'project' was that of persuading the City Council to adopt for the City a 30% CO<sub>2</sub> reduction on 1990 levels by the year 2000 target as advocated by Friends of the Earth. This is well ahead of the national target. It resulted partly from the initiative of the Energy SWG, partly from the opening of the Energy Centre which prompted the need for a declared specific commitment (to a FoE Climate Resolution) by the City Council and partly from the City Council's 'in-house environmental champions' (e.g. in the Environment City Unit). The latter, used the 'politics of embarrassment' to get their political masters to take another, in this case large, step. It is hard for a, so called, Environment City to refuse to adopt such policies. The fact that Leeds aspires to be a European '24 hour city' no doubt also weighed in favour of this decision in the minds of the leadership.

As mentioned above, by far the biggest success by Leeds EC has been the Council's implementation of its Green Charter commitments to put 'its own house in order' (largely through the application of EMAS) both in terms of the impacts of its own direct administrative activities and those of the actual services which it provides. Other projects,

some by LEBF and LEAF, have included:

Forest of Leeds, major community planting project; Equafor, Ecuador twinning project; Project ELAN and SERC sponsored sustainability modelling project; Supertram, input into development of scheme; Energy Advice Centre (part Energy Savings Trust funded); traffic studies; Environment Advice Centre and mobile exhibition; school projects; input by Natural Environment SWG into UDP; Meanwood Valley Urban Farm Environment Centre Environment Centre proposed development; input to Transport Strategy and Woodland Strategy; School Native Tree Project; Global Action Plan for participating households to focus on environmental topics; Green Transport Week; Leeds Energy Rating Initiative; Local Agenda 21 Conference; Green Directory.

### **Holism (or Integration) and Local Agenda 21**

LECI was not credited by interviewees from outside or inside the Council's organisation with being holistic. It was seen as a strongly Council led group which is designed purely to consult the other two sectors on EC matters which are first put to the Labour Group for decision and then to the Environment Committee for formal ratification. It cannot claim to be overarching as can, to some extent, the Board of Environ, or either of the trust boards in Middlesbrough and Peterborough. All of them exist as a potential focus for 'visioning'<sup>48</sup> in partnership towards an LA21 whereas LECI can be only part of a wider visioning mechanism, involving, at least, LEBF, LEAF and the Leeds Initiative.

In January 1997, with no particular regard to the need for a LA21, the Leeds Initiative set up a Steering Group to progress the development of a shared 'Vision for Leeds' which is to be '...guided by the needs of those who live and work here.' (Leeds City Council, 1997). Recognising the shortcomings of LECI and the potential of this vision to be an LA21 vision, the Leeds Environment City Manager and his colleagues, as environmental *broad agenda policy entrepreneurs*, are attempting to seize the opportunity. Using the 'politics of

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<sup>48</sup> 'Visioning' is now a widely used term in local government circles, implying an attempt to involve all sections of the population (and as far as possible all citizens) in deciding what sort of a future they want for their municipality. It implies an effort by local authorities to seek to 'govern' through the development of a 'consensus'. As argued in Chapter Three, many local authorities, including those of the Environment Cities, have used the idea in association with the need to develop an Agenda 21 through the development of a consensus to advance their governmental role. As argued above, Middlesbrough and Leeds EC officers used the wish of local politicians to develop such a vision as a means towards the development of a LA21.

embarrassment', gently, and a good measure of creative manoeuvring they are attempting to get the Board of The Leeds Initiative to adopt the overarching role needed for the development of a consensus for a LA21. This is a good example of how officer champions can pragmatically manipulate the structures and political commitments which exist to drive a particular cause, in this case the development of an integrated vision for LA21. Here the Environment City Manager (a quite junior officer in the massive Leeds CC organisation) has been in a potentially very influential position to influence the leadership. He has had the opportunity of working very closely with the Leader including European overseas visits to explain the achievements of Environment City and Leeds through the Eurocities environment initiatives. The kudos from such excursions is often much appreciated and addictive for leaders, both political and professional, who, in the local government world of problems and criticisms, are very relieved to be seen to have some successes to their names.

In 1996, the Government invited Leeds CC to work with its partners to produce City Pride<sup>49</sup> proposals, a programme of regeneration. This also requires a vision and was included in the Leeds Initiative Portfolio. It was, thus, proposed by the Environment City Manager (as the originator of a report of the Director of Leeds Environment Committee, Green Strategy Steering Group), that a draft vision statement be produced embracing strategic objectives for Leeds Initiative agencies, a City Pride strategy *and an Agenda 21 action plan*. As a result of the manoeuvring referred to above, the Vision (MEC: 1997: 3) will now become '...the common basis for developing action plans for both City Pride - a regeneration strategy, and Agenda 21 - a sustainable approach to developing improved quality of life for Leeds citizens.' It is expected that the action agreed will then need to be included in the agencies' corporate plans. Once, thus, committed, this will represent a major victory for the promoters of sustainable development green in Leeds. City Pride prescribes a format to be followed if it is to be the 'ticket' to attracting SRB and National Lottery funds. To get this priority for LA21 it was argued that it and City Pride are complementary programmes. Experience from other cities has shown City Pride to be essentially a top down process largely because only

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<sup>49</sup> City Pride is a DoE generated initiative towards the encouragement of regeneration strategies through a corporate approach.

the major agencies can relate to the strategic nature of the objectives and to the major projects which are identified. Also because its focus is on regeneration some aspects of a city's development do not feature in it at all. To appeal to the 'community' values of the Labour Council the opportunity was, therefore, taken to argue that LA21, on the other hand, can be seen as a bottom up process (though, in fact, only mildly so if reasonably speedy progress is to be made). It was also argued that the format of this might be expected to follow the LGMB's (1994) recommendation of a 'Vision - Action Plan - Review against indicators' model.

'On the ground', the process of getting an LA21 on the local policy agenda began with a high profile Local Agenda 21 Conference at the West Yorkshire Playhouse in June 1996 chaired by TV personality, John Craven. This ensured that Leeds City Council had to 'nail its colours to the mast' in promising to develop an LA21 through consensus building and dialogue; a *'hard to go back on commitment'*. To keep the momentum going two workshops followed, firstly at Elland Road involving all organisations currently involved in the Leeds Initiative, and then at Tetley's Brewery Wharf involving the voluntary and community sectors in Leeds. A further series of themed workshops in May and June 1997 was then organised to progress the ideas from the first phase into proposals and to relate them to indicators against which to measure performance. A written version of the outputs was produced and a consultation draft put to all of the organisations soon afterwards. Again the Council was being led into what was, effectively, a declaration of commitment.

It could be argued, of course, that ideally from the point of view of sustainable development green ideology, all of the Leeds initiatives should be put into a LA21 'basket' rather than a Leeds Initiative 'basket'. It would, however, be very difficult indeed for the champions of LECI to argue this successfully, especially because whether as a result of the Leeds Initiative or not, Leeds has undoubtedly become a more prosperous place since the Initiative was established and any suggestions of tinkering with it now are not likely to be well received.

This can all appear rather confusing and to most people, even those City Council officers

and councillors involved with LECI and the Leeds Initiative, it is. To get to an LA21 they would not ideally have started from here. Being here, however, it seems to be a promising way to get people on board, knowingly, or not.

## **PETERBOROUGH ENVIRONMENT CITY**

Peterborough looks much more like an 'environment city' might be expected to look than do any of the other three. In 1967, it had been designated as a New Town receiving London 'overspill' and, in the period of rapid expansion in the 1970's and 1980's, the population grew 'with new bricks' from 80,000 to 153,000. The City retains its historic core, suburbs and older terraced housing areas but these are dwarfed by three new townships with modern housing, shopping centres and employment areas. The development of a fourth, and southern township, is proceeding making Peterborough the fastest growing city in the UK. Partnership working was heavily emphasised when the Peterborough Development Corporation was active. The Corporation was wound up in 1990. The city has had substantial investment in its infrastructure giving it large amounts of green space, a network of cycleways and an almost traffic free city centre. A conscious policy of allowing only clean industries to relocate there was adopted. Following the Local Government Review, Peterborough City Council became a unitary authority on 1 April 1997.

Just as the story of the EC idea has been largely the story of a few champions in a Leicester environmental initiative, especially in the early days, so the nature and strength of approach to the environmental challenge in Peterborough has depended to a large extent on the beliefs, character and position of a small number of officer champions. The influence of David Nicholls and Ian Roberts in Leicester and of Geoff Wright MBE and Mike Boase in Leeds has already been explained. The steady influence of Dr Bob King in Middlesbrough has been only recent but his efforts and tactics to encourage the establishment of a sound approach for the future are well thought through and promise to be influential. In Peterborough, however, over a long period the ideas and commitment of one man, Richard Donoyou, the Director of the Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT), have been extremely influential. Almost everything one touches to do with EC or LA21 in

Peterborough has the feel of Richard Donoyou about it. To understand Peterborough EC, therefore, one has to understand the approach of this policy entrepreneur, extraordinaire.

Until recently, Donoyou had served as a Principal Planner in the Environment Directorate as well as serving as the Director of PECT. Hugh Cripps has been the only full time employee of PECT as its Director of Operations and has also shown a great deal of commitment. Donoyou's approach might be called that of a '*grand master*' or as a manager of the local environment taking a pragmatic 'long view' and has been based on two related principal tenets, *incrementalism* and *auditing*<sup>50</sup>. Unlike the approach in the other cities, the work of the SWGs has, thus, focused on leading comprehensive audits e.g. of energy, recycling assessment, lifestyles, natural environment and the built environment. It has also had a higher '*intellectual*' content which only the 'grand master' understands. Ideas such as that for replacing 'natural capital' lost to development have won acceptance<sup>51</sup>.

Peterborough's approach is founded on this steady but sure '*grand master plan*' idea where people are taken along stage by stage, although most of them do not have to (and many could not) think beyond the stage they are involved in. The overall strategy is managed by the 'grandmastery' of the (environmental) decision-making elite. An idea of this is given in PECT's 1995/96 Annual Report (p4):

It is important that environmental actions are based upon a through understanding of environmental issues and that the results of actions can be accurately monitored and assessed. Uninformed initiatives may at best actually cause environmental damage.

Figure 5. gives a diagram of Peterborough's EC organisational model.

In 1989, Peterborough City Council began the process of producing an environmental

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<sup>50</sup> See, for example, PECT's People and Places Programme (1995) which used local natural environment interest groups volunteers to audit many areas of the City and developed a programme for their conservation and improvement in association with English Nature (Peterborough based).

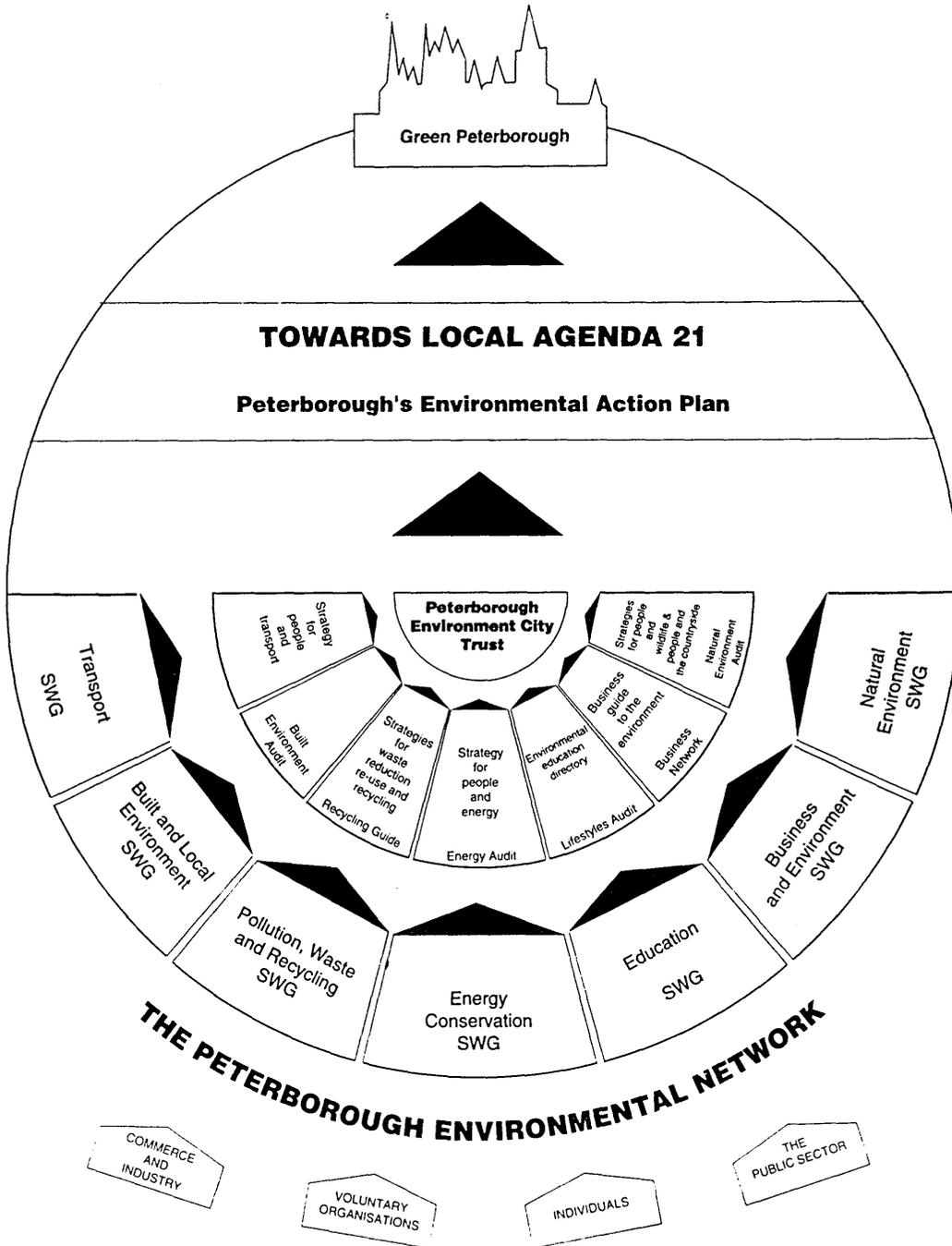
<sup>51</sup> This idea has been developed by Donoyou in association with Leicester DeMontfort University.

charter in consultation with the public (e.g. through a public meeting). Donoyou was one of several officer policy entrepreneurs pushing this. A charter modelled on the FoE Environmental Charter for Local Government (1989) was approved as formal City Council policy in February 1990. The '*politics of embarrassment*' could now begin. In September 1990, the Council approved an internal and city wide participative management structure aimed at implementing the Charter. This was similar to the model Environmental Charter although the officer structure was not put at the corporate centre of the City Council's organisational structure. It was placed in its Environment and Development Directorate. Six SWGs were set up by December 1991, prior to the bid for EC status. reporting to the Environmental Charter Steering Group as recommended by the Charter. Unlike the EC model this was an internal Council group reporting directly to the Council's Environment Committee.

Between April and July 1993, only a few months after designation, a company, Peterborough Environment City Trust, limited by guarantee and a registered charity, was set up. Senior proponents of PEC saw this as an opportunity to put some space between the initiative and the City Council aiding decision-making and sponsorship opportunities as well as emphasising an intention to achieve partnership working, an approach which Peterborough had come to be used to. It would also give Donoyou an opportunity to lead an organisation, by building it around him. One can see, especially from a public choice theory perspective, why this might be attractive to local government officers who wish to free themselves of senior officer and political control and explore their entrepreneurial ability.

A Peterborough Environment City Steering Group had been meeting since the summer of 1992 and referred to itself as the Board. It created sub-committees to advise on staffing and financial matters. The intention to create a trust was not mentioned in the bidding documents, because it was considered by some that this may not find favour. The second bid document (Peterborough, like Leeds, had lost to Middlesbrough in the first round) had

Figure 5. Peterborough EC Structure



Source: Peterborough Environment City Trust (1994) *Peterborough Environment City promotion leaflet*, PECT, Peterborough.

envisaged that, by September 1993, an Environment City Office base and staff to administer and promote Peterborough Environment City (PEC) would be created.

The Board of the Trust has 24 members (including trustees). In addition there are 10 co-optees who have no voting rights. With an average attendance of about 14, an Executive Committee was set up in 1994. Of the 8 trustees, one represents the City Council, 2 the voluntary sector and 5 the private sector. Of the other Board members, 7 represent the public sector, 6 the private sector, 2 the voluntary sector and one is an academic. The mix of co-optees is 5 from the private sector and 5 from the public. This is, thus, by far the most comprehensive and the largest of the EC fora. Donoyou, also a Principal Planner, was made Director of the Trust on a '50% of his time basis'. The Environment Charter Officer, Hugh Cripps, was appointed as the Trust's part time Operations Manager and spent most of his time supporting the SWGs. He became full time in 1995. An administrative officer, also on a 50% basis, was appointed from the outset. This very small group achieved a great deal. Funding these part salaries was, virtually, the only cost and the City Council funded this.

The Trust's objectives are (Peterborough City Council, 1992):

- a) To advance the education of the public, and promote public involvement in all matters concerning environmental conservation, both local and global, and
- b) To preserve, protect and enhance the environment within the district of Peterborough and its key functions are administration e.g. of the SWGs, staffing of the Environment and Energy Centre and the production of publicity materials; promotion and publicity e.g. by using the existing skills and resources of local concerned organisations; co-ordination of practical work and strategies, especially by the SWGs and, finally, securing funding e.g. through sales and possibly consultancy work.

The six SWGs have been Transport (19 members); Local Environment (12 members); Waste Management (12 members); Energy Conservation (14 members); Education (8 members) and Natural Environment (12 members). The bid document also proposed a Business and the Environment SWG but this never got off the ground.

## **An Emphasis on (Equal) Partnership**

An advantage of the Trust idea has been seen as placing the organisation visibly at 'arms length' from the City Council and, thereby, helping to hand the initiative to 'the community' and encouraging an (equal) partnership. In Peterborough this was unofficially recognised as especially important because the City Council has a particular reputation for 'bickering'<sup>52</sup>. There is, however, a clear danger that a company can become inward looking and more concerned with its own organisation and survival than with the greater good of the environment. Indeed, in the early days of PECT there was evidence of this, with the Board spending an enormous amount of time discussing the details of establishing the Energy Advice Centre including the terms of employment of the Energy Advice Centre Manager<sup>53</sup>.

Until 1994, the Chairman of the Board was, first, the Chair of the City Council's Environment Committee and then the City Council's Director of Environment (which includes planning and environmental health). In 1995, the appointment of the Managing Director of a large locally based but international environmental engineering consultancy to the Chair of PECT, then signalled an intention to shift dominance away from the Council. The 'fledgling was ready to fly on its own'.

PECT relates upwards to the Greater Peterborough Partnership in a similar fashion to the way in which LECI relates to the Leeds Initiative. The Partnership's aims are the development and promotion of Peterborough as a good place to live, work and play. This again shows the tendency towards associational (and pluralist) local governance (Littlewood, 1996).

An example from the Natural Environment SWG shows how partnership working with some

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<sup>52</sup> The claim that the City Council spends too much time engaged in political 'bickering' was made not only by some officers and councillors themselves but, unprompted, also by 10% and 8%, respectively, of the respondents to the two Citizens Attitudinal Surveys (1994 and 1995).

<sup>53</sup> This was much criticised by some of the private sector participants who expressed their extreme frustration with having to get so involved with detail. They saw this as largely the result of the influence of the operational culture of the local authority which was being imposed on the Trust.

community groups, though largely the 'green wellies brigade of the middle classes' has been developed. The People and Places Wildlife Strategy (1995), referred to above, attempted to marry the components of the natural environment e.g. wetlands, woodlands, urban habitats, with components of 'the community' through an overall management structure. The 12 'flagship' projects in this published strategy have been seen as an example of how it is possible to move from an audit to a strategy and then to real action by citizens through their direct involvement. A similar approach could be adopted for energy, transport and so on.

A significant characteristic of Peterborough's EC and LA21 organisation has been the way in which many of the key players hold *multiple offices*. Whilst this is true to a point in all of the ECs it is especially relevant here. As a small and geographically isolated city, 20 miles from any other substantial settlement, it is more noticeable that key individuals in the decision-making civic elite, appear in many of the groups and committees in different roles. Some members of the Chamber of Commerce, for example, serve on SWGs and on the Trust Board and in several other voluntary organisations in the city. This has the effect of integrating a part of the overall leadership of the city but it is a part of the elite which is not in line with the Labour Group's political leadership of the City Council. Indeed, it is seen to be sometimes opposed to it and often intolerant of it. PECT has, thus, served to distance the EC initiative from City Council party politics which, as shown in the next chapter, has been resistant to a shift of ideology in respect of the environmental cause. In the interests of progress, albeit unilateral progress, PECT's staff have, therefore, welcomed their independence.

### **Demonstration Projects**

At one time, the Chair of the Transport Group was shared between the Director of a local bus company and a City Council officer to help avoid any charges of the former leading from a vested interest point of view. The Local Environment SWG led the establishment of a 'one stop' Environment Shop similar to that in Leeds and the Ark in Leicester. It also led a built environment audit which, with the help of DeMontfort University, was designed to be used by citizens. The Chair of this Group was the British Gas representative but he

stepped down when appointed to the post of Energy Advice Centre Manager. This centre was established as part of the Environment Centre. The Waste Management SWG had considerable difficulty getting off the ground because the membership was, to some extent understandably, dominated by the local authorities and members who could be accused of having a vested interest in outcomes e.g. representatives of composting companies. Nevertheless, a major initiative by the City Council for the separation of domestic waste at source at a cost of £1.1m was a considerable commitment even though most interviewees considered that this would probably have gone ahead whether or not Peterborough had become an EC. A materials recycling facility was also established.

The Energy Conservation SWG Chairman was a local architect specialising in energy efficient buildings and, seemingly, risking the apparent integrity of PEC, also had the contract for the Centre. Like the Energy Centres in the other three cities it was part funded as the result of a successful bid to the National Energy Foundation for match funding, in this case £45,000 p.a. for 3 years. The Natural Environment SWG proved very successful especially through the large and committed membership of voluntary conservation groups, their earlier involvement in the production of Peterborough's Strategy for People and Wildlife and close working with English Nature which has its headquarters in Peterborough.

Some particular innovations in Peterborough included:

The establishment of 'PEGS' -Peterborough Guidelines, which have provided aims for each SWG; the Peterborough Environment Network (PEN) - an information system to help co-ordinate the work of all SWG projects and strategies; PEN News has also been regularly published and is similar to the publications by Leeds and Middlesbrough; Business in the Environment Award; Architectural Design Award; Business Guide to the Environment; Grimeshaw Community Woodland LNR; Boardwalks LNR; Cycleway condition survey; improved integrated public transport system and an electric vehicle study with CITLEC.

### **Holism (or Integration) and Local Agenda 21**

In addition to the substantial financial advantages referred to above, it has been argued in Peterborough that establishing PECT as a company has enabled it to give its undivided

attention to the one issue which is its prime concern, unlike the Council where 'the environment' has to compete with many other issues such as housing, crime, bus fares and local government reorganisation which, at different times, have been big issues on its agenda. On the other hand, this has not helped to drive the Council to embrace an integrated approach to the environment as expected by Agenda 21. In fact, quite the reverse. The focus on PECT has tended to marginalise concerns on the City Council's agenda as argued in Chapter Five. On the other hand, Peterborough City Council had been pushed, through the 'politics of embarrassment', by parts of the PECT machine, to take an integrated approach on specific issues. An example quoted was that of Star Brick Pit. In 1993, planning consent for building on this pit land seemed very likely to be given but debate in the local press aided by pressure from wildlife groups including some of those represented in the Natural Environment SWG and the Board of PECT made out a strong case against this on the ground that the pit was home to the Great Crested Newt. The fact that Peterborough was an Environment City was frequently quoted in this debate. It, therefore, became very difficult for the Council to argue against it and the consent was refused. Had the Council's Planning Committee taken a stand on granting the consent then the City Council's planning director who was Chair of PECT and also PECT's Director, Richard Donoyou, as a Principal Planner would both have been in invidious positions.

In relation to a Local Agenda 21, PECT envisages a characteristically, Donoyou, 'steady but sure' and 'grand masterly' approach (PECT, 1996). Giving the year 2000 for achieving the LA21 through a programme which has already begun shows a readiness to take much more time than in the other cities to ensure that it provides a very firm base for further progress. This is also because the funding for this work has, cleverly, been achieved through the Green Wheel Project (see below):

The combination of audits and their associated projects and monitoring systems for the Green Wheel will provide a practical and tangible Local Agenda 21 for the City of Peterborough. The first draft Local Agenda 21 document will be formally published in 1998 for public comment and will be reviewed, expanded and updated in 1999. By the year 2000 PECT is confident that there will be a sufficiently comprehensive understanding of the environment together with well developed systems of community involvement to enable the publication of a Local Agenda 21 as a shared vision for the new millennium.

In all of the cities there has been a struggle for funding and, although in Peterborough as in Leicester, the outcome has been good it has been less successful (but less needed because of reasonable City Council funding) in Leeds and much less so in Middlesbrough. It, nevertheless, seems very odd that, effectively, given a brief to 'save the world through local action' the environmental champions in each of the cities have had to first spend so much time and energy in scrabbling about for resources. This challenge has all the feelings of expecting these people to 'save the world on a shoe string'. Many of the groups have had the character of committees which are more typical of a charity, a parent teachers association or a cricket club than of groups charged with such a massive task.

PECT's experience demonstrates this. A total of about £400,000 had been raised by 1996 by PECT in cash and kind excluding the City Council's £30,000 p.a. staffing contributions. The money had come from a wide variety of sources such as the Energy Savings Trust (£135,000 over three years for the Energy Advice Centre); Eastern Electricity (£37,500 over three years); City Council (£10,000 for Natural Environment Audit, £10,000 for Energy Advice Centre); English Nature (£11,000 for Natural Environment Audit); BT £10,000 (for BT Business Award); DoE (£36,500); Co-op (£50,000 equivalent for rent free accommodation for Environment and Energy Advice Centre) and Cambridgeshire County Council (£2,000). In 1996, however, the success of an application to the Millennium Commission secured a further £5.5m which, with the match funding required, will secure a total investment of £11m. This will make a massive difference to EC and LA21 activity in Peterborough.

The Green Wheel idea was Donoyou's and was based on the UK's most ancient 'wheel', the green wood of which was discovered well preserved in the Fens close to Peterborough in 1993. The Green Wheel will (PECT, 1996:1):

...be a brand new network of cycleways, footpaths and bridleways encircling the entire city of Peterborough. It will link tourist attractions and nature reserves, picnic sites and sculpture trails, wildlife habitats and pocket parks - and feature three purpose built heritage centres celebrating our history, our culture and our environment.

...build partnerships - of businesses, local authorities, parish councils, community groups and, most importantly YOU!

The Wheel will have 'A system of "spokes" running from the outer rim into the city centre..' that will 'ensure that every person in Peterborough is within five minutes of the Wheel.' (p2) It will be 56km long.

On the face of it, the Green Wheel is essentially a huge environmental promotion and demonstration project involving many people. From the point of view of PEC and LA21, however, as intended by Donoyou, the significance of the Green Wheel is much deeper. It will put the staffing and operations of PECT on a much firmer footing for at least 5 years. The Director of PECT has been made full time (on a secondment basis from the City Council) and two project managers and a publicity officer have been appointed. Other appointments will follow. Donoyou has, thus, had to secure and use a project to fund Agenda 21 work. Whilst the approach to developing the project will be able to make a virtue of this necessity, it is arguable that such devices to secure funding for 'essential' LA21 work by a Council should not be necessary.

For the small core of environmental champions of PEC who have been largely responsible for this progress, the Green Wheel is just another step along the way. It is part of what was described earlier as 'a grand master approach' designed to carry people, both citizens and policy makers, along a bit at a time towards sustainable development green. As they are gradually drawn into being involved with action on audits, strategies, and projects, their behaviour will be adjusted. They will be acting more and more in the interests of the environment and gradually taking on values closer to sustainable development green especially through the power of 'cognitive dissonance' (See Chapter Six). It is a means of manipulating both the public and formal agendas simultaneously. This idea has been pursued by the champions in all of the cities but less consciously, especially in Leeds. It has also been more patient and steadfast in Peterborough. It is especially reminiscent of Leicester's pre DG X1 funding days. Middlesbrough could have used it much more but lacked champions with the capability to do so.

The financial success of the Green Wheel funding is a good example of a 'success breeds success' phenomenon which has been observed in all of the ECs and which is referred to

again in Chapter Five. The designation has undoubtedly helped the cities to be successful in bidding for funds. Whilst this has involved a great deal of imagination and work by EC staff, as more projects and ideas have been developed and sponsored so more and more sponsors have then become ready to invest in these 'going concerns' which are seen as 'good bets'. Politicians, Government agencies and businesses like to be associated with success stories.

## **PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA BUILDING THEORY: IMPROVED**

This section explains further those public policy agenda building aspects of the EC experience which have been introduced above.

### **Issue Emergence and Issue (Trojan)'Wooden Horsing' as Issue Redefinition**

As explained above, Hall *et al.* (1975) argue that governments assess three main factors when setting their policy agendas. Agenda 21 has clearly added to the first, '*legitimacy*'. So too has the EC designation. The requirement for '*feasibility*' was also helped by the EC's model approach and especially by the manoeuvring of the protagonists. '*Support*' was increasingly forthcoming through shifts in public opinion about environmental issues and the Labour Party's growing recognition of this (as explained in Chapter Three).

As argued above, Baumgartner and Jones' (1993) *issue joining* as *issue redefinition*, helps to explain how some protagonists of the new environmental agenda have been able to redefine it as a natural and non radical progression of the old, thus satisfying local government policy makers of its legitimacy, feasibility and support - as almost a '*new public health*'<sup>54</sup>. The experience of the Environment City Programme, however, demonstrates also another form of *issue redefinition* which has proved to be, at least partially, effective. From the research findings, it is argued in the next chapter that the local authority policy makers have made *declared ideological commitments* to an ideology which most of them do not understand. They have declared their commitment to *sustainable development green* which,

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<sup>54</sup> See Pell and Wright (1996C).

as argued in the last chapter, requires a *major shift* of behaviour and ideology. Most of the policy-makers are unaware of this. They feel that they have bought into an agenda which Ward (1996) describes as the *limited environmental agenda*, or, at most, into a *general ideology of concern for nature*. Rather like a concern for the poor, this is believed to be located on the moral high ground. It is seen as a *worthy* general cause to declare one's commitment to without posing any threat to mainstream, 'business as usual', policies. The protagonists of sustainable development green, both at the National Programme level and the insider policy entrepreneurs in the city councils, did not go out of their way to emphasise the *broad agenda*, let alone, how deep green, the ideology of sustainable development is. To have done so would have risked frightening the policy-makers away. Having once got them to make a declared ideological commitment, however, the door was, in theory, open for the '*politics of embarrassment*' to be used to gradually ratchet their *actual level of commitment* up from artifactual, through espoused and, ultimately (unbeknowns to them, perhaps with the aid of cognitive dissonance), to the deepest basic levels of cultural acceptance. Also, as argued above, the woolly nature of the term 'sustainable development' helped to make this possible. This approach which is unexplored in the literature, might be termed *issue 'wooden horsing'* as a form of *issue redefinition*.

Through this form of agenda manipulation, the protagonists were able to use a general concern for the wellbeing of their cities by policy-makers to promote the environmental broad agenda. This has been partially successful, largely as the result of Nicholls and Roberts in Leicester, Boase in Leeds, King in Middlesbrough (recently) and Donoyou in Peterborough. They have all used Agenda 21's expectation that an LA21 be developed as a means of manoeuvring the broad environmental agenda onto the formal agenda. In Leicester, Blueprint was used to *redefine* a concern among the leadership for the City's general wellbeing as a concern for sustainable development green. This is being achieved through Vision for Leeds, to redefine City Pride which was already receiving political support. In Middlesbrough, Vision 2020 is similarly being used in relation to City Pride. In Peterborough, the Green Wheel project was invented as a device to get the political support and resources for progress to be made with sustainable development green through LA21. The other insider groups have also, thus, secured not only attention and legitimacy for their

issue but also resources for themselves .

As in the case of the EC Programme, this 'Trojan' 'wooden horse' approach can be used in conjunction with *public policy franchising* to manipulate the formal agenda.

### **Ways in Which Issues Reach the Formal Agenda; 'Public Policy Franchising' and 'Public Policy Rewarding'.**

The argument that, a new model, that of '*public policy franchising*' is needed to explain how the Environment City Programme has sought to influence the formal agendas of four local authorities has been introduced above. The proposed model describes a mechanism through which issues reach the formal agenda as the result of an agreement by a government to 'buy into' the franchise offered by a non-governmental group. This agreement is usually in the form of a *declared ideological commitment* (though, conceivably, it could relate to a specific issue), to adopt a particular ideology in their policy making and is the '*price*' of the franchise. This '*price*' is *on-going* and is, to one degree or another, varied by the *franchisor*. In the case of the Environment City Programme, the Wildlife Trust's recent moves to require the cities to meet certain annual environmental targets is an example of a '*price hike*' for the continuance of the franchise. Of course, like any commercial franchise, there is a fine balance to be struck between the demands of the *public policy franchisor* and the *public policy franchisee* if the franchise is to continue to be acceptable to them both. If the Wildlife Trusts were to push too hard then a city (in effect the city council) might withdraw. Also, as in any commercial franchising situation, the franchisees are likely to get together to present a united front to the franchisor in getting the best deal from him. Importantly, though, in public policy franchising, there is a greater likelihood that there will be government insiders who share the aims of the franchisor and who will, therefore, be motivated to want to encourage him to progressively increase the price of the franchise. Moreover, they are able to advise the franchisor, at any time, of the maximum '*price*' which they believe he will be able to extract from the franchisee government of which they are a part. This was true of the Environment City Managers in each of the four cities who, though having to take great care to be seen by their local authorities to be 'loyal' to them, met from

time to time and were influential in deciding the use of the power of the franchise to manipulate the formal agenda. This was especially so in this case because the ownership of the franchise, by the Wildlife Trusts, was not used as powerfully as it might have been. It was, thus, often only the *perception* of its power which the insider policy entrepreneurs *intentionally* presented to their leaderships which gave the Programme its leverage.

The development of the EC public policy franchise has been explained. In brief, it began with the work of the Leicester Ecology Study Centre, then the Leicester Ecology Trust's MSC work for Leicester City Council. Through one ecologist, the successful experience of the Riverside Park scheme which brought the Europa Nostra Diploma of Merit, was recognised as a means of manoeuvring an issue onto the local public policy formal agenda. It did so largely by appealing to the policy-makers' need to continually *demonstrate* their success. The EC idea recognised the reality of the local 'associational democracy', however, and was similarly intended to influence the policy agendas of all sectors, as did the Earth Summit and its Agenda 21 action plan. The EC Steering Group was established as a potentially powerful owner of the franchise but, with insufficient ownership of the franchise or understanding of its potential, the Steering Group faded away. Whilst some of the champions of the franchise at the Wildlife Trusts picked up its ownership in default, they were not sufficiently influential to ensure that it was used to the extent it might have been. By 1996, this weakness caused it even to renew Middlesbrough's designation, which, in terms of performance and commitment was not justified. Nevertheless, more recently, with the collaboration of environmental policy entrepreneurs in the EC local authorities, the Wildlife Trusts have picked up the ownership more positively and an arm's length trust is now being set up by the organisation to facilitate the stronger ownership and exploitation of the franchise. The use of annual environmental performance 'indicators' and the extension of the Programme to a further 16 cities are envisaged as a means to that end. This new trust is likely to become a *high profile insider group*.

*Public policy franchising* needs to be distinguished from another closely allied, also newly proposed, model, that of '*public policy rewarding*'. Awards or '*accolades*' for governments, and especially for local governments, are common these days and, to some extent, most of

them have helped to encourage all of the competitors to behave in a certain way. The EC Programme had this effect when, initially, the title was competed for by many cities. As this research shows (See Chapter Six) many of the policy makers in the Environment Cities see the designation as, essentially, an *accolade* rather than a *challenge*. Britain in Bloom might be seen as an example of public policy rewarding encouraging local authorities through an award scheme to pay attention to their flower beds, planters and the like. The European Blue Flag Designation for beaches has, similarly, attempted to encourage care of beaches. As with public policy franchises, in these and most other cases, there is a likely economic pay back for the winners. This is often in terms of providing a potential boost to local economic development. Industry is more likely to relocate to a town perceived to be 'in bloom' or to care for the environment and tourists are more likely to be attracted to a resort whose beaches have been commended for their cleanliness, safety and facilities. Motivation is, however, also provided by the potential *kudos* for the officers and politicians of the local authorities who have championed the bids and improved the reputation of their area and brought *political* 'success' to the controlling Party. This motivating factor should not be underestimated. The careers of chief and senior officer and of politicians can receive a considerable boost through winning such benefits for their local authority in competition with others and this competitive culture was encouraged by the last Government. The bidding process for Single Regeneration Budget funds is an example.

Whilst awards such as those of Britain in Bloom help an issue to reach the formal agenda, usually in respect of a particular activity, such '*public policy rewarding*' is less potentially influential than *public policy franchising*. The former seeks essentially to influence *behaviour* and the *actual commitment* of the local authority leadership has only to be at the artificial specific, and at most the espoused specific levels to satisfy the requirements of the award. Franchising, on the other hand, is much more ambitious and aims to encourage ongoing and progressive *actual commitment at the basic ideological level*. It seeks to impose the *values* of the franchisor on *all that the franchisee does*. Just as McDonald's specify every detail of how their franchisees are to operate, so public policy franchising arrangements aim to influence every activity of the government franchisee in favour of their basic ideology or 'assumptions'. Importantly, through its concern to influence the ideology

of government, public policy franchising seeks to influence future, as yet unforeseen, decisions and to do so across the board of the government's policy making powers. Awards for specific achievements cannot do that.

The Environment City Programme is not the only example of public policy franchising. The National Cities of Sport (Sheffield, Birmingham and Glasgow) for instance, similarly seeks to influence the formal agenda and culture of the local leaderships.

Against the descriptions of the last chapter, at the global level, the pressure groups behind the Earth Summit, itself, can be seen to have used, firstly, *issue wooden horsing as issue redefinition* to get nations to sign declarations of commitment to sustainable development green which, after many trade offs and the inclusion of many nebulous commitments, was wrapped up in an apparently less radical packaging. This packaging made sustainable development appear to be essentially the old policies for economic development but with some concern for the environment so that such development can be sustained into future generations. As argued in the last chapter, this was one reason why nations were prepared to drag the '*sustainable development wooden horse*' through their '*policy gates*'. Having once reached the formal agendas of nation states the *politics of embarrassment* then 'leapt out of the wooden horse' to try to push actual commitment to the deeper levels. The need for annual reports to the Sustainable Development Commission were one means (largely unexploited) of achieving this. In the event, the Earth Summit 1997 made clear that, whether or not national policy makers had understood the true nature of the expectations of Agenda 21, they had mostly failed to meet them. As Hams (1997) reported on the outcome of New York:

The Political Declaration disappeared without trace to be replaced by an extremely bland six paragraphs, much of the text was diluted in the main document, except the surviving stuff on Agenda 21. I left feeling depressed with the whole event - convinced more than ever that local actions is where it's at, that the UN is not a body which can easily reach consensus on anything and that business as usual will prevail at least until Kyoto. Blair's speech was excellent and certainly rewarded all those in the UK who have been slogging away on the very hard task of promoting and delivering Local Agenda 21 on the ground.

This failure suggests that the potential embarrassment was not sufficiently threatening,

probably because, as time passed, it became clear to national policy makers that none of the other nations were showing any actual commitment to many of their declared commitments either. The declared commitments made by the Environment City local authorities as 'franchisees', however, present the possibility of much greater embarrassment for failure because they have set themselves up as leaders and pioneers in this field and have active peers placing pressure on them.

*Public policy franchising*, then, explains a mechanism which differs from the way in which it is perceived *outsider pressure groups* (Grant, 1990) usually seek to manipulate the formal agenda. In particular, it is assumed that they have to get an issue on the public agenda before they can get it on to the formal agenda (Cobb *et al.*, 1976). This is not necessary in the case of public policy franchising. As explained in the next chapter, the policy makers in the Environment City local authorities were required by the EC 'franchise' to be committed to an ideology which was different from that of their electorate. They were, in effect, being required to be '*statesmanlike*' in recognising the importance of an issue which their electorates had not yet grasped. They were being asked to act without complete *support*.

The models given in the literature can, thus, be improved by the addition of the two new concepts of '*public policy rewarding*' and '*public policy franchising*'. Cobb *et al.*'s (1976) three mechanisms ('outsider initiative', 'mobilisation model' and 'insider initiative model') by which issues reach the political (or formal) agenda do not, for instance, offer a model to explain what has happened through the Environment City Programme nor the mechanism of award giving by those who seek to manipulate the formal agenda. My two additional mechanisms might, thus, in Cobb *et al.*'s terms, be seen as the two subdivisions of a fourth model which allows that issues can arise in non-governmental groups and be promoted by them to achieve formal agenda status without having first achieved a comparable status on the public agenda.

*Public policy franchising* and *public policy rewarding* can also be used to supplement the six mechanisms of Hogwood and Gunn's Model (1984) through which an issue can reach the political agenda. They provide a seventh explanation for issues reaching the agenda,

that of offering *kudos* to policy makers, whether senior officers or politicians, for *declaring a commitment* to a particular ideology. *Issue wooden horsing* as a form of *issue redefinition* can be seen as an eighth. Without these additions, the six mechanisms do not adequately explain the Environment City experience. Environmental issues reached the formal agenda through, what is argued in this chapter, to have been more than just the concern of politicians to be seen to be committed to a particular 'fashionable' issue. There was also a desire to be *seen* individually and collectively to be winning 'accolades' as a mark of their success and to enjoy the associated kudos.

### **Policy Venue and Image**

Baumgartner and Jones' (1993) 'punctuated equilibrium model' demonstrates how protagonists can use the different images which different shared policy venues have of their issue to seek out and make progress with those which are the most amenable to it. In the case of Ward's (1996) environment as a broad agenda, which we might reasonably regard as requiring a *major shift* towards the ideology of sustainable development green, this has been clear. The last chapter described a pyramid of declarations made by a pyramid of institutional arenas. The global level was initially receptive through the Earth Summit in 1992. The European Community was also quite receptive but, in neither case, was it perceived to represent a real threat to economic development. Similarly, it was not seen as threatening at the level of local government in the UK. Indeed, it was seen to present an opportunity for issue space (explained in last chapter) which was demonstrated by the EC experience. At national level, however, it was always seen to be thus threatening and the protagonists had all but given up at that level, until the incoming Labour Government seemed to offer to new hope. Baumgartner and Jones also draw attention to how such institutional change can lead to changes in policy outcomes either in favour of, or against the 'protagonists' cause. An example of the negative case was provided by the restructuring brought about by the last reorganisation of UK local government, especially as it impacted on Middlesbrough. This can be a reason for issue fade.

## Issue Management, Inertia and Fade

Ward (1996) asserts that *issue fade* occurred in responding to the environmental agenda in local government in the early 1990's because of the economic recession and a consequential lack of resources. Although Leicester, Leeds and Peterborough faced, to some extent, the same combination of problems after 1991, and some issue fade occurred, this was mostly countered thanks largely to their internal champions and policy entrepreneurs who ensured that a process of institutionalising the environmental broad agenda took place. This was especially the case in Leeds where the EC Unit and a few influential councillors (e.g. Councillor Jones) were ensuring that the environmental aspects of most of the City Council's activities became a routine and progressive process. The dogged pursuit of EMAS greatly helped with this. Like the Leeds EC Unit, PECT was under the leadership of an environmental champion who was able to use the Council's publically pledged and widely boasted commitment to the environmental cause, to keep the pressure on the Council's organisation. In Middlesbrough, the environment was never firmly on the policy agenda but a lack of understanding by the new Council and the dire financial circumstances almost pushed it off completely in 1996.

Only in Leicester did the environment retain a high public profile, again, largely as a result of a few key councillors, officers and Environ which has the only EC Unit with its roots firmly outside of the local authority's organisation. This should not, however, be interpreted as demonstrating that Leicester City Council's *organisation* is more committed to shallow sustainable development green than Leeds. Whilst it is true that, overall, the leadership of Leeds CC is less committed ideologically than the leadership in Leicester (see Chapter Five), Leeds CC has, through EMAS in particular, institutionalised environment concern into its operations to a level which is close to that of Leicester CC.

Unlike Peterborough, Leicester has not focused on auditing with a view to planning and measuring progress. There has been a greater urgency and a concern for action about the approach. Also, unlike Leeds, Leicester has not focused on using the techniques of environmental management to ensure that the City Council *puts its own house in order*. The

approach to this has also been more action orientated than measured, incremental and strategic. The analysis in the next chapter demonstrates this. As argued above, however, Leicester City Council has by no means neglected to examine the environmental integrity of its own activity which it has managed to combine with a much more outward looking approach than any of the other cities.

Ward (1996) also argues that many authorities concentrated, initially, on promoting and reforming issues where they already had programmes prior to the environmental plan policies, notably nature conservation, energy efficiency and recycling policies. Whilst the EC local authorities did do a considerable amount of 'rebadging' of pre EC status initiatives and policies, however, between 58% (Leeds) and 75% (Leicester) of respondents to the DM Survey claimed that the EC designation has had a 'moderate' to 'substantial' positive impact on the number of initiatives. Between 25% (Leeds) and 49% (Peterborough) felt it had made a 'substantial' difference (see Chapter Six).

The EC fora and the principal players in the partnerships have demonstrated the *agenda inertia* inducing tendency of corporatism and the Councils have defended their (democratic) right / duty to make Council policy and often also to control the EC initiative quite firmly. Partners able to take an overview have been drawn in at this level e.g. FoE, directors of large companies, high powered academics. The SWGs and the organisations which are represented on them have operated at a lower specialist level of environmental policy relating to more specialist / service orientated parts of the Council e.g. the Waste Management and Recycling SWG to Environmental Services and the Transport SWG to the Planning Department. There has, typically, been little or no contact between SWGs or between them and the EC Fora. The wider overview networks were new whereas the specialist ones were often based on existing networks. In some cases e.g. Leeds 'Natural Environment' SWG, only the name of the representative committee had to be changed to create an SWG. The general weakness of the 'new' corporate level networks, however, and the consequential fragmentation of legitimacy, has allowed leaderships in the ECs to push much of the demand for shifts of ideology to one side, unchallenged, and to marginalise the environment to the SWGs and service committees.

In the ECs, on the one hand, the SWGs, as the 'monitors' of policy implementation (and LEBF and LEAF in Leeds) and the EC units, for instance, can be seen as a part of this process of institutionalisation and as working within *policy networks*. As fairly timid low level groups which give the appearance of 'lots of environmental things happening' they also serve to help '*tame*' pressure groups e.g. the 'nature conservation' group in Leeds, by taking them into the fold. On the other hand, the 'politics of embarrassment' give them and their environmental allies within the councils the opportunity to '*bite*' e.g. the nature conservation groups in Peterborough, which were able to argue publically that, as an EC, planning consent should not be given by the Council for Star Pit. The different circumstances in each city and at different times has resulted in different balances between *radicalism* and *protectionism*. Overall, though, Leicester has been the most radical then, somewhat behind, Leeds and then Peterborough. Middlesbrough has been a long way behind these.

### **'Grand-Mastery'**

The EC experience shows that involvement with implementation is an important way of managing and manipulating the formal agenda. Environ, for instance, has been involved in a two way process through which it has come to be involved, and identified, with the City Council's problems in pursuing the broad agenda at the same time as influencing not only *which* policies are pursued but also *how*. The other EC's have similar experiences. As shown by Peterborough's experience, however, it is possible for a policy entrepreneur to exercise 'grand mastery' over progress by managing and manipulating events which influence the policies and actions of the local authority and its partners. Such grand-mastery has been shown, especially in Peterborough, to be a means through which those leading implementation can manipulate both the public and the formal agendas. This explanation is examined further in the next chapter in relation to *public policy implementation theory*.

### **The 'Levels of Commitment' Dimension**

Agenda building theory takes getting an issue onto the formal agenda as a policy as the goal.

This neglects, however, any consideration of whether or not decisions to implement it are *likely to be taken*. This thesis, and especially the next chapter, therefore, argues that this does not provide for a sufficient understanding of the situation. There is a huge difference between commitment to an ideological issue reaching the formal agenda at the artifactual level on the one hand and at the basic values level on the other, yet knowledge of the level which the issue has reached is vital if its *chances* of being converted to decisions is to be judged. The next chapter considers this in relation to the case studies and public policy implementation theory.

## CONCLUSION

The experience of the Environment City Programme and that of the four Environment Cities, has been presented and it has been argued that the lessons set out below are evident.

- a. From the earliest days of the EC Programme it has, largely unknowingly, used and developed what I have termed *issue wooden horsing* (as a form of issue redefinition) by policy entrepreneurs and a '*public policy franchising*' arrangement. What I have termed '*the politics of embarrassment*' have then been used by the environment policy entrepreneurs to encourage, first, shifts in the *behaviour* of local authority leaderships. Secondly, and similarly largely unknowingly, they and the Programme managers have then used '*cognitive dissonance*' (more is said of this in Chapter Six) in an effort to encourage a *major shift of attitudes* by local leaderships towards *sustainable development green values*. In the hands of the Wildlife Trusts this was a potential, though only softly exploited, 'David-like' power in the hands of the organisation for influencing the actions of four 'Goliath' city councils. '*Issue wooden horsing as issue redefinition*', '*Public policy franchising*', '*policy rewarding*' and the '*politics of embarrassment*' are proposed as new concepts needed for the improvement of public policy agenda building theory.
- b. What I have described as '*public policy rewarding*' also occurred in the early days of EC and is another newly proposed concept for the improvement of public policy

agenda building theory in explaining how pressure groups can manipulate the formal agenda.

- c. Similarly, the small number of environmental champions in each of the city councils have, also largely unknowingly, relied on these levers to push the city leaderships to different degrees, towards shifts of behaviour and then attitudes in favour of sustainable development green. This has been against strong resistance by leaderships committed to, first, economic and, then, social goals. Nevertheless, in three of the cities, and in the fourth (Middlesbrough) latterly, the ability of one or two insider champions who know the character of the city and its council leadership has had an enormous influence on pushing progress. In particular they have worked with the EC 'franchisor' to bring pressure to bear on their councils.
- d. *Arms-length trusts* have been found to give the environmental champions a particular form of *leverage* over city council leaderships. By the end of 1997, the champions had, thus, secured charitable trusts in three of the four cities and at the national level. Only in Leeds, where the leadership has taken a very dominant role has such an option never been a possibility, causing the champions to successfully find other ways to secure a degree of leverage from within the Council's organisation. A trust is also being established for the Programme itself.
- e. Leeds has been the most inward looking but the champions have used EMAS to shift behaviour.
- f. In all of the cities, the city councils have remained the dominant partners and 'first among equals' dominance has been accepted by most of the environmental champions as the proper role of the city council leaderships.
- g. Leicester was the front-runner and, through Environ, there has been a strong feeling of powerful pressure group driven urgency about its approach. This has also resulted in the most outward looking approach and in the greatest degree of behavioural and

attitudinal change by the City Council's leadership.

- h. Peterborough environmental policy entrepreneurs have very successfully pursued a 'steady but sure', incrementalist approach orchestrated through, what I have termed, '*grand-mastery*'. Audits have been a key feature of this. '*Grand mastery*' is proposed as a concept to explain how an insider group or individual involved with implementation can manipulate and manage the public and formal agendas.
- i. As a result of a lack of effective environmental insider champions / formal agenda manipulators and a very difficult political situation, especially latterly, in Middlesbrough, relatively little has been achieved in precipitating either behavioural or attitudinal shifts towards sustainable development green.
- j. In all of the cities, it is significant that the Food and Agriculture SWG has been very difficult to get off the ground because this is not usually seen as a concern in cities and that, whilst 'Social Environment' and 'Economy and Work' are arguably the most important topic areas for the achievement of sustainability, these have also proved very difficult to make progress with. This gives evidence to the belief that people are finding it very hard to take action which challenges the dominant scientific materialist paradigm. Progress, therefore, tends to be predominantly in the areas where impact on 'business as usual' is *marginal* and/or where it can deliver environmental benefits without behavioural change which is considered unacceptable e.g. more recycling is acceptable because this form of environmental efficiency delivers environmental benefits without any real hardship. Causing people to take the bus or to cycle to work rather than use a car is, however, another matter. So too is taking action which will protect the environment only at a cost to profit margins.

Building on the approach of this chapter, the next uses the case studies to attempt to understand the *nature* of actual basic ideological commitment by the EC local authority leaderships to Agenda 21, from a more behaviouralist / social psychological perspective.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

# BASIC IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT TO AGENDA 21 BY THE ENVIRONMENT CITY LOCAL AUTHORITY LEADERSHIPS

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### INTRODUCTION

...there is a danger of viewing the progress of local authorities through the activities of a small band of pioneering authorities who claim attention through their unique approaches. In a significant number of authorities, documents have been written, and authority structures reformed, but the impression is of lip service, with environmentalism as a bolt-on extra. As Gordon has argued 'the best authorities have shown what can be done within existing constraints. The gap between them and the worst is enormous. Many councils are hardly aware that environment is an issue.' Ward (1993)

Four local authorities which would, on the face of it, be regarded as amongst Gordon's 'best', are those of the UK's Environment Cities. This chapter uses further findings from the research into their experience to progress the assessment of how committed the leaderships of even these front-running authorities *actually* are to the need for a *major shift* of attitudes and behaviour expected by Agenda 21.

The chapter begins by setting the *attitude of commitment* into a theoretical *policy implementation* context and by noting the views of UK local authority environmental co-ordinators about the *degree of commitment* by their leaderships. From a moderately quantitative perspective, it then attempts to assess the degree of commitment through the Decision-Maker Survey's direct questions about this. This is intended to complement the essentially qualitative inferences which were gained from the evidence presented in the last chapter. The remaining sections use some of the findings of the Decision-Maker (DM) and Citizens (CZ) Attitudinal Surveys to attempt to reveal and to understand *actual commitment* at the level of *basic assumptions*.

In reaching judgements about degrees of actual commitment to the expectations of Agenda

21 and the requirements of sustainable development, my benchmark has been that position argued in Chapter Three i.e. that a *major shift* of ideology and behaviour is required and expected.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY LEADERSHIPS, ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, BEHAVIOUR AND IMPLEMENTATION THEORY**

### **Local Authority Leaderships**

The term 'leadership', in relation to a local authority, is used in this thesis to describe that group of 'political' policy-makers comprised of the elected members and first tier chief officers of each of the four city councils. Effectively, there are two groups and this fact has been allowed for and used to methodological advantage in this study (See Chapter Two). The term 'decision-makers' has been used to describe that wider group of people including not only the 'leadership' group but also other officers in the local authorities and people from outside the local authority organisations who have been involved with the Environment City initiative. Again, the different perspectives of each of these two latter groups, both between themselves and between themselves and the leadership groups has been used to methodological advantage in assessing commitment.

### **'Basic Ideological Commitment' as an 'Attitude'**

Revealing degrees of (*actual*) *basic ideological commitment* (see Chapter Two) is important. Intuitively, we might reason that any gap between the expectations of 'declared ideological (political) commitment', including agreed action programmes to implement or progress that ideology (e.g. Agenda 21), and the '(actual) basic ideological commitment' of politicians to it, seems very likely indeed to affect political behaviour. Moreover, we might reason that this is likely to be especially so in the longer term. As argued in Chapter Three, progress with the *major shift to sustainable development green ideology*, beyond the early stages, will face the challenge of a *steep uphill struggle*. This will be particularly evident as political policy and decision-making processes continue to test the general

expectation of ideological commitment against a never ending stream of *specific* issues long after the ink has dried on the political 'statements of intent' and 'declarations'. A concern of this study is, thus, to reveal any gap between the '*declared ideological commitment*' of the leaderships of the Environment City local authorities to sustainable development and their '*basic ideological commitment*' to it. Even more importantly, it is concerned to learn, through the experience of the EC Programme, about how such 'basic ideological commitment' is encouraged (See Chapter Six).

### **Assessing the Attitude of Basic Ideological Commitment**

The human '...mind is a *belief-seeking* rather than a fact-seeking apparatus.' Jastrow (1927: 284) (My *emphasis*.)

For the purposes of this study, 'basic ideological commitment' is considered to be an 'attitude'. This needs explanation because the concept of 'attitude' has no agreed meaning.

As Allport (1935) pointed out '...attitude is probably the most distinctive and indispensable concept of American social psychology. No other term appears more frequently in experimental and theoretical literature. 'Attitude' is a construct which serves the human need to see order and consistency in what people say, think and do. Similarly, Rokeach (1970: x) claimed that 'There is as yet little consensus about exactly what we mean when we speak of a belief, an attitude, a value, a value system - and exactly what the differences are between these concepts.' Measuring these constructs is, thus, seen to be fraught with problems. To arrive at a workable terminological protocol for this study, the following approach was taken.

Everyday use of the term 'attitude' is as 'a settled mode of thinking' (Oxford Dictionary, 1983). The aim, in social, as in individual psychology, however, is usually to make predictions about future *behaviour*. Thus, as Fishbein and Ajzen (1975: 12) argue, conceptions of attitude have undergone many changes most of which have been '... necessitated by the failure of attitudes to live up to their promise as the central device *for explaining and predicting behavior*.' (My *emphasis*.) They emphasise the definitional

problem by adding that:

Unfortunately, despite the vast amount of research and the publication of countless books and articles on the topic, there is little agreement about what an attitude is, how it is formed or changed, and *what role, if any, it plays in influencing or determining behavior.* (My emphasis.)

Similarly Mainieri *et al.* (1997) argue that 'A key research question is whether environmental attitudes predict actual behaviour in relevant situations.' Weigel (1983: 257) defined an attitude as 'an enduring set of beliefs about an object that predispose people to behave in particular ways toward the object'. Allport (1954: 20) argued that 'attitude' has another dimension; that it 'connotes a neuro-psychic state of *readiness for mental and physical activity.*' (My emphasis.) This idea of an attitude producing a '*readiness*' or '*predisposition*' in the subject to respond to a particular '*object*' in a '*given situation*' is important for this study. As Mainieri *et al.* (p192) point out, *if this is so* '...then one may expect people with a pro-environment attitude to act in ways consistent with that attitude (e.g. to recycle waste or to support environmental initiatives).' They caution, however, that though some studies have found a positive relationship between environmental concern and ecologically responsible behaviour such as recycling (Arbuthnot and Lingg, 1975; Kellgren and Wood, 1986 and Simmons and Widmar, 1990) a large body of research has reported weak relationships between general ecological concern and recycling (e.g. Oskamp *et al.*, 1991, Vining and Ebreo, 1990). They add that the research has suggested several possible reasons including:

- a) low correlations among environmental behaviours e.g. because a person engages in recycling does not mean they will engage in car pooling. Such behaviours are not interchangeable (Stern and Oskamp, 1987),
- b) different levels of specificity in the measures of attitudes and behaviour e.g. Hines *et al.* (1986-1987) found stronger correlations between attitudes toward a specific environmental behaviour and the frequency of that behaviour than between general environmental concern and related environmental behaviour,

- c) effects of extraneous variables e.g. *personal characteristics* such as *knowledge* (Simmons and Widmar, 1990) and *situational characteristics* such as social norms, other attractive choices or economic constraints (Hines *et al.*, 1986-87).
- d) lack of measurement reliability and validity because measures used of environmental attitudes are not equivalent and this discrepancy affects the interpretation of findings (Stern and Oskamp, 1987).

These cautions can be related to levels of commitment defined for this research. In the case of basic ideological commitment to sustainable development (at Schein's level of '*basic assumptions*'), for instance, there would exist a powerful *predisposition*. Proponents of this ideology, for instance, argue that ideological commitment to it, in the UK, should become as *unquestioned* as our '*taken-for-granted*' assumption that justice and freedom of speech are morally right (Agyeman and Evans, 1995: 37). The degree, or strength, of the response of a leadership thus committed to sustainable development green, at the level of *basic ideological commitment*, to calls such as those of Agenda 21 (the '*object*') would, therefore, be mitigated only by conflicting '*basic ideological commitments*' which it has in relation to the particular '*situation*'. A perceived need for local economic growth at, almost, any (environmental) cost is an example of such a '*situation*'.

This particular form of the construct of 'attitude' was developed further by Rokeach (1970: 132). He drew attention to the significance of attitude as a collection of 'beliefs' which *result in some preferential response toward the attitude object*. He defined attitude, comprehensively, as:

...a relatively enduring organization of interrelated beliefs that describe, evaluate, and advocate action with respect to an object or situation with each belief having cognitive, affective and behavioral components. Each of these beliefs is a predisposition that, when suitably activated, results in some preferential response toward the attitude object or situation, or toward others who take a position with respect to the attitude object or situation, or toward the maintenance or preservation of the attitude itself. Since an attitude object must always be encountered within some situation about which we also have an attitude, a minimum condition for social behavior is the activation of at least two interacting attitudes, one concerning the object and one concerning the situation.

From this, the attitude of 'basic ideological commitment' can be viewed as being comprised of a 'collection of beliefs' e.g. about the nature of the environmental crisis, its causality and about what responsive action is needed by us for our salvation. The 'collection of beliefs' underpinning Agenda 21 and sustainable development green were explained in Chapter Three as expecting a '*major shift*' of ideology and behaviour.

The literature presents many alternative views on the relationship and distinction between 'attitudes' and 'beliefs' (see, for example, Krech and Crutchfield, 1948, Osgood *et al.*, 1957, Katz and Stotland, 1959, Fishbein and Raven, 1962, and Fishbein, 1967). That provided by Rokeach (1970: 113), however, presents a construct useful for this research insofar as he goes on to argue that each 'belief' within an 'attitude' is conceived to have three components:

a *cognitive* component, because it represents a person's knowledge, held with varying degrees of certitude, about what is true or false, good or bad, desirable or undesirable; an *affective* component, because under suitable conditions the belief is capable of arousing affect of *varying intensity* centering around the object of the belief, around other objects (individuals or groups) taking a positive or negative position with respect to the object of the belief, or around the belief itself, when its validity is seriously questioned, as in argument; and a *behavioural* component, because the belief, being a response to a predisposition of varying threshold, must lead to some action when it is suitably activated. The kind of action it leads to is dictated strictly by the content of the belief. (My *emphasis*.)

To avoid the unnecessary risk for this thesis of getting lost in the 'terminological forest' (Campbell, 1963) of the constructs of attitudes, beliefs and values, 'attitude' is used here after the above definition by Rokeach. In its concern to explain the broader nature of commitment as well as the degree of commitment it is also consistent with the broader description of 'attitude' by Henerson *et al.* (1987) i.e. '...quite broadly to describe *all* the objectives we want to measure that have to do with affect, feelings, values or beliefs.'

Rokeach's 'cognitive component' is important in this study. It was argued in Chapter Three (and is examined again below) that to be committed, one must first have some degree of *knowledge* of what one is expected to be committed to. To be committed to the ideology of sustainable development green and to Agenda 21, one first needs to have some knowledge of it. Only then is one in a position to be aroused, to whatever degree, to hold an affective belief about the ideology and a belief about what behaviour is needed in response. The

knowledge of the leaderships of the EC local authorities of the expectations of Agenda 21 and sustainable development as well as their acceptance of the ideology was, therefore, tested in this study.

## **Behaviour**

'Behaviour' is used here to mean, simply, 'the way of conducting oneself' (Oxford Dictionary, 1983). Taking place largely at Schein's two shallowest levels of organisational culture it is fairly readily observed. Declarations of commitment are, themselves, behavioural. Other behaviour may or may not be the result of either declared or basic ideological commitment or both. It may be the result of a simple declared commitment to that specific behaviour.

## **Implementation Theory**

Through Agenda 21, *policies for action* were made at the world level by the UN. All of those institutions which have contributed to the *pyramid of declared ideological commitments* (see Chapter Three) to Agenda 21 can be seen as part of a huge loosely confederated 'organisation' which aims to manage Planet Earth through the *implementation of the action plan* in a way which is consistent with the ideology of sustainable development. In the case of local authorities this was thus, in effect, a call for local authorities to *manage Planet Earth, locally*. Whilst it is accepted (and discussed in Chapter Three) that different local governments have very different degrees of freedom and competence to respond to these calls, this thesis is concerned especially with one of the possible reasons for any failure by them to do so i.e. a lack of commitment to the ideology which underpins the Agenda 21 policy. From this world management perspective, it is legitimate to use *policy implementation theory* to help the pursuit of this concern about basic ideological commitment as an alternative, and supplementary, theoretical perspective to that provided by agenda building theory which was used in the last chapter.

Hogwood and Gunn (1984) argue that 'in plain terms a policy is usually seen as being put

at risk because of one or more of the following three causes: bad execution, bad policy, or bad luck.' They offer a range of reasons put forward to explain why each of these might happen. In the case of Agenda 21 and local authorities, 'bad policy' made on the basis of 'hopelessly unrealistic assumptions' might be given. Clearly, if sustainable development green ideology expects more of local authority leaderships than the '*situation*' (see above) in which they find themselves realistically allows, then it is to that degree 'bad policy'.

A more thorough ideal type model of rationality in policy implementation is provided by Hood (1976). His concept of 'perfect administration' holds that certain preconditions have to be met for this to be achieved. From this, some preconditions (after Gunn, 1994: 204) might be found to stand in the way of progress by local authorities in meeting the expectations of Agenda 21. Examples are:

- a) Political considerations which impose crippling constraints (e.g. a decision to grant a planning consent - for 'vital' local economic benefits, even if it threatens serious environmental damage).
- b) Too much is expected too soon, especially when attitudes or behaviour are involved (e.g. it takes time to persuade citizens of the need for a shift in their values).
- c) The end has been willed but not the means (e.g. Government spending controls prevent the resources from being raised to fund any significant local environmental initiative).
- d) That those in authority cannot command perfect compliance. (e.g. in the case of Agenda 21, the UN cannot). (See Chapter Three)
- e) That there is insufficient understanding of, and agreement on, objectives (e.g. few councillors and citizens have any understanding or knowledge of what A21 expects).

Moore's (1994) study of Vancouver Council, Canada, identified the obstacles which had

stood in the way of that local authority's leadership when charged with implementing an overarching environmental policy. Littlewood and While (1997: 107) stress the importance of recognising the transformative potential of LA21<sup>1</sup>. In so doing they list what they consider to be some of the key barriers to its development. These include a lack of resources, the parochial and inward-looking nature of local policy making and the tendency of local business and local authorities to prioritise economic development over environmental and social policies. They also claim that the barriers include the fact that LA21 is a non-statutory concern and that there is a reluctance of local authorities to devolve power when it is their natural inclination to resent any further erosion of local authority control<sup>2</sup>. They see a lack of council wide commitment reflected in a lack of awareness amongst local representatives and a tendency to align LA21 narrowly with environmental concerns. These obstacles closely match Gunn's preconditions.

Whilst a lack, to one degree or another, of each of these preconditions was observed in the EC local authorities, it can be seen that this thesis focuses primarily on Gunn's fifth precondition. This emphasises the overarching and crucial importance of political commitment to the ideology of A21 by a local authority's leadership. Also that the greater the degree to which this is recognised then the more likely it is that political leaderships will see the challenge which it presents as a 'common enemy' and make real efforts *to get the other preconditions met. Equally, any shortfall in such commitment is likely to stand in the way of such effort.*

### **Commitment to Agenda 21: The View of Local Authority Environmental Co-ordinators**

The concern of this thesis to understand commitment was further justified by surveys such as that by Rees and Wehrmeyer (1995) They sought the views of local authority environmental co-ordinators (local authority 'Green officers') about the *implementation* of Agenda 21 by their councils and found that 81% of respondents felt that 'sustainable development was not being taken seriously at the top' and 82% criticised the short-termism

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<sup>1</sup> This was argued in Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>2</sup> This was argued in Chapter Four of this thesis.

of the political system. This was, of course, a group with fairly deep green values, a bias evidenced by the 82% who did not think that free enterprise and deregulation are compatible with sustainable development (33% response rate). Rees and Wehrmeyer also concluded that (p4):

Co-ordinators do not always understand the true potential of their own role, let alone that of the whole local authority. Lack of know how, over professionalism, eco-babble and vested interests threaten the effective development of environmental management and LA21.

This thesis, has, therefore, attempted to arrive at a less biased perspective of basic ideological commitment to sustainable development.

Tuxworth (1995) found that, even amongst local authorities where their respondents (again mostly local authority environmental co-ordinators) claimed their local authorities to be 'committed' to LA21, 28% of them 'disagreed' or 'disagreed strongly' with the suggestion that 'elected members prioritise environmental issues'. This is clearly not an easy thing to admit about your employer to an outside organisation. Moreover, only 4% felt that corporate environmental policy was member driven.

## **LEADERSHIPS' KNOWLEDGE OF, AND BELIEFS ABOUT, THE IDEOLOGICAL EXPECTATIONS OF AGENDA 21**

It was argued, above<sup>3</sup>, that to be committed at the level of actual basic ideology, one has to have knowledge of and/or a belief about what the ideology requires one to be committed to. One cannot be committed, as a basic assumption, to the need for a *major shift* of behaviour if the possibility of such a need has not even entered one's thinking. Knowledge is a prerequisite. A battery of questions in the DM Survey tested the level of such knowledge *and* also beliefs in relation to the sustainable development green ideology of Agenda 21 (Questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 17 and 18). In essence, the questions attempted to do this by revealing the extent of behavioural and ideological change which respondents felt would be needed

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<sup>3</sup> In Chapter Three and above in this chapter.

in response to Agenda 21 and sustainable development. It was not, however, possible to distinguish between responses which were based on a weak knowledge of the ideology by respondents and those based on a stronger knowledge. The findings are thus the result of *both* forces. In all cases, however, findings from the surveys were supplemented especially by the responses to other questions within the survey but also those derived from the participant and non participant observations and those from the interviews and artifactual searches. Throughout the interpretation of the DM Survey results, the likelihood that those who returned questionnaires were more environmentally sympathetic than those who did not was also allowed for.

### **Degree of Behavioural Change Accepted as Necessary by City Council (and by Respondent)**

DM Questions 2 to 5 were:

- Q2 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.
- Q3 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'.
- Q4 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.
- Q5 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'.

The 5 tick box options of degrees of acceptance in each case were: 'major change', 'fairly major change', 'moderate change', 'little change' and 'no change', plus 'don't know'.

The questions can be paired 2 and 3; 4 and 5, relating firstly to the respondent's knowledge / belief and, secondly, to his/her belief about the leadership's knowledge / beliefs in relation to the issue. The latter will, inevitably, be influenced by the former. They can also be paired 2 and 4; 3 and 5 because the first pair relates to the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 whereas the second pair relates to 'sustainable development'.

In drawing inferences from the responses to the personal questions (Q2&4), a likely tendency for people to say that they are more ready to accept that major change will be needed than they truly believe was allowed for. So too was the likely tendency for leadership group respondents, most of whom had a stake in their council's corporate policy, to credit their council's leaders with a higher degree of commitment than would the informant respondents whose stake was weaker and who tended to be environmentalists.

Tables 4 to 7 in Appendix Five set out the responses to this set of four questions in detail.

#### *Status Group by Status Group Analysis*

In respect of both pairs of questions, the bar charts in Figures 1 and 2 contrast the degree of behavioural change which respondents feel is expected / required by A21 and sustainable development ideology with what they feel their city council thinks will be needed.

Whilst 53% of respondents said that they felt that a 'major change' of behaviour will be needed to meet the requirements of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 (Q2) only 15% felt that their city council accepted this (Q4). Similarly, 57% of respondents said that they felt a 'major change' of behaviour will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development' (Q3) whereas only 14% felt that their city council accepted this (Q5). Thus these respondents, most of whom have been involved with EC, were almost 4 times as likely to claim *they* feel that major change will be needed than they were likely to claim they feel that their councils think this. Clearly, then, a large majority of members of this group claims to feel that they, as individuals, have accepted that major change will be needed but that their city councils have not.

Q2 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21. (Hatched)

Q4 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.

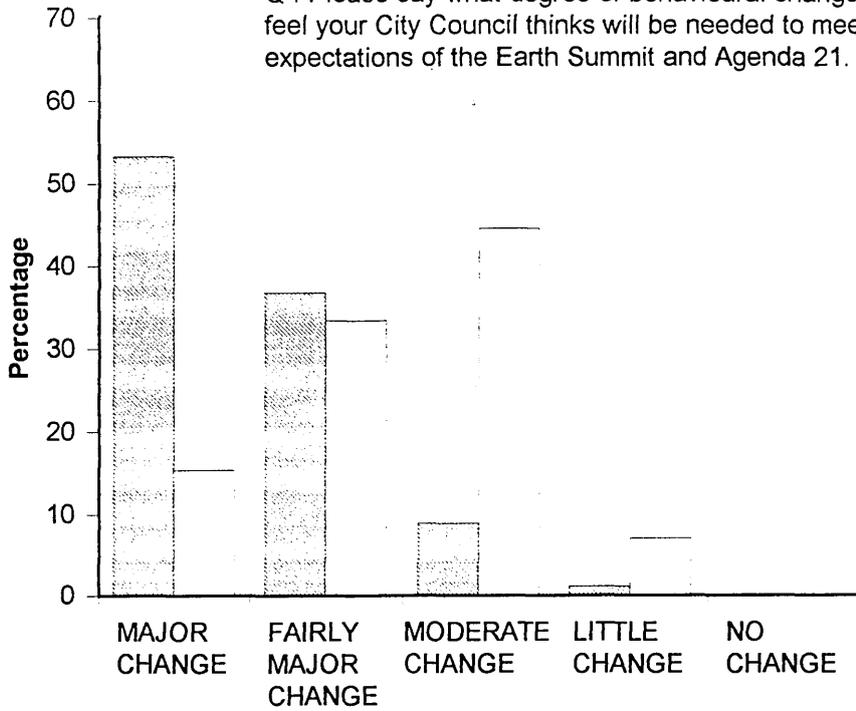
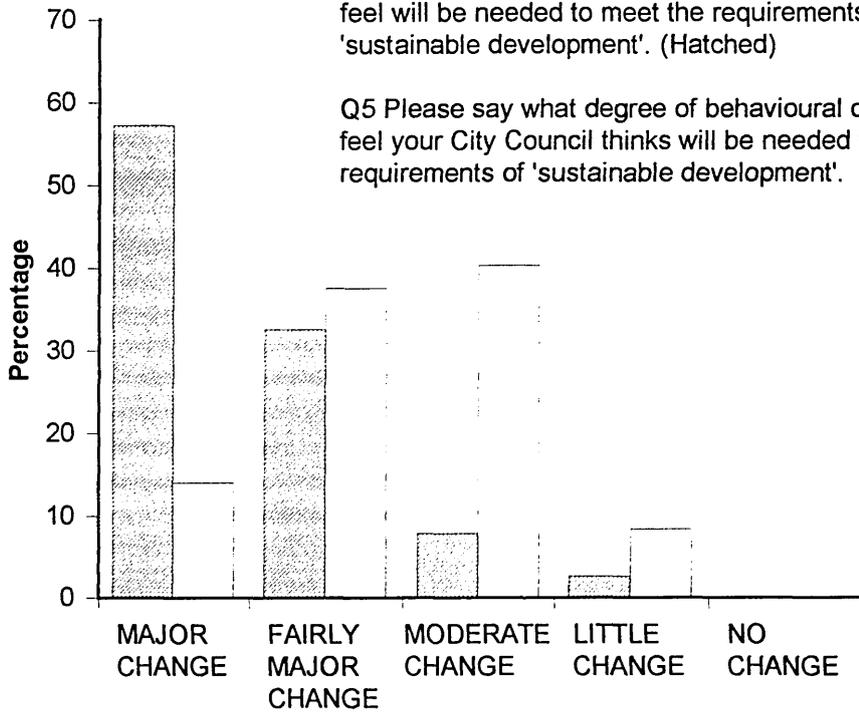


Figure 2.

Q3 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'. (Hatched)

Q5 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'.



If a less severe test is used by combining responses of 'major change' and 'fairly major change' these respondents were still almost twice as likely to claim that they feel that one or other of these levels of change will be needed (Q2, 90%; Q3, 89%) than they are likely to claim that their councils think this (Q4, 48%; Q5, 52%). Table 1., below, analyses this on a status group basis in respect of Q's 2 and 4.

**Table 1.**

**Respondents' feelings about the degree of behavioural change expected by the Earth Summit / Agenda 21 contrasted against the degree of behavioural change they feel their city council thinks will be needed. (DM Q2 & Q4)**

**Primary and secondary status group analysis. (Q2: 79 respondents Q4; 72 respondents)**

(Col.1) Respondent status	Respondents' own feelings about change needed (Q2)			Respondents' feelings about city council's beliefs about change needed (Q4)		
	(Col.2) Major change %	(Col.3) Fairly major change %	(Col.4) m.c. + f.m.c.% (Col.2 + Col.3)	(Col.5) Major change %	(Col.6) Fairly major change %	(Col.7) m.c. + f.m.c.% (Col.5 + Col.6)
Councillors	56	28	84	24	29	53
C.Execs / Dir's	50	30	80	30	20	50
'Leaders'	53	29	82	26	26	52
Other LGOs	43	52	95	6	33	39
Others	60	33	93	11	41	52
'Informants'	53	41	94	9	37	46
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>48</b>

From Table 1., it can be seen that the respondents who were the most pessimistic about their city council's acceptance of the need for change were the local government officers who are not chief officers (given as 'other LGOs'). Dramatically, only one (6%) felt that his city council thought that 'major change' would be needed and only 33% felt that their city councils thought that 'fairly major change' would be needed. On the other hand, their more

senior officer colleagues, the chief executives and directors, were the most optimistic about the degree of change which they felt their councils thought to be necessary. 50% selected either 'major change' (30%) or 'fairly major change' (20%). The other 50% selected 'moderate change'. The interviews showed that members of this latter group tended to be the least likely to be prepared to 'criticise' their city council's degree of commitment. This difference might also be explained by allowing that many of the non first tier officers are typically environmentalists to one degree or another whereas the first tier officers are less so and have to balance many priorities. With 50% of the chief executives' / directors' group claiming to feel that 'major change' will be needed against 43% of the other officers' group this does not appear, on the face of it, to be so. The interviews confirmed, however, that, to some extent, the first tier officers were tending to say what they thought I wanted to hear, attempting to present their council in the best possible light. They are also most distant from what is, or more importantly what is not, happening on the ground as a result of some of the fine words in council statements to which they have a corporate commitment but to which, in fact, often only lip service is paid. This latter point was explored through the interviews and is examined again below.

Councillors were the second most optimistic in respect of feeling that their council accepts the need for 'major change' (24%). This group of councillors, not all of whom have been involved (or involved much) with EC were also almost as likely to feel, themselves, that major change (or a major shift) is needed (56%) as were the others' group respondents who were the most likely (60%). Again, this could be partially explained as the result of councillors simply saying what they thought I wanted to hear and, therefore, keen to present themselves, their political party and their councils in the best light. This fear was tempered, however, by their readiness to 'criticise' their council's, and therefore, by inference, their own controlling Labour Group's, relative lack of acceptance of the need for change. This was evidenced by the still small percentage who felt that their councils had accepted the need for major change.

Similar trends are evident from an analysis of the responses to Q3 and Q5. (Table 2, below).

Table 2

Respondents' feelings about the degree of behavioural change required by 'sustainable development' contrasted against the degree of behavioural change they feel their city council thinks will be needed. (DM Q3 & Q5)

Primary and secondary status group analysis. (Q3; 77 respondents, Q5; 72 respondents)

	Respondents' own feelings about change needed (Q3)			Respondents' feelings about city council's beliefs about change needed (Q5)		
(Col.1) Respondent status%	(Col.2) Major change %	(Col.3) Fairly major change %	(Col.4) M.c. + f.m.c % (Col.2 + Col.3)	(Col.5) Major change %	(Col.6) Fairly major change %	(Col.7) M.c. + f.m.c % (Col.5 + Col.6)
Councillors	65	29	94	18	41	57
C.Execs / Dir's	50	40	90	41	20	61
<b>Leaders</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>59</b>
Other LGOs	50	40	90	0	39	39
Others	60	27	87	11	41	52
<b>Informants</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>All respondents</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>52</b>

Few respondents claimed that they felt a greater degree of change will be needed to meet the requirements of sustainable development than to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit / Agenda 21. This suggests that the expectations of the latter are seen as less onerous than meeting the requirements of the concept of 'sustainable development'. This may, in part, be due to respondents seeing little difference between the motivators for change cited in Q2 and Q4 and those cited in Q3 and Q5.

Overall, my expectation that the leaders would be more optimistic about the level of their council's acceptance of the need for behavioural change was met by the responses to both sets of questions. In the case of Q4, 26% of the leaders felt that their councils accepted that 'major change' will be needed whereas only 9% of the informants felt this. In the case of

Q5 the comparable figures were 26% and 6% respectively. On the other hand, taking 'major change' and 'fairly major change' together, the gap between the perception of the two groups closes. 52% of the leaders felt that their councils accepted that at least 'fairly major change' is needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 against 46% of the informants (albeit only 39% of the other local government officers). On the same basis, 59% of the leaders' group felt that their councils thought that such change will be needed to meet the requirements of sustainable development whereas 46% of the informants' group felt this (again 39% of the other local government officers). There was, thus, a fairly high level of agreement between about half of both the leaders and informants groups that their councils accept that at least fairly major behavioural change will be needed in respect of both propositions put to them.

#### *City by City Comparisons*

In Table 3 and 4, below, city by city and primary status group analyses are made in a similar way to that used for the more comprehensive status group analysis made above in respect of the pairings DM Q2 and Q4, and Q3 and Q5.

Table 3.

Respondents' feelings about the degree of behavioural change expected by the Earth Summit / Agenda 21 contrasted against the degree of behavioural change they feel their city council thinks will be needed. (DM Q2 & Q4).

City by city and primary status group analysis. (Q2: 79 respondents Q4: 72 respondents)

City and primary status of respondent	Respondents' own feelings about change needed (Q2)			Respondents' feelings about city council's beliefs about change needed (Q4)		
	(Col.2) Major change %	(Col.3) Fairly major change %	(Col.4) M.c. + f.m.c % (Col.2 + Col.3)	(Col.5) Major change %	(Col.6) Fairly major change %	(Col.7) M.c. + f.m.c % (Col.5 + Col.6)
<b>Leic. All</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>59</b>
Leaders	100	0	100	67	0	67
Infmnts	57	33	90	13	44	67
<b>Midd. All</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>
Leaders	25	50	75	0	36	36
Infmnts.	30	70	100	0	37	37
<b>Leeds All</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>41</b>
Leaders	33	33	66	0	33	33
Infmnts.	60	33	93	7	38	45
<b>Peter. All</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>60</b>
Leaders	87	13	100	70	15	85
Infmnts.	60	40	100	0	0	0
<b>All cities</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>48</b>

Table 4.

Respondents' feelings about the degree of behavioural change required by 'sustainable development' contrasted against the degree of behavioural change they feel their city council thinks will be needed. (DM Q3 & Q5)

City by city and primary status group analysis. (Q3: 77 respondents, Q5: 72 respondents)

City and status of respondent	Respondents' own feelings about change needed (Q3)			Respondents' feelings about city council's beliefs about change needed (Q5)		
	(Col.2) Major change %	(Col.3) Fairly major change %	(Col.4) M.c. + f.m.c % (Col.2 + Col.3)	(Col.5) Major change %	(Col.6) Fairly major change %	(Col.7) M.c. + f.m.c % (Col.5 + Col.6)
<b>Leic. All</b>	71	17	88	21	42	63
Leaders	100	0	100	66	0	66
Infmnts.	66	18	84	13	48	61
<b>Midd. All</b>	29	59	88	6	31	37
Leaders	37	50	87	13	38	51
Infmnts.	23	67	80	0	25	25
<b>Leeds All</b>	57	30	87	0	50	50
Leaders	50	37	87	0	56	56
Infmnts	60	27	87	0	48	48
<b>Peter. All</b>	69	31	100	40	10	50
Leaders	75	25	100	57	15	72
Infmnts.	60	40	100	0	0	0
<b>All cities</b>	57	32	89	14	38	52

It is clear from a comparison of the last two tables that a higher percentage of Leicester respondents felt that their City Council thought that either 'major' or 'fairly major' change would be needed than did the respondents in any of the other cities. With 59% of Leicester respondents selecting one of these options in the case of the need for a change of behaviour in response to the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 (Q4) Leicester was virtually joint first with Peterborough (60%). At 63% in relation to sustainable development (Q5), however, Leicester was clear first, ahead of Leeds and Peterborough with 50%. The relative

positions of the other cities were:

Table 5.

Q4		Q5	
Peterborough	60%	Leicester	63%
Leicester	59%	Leeds	50%
Leeds	41%	Peterborough	50%
Middlesbrough	38%	Middlesbrough	37%

Looking more closely at 'major change' alone, however, the order is changed, thus:

Table 6.

Q4		Q5	
Peterborough	50%	Peterborough	40%
Leicester	21%	Leicester	21%
Leeds	5%	Middlesbrough	6%
Middlesbrough	0%	Leeds	0%

An inference that Peterborough is at the top of this ranking because its leadership is the most committed to 'major change' may be unjustified because, exceptionally among the cities, none of the informants (5) felt that Peterborough City Council thought that either 'major' or 'fairly major' change will be needed. The leaders (8), on the other hand, were by far the most generous in their feelings about the degree of change which they felt their City Council thought will be needed. In response to Q4, 70% of the Peterborough leaders' group selected 'major change' and, in response to Q5, 57% selected it. There was, thus, a sharp divide between the attitudes of the two groups on this. The interviews confirmed the probability that this particular group of leaders were anxious to be seen to be more committed than they were and this is explored further, below, against the responses to Q17 and Q18.

By examining informants' responses in comparison with leaders' responses in both Middlesbrough and Peterborough, informants are seen to be substantially more sceptical of

their city councils' acceptance of the need for the 'shift' than are their leaders. In the case of Leeds, however, they are shown to be equally as positive and in Leicester only slightly less positive than their 'leaders' about the need for, at least, 'fairly major change'.

Table 7.

	Q4	Q5	Mean	Difference*
Leeds	45% (33%)	48% (56%)	44.5% (44.5%)	Nil
Leicester	67% (67%)	61% (66%)	64.0% (66.5%)	-2.5%
Middlesbrough	37% (36%)	25% (51%)	31.0% (43.5%)	-12.5%
Peterborough	0% (85%)	0% (72%)	0% (78.5%)	-78.5%

Figures not in brackets = informants' responses

Figures in brackets = leaders' responses.

\* Difference = difference between the arithmetic means of the percentages of a given group of respondents, in each city, selecting 'major change' or 'fairly major' change in response to Q4 and Q5.

It is reasonable to infer from this that, in Leicester and Leeds, the coincidence of views of the leaders' and informants' groups about the acceptance of their city councils' leaderships' that at least 'fairly major change' is needed, supports the Q4&5 findings in respect of these cities. The comments of respondents and interviewees add further weight to this inference. Leicester and Leeds respondents tended to be constructively and realistically critical about the degree of commitment of their leaderships. Peterborough respondents were much more condemning of theirs and few Middlesbrough respondents, themselves (either informants or leaders), knew much about A21 or sustainable development and were, thus, unable to offer any opinion at all on commitment.

### **Proportion of Councillors and First Tier Chief Officers Believing that Major or Fairly Major Behavioural Change is Needed.**

#### *Status Group by Status Group*

Questions 17 and 18 were designed to test, from another perspective, the attitudes of respondents about the degree of change which their city councils think will be needed. The questions were:

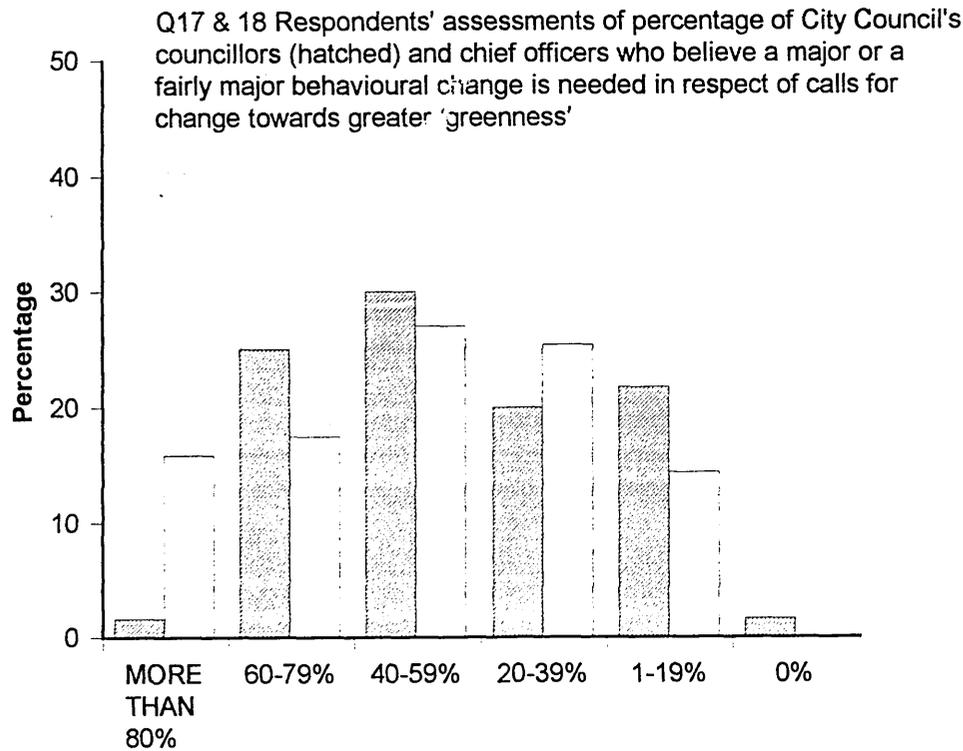
- Q17 Please try to assess about what percentage of your City Council's Councillors believe that a major or fairly major behavioural change is needed in respect of calls for change towards greater 'greenness'.
- Q18 Please try to assess about what percentage of your City Council's Chief Officers believe that a major or a fairly major change is needed in respect of calls for change towards greater 'greenness'.

The options were: more than 80%; 60-79%; 40-59%; 20-39%; 1-19%; 0%; Don't Know.

Tables 8 and 9 in Appendix Five set out and analyse the responses. Figure 3. presents respondents' assessments of the percentage of their city council's councillors and chief officers who believe a major or fairly major behavioural change is needed

If the 'don't knows' and 'not answered' are left out of account then, in response to Q17 and 18, 27% and 33% respectively of respondents assessed the percentage of councillors and chief officers who accept this premise at 60% of them or more. A further 30% and 27%, respectively, assessed the percentage at 40-59%.

Figure 3.



Two assumptions need to be made to enable the responses to Q17 and Q18 to be related to Q4 and Q5. First, it is assumed that a view held by 50% of councillors is the minimum proportion which one might reasonably, or at least notionally, regard as representing the position of 'the council' at 'member leadership level'. Similarly, 50% of chief officers is assumed to be the minimum proportion at 'officer leadership level'. Second, it is assumed that respondents selecting the 40-59% band were equally distributed in their attraction to all points within that band. On that basis, it can then be reasoned that  $(30\%/2) + 27\% = 42\%$  of respondents in respect of Q17 and  $(27\%/2) + 33\% = 46.5\%$  of respondents in respect of Q18 assessed that more than 50% of their city councillors and chief officers, respectively, accept the premise put in the questions. It might, therefore, be reasonably concluded that there is a broad match between respondents feelings, in response to Q4 and Q5, that their city councils, or by inference their leaderships, accept the need for major or fairly major change and respondents feelings in response to Q17 and 18, that 50% or more of their city councillors / chief officers believe that these levels of change are needed. This can be summarised:

- Q4 48% of respondents said that they feel their city council thinks that either 'major' or 'fairly major' behavioural change will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.
- Q5 52% of respondents said that they feel their city council thinks that either 'major' or 'fairly major' change will be needed to meet the expectations of sustainable development.
- Q17 An estimated, 42% of respondents feel that 50% or more of their city councillors believe that a 'major' or 'fairly major' change is needed in respect of calls for change towards greater greenness.
- Q18 An estimated 46.5% of respondents feel that 50% or more of their city council chief officers believe that a major or fairly major change is needed in respect of calls for change towards greater greenness.

Broadly, then, about half of the respondents to the DM survey felt that, on balance, their city council, its councillors and its chief officers accept that at least 'fairly major' behavioural change is needed.

The responses analysed by status groups at the 40% level (with the 60% level in brackets) were:

Table 8.

Councillors (Q17)		Chief Officers (Q18)	
C Es, Directors	75% (50%)	C Es, Directors	88% (50%)
Other LGOs	65% (36%)	Other LGOs	65% (24%)
Councillors	50% (19%)	Others	56% (34%)
Others	50% (18%)	Councillors	46% (33%)

For instance, 75% of chief executive / first tier chief officer respondents felt that 40% or more of their city councillors believe that a 'major' or 'fairly major' change is needed in respect of calls for greater 'greenness' and 50% of them felt that 60% or more of their city councillors believe that a 'major change' is needed.

The chief executives' and directors' group of respondents is shown to be the most optimistic especially about their own group's belief that major or fairly major change will be needed. Councillor respondents appear to be much less optimistic about their own group than are the other LGO or the chief executive / director respondents. They are, however, even less optimistic about their chief officers' acceptance of the need for change.

#### *City by City.*

On a similar basis, city by city rankings can be derived from the responses as follows:

Table 9.

Councillors (Q17)		Chief Officers (Q18)	
Leeds	65% (24%)	Leeds	67% (34%)
Middlesbrough	62% (31%)	Leicester	60% (34%)
Leicester	55% (23%)	Middlesbrough	57% (28%)
Peterborough	38% (38%)	Peterborough	49% (37%)

The unbracketed figures show that, the percentage of respondents who felt that 40% or more of their city councillors and chief officers accept that these levels of change are needed was, with the exception of Peterborough, similar in each of the cities. The bracketed figures show

the percentage of respondents who felt that 60% or more of their leaders accept that these levels of change are needed was also quite similar in each of the cities. The percentage of 'not answered' and 'don't know' responses to Q17 (at 25%) and Q18 (at 22%) was high, especially in respect of Peterborough and this may help to account for that city's poor showing in these rankings.

As discussed above, the interviews and comments received showed that some respondents were reluctant to point to their councillors or chief officers for fear of this being seen as disloyal criticism. Nevertheless, even in Leicester, evidence of scepticism about commitment was clear. It was said by an informed officer, for instance that: 'There are high levels of ignorance (denial?) in central influential individuals in all sectors.' Another said that 'Of the 60 Councillors only 3 or 4 accept the ideas.' Yet another said 'Strong political commitment needed. However, few Members and chief officers are fully aware - training is needed.'

Interviewees and respondents in Middlesbrough were in no doubt that very few councillors and chief officers are committed to the cause of A21 or sustainable development. It was quite clear that this is not seen as a priority in the face of the many other issues with which they are wrestling at present. An informed officer here claimed that 'Councillors here are not at all committed to MEC or to sustainable development.' In similar vein, an involved outsider said that 'Neither the chief officers nor the councillors here have any real belief in the need for behavioural change to meet sustainable development.'

Comments from Leeds reinforce the view that only a small minority of the 99 councillors and 17 chief officers are champions of this cause. A senior officer said that 'Very few people, councillors or officers understand what sustainability is all about'. An informed lower tier officer said that 'No environment champions among chief officers. Councillors better.' More positively, however, another lower tier officer said that the commitment 'Infiltrates culture.'

In Peterborough there was clear frustration amongst officers with what was perceived as the preoccupation of councillors with infighting and a consequent lack of co-operative working

between themselves and with officers and outside EC partners. This perception of too much 'politicking' was also clear amongst respondents to the Citizens Attitudinal Survey and is discussed further, below. A lower tier officer commented that 'Departments, officers, Councillors not working together'. A closely involved outsider said 'EC brilliant idea but City Council too much politics - not based on rational discussion - based on who's in power. A21 unlikely to meet deadline.'

There was a tendency for Qs 17 and 18 to put respondents on the spot to a greater degree than Qs 4 and 5, resulting in a slightly less generous view of the degree of commitment.

### **LEADERSHIP'S ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA 21 AS A 'BASIC ASSUMPTION'**

Agenda 21 (Ch.28) says that 'Local authorities construct, operate and maintain economic, social and environmental infrastructure...' Whilst it was argued in Chapter Three that UK local government has only quite restricted 'governmental' freedom, it does have considerable opportunity to influence these aspects of 'civic infrastructure'. A local authority's planning and economic development roles, for instance, can be extremely influential on the economic, social and environmental character and (to use the words of New Labour's Manifesto) 'wellbeing' of its area. Moreover, through the need to meet the expectations of Agenda 21, UK local authorities were presented with a call which gives legitimacy to efforts by them to begin to demonstrate that they could, and should, be increasingly governmental institutions. A local authority leadership accepting the ideology of Agenda 21 as basic ideology would, thus, be expected to have integrated it into all of their policies. They have, instead, seen their response to Agenda 21 as another 'bolt-on' responsibility which their battle and work weary councillors and officers have had to take on without the powers or resources to do a proper job. A study of environmental management systems and local authorities (Riglar, 1996) confirmed that a lack of such integration is common.

The difficulties for local authorities of incorporating social and economic considerations into the debate about environmental policy are considerable and have been highlighted by Marvin (1992). As he says, local authorities are required (e.g. by Agenda 21) to become

involved in issues which may be largely outside their traditional range of knowledge and expertise. To their credit, however, local authorities up and down the country have had consultancy advice on how they might encourage the greening of the local economy, usually at the instigation of officers.

The responses to Q16 provide an insight into the degree to which each city council has, according to particular groups of respondents, taken 'the environment' to the heart of its governmental policies and operations as opposed to marginalising it. It was:

Q16 Please say to what degree, in your view, your City Council sees 'the environment' as an overarching LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL and LOCAL STRATEGIC value rather than just another LOCAL SERVICE RESPONSIBILITY to be ADMINISTERED LOCALLY alongside many other local services such as economic development, environmental health, housing, planning, compulsory competitive tendering etc.

The options were: substantially; fairly substantially; moderately; a little; not at all; don't know.

The responses are set out in Table 10. in Appendix Five. Figure 4. compares the responses of the four status groups and Figure 5. presents the responses city by city.

*Status Group by Status Group*

A higher percentage of leaders than of informants answered either 'substantially' or 'fairly substantially', thus:

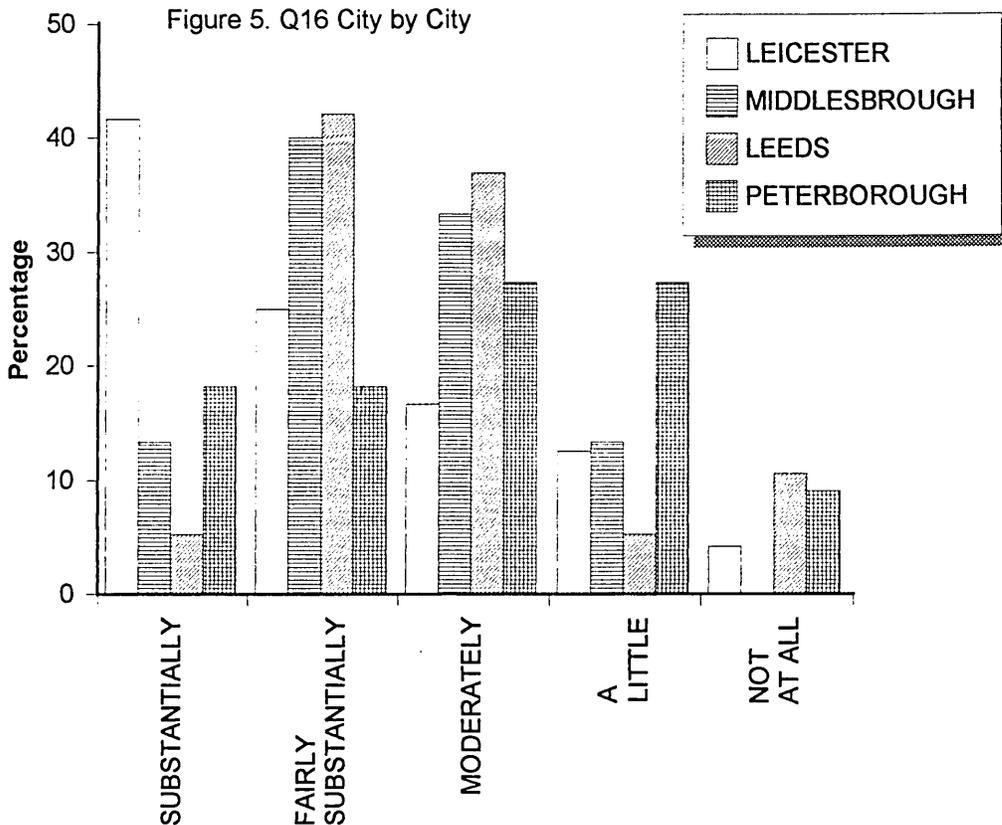
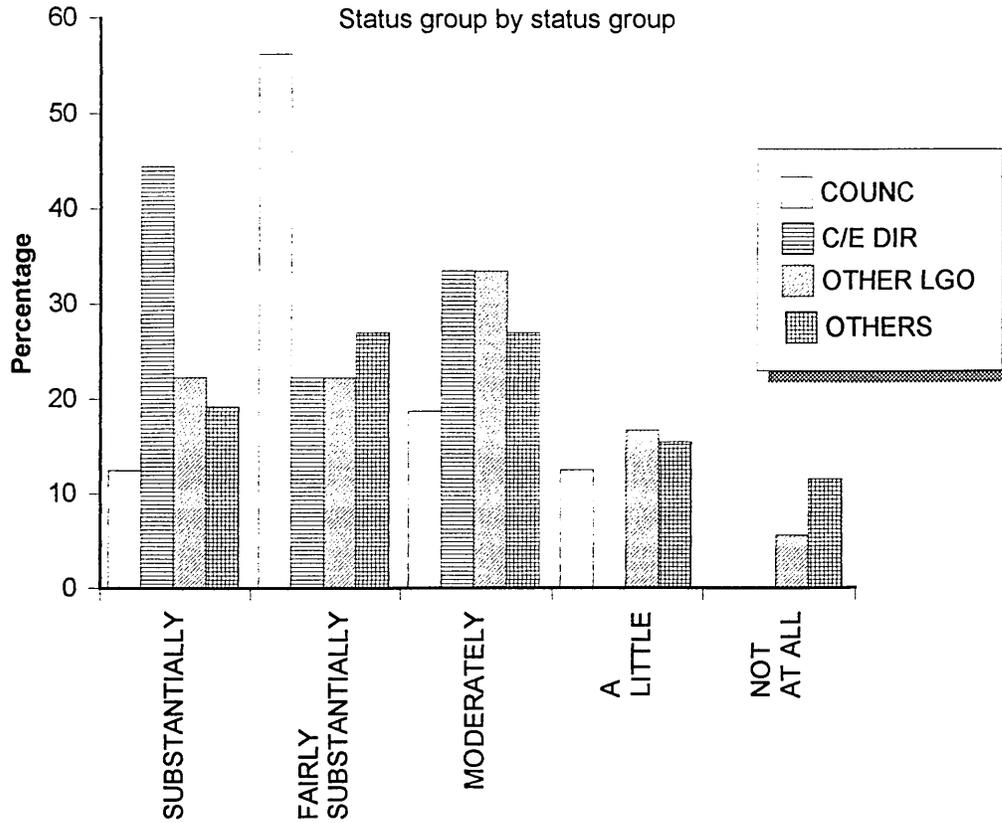
Table 10.

	sub.	f.sub.	
Councillors	12%	56%	= 68%
C/Execs and Directors	44%	22%	= 66%
Leaders			67%
Other LGOS	22%	22%	= 44%
Others	19%	27%	= 46%
Informants			45%

The gap of over 20% between the readiness of the two groups to claim that this integration has taken place is significant. It is likely that those nearer the ground in the organisation and

Figure 4.

Q16 Please say to what degree, in your view, your City Council sees 'the environment' as an overarching LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL and LOCAL STRATEGIC value rather than as just another LOCAL SERVICE RESPONSIBILITY to be ADMINISTERED LOCALLY alongside many other local services such as economic development, environmental health, housing, planning, compulsory competitive tendering etc.



those who deal with it, the 'others', are more in touch with the organisational reality than are the policy-makers. A more cynical view is that some informants may also not be very impressed with their leaders in general (perhaps sometimes even for personal reasons) and may, thus, present an unfairly pessimistic response to this question (and, indeed, to the others). It is also likely that many of those with a corporate responsibility in an EC to ensure that 'the environment' is given full weight in all policy and service matters (especially chief executives and directors) truly believe that they are trying to achieve this and that they have been successful to at least some extent. Again, a more cynical view, here, is that some of them were positive about this because they wanted to give me the best impression (in their own best interests). Knowing many of the respondents, however, gives me good cause to believe that most will have made every effort to present a fair picture.

*City by City:*

If the percentages of respondents answering 'substantially' or 'fairly substantially' are ranked city by city then Leicester respondents claimed that City Council to be way out in front of the other three, especially at the 'substantially' level, thus:

Table 11.

	sub.	f.sub..
Leicester	42%	25% = 67%
Middlesbrough	13%	40% = 53%
Leeds	5%	42% = 47%
Peterborough	18%	18% = 36%

Looking more deeply, none of the councillors answered 'substantially' in respect of Middlesbrough or Leeds City Councils. Neither did any of the other local government officers in respect of Leeds or Peterborough or any of the 'others' in respect of any city council other than Leicester. The latter was, thus far and away, the most holistic in environmental terms as reported by the officers and other informants.

It is also significant that no informants answered either 'substantially' or 'fairly substantially'

in respect of Peterborough City Council and only 25% of them opted even for 'moderately'. 50% opted for 'a little' and 25% for 'not at all'. The difference in the degree to which 'the environment' is integrated into the city council's activities, between Leicester and Peterborough is, then, as reported by informants, large. They report Middlesbrough slightly more positively than Leeds and both as being, notionally, about mid way between the Leicester and Peterborough opposite ends of the spectrum.

Even in Leicester City Council, though, the degree of integration is not strong. This view was reinforced by the comment of a knowledgeable outsider who said 'Sustainable development is very clear in the Environmental Health Department but not much elsewhere'. At the political level it was said that 'Peter Soulsby (the Leader) is a champion.' Another outsider said 'Good to have Soulsby back.' A councillor recognised that 'EC out in the wilderness in last two years, new leader had nothing to do with.' On the other hand an officer said 'Peter Soulsby not into Europe much'. It was also said by an outsider that environmental concern had been seen by the City Council's leaders as 'a subversive agenda.' and, by an officer that 'Kirklees etc. have all succeeded because of interested Members.' Another officer commented that Leicester is 'Addressing segmented issues in a non holistic way.' and another that 'A balanced approach normally leads to a loss of environmental features.' 'Short term thinking' was criticised by a senior officer and another explained the tenor of the response in his questionnaire by saying 'You may detect a high degree of cynicism... there is a huge difference between decision-makers accepting that environment is important and then changing their behaviour / decisions. They score high on the former and low on the latter'; An outsider complained about 'Inconsistent decision-making - political pragmatism.' and another said that 'The EC initiative is subject to vagaries of local politics just as any other initiative is. A significant lack of commitment, reflecting what I believe reflects a lack of conviction and real understanding.' yet another felt 'More leading, less preaching needed.'

An involved councillor in Leicester was very critical of the City Council's alleged failure to take environmental concern to its heart and explained some of the 'in-fighting' which has gone on at both officer and Councillor levels, thus:

Sadly, during all this excellent proactive work (EC), resentment by planning officers grew - saw their small but powerful domain threatened. Environmental Health making environmental impact assessments and reports to Planning Committee on planning applications was the final straw. The idea of the Environment and Development Directorate was to create an ethos of working together, but planners refused. In an attempt to bring the planners on board in mid 1995, the Chair of the Environmental Services Committee set up a Policy Unit (in the Directorate) which brought the planners, the Environment Unit (whose work included A21 and EC) and equality officers into one section for working together. Change of Leadership in May 1996 ensured planners had a shoulder to cry on and grandiose schemes with environmental impact all across the City e.g. large supermarkets with no access to public transport. Major road scheme. Environmental Services Committee lost and Planning Committee won! Environmental Services Committee done away with and its work was fragmented between various sub committees with no coordination of green issues across the Council. The current leadership does not rate the environment high on its agenda. I believe that LCC was a leader on A21 work but to most officers and Councillors it was a way of raising money or of obtaining international 'Brownie points'. It was certainly not about improving quality of life for its citizens or of understanding the meaning of the word 'sustainability' or of attempting to put it into practice. To the citizens of Leicester, whose hopes were raised with the huge consultation exercise, it just became another let down by local government.

Another, this time unnamed, Leicester City (and Leicestershire County) Councillor wrote (Leicester in Green, *Financial Times*, 31 January 1996, p19) that whilst many local authorities claim to be doing a great deal, not many councillors really know what the process means and pointed out that it is not just about planting trees and environmental management but should be considered 'a participatory planning process'.

It is significant that so many respondents in Leicester felt moved to make additional comments on their questionnaires. Even though many of them were critical of a lack of commitment at least there was a high level of awareness of what is being expected.

In direct contrast with commentators in the other cities, and especially with this readiness of Leicester respondents to comment, very few respondents in Middlesbrough (especially councillors) were moved to comment on any lack of commitment. It seems likely that this was because, as mentioned above, very few had *knowledge* of what was expected by A21, sustainable development or even EC. This was explained (e.g. by officers) as being because the newly formed (unitary) Council had yet to learn about these things and because of the massive budgetary problems which it has had to face. It was pointed out by a very involved officer that the former Council was more committed. Examples which support this view are

given below under the analysis of the EC leaderships' policy priorities.

Some 'mixed messages' were received about the degree of environmental holism operating in Leeds City Council. For instance a junior but knowledgeable officer said that environmental concern was 'Written into everything.' whereas a councillor said 'Leave it to other people to get on with.' Another councillor felt that 'Raising awareness is brief.' A senior officer agreed in saying that 'Awareness biggest achievement but more needed.' Another informed officer pointed out that 'Few people wrote bid.' and another that 'SWGs meet quarterly to save the world!' An outsider complained that 'LECI is not holistic. Going through the motions.' An influential outsider similarly argued that 'Efforts remain predominantly environmental and linkages between this and social / economic sustainability not yet being established. Overall, sustainable development policies and approaches beginning to take shape but may be two or three years before full understanding and acceptance of the principle.' A senior officer felt that 'LA21 struggle to make meaningful.' More positively, a junior but very involved officer felt that 'LECI now getting an overview. Used to be about where money was coming from.' and a key outsider said that 'Did not plan for success but to get EC status.' implying that the leadership did not know what to do next. A senior officer claimed that 'Politicians are frightened of A21' and another felt that 'Sustainable economic development, lip service only.' An outsider, however, was 'Impressed with Councillors.' Another was less optimistic suggesting that 'LECI is just something else for Councillors to sit on.' A more balanced comment from an outsider was that 'Council still reluctant to rock the boat but is showing signs of environmental understanding. It takes a long time!'

Tellingly, an outside commentator said:

I feel there are a lot of 'good things' going on in Leeds in respect of environmental issues / matters, including the voluntary sector, local authority and business sector schemes / projects. However, much is done by a relatively small number of 'committed' persons and departments (again in all sectors) who struggle to draw the great majority into the 'arena'. It is relatively easy to 'talk' a good environmental policy but when it comes to committing time, money and personnel then there are, or appear to be, quite a lot of constraints, especially at a political level. I feel the great majority are almost completely unaware of the concepts of LA21 and that if anything is actually to happen in the life of the 'ordinary' person then lots of decision-makers, especially / initially in the local authority and the business sectors, will

need quite a material shift in attitude.

A further test of integration in Leeds was provided by Bruffs (1996) analysis of Urban Development Plans (only required of the 36 metropolitan authorities). Using a matrix and a weighting system to measure the degree to which they integrate the requirements of sustainable development he concluded that the Leeds UDP performed 25th best in respect of his measure for its regard for 'natural resources', 22nd on 'energy', 1st on 'transport', 19th on 'land, water and air quality', 31st on 'waste management', 27th on 'rural and natural environment', 33rd on 'economic development' and 3rd on the 'built environment'.

Peterborough CC showed little evidence of integration on the environment. Most of the EC work was becoming increasingly marginalised to PECT. The distance between PECT and the City Council (or the cautious diplomacy of a local businessman) was indicated by the Chairman of PECT who said he was unable to complete the questionnaire because he did not know enough about the attitudes of the City Council. Some examples of positive comments in Peterborough include those of a senior officer who said that 'Countryside strategy will influence the Local Plan.' Another said that 'Attitude is a big role - not educating our children but us, now. Councillors understand much more now. Star Pit was a good example.' (Star Pit was the subject of a planning application for the development of a brick pit which was the home of the Greater Crested Newt. Following a campaign through the Press which focused on the status of Peterborough as an EC, the City Council backed down and refused consent.) Again positively, a councillor said that 'Level of awareness and expectation is high.'

On the whole, however, comments in Peterborough were strongly critical of the lack of commitment by the leadership. A senior officer said 'No corporate commitment to anything except unitary status.' and a junior officer observed 'More power, personal advantage'. An involved outsider complained of 'No political will'. A junior but extremely involved officer complained of 'No Councillors at opening of Energy Centre in 1995.' and an outsider complained of a 'Lack of public support by Councillors for environmental issues.' Another claimed that 'Councillors input into EC very limited now. Not a political issue. No political capital. Political bickering. Thus a lack of clarity. Breeds cynicism. Feels bad. General

political support for environmental issues if not pushed too hard against money'. An outsider reinforced this with the comment that 'Too Member orientated. Council does not care about the Environment.' A particularly damning comment from a councillor was that 'Peterborough is not responsible for the environment. Its status as an EC should be removed.'

There was, therefore, considerable scepticism about the degree to which the leaderships of any of the cities had accepted that environmental concern had been embraced into the overall concerns of the councils. This was especially prevalent amongst officers and outsiders but some senior (including chief) officers and councillors (of the same controlling political party) were also prepared to admit to it. This was strongest, by far, in the case of Middlesbrough, then in Peterborough, rather less so in Leeds and more constructively so in Leicester.

#### **LEADERSHIPS' ACCEPTANCE OF OTHER ISSUES AS 'BASIC ASSUMPTIONS' (POSITION OF AGENDA 21 CONCERNS ON POLICY AGENDAS)**

The findings and discussion in this section add especially to the conclusions reached in the previous chapter about *how* policies reach the formal agenda. That chapter's conclusions were, in part, based on evidence about what priority each of the city council leaderships had given to the *broad environmental agenda*. This section seeks to identify more specifically, *what* is on the formal agendas of the four EC local authorities testing further the arguments begun in the last chapter.

There has been some recognition by local politicians that a high level of political commitment is needed in this field if progress is to be made. Burstow (1995), the Deputy Leader of Sutton LBC, for instance, argued that, for a local authority to succeed with LA21, it has to be at the top of its political agenda:

Without clear support from elected members, LA21 issues are unlikely to be prioritised by officers... LA21 will not succeed in any council where political will is half hearted and officers are failing to champion the cause. This will has to come from the top. Leading members need to adopt a high profile stance that is clearly behind the promotion of A21....

Crucially, he adds:

The community incentives and dynamics must be so strong and so effective that no matter which politicians are in power or what the degree of commitment to the process, the pressure will be there to keep them focused on the need to maintain LA21 as a priority.

He claims that this is so in Sutton:

Since the Liberal Democrats took control of Sutton Council in 1986 environmental issues and sustainability have been at the top of our list of priorities.

Sutton's success as the first UK local authority (in 1996) to have all of its operations accredited under the EMAS scheme gives some credence to Burstow's claims.

One would similarly expect that the local authority of an 'Environment City' would have environmental policies at the top of its political agenda and this research sought evidence of that from leaders, informants and citizens.

### **Leaderships' Policy Priorities.**

DMQ1 was open ended, and probed commitment by the councils' leaderships to the need for 'the shift' without specifically asking this. Instead, it asked:

Q1 What do you think the LEADERSHIP of your city considers are the five most important overall policy issues facing the city?

#### *Status Group by Status Group*

Figures 6 to 8 present summaries of the responses to Q1 analysed by status groups.

At the 'all respondents' level, economic issues in one form or another were seen by respondents as the most important overall policy issues facing their city. Such issues included jobs, economic growth and the need to improve the image of the city (to help bring economic benefits). 'Economic regeneration' was a term frequently used. Indeed, the term

Figure 6.

Q1 What do you think the leadership of your City considers are the five most important overall policy issues facing the City?  
Please indicate them in declining order.

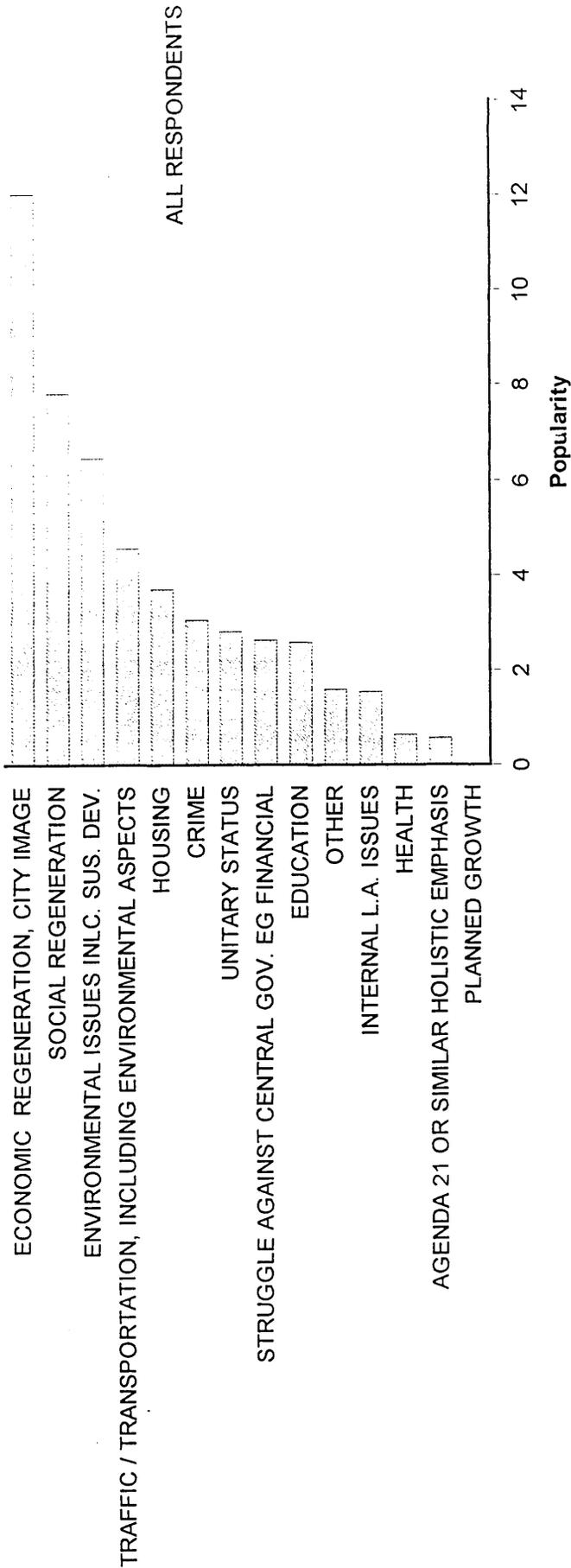


Figure 7.

Q1 What do you think the leadership of your City considers are the five most important overall policy issues facing the City?  
Please indicate them in declining order.

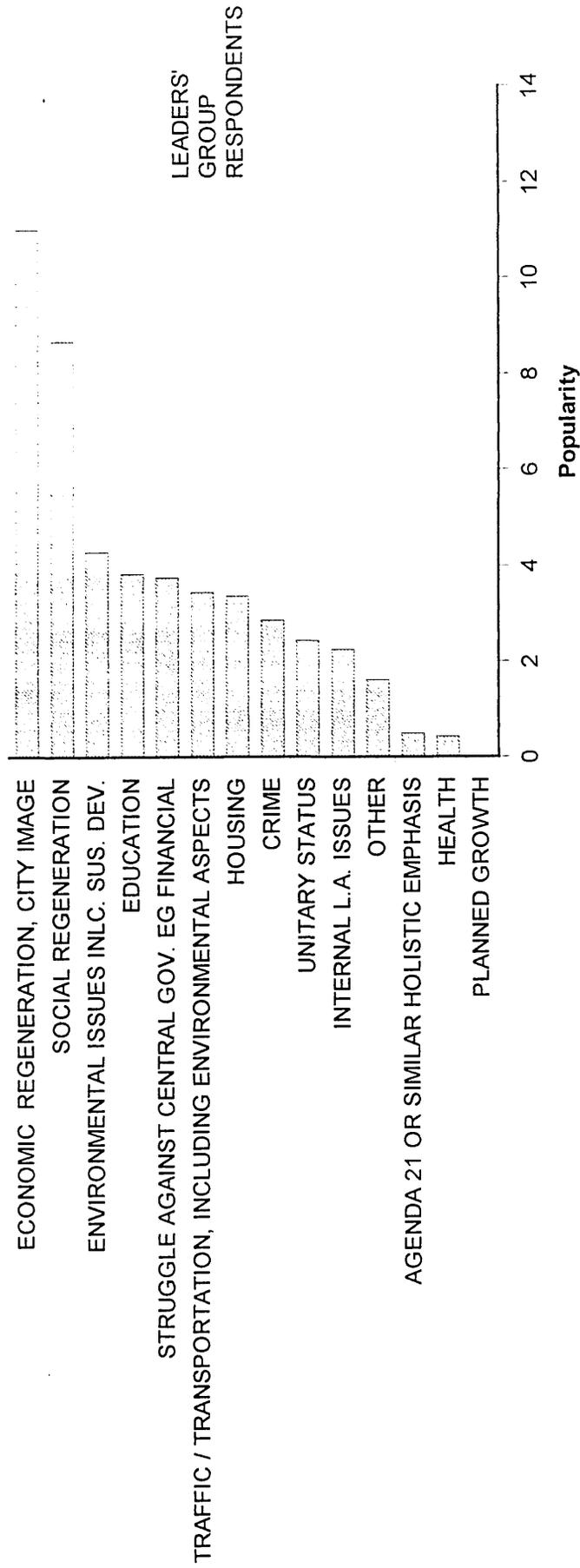
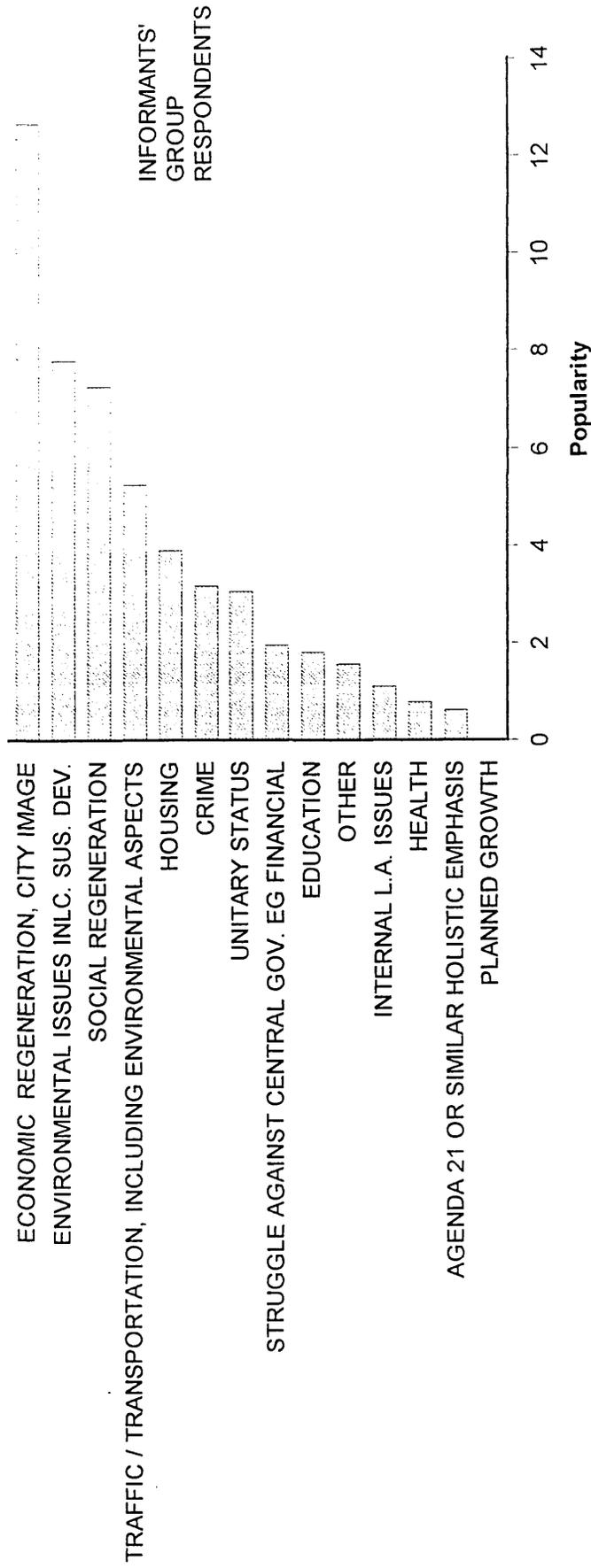


Figure 8.

Q1 What do you think the leadership of your City considers are the five most important overall policy issues facing the City?  
Please indicate them in declining order.



'regeneration' cropped up frequently in responses to the DM Survey and, thus, deserves some exploration here. It is a term which, during the researcher's long service in local government, ending only in 1993, was not much used. The interviews suggested that the introduction by the Government of The Single Regeneration Budget as its new approach to capital control for local government contributed to this. This new competitive bidding system seems to have encouraged, perhaps even compelled, local authorities to think of all of their new schemes in terms of the 'regeneration' of declining areas through public / private sector partnerships, capital investment and associated initiatives. Such areas (especially declining inner city areas and peripheral housing estates) can be seen as an almost inevitable consequence of Thatcher's only weakly regulated free marketism and they had become an increasing source of embarrassment to local and central government politicians. Economic regeneration was seen as offering solutions largely consistent with that ideology. So too, though to a lesser extent, was 'social regeneration' the need for which was the second most often cited policy issue. Again, the term was frequently used. Other terms used were 'social cohesion' and 'social exclusion'. Among this (relatively environmentally biased) group, environmental concern (one might say environmental regeneration including moves towards sustainable development) was given as the third most recognised group of overall policy issues by the leadership of their cities. Taken with the fourth most often cited i.e. traffic / transportation, including environmental aspects, environmental issues were clearly said to be seen as important by the leadership of the cities. Perhaps surprisingly, 'crime' ranked only fifth, behind 'housing'. The fact that crime control was not a direct responsibility of any of the city councils, however, might help to explain this.

Issues raised included facilities e.g. - shops, leisure; community consultation:

'getting everyone involved'; 'community involvement'; 'ageing population / community care'; 'services to community fragmented over recent years to quangos'; 'promotion of arts and sports'; 'social services'; 'dog dirt'; 'city-scape'.

'Community safety' was another 'in term' used. One councillor respondent replied 'finance, financial management, financial management' and another councillor simply wrote 'finance' five times.

The outcome of the 'pecking order' of issues as perceived by the leadership group's assessment of policy priorities of leaders of city councils was vigorously first, 'economic' and second, 'social' with 'environmental', third, though some way behind the two 'big issues'. This reflects the ideology of the dominant paradigm and suggests a policy trinity with this pecking order. The response and especially those received during the interviews, however, revealed a perception that we may be moving towards a 'commonwealth of values' in respect of economic and social concerns but that environmental concerns are some way behind, not really sharing in this 'commonwealth'<sup>4</sup>. It was, however, also apparent from the interviews that economic issues predominate over the social with the former being seen as a prerequisite if the latter is to be tackled. It appears as a hierarchy based on free market ideology ie. we must earn money (wealth) before we can buy social and then environmental benefits. Far from heading the list, then, in these Environment Cities, environmental issues were ranked third with the leaders of the cities.

Perhaps surprisingly, the 'informants' group was slightly more optimistic about their cities' leaderships' acceptance of environmental issues as a policy priority. This was put at second, just ahead of social regeneration but still well behind economic regeneration.

### *City by City.*

Figures 9 to 12 summarise the responses to Q1, analysed city by city.

In Leicester, environmental issues were seen as an easy second to economic regeneration. They were seen as third, fifth and seventh in Middlesbrough, Leeds and Peterborough, respectively. In Middlesbrough, social regeneration was the easy second to economic regeneration with environmental issues a good third. In Leeds also, social regeneration was the easy second to economic regeneration with traffic, including traffic related environmental issues, taking third place. In the comments accompanying the responses to the questions the criticism of the environmental performance of the (new) leadership in Middlesbrough was almost universally damning. Peterborough's leaders were perceived as

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<sup>4</sup> See systems model, Chapter Three, Figure 3.

Figure 9.

Q1 What do you think the leadership of your City considers are the five most important overall policy issues facing the City?  
Please indicate them in declining order.

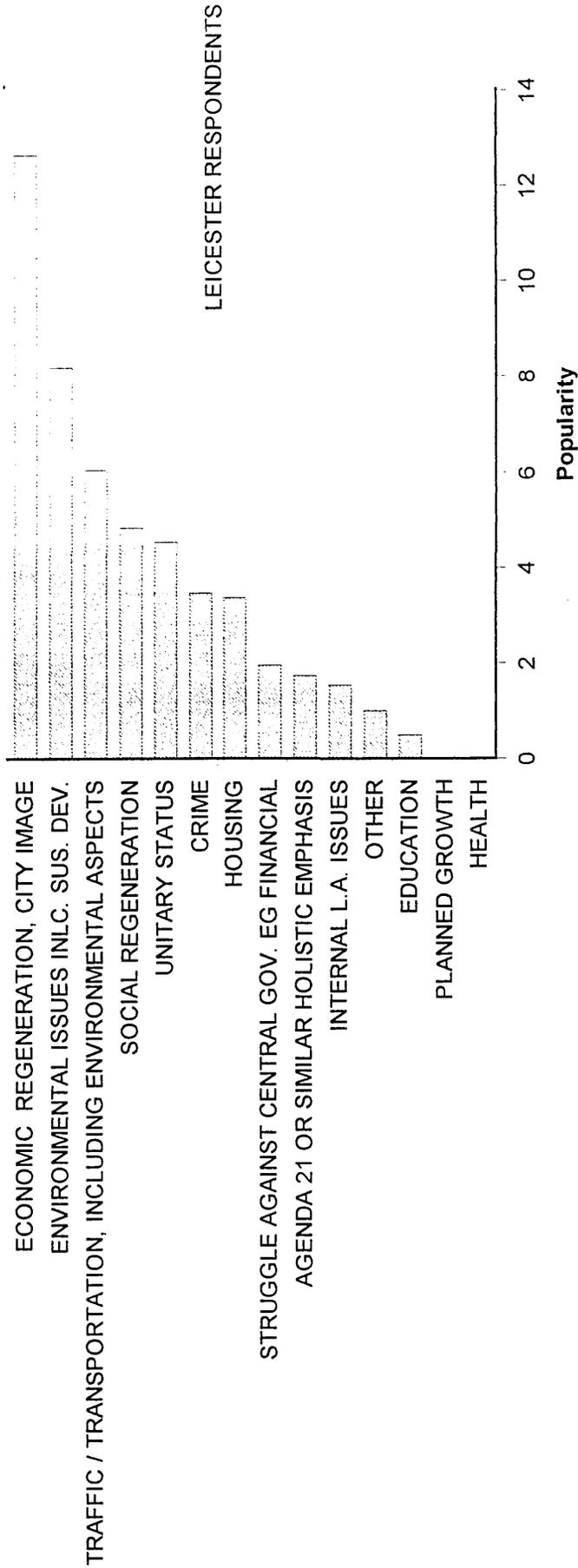


Figure 10.

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Please indicate them in declining order.

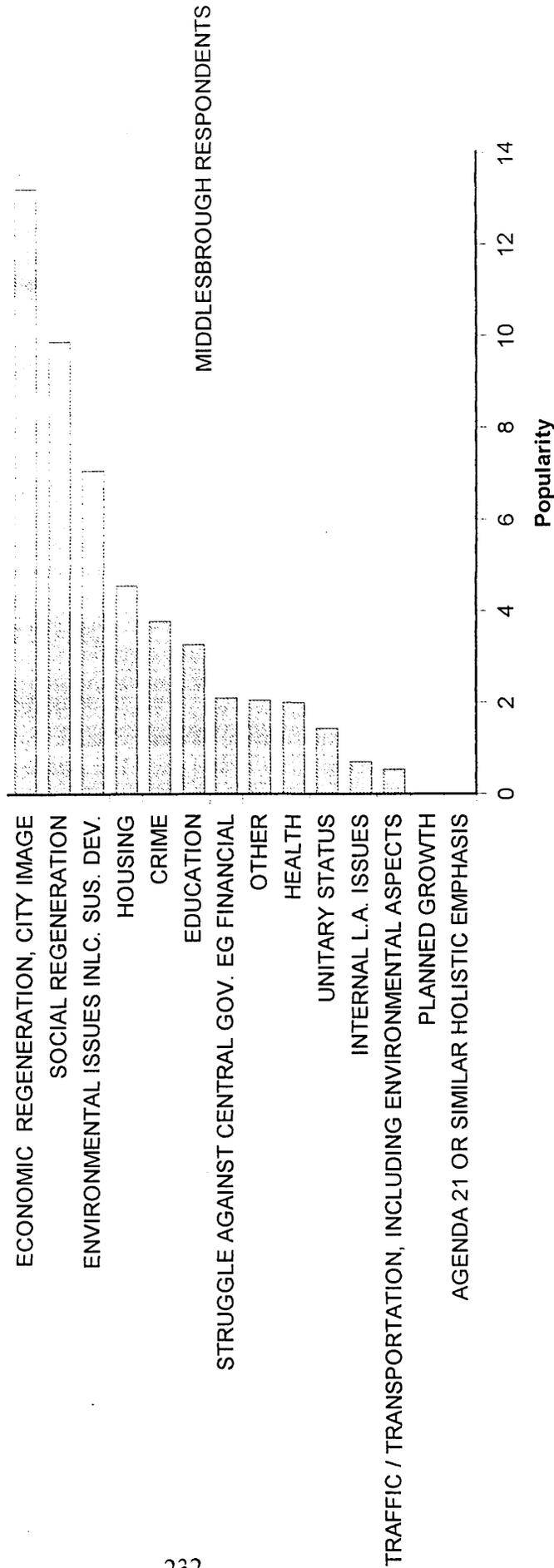


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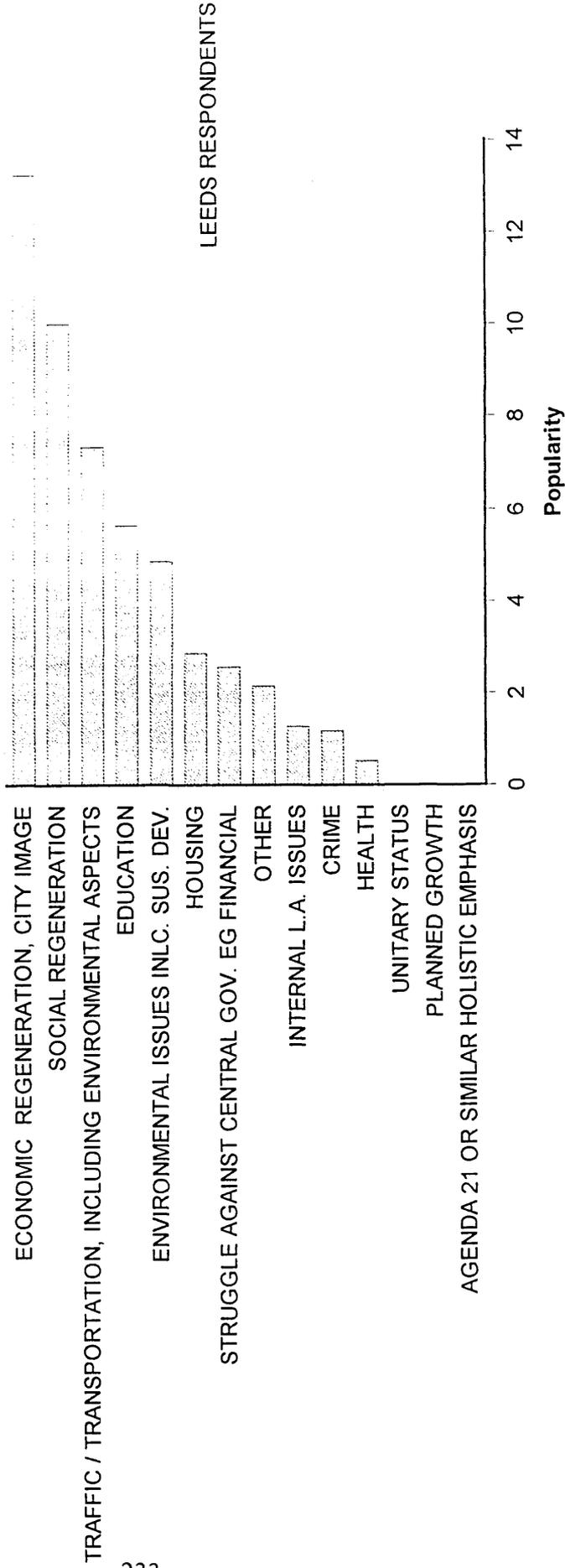
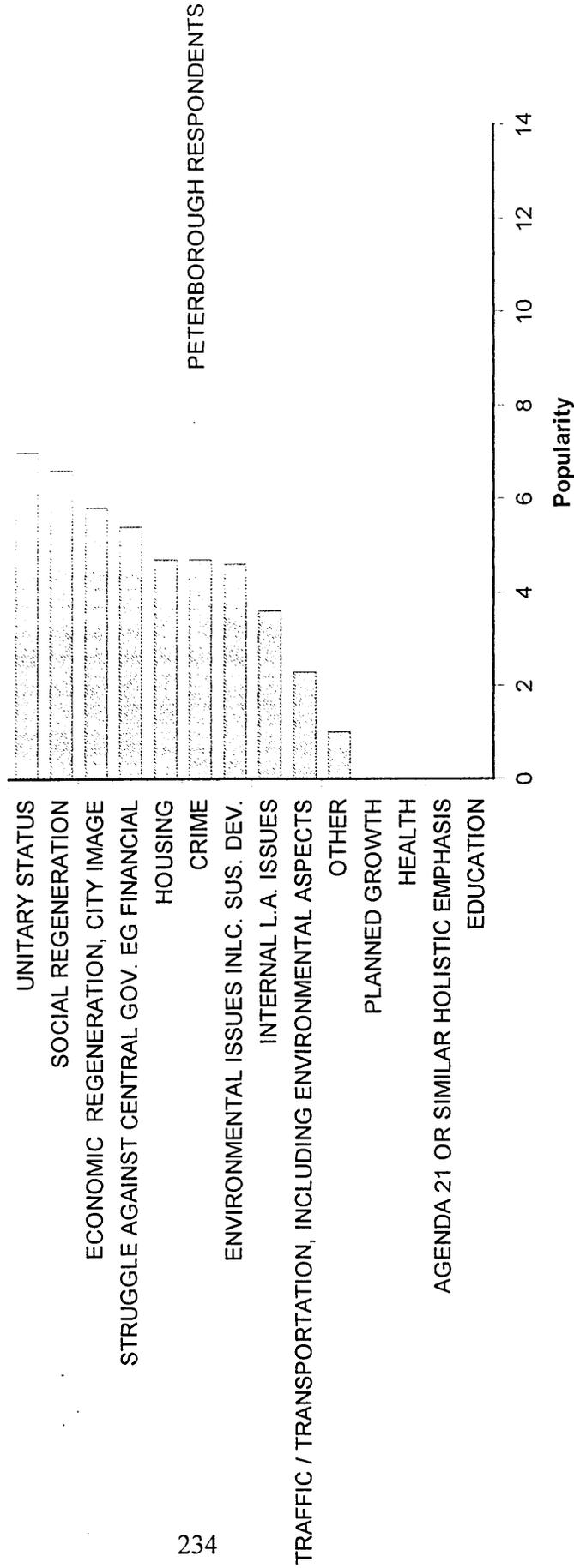


Figure 12.

Q1 What do you think the leadership of your City considers are the five most important overall policy issues facing the City?  
Please indicate them in declining order.



believing unitary status to be the most significant policy issue facing the city with social regeneration and then economic regeneration a close second and third respectively. Although crime ranked sixth and environmental issues only seventh there was a fairly close grouping of the top seven most often cited issues.

In Leicester, a typical comment by an informed outsider was that: 'There is obsession with budget cuts!'. Similarly, unitary status and the other pressures on local government were thought to have been a serious distraction. Another informed outsider said that:

I think the EC designation has benefitted from the attempts to bring about improvements, and I think very valuable lessons have been learnt through trying to make a success of the EC model. However, the endless changes / reorganisations etc. within local government are like shifting sands which tend to obscure these lessons before they can create long term changes in the way things are done. There is always pressure to go on to the next thing!

On the other hand, it was also suggested that more progress could have been made in spite of this. A Leicester outsider, for instance, commented that the Council has 'Failed to make small changes to ordinary traditional council workers jobs that could have a major impact e.g. officers who advise on development.'

Explanations for Middlesbrough's claimed poor performance which blame 'others', especially the Government included, from an involved senior councillor:

Core funding is a major problem. As budgets reduce the emphasis is on statutory activities and consequent reductions in corporate balances place such initiatives at risk unless 'hard' performance data can justify the resource allocations.

Due to present Government cuts (capping) we have not been able to invest in the EC project as much as I would have liked. It has been one long round of cuts etc. Any decent central government would see the value of what we are doing - local people, familiar with local issues, problems, trying to form partnership groups, to tackle problems.

Massive shortfall on budget because though not capped, Government required Council to reduce Council Tax by 15% for 1996/97.

No growth policy. EC was funded by Urban Programme for 4 years expiring on 1 April 1996 when unitary status began. Also had to reapply to WT for EC status for another four years. Given. Council will find the £60,000 by a combination of money from savings from corporate budget and secondments. Only growth area.

Life is very chaotic as new Members and staff (3 new EC Managers) are very much on an environmental learning curve.

Funding remains the main hurdle. Unless the Government comes up with large volumes of cash support little of major significance will be achieved.

Some reasons put forward for Middlesbrough's acknowledged lack of progress and which were 'critical' of the Middlesbrough leadership included those of senior officers who complained of a 'Lack of prioritization of budget.' and a 'Lack of priority given to funding environmental initiatives.' An outsider complained of 'No allocation of (admittedly scarce) funds for environmental projects.' and another of 'Resource allocation.' A more junior but closely involved officer observed that 'The old Council was much more committed to green issues through key chief officers and leading Members. The new Council is much more committed to solving the severe financial problems arising from local government reorganisation and social justice / equal rights is now the political priority.' Another outsider pointed out that 'MEC began with two inadequate managers.' A councillor observed that 'Worked in Middlesbrough for 16 years and did not know much about it (EC).' and an outsider said that there was a 'Lack of strategies which put environment as key aim.' A key statement by an involved junior officer which summed up those of many observations made was that 'Members were academics, now taxi drivers.' There was a strong feeling that this Council does not have much idea about what environmental sustainability is about and is concerned mostly with less strategic issues such as short term financial survival, economic development and the pressing need for action to relieve the plight of socially declining areas in the town. A thoughtful comment on the problem of making sustainability more relevant to political priorities in Middlesbrough by a senior officer, however, was that:

I believe that one of the major problems with sustainability is that the Councillors have not yet recognised that social equity, housing, employment and education need to have been developed to a state where people are happy or reasonably so before there is any chance of it happening. It is not just the so called green issues of energy, air quality and flora that need to be tackled as part of LA21.

Although both the Middlesbrough Leader and the Deputy Leaders' questionnaires were eventually returned, it seems very likely that they did not complete them themselves. The interview with them was cut short, probably, because they did not feel sufficiently familiar

with the subject matter. If this is true, then it reinforces a belief that the councillors are not at all in touch with the expectations of A21, sustainable development or EC.

Traffic is the big issue in Leeds and was often cited (third most often) as needing urgent attention in the centre before gridlock occurs. Other environmental issues were rated fifth after education.

Evidence that the leadership in Leeds has seen its environmental credentials as a means for boosting its efforts for European recognition included the following statement from an officer about the Second European Conference on Sustainable Development which was held in Lisbon in October 1996: 'Councillor Brian Walker (the Leader) gave a presentation on Leeds' experience which focused on the complex requirements of delivering LA21 objectives in large European cities'. Leeds will host a follow up seminar in December 1997. Negatively, from the environmental perspective, it was also said by an officer that 'Europe takes all Mike's (Environment City Manager) time.' and by another that 'Intended European City drives everything'. Other more positive indications of the priority which the leadership in Leeds gives to environmental issues included the comment of a junior environmentally committed officer who said that 'EMAS scheme going well.' A leading councillor said 'Would welcome targets in dealing with sceptics on Labour Group.'. Another said 'Has equal standing with other initiatives.' Another junior and environmentally committed officer observed that 'Business is vital to Leeds - increasing business means more traffic, more pollution, more congestion, more asthma.' Yet another felt that 'Resources could be transferred to environment from other department budgets.' An officer pointed out that Leeds has a '£1bn annual budget', and the context of this statement implied that the Council's own spending choices have a potentially profound impact on the local economy and on the social and environmental consequences of that investment choice. Similarly the context of an informed officer's criticism that 'Leeds Initiative is a breakfast club.' suggested that corporatism is viewed as not serving the environmental cause but essentially the economic one. An outsider, frustrated with slow progress said 'Should ask Council to sign an agreement.' and another observed a 'Lack of commitment - transport policies, emphasis on economic ability of Leeds, not environmental or even aesthetics.' Another

outsider pointed to a 'Lack of funding, lack of communication / appreciation of key environmental personnel employed by Council. Low morale. Lack of global awareness.'. Yet another felt that 'LA21 is important element of where people see the future of the City. No mechanism agreed for consultation. A balanced pace. Everything we do has to have balance e.g. environment / economy.' A fairly senior officer commented that 'Chamber of Commerce and major City leaders think it is a fringe issue.'

The concern about Peterborough's unitary status can be only a temporary preoccupation. These results along with some of the others, however, and the interviews suggest Peterborough City Council to be inward looking. This seems to be not only because of its successful fight for unitary status and the need now to manage the challenge but also because, as suggested above, 'politicking' seems to have been rife here for some years. It was much criticised in both the DM and CZ Surveys. Unlike the other three cities, though, Peterborough seems to be perceived as quite an affluent place to most respondents with a need to tackle 'higher ' quality of life issues rather than just creating jobs. Some of the comments from Peterborough reinforce these points. An officer observed that 'All of the cities have many other things on their agendas.' and another that 'What we are achieving is limited. CO2 no progress. Business as usual.' A more senior officer commented that there was 'Initiative overload. Citizens' Charter, LG Review, CCT, EMAS (through which environmental conditions are inserted in contracts so that 'the depot' gets them).' More positively, however, a councillor felt that 'EC / A21 places on political agenda.' and another that 'Not at top of agenda of any council - pervading rather than dominating it.' An involved officer complained that 'Space over Co-op Bank for Environment Centre - very poor location - grovelling.'

The overall policy trinity fixed 'pecking order' described above, then, does not bear out in the city by city analysis where different issues such as unitary status, traffic (with substantial environmental aspects) and specific environmental issues all break into it. This gives some reason to believe that there is potential for a full commonwealth of values<sup>5</sup> to allow environmental values more space to develop. The space for other policy issues,

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<sup>5</sup> As described by the 'systems model', Chapter Three, Figure 3.

however, seems likely to exist only where the need for helping to lead the charge for wealth creation is not seen as the imperative for the council. This appears to be so in Peterborough albeit the supposed 'space' appears to have been filled with many other issues as well as environmental ones, especially the challenge presented by unitary status.

If we expect the leaders of a city (especially an Environment City) which is committed to shallow green environmentalism to have environmental issues at the top, or even at equal top of their policy agenda then it seems that none of the four EC 's are committed to that degree. Leicester might be seen as the closest. The perception of Leeds and Middlesbrough leaders is that they, at least, see traffic/environmental issues as very close to the top of their agendas. No doubt other environmental issues which present themselves as crises in the way that traffic has could similarly rise up the policy pecking order.

#### **Evidence of Cities' (Leaderships) Caring (or Not) About Environmental Issues: Perceptions of Decision-Makers and Citizens and Artifactual Evidence.**

DM Questions 10 and 11, and especially the latter, tested the integrity of responses again on the issue of the commitment of leaderships to the need for behavioural change. This time, like most of the other studies in this field<sup>6</sup>, behavioural evidence that the issue had a high priority on the formal agenda was sought, thus:

- Q10 In what ways do you think your city shows that it cares especially about environmental issues? If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance to your city.
- Q11 In what ways do you think your city shows that it does not care especially about the environment? If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance to your city.

Unlike most studies in this field, it was possible to compare the perception of decision-makers on this with those of citizens. To facilitate this DMQ 10 and 11 were worded in a

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<sup>6</sup> See Chapter One

similar way to Questions 12 and 13 of the CZ Survey which asked<sup>7</sup>:

Q12 In what ways, if any, do you think L M P L shows it cares especially about environmental issues?

Q13 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/P/L shows it does not especially care about environmental issues?

Tables 11 and 12, in Appendix Five, set out the detailed findings of the DM questions. Tables 1 and 2, in Appendix Six, set out the detailed findings of the CZ questions, combining the 1994 and 1995 results. Tables 3 to 6 in Appendix Six give the detailed CZ 1994-95 findings separately. The bar charts in Figures 13 and 14 illustrate key aspects of the findings of the DM Survey and those in Figures 15 and 16 key aspects of the findings of the CZ Survey.

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<sup>7</sup> Like DMQ1, these questions were deliberately very open ended to draw out as wide a range of perceptions of the need for environmental care as possible. The answers were, therefore, difficult to categorise. To aid comparison, analysis of the DM questions included the CZ categories.

Figure 13.

Q10 In what ways do you think that your City shows that it cares especially about environmental issues? If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance.

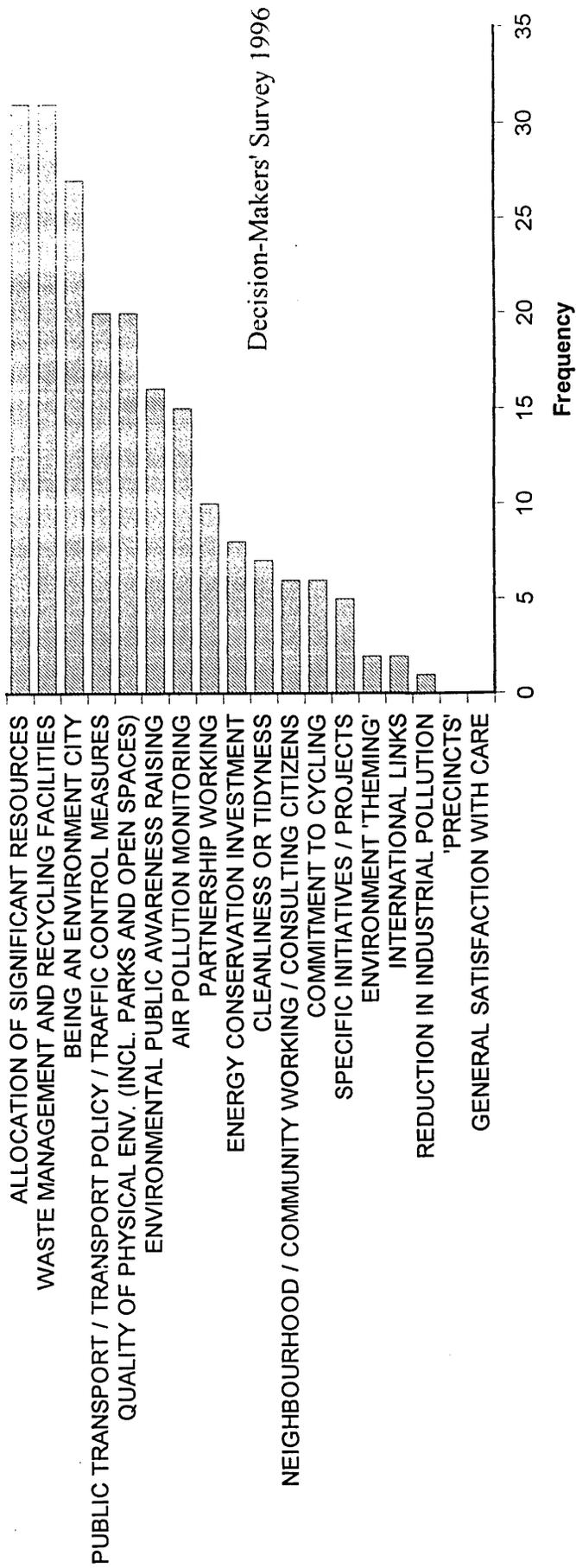


Figure 14.

Q11 In what ways do you think that your City shows that it does not care especially about the environment?  
 If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance.

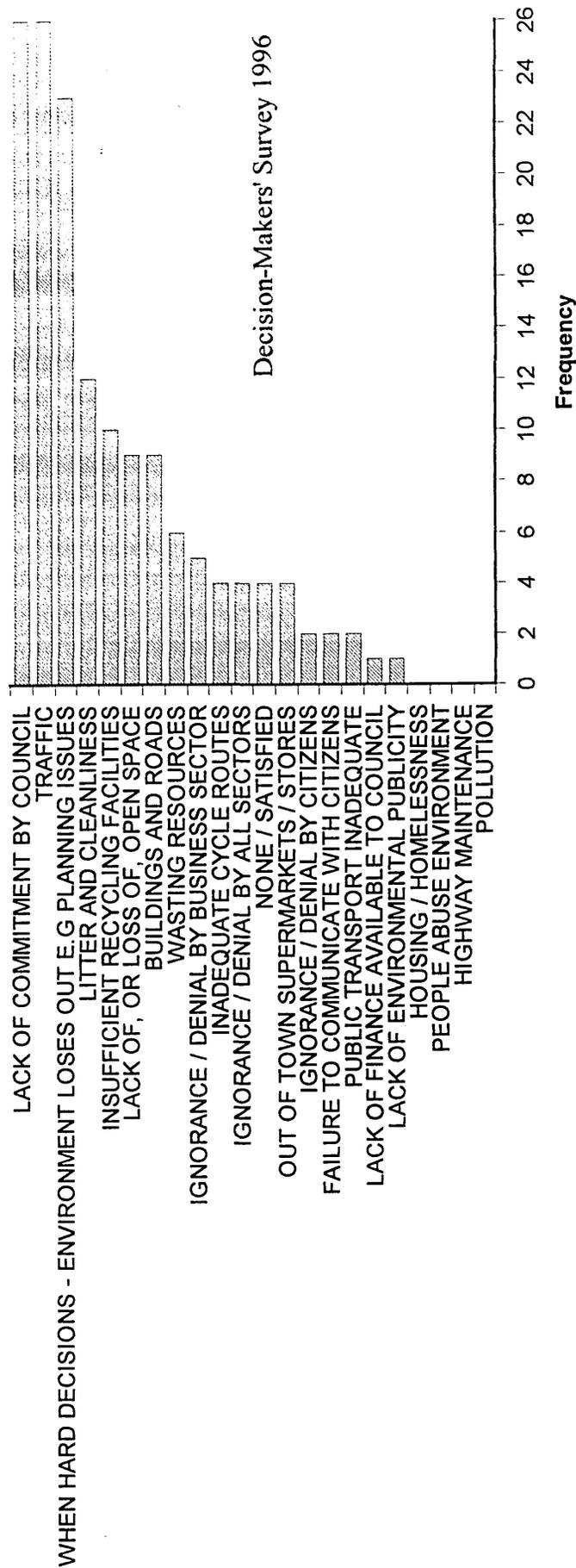


Figure 15.

CZ Q12 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows it cares especially about environmental issues?

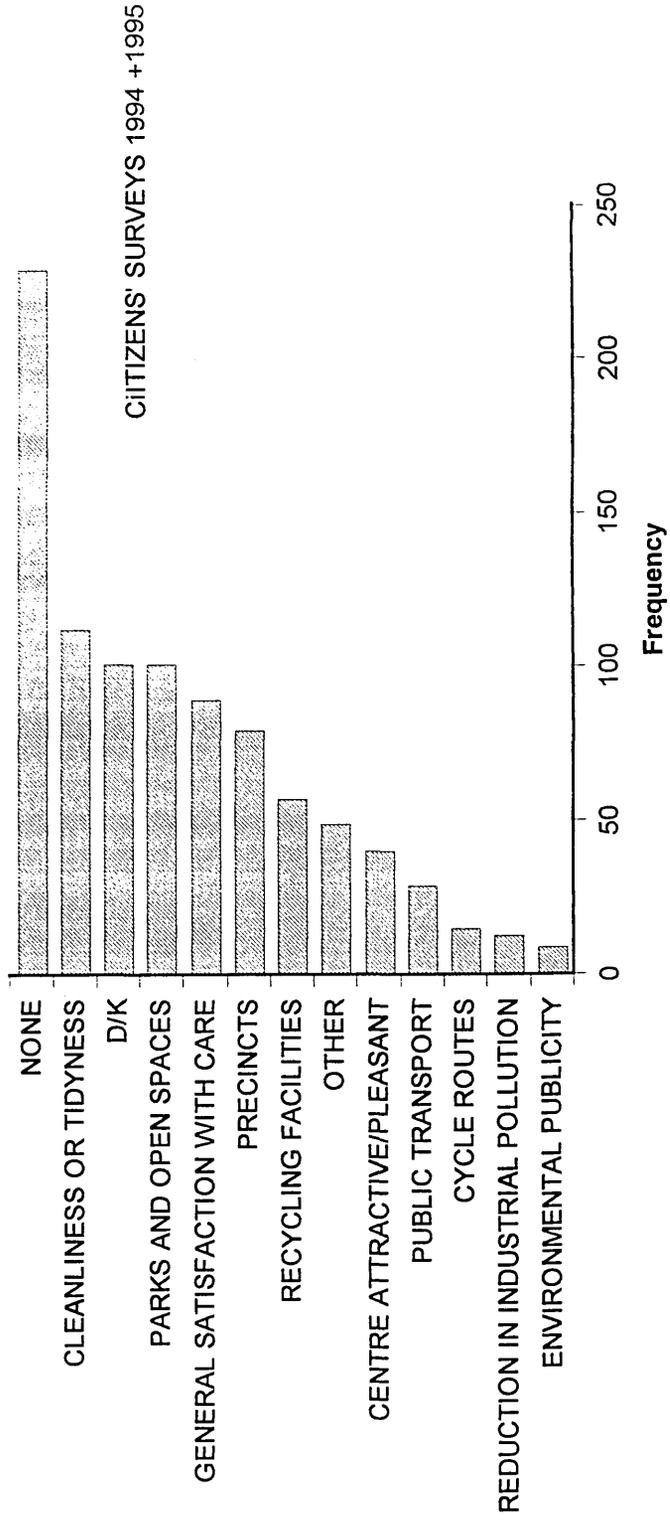
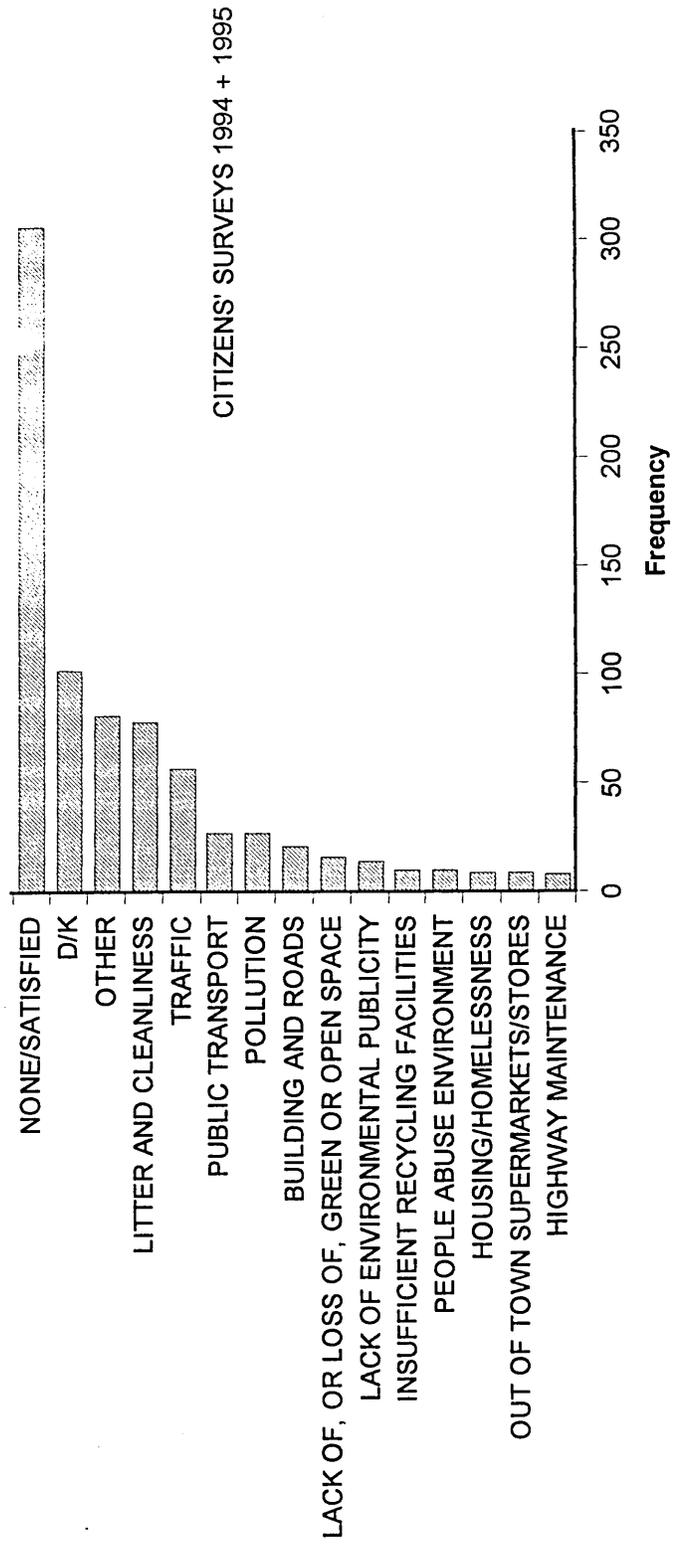


Figure 16.

CZ Q13 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows that it does not especially care about environmental issues?



The decision-makers saw commitment as being demonstrated by their city mostly through the allocation of significant resources and through its commitment to waste management and recycling facilities. Next came the fact that it is an Environment City, then its care for transport issues and the quality of the physical environment. The most popular response by citizens, on the other hand, was that there are no ways in which the city shows it cared especially about environmental issues. Their most often expressed satisfaction was with cleanliness and tidiness with open spaces and then a general satisfaction with their city's care. The 'environment' to citizens was often seen as to do with the public areas which the council maintains. They had relatively little knowledge of their council's wider role in the environmental field. The order of the top 5 most often quoted demonstrations of 'commitment' (showing care) in the DM Survey by each grouping was as shown in Table 12.

Table 12.

The five most often quoted demonstrations of commitment to environmental issues. (DM Q10).

Primary and secondary status groups and city by city.

	All DM	Leader	Council	C/E Dir.	Inform	LG Os	Others	Leic.	Md	Lds	Peter.
Allocation of sig. resources	1	3	3	1	1	1	4	1	2	4	2
Waste man. & recycling fac.	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	3		1	1
Being an EC	3	2	2	1	3	5	1	3	4	2	2
Action on transport	4	4	4	4	5		2			3	
Quality of physical env.	4				3	3	4	3		5	4
Env. publicity / awareness		5		4				1	3		
Air pollution monitoring			4			4			1		
Partnership working									4		
Cleanliness and tidiness											5

The DM Survey analysis of responses to Q11 revealed 'a lack of commitment by the council' and 'traffic' to be the equally most frequently mentioned ways in which the respondent's city showed that it *did not* care especially about environmental issues. The category 'when hard decisions - environment loses out e.g. planning issues' was not far behind those two. 'Litter and cleanliness' and 'insufficient recycling facilities' came next but were a long way behind the three front runners. The leaders' group, however, specified 'traffic' most frequently, with 'litter and cleanliness' a poor second. The leaders conceded, though, that 'when hard decisions have to be made the environment loses out e.g. in the case of planning issues'. This was the third most frequently specified 'way'. 'Lack of commitment by council' and 'insufficient recycling facilities' came joint fourth.

In the Citizens' Survey<sup>8</sup> 'none/satisfied' was by far the most frequent response (50% of those not answering 'don't know' to CZQ 13). 'Don't knows' were second, 'other' third, 'litter and cleanliness' fourth and 'traffic' fifth. In many cases the 'none/satisfied' response was because people just could not think of any examples. It was clear from involvement in carrying out the interviews that most people did not seem to be 'tuned in' to this at all. Most of those who offered examples of 'ways' cited 'litter and cleanliness (13 % of the 'ways' cited), traffic or public transport related (taken together, 14% of the 'ways' cited). This picture is very different from that gained from the DM Survey where this, much more informed, group showed itself to be much more able to point to evidence, albeit often rather general, of a lack of commitment.

In the DM Survey the order of the top 5 most often quoted demonstrations of a lack of commitment given by the various groupings are set out in Table13.

As might be expected, informants were more ready than were their leaders to claim that there was a lack of commitment by their councils. Nonetheless, a lack of commitment by the council was the equal second most frequently mentioned 'way' stated by the chief executives / directors group. A failure to stick to their 'environmental guns' when hard

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<sup>8</sup> The responses to CZQ11 and 12 are examined in greater detail in Chapter Six and Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Appendix Six.

decisions have to be made (especially planning decisions) was the third most frequently stated failure by the councillor group.

Table 13. The five most often quoted demonstrations of a lack of commitment to environmental issues. (DM Q11).

Primary and secondary status groups and city by city.

	All DM	Leader	Coun cs	C/E Dir	Infor m.	LG Os	Other s	Leic	Md	Lds	Peter
Traffic	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	3	4	1	1
Litter & cleanliness	4	2	4	1			5		2	5	2
When hard decisions - env. loses	3	3	2	5	2	2	2	1		3	4
Lack of commitment by council	1	4	4	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	2
Insufficient recycling facilities	5	4	3	5		4			2		4
Inadequate cycle routes			4								
Wasting resources			4				5			4	
Ignorance / denial by all sectors			4								
Ignorance / denial by bus. sector				2							
Ignorance / denial by cit.				5							
Public trans inadequate			4								4
Lack or loss of op. space				5	4		4	3	5		
Buildings & roads				5	4	5	5	3		5	
None / satis.				5							4

The 'other local government officer' group were very clear about their disappointment at the lack of commitment. These officers may be biased by their environmental commitment but the interviews confirmed that they are also amongst the most informed in their councils about what is and is not being done in response to the 'fine words'. 17 of the 38 'ways' cited by them fell into one or other of the two categories 'lack of commitment by council' (10), or 'when hard decisions have to be made the environment loses out' (7).

Again, in Leicester, many more comments were offered in response to the DM Survey questions than were offered in the other cities. As observed above, this suggests that decision-makers here are much more aware of the challenge of making a major shift of ideology and behaviour towards sustainable development green than are decision-makers in the other cities. An involved outsider commented that 'When hard decisions have to be made, the environment goes out of the window.' Another said 'Planning type issues, no howls of protest.' Examples of this which were frequently given included the Cattle Market development, the planning consent for which had been given in 1995 and which included a cinema, bingo hall, McDonalds, Pizza Hut and no real access to the public transport system. It was said by an involved officer that the 'Cattle market development (big supermarket, cinema, bingo hall) is being built with car parks on inner city site.' Another complained of 'Periodic insensitive developments with token attention to environmental issues'. An influential outsider complained of 'Cars all over the place.' and another of the 'Absence of serious proposals for traffic management, continuing threats to built environment in regeneration schemes, lack of commitment to maintenance of public open spaces.' An outsider complained of 'Mass planting of trees but no maintenance budget' and another that there were 'Still no cycle routes, a cynical exercise in ticking boxes.' A councillor commented 'Approval of major road scheme by County Council in advance of unitary status without any consideration of environment. Based on possible financial gains?' Another felt that the City Council was 'Doing very little to discourage city centre car parking, gradual erosion of environment budgets'. A closely involved outsider noted 'Problems of open space management with CCT, unkempt appearance.' and another complained of a 'lack of vision on traffic issues, low priority to waste recycling, does not market its expertise or achievements.' Yet another involved outsider complained of the

'Personal habits of councillors and officers, pragmatism, the inner ring road for Leicester' A councillor recognised that 'Development decisions - generally towards wealth creation (supermarkets etc.)' A voluntary sector outsider was critical of the 'Poor local management of nature sites and open space' and another was critical of the 'Slow progress in introducing recycling facilities.' A senior officer recognised 'Increasing car use in the City. Failure to address problems of the motor vehicle in relation to new development.' A very involved and informed outsider was very critical of the 'Preparedness of Council to abandon its environmental principles when it suits it e.g. City Challenge is almost entirely car dependent.' 'City Challenge developments' were quoted frequently as examples showing a lack of commitment to environmental concern e.g. an involved outsider commented 'Accepting unimaginative and relatively unsuitable urban regeneration proposals (City Challenge etc.)'.

These comments should, of course, be seen in the context of a great deal which could be seen to be happening on the ground in Leicester. Evidence of this was given in Chapter Four.

Examples of not caring in Middlesbrough were not cited as frequently as in Leicester probably because, as the interviews revealed, the decision-maker respondents were less aware of what could / should be happening. Some examples, often referring to *limited agenda* rather than *broad agenda*<sup>9</sup> environmental issues, themselves, help to show the quite low expectations in Middlesbrough in comparison with Leicester's commentators. They included the comment by an involved officer who pointed to 'Only modest attention to recycling, no introduction of recycling credits, slow progress on environmental initiatives such as car sharing, bicycle allowance' A councillor referred to 'litter' and another to 'green areas'. Yet another referred to 'dog dirt'. An outsider referred to 'insensitive management of open space' and a voluntary sector respondent to 'building houses on green wedge and backing out-of-town developments.'

In Leeds, many examples were given most of which saw transport issues as likely to be

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Four for an account of *broad* and *limited environmental agendas* after Ward (1996).

Leed's 'environmental Waterloo'. A closely involved voluntary sector respondent complained that 'Indicators will show Leeds up in a good light - cycleways, bottle banks, businesses with environmental policies, but low birth weight, crime, admissions for respiratory illness poor.' Another felt there was a 'Lack of commitment to tackling strangulation hold by motor vehicle, slow progress on recycling and waste minimisation.' Another pointed to a 'Failure to show real leadership on the transport issue.' and still another that the City Council 'Promotes development (commercial / office) and car usage.' A key officer was critical of a 'Lack of provision for bikes, appeasement of motorists needs / wants.' and another that the Council has 'Still not prohibited car from city centre'. A councillor agreed that there was 'Inadequate control of city centre traffic.

Comments on other topics were more limited, though a knowledgeable outsider commented that the Council 'Could do more about energy. Not given high enough priority by City Council.' More generally, a very involved outsider said that the City Council's 'Actions not actually supporting stated objectives. Relatively poor funding for environmental projects.'

On general policy priorities a councillor felt that 'Antipoverty needs analysis and focusing in on issues of deprivation, along with community involvement and participation are absolutely crucial to A21 strategy. In order to include or not to exclude a significant number of people (1 in 3 are on benefit) must start at issues of social / economic exclusion.' The interviews and focus of the Council's policies showed that this perceived need to tackle poverty (even in this outwardly apparently rich city) is clearly embedded in the leadership's culture. The route to success with this, however, is usually seen to be through further economic development, the down side of which was thought by some commentators to be environmental degradation. A voluntary sector respondent, for instance, pointed to 'Some economic development initiatives, car parking policy and lighting initiative (which aims to encourage - with grants - major buildings in Leeds to be floodlit)'. A fairly senior officer complained that he 'Could list some minor grievances like the awards and grants given to light up buildings at night. Generally, it is a lack of priority and clear directions on environmental issues.' A councillor recognised the problems of 'Car use, inadequate rubbish clearance from city centre.'

There were many comments on the City Council not caring in Peterborough. An outsider complained 'Not a lot done on the ground.' A business respondent thought there was 'No recycling programme.' A councillor commented 'Recycling' and another 'No composting schemes and only patchy commitment to safe pedestrian and cycleways (in city centre)'. A voluntary sector outsider complained of 'Multi storey car parks. Hanson Trust destroying brick pits and Great Crested Newts.' A councillor referred to 'Cars' and an involved outsider to 'Expensive public transport - not subsidised, priority given to cars. Pesticides still used.' A councillor complained 'Car parking encouraged.' and another of 'Paper use, cars in City centre.' An influential outsider said the City Council was 'Hotter on theory than practice.' and another that 'Not a lot done on the ground.' On the other hand, neither the Leader nor the Chief Executive could give any examples of how Peterborough shows it does not care.

In Peterborough more than in any of the other cities reasons were put forward for not doing more. A key officer commented that 'If Armageddon, Fora would drive forward but, as it is, laid back.' A councillor commented that EC has 'Raised expectations but no money. Match funding is a hassle.' Another key officer said that 'Lots wanted to be identified with but not to do the work.' A leading councillor complained that 'Government finance. Bidding system means cannot plan.', another said 'Money' and another 'Finance'. A voluntary sector respondent observed that 'A21 unreadable.' A very involved officer complained that 'Raising money (by PECT) gets in the way of saving the world.'<sup>10</sup>

Some comments on positive examples of progress in Peterborough included that of an involved junior officer who drew attention to '£100,000 p.a. committed + £1m capital approval got for materials recycling facility and kerbside collection.' Another pointed out that 'If bid to Millennium Commission succeeds then Green Wheel will bring £12m, providing 5 years funding for PECT. Half time Director will then become full time.' Yet another drew attention to the considerable benefit of 'Eurobucks easier as a result of EC.',

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<sup>10</sup> This comment supports the conclusion reached in Chapter Four that it seems ridiculous that EC fora which are charged with such an apparently vital task, should have to grovel for funding (rather like a local charity) from all sources to fund even the most basic of activities whilst those involved in the pursuit of 'business as usual' proceed to affect the local environment virtually unhindered by them.

a means of manipulation which Leicester has benefitted from even more. A business respondent pointed out that 'Peterborough is not an environmental disaster area.'

### **Degree to Which Economic Interests Dominate the Policy and Actions of the City Councils.**

Finally, in relation to the argument about agenda priorities and ideological commitment to them, in a city which has environmental issues high on its policy agenda we might reasonably expect to find perceptions of weakness in the dominance of economic interests over its city council's policies and actions. Integrating environmental concern into the authority's economic development role is 'a political challenge for real leverage over economic discourse' (Healey and Shaw, 1994: 434). As a fundamentally political concept its realisation 'lies in answers to such questions as who is in control, who sets agendas, who allocates resources, who mediates disputes, who sets the rules of the game.' (Wilbanks, 1994: 544). It is argued by Owens (1994), however, that the scale of this challenge to current political economy is barely recognised. It is in their involvement with economic development that local authorities are, therefore, likely to find it most difficult to recognise and act on the calls for a major shift.

As Gibbs *et al.* (1995: 14) point out, much of the emphasis in the literature is on developing such integrative strategies advocating their achievement through cooperation and consensus within the local area between the local authority, the business sector and the community. Indeed Chapter 28 of A21 specifies as much (see above). There are, however, some very different visions by different groups and local authorities are being expected to act as mediators.<sup>11</sup> The interface between business and the environment is a key area where tensions are most acute (Marsden *et al.*, 1993). Chapter Four presented the finding that there is only very limited participation by the business sector in the Environment Cities, however, and this is examined again in greater detail in the next chapter. The survey by Gibbs *et al.* also found only limited participation by the private sector in local initiatives to integrate

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<sup>11</sup> For a book primarily addressed to business but thereby offering important tools to those involved in local government on A21 seeking to work with business, see Welford (1995).

environmental and economic development concerns.

DMQ14 asked about the degree to which economic interests are dominant:

Q14 Please indicate the degree to which you feel local economic interests e.g. business, dominate the policy and actions of the City Council.

The options were: 'substantially'; 'fairly substantially'; 'moderately'; 'a little'; 'not at all' and 'don't know'.

Table 13 in Appendix Five sets out an analysis of the responses and the bar charts in Figures 17 and 18, below, illustrate them for all respondents and on a status group by status group basis.

Figure 17.

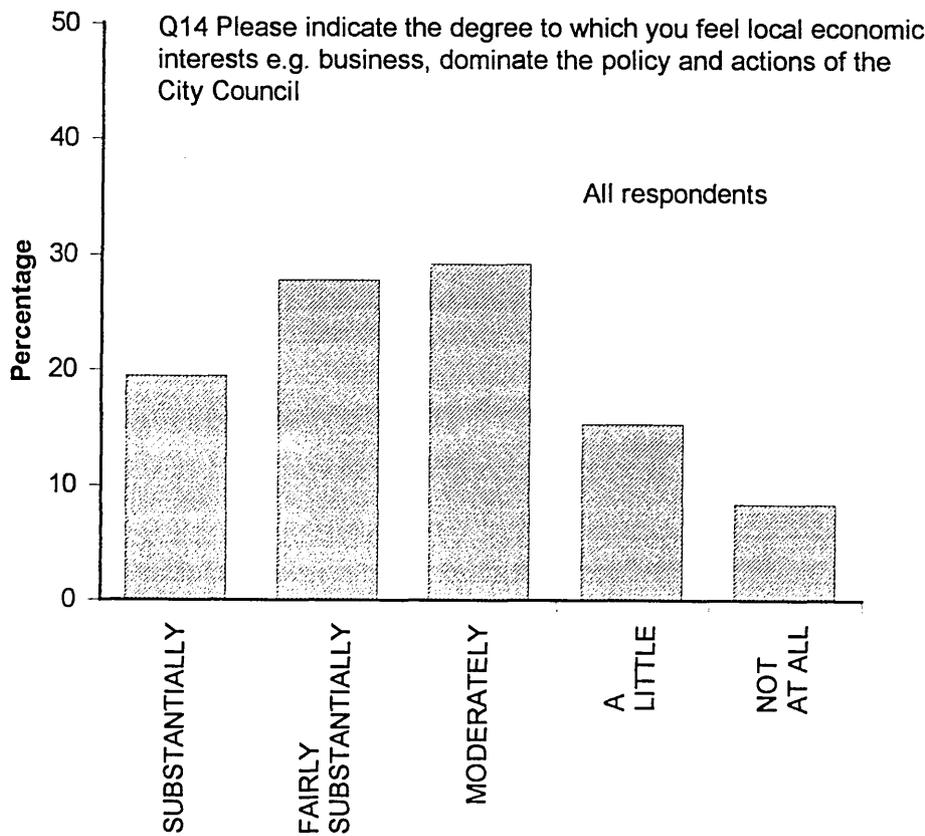
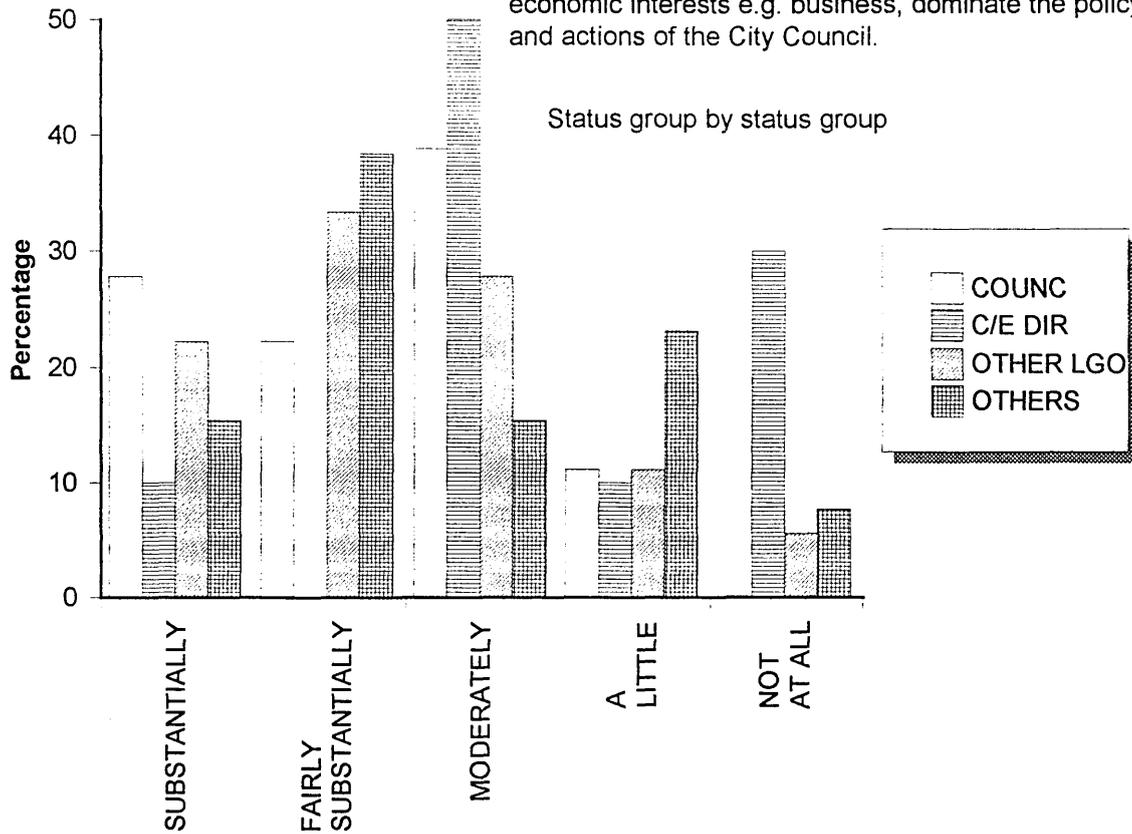


Figure 18.

Q14 Please indicate the degree to which you feel local economic interests e.g. business, dominate the policy and actions of the City Council.



*Status Group by Status Group.*

It will be seen that 47% of respondents selected either 'substantially' or 'fairly substantially'. 50% of councillors (28% replying 'substantially' and 22% 'fairly 'substantially') claimed to see this level of dominance. The comparable figures for chief executives / directors was much lower, at 10% (10% and 0%). 54% of the informants' group selected one or other of these degrees (18% and 36%). More members of the councillors group than of any of the other secondary groups, thus, said that economic interests, such as business, substantially dominate the policies and activities of their city council. A significant, though smaller, number of respondents in each of the secondary groups which make up the informants' group agreed. It is, however, surprising that only one of the chief executives and directors who, to some extent, share the policy making world of the councillors, saw these degrees of domination. Moreover, 30% of them (3) felt that economic interests do not dominate at all and one replied 'a little'.

This, and the interview findings, suggests that councillors feel the pressures of having to satisfy economic interests e.g. to secure jobs, much more than do any of the other groups and, in particular, the chief officers who see the policy outcomes of their councillors' deliberations but do not feel as much of the pain of having to make difficult policy decisions in the 'real world' of the market economy. Whilst they give advice and set out policy options, it is the councillors who have to deliver what their Party and, to some extent, the electorate, demands. The interviews also suggested that the chief officers feel that the local authority world which they inhabit, and with which they have a tendency to become preoccupied, is a very powerful one. From this, it might be speculated that, in contrast, their councillors and members of the informants' group inhabit a wider world where the city council is seen as just one of several major players (e.g. alongside, for instance, large businesses which are relied on for the prosperity of the city, the Government and the EU) involved in running the city with the market economy dominating the thoughts and actions of all of them to one degree or another.

*City by City.*

Figure 19.

Q14 Please indicate the degree to which you feel local economic interests e.g. business, dominate the policy and actions of the City Council

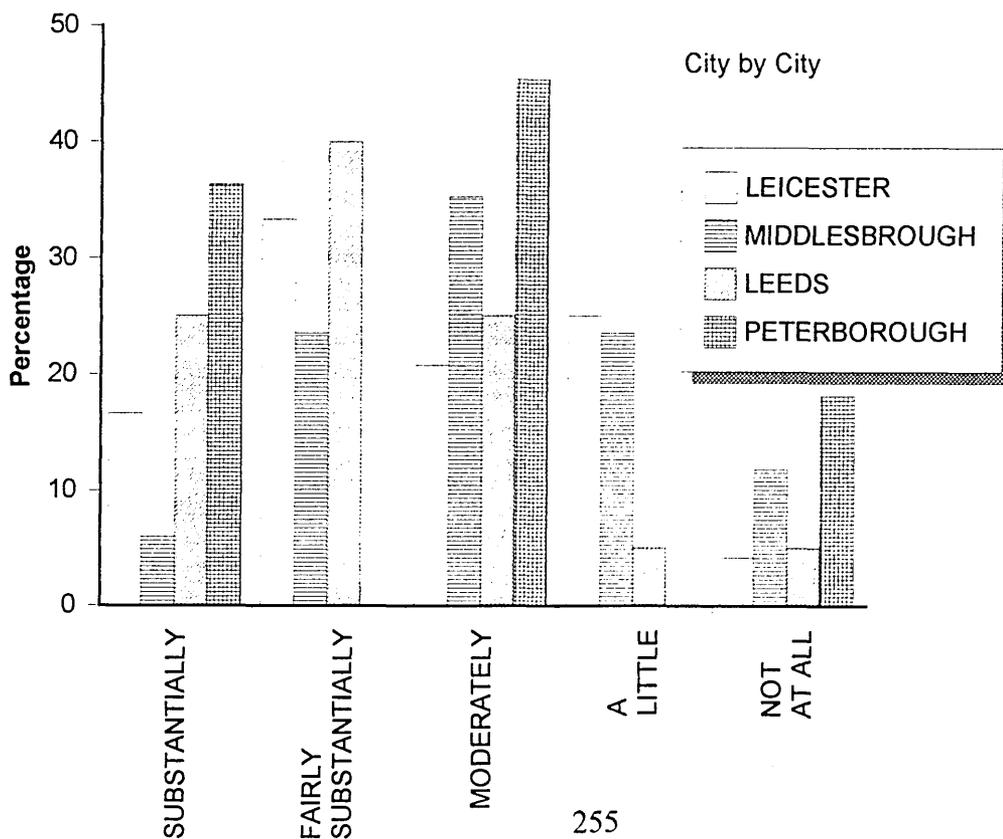


Figure 19, above, illustrates the response to Q14, city by city. From these findings, the following order can also be constructed:

Table 14.

	Substantially	Fairly Substantially	Total
Leeds	25%	40%	65%
Leicester	17%	33%	50%
Peterborough	36%	0%	36%
Middlesbrough	6%	24%	30%

The relatively small proportion of Middlesbrough respondents who said that they felt local economic interests dominate the policies and actions of their council is hard to account for. ICI and other major (mostly chemical) industries seem to have had a very strong influence on the town and, although this has weakened with the coming of more small and medium sized enterprises, the economy of Middlesbrough still relies to a very large extent on these major companies. Moreover, the Middlesbrough EC initiative has been supported with help in kind from ICI in sponsoring several placements to its EC Office (e.g. its own staff coming up for retirement). The interviews, and further questioning, suggest that one reason for this view by Middlesbrough respondents might be the new unitary authority status of the council. This is seen as a much more powerful force in Middlesbrough than its predecessor. It was also suggested that a higher proportion of respondents in Middlesbrough than in the other cities have 'left wing' tendencies and see the council, the unions and the local Labour Party as powerful local forces which will be further strengthened by an incoming Labour Government. The thought that they might be the subject of domination by 'business' is thus not a very acceptable one. Whilst some parts of the business sector have made gestures towards MEC, the sector appears not to have been as welcome at Council policy-making level as in the other three cities.

The response in Leeds, in particular, was not surprising. It has been noted that Leeds is now seen as a rich city. The local Labour Party has a reputation for moderation and working with business (for 'going with the market economy'). The Leaderships vision for a '24 hour', European city relies on working with business, on helping Leeds to be a winner in the market economy, and not on 'old fashioned socialism'. Nevertheless, the City Council still

demonstrates its concern for the casualties of the free market e.g. in having strong equality and poverty eradication policies, a major Benefits and Rights Department and a top level committee to match. On the one hand the Labour Council is fiercely independent (See comments below) not finding partnership working easy. On the other hand, though most Councillors would not admit it, the Council is driven by local business to a large degree.

Some examples of the comments which help to illustrate this view are from a knowledgeable middle ranking officer who said 'Business dominated'. An involved business sector commentator pointed out that the 'Second (and successful) bid (for EC status) came from business community. Geoff had no support from the Council. Yorkshire TV were good. The story of individuals.' A key voluntary sector respondent pointed to 'Failures of transport policy and economic development. Cave in to business interests'.

Leicester's more mixed experiences have still resulted in a fairly economically buoyant local economy and, again, examples such as the hotly disputed granting of the planning consent to develop the old market site as a leisure complex are seen as strongly dominated by economic forces and not those of social or environmental care.

Peterborough has not had to struggle for jobs as much as most cities in the UK but its wealth has been closely tied up with a continuous development process and business has been keenly involved in this. Like Leeds, it is not perceived to be a poor city and respondents had good cause to feel that developers were fighting each other and the council to get a share of its wealth potential. Peterborough has, in a sense, almost handed over its EC initiative to the private (business) sector through PECT. It is certainly now at 'arms length'. This has been largely the result of some very entrepreneurial officers who have been keen to lose the shackles of the City Council - especially their political masters. Some comments evidencing this assertion included that of a very involved officer who was critical of a 'Poor relationship with businesses to improve the environment'. Also that of a voluntary sector commentator who observed that 'Partnerships are with people who can get things done.' Another officer felt that 'Business model is the best because can apply for grants.' and another who felt that the EC initiative was 'More led by business these days.' Another key officer, however,

cautioned that 'Businesses see themselves as sponsors. Role more passive than active.' Similarly another was concerned that 'Retailers want as a marketing thing'. Yet another officer pointed to the problem caused by the 'Incredulity of business sector of local authority committee system.' The comment of a senior officer that 'Businesses want no blame, no disasters. Council's tend to want inquests.' was typical of the descriptions of the nature of the frustration which exists between the two sectors. The business sector was, thus, seen to have a tendency to look rather strangely on the City Council. It was also felt, however, that, so long as EC does not interfere too much with business as usual, which in Peterborough it rarely does, then the sectors can coexist in this field.

The findings of Q14 can be linked to those of Q10 and, especially, Q11 where 'when hard decisions have to be made the environment loses out' and 'a lack of commitment by the council' are seen as the main ways (along with 'traffic') in which the cities show that they do not care about environmental issues.

Gibbs *et al.* (1995: 13) concluded from their survey of the integration of environmental concern into the economic development activities of urban local authorities, that success has been very limited. This study supports that general finding and also their more specific finding that planning and environmental health departments, as opposed to economic development departments, are dominant in attempting to take sustainable development forward. Gibbs *et al.* also observed '...the incorporation of integrative strategies in Unitary and Local Development Plans and their relative absence from Economic Development Plans.' In Leicester and Leeds an attempt at the latter has been made but not in the other two cities.

## **CONCLUSION**

Basic ideological commitment by the EC local authority leaderships to Agenda 21 and sustainable development green is weak. Only about one in seven respondents to the DM survey, for instance, felt that their city council accepts that a 'major change' of behaviour will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 and the

requirements of sustainable development. Even if a less stringent test is applied, less than half of the respondents felt that their city council accepts that either 'major change' or 'fairly major change' will be needed. *None* of the 18 (responding) city council officers (who are not chief executives or first tier chief officers) felt that their city council accepted the need for a major change to meet the requirements of sustainable development. Moreover, only 3 of the 27 (responding) 'other non city council' group and 3 of the 17 (responding) councillors felt that their city council believes that such a degree of change is needed. The comments by respondents to the DM Survey strongly reinforced this view.

Nevertheless, more positively, about one third of each of the groups felt that their city council accepts the need for 'fairly major change' to meet the requirements of sustainable development. The chief executives and directors group was by far the most positive with 40% feeling that their city council believes that major change will be necessary and 20% believing that fairly major change will be needed; a total of 60%. It has been argued, however, that this group of respondents is the least likely to want to be critical of its city council's degree of real commitment to a policy which it has very publically signed up to. They have a vested interest in defending the integrity of their city council's actual commitment at each of the three levels I have identified and especially that of basic ideology.

There was a small but significant<sup>12</sup> tendency for respondents to see the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 as less onerous than meeting the requirements of (the albeit arguably, ideologically 'hijacked' concept<sup>13</sup> of) sustainable development.

At 59% and 60%, a significantly higher percentage of Leicester and Peterborough respondents, respectively, felt that their city council thought that 'major change' or 'fairly major change' would be needed in response to Agenda 21 than did the respondents in the other two cities (38% Middlesbrough and 41% Leeds). A similar pattern emerged in

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<sup>12</sup> Because of the consistency of the response.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter Three for an explanation of this perceived 'hijacking'.

relation to the degree of change needed to meet the requirements of sustainable development but, here, Leicester was ahead with 63%, then Leeds and Peterborough with 50% and Middlesbrough with 37%. This pattern of a higher level of knowledge of and commitment to the expectations of A21, sustainable development (and EC) by the local authority leaderships was a consistent trend of the survey findings and interviews. It has been argued that the findings in respect of Peterborough probably provide a too optimistic picture of the true situation.

About half of the respondents felt that 50% or more of their city council's councillors and first tier chief officers believe that a 'major' or a 'fairly major' change of behaviour is needed in response to calls for a change towards greater 'greenness'.

The degree to which each city council's leadership sees 'the environment' as an overarching local governmental responsibility and local strategic value rather than just another local service responsibility to be administered locally alongside many other local services, was tested. In the DM Survey, by far the most positive response was from Leicester. 42% of Leicester respondents replied 'substantially' against 18% in Peterborough, 13% in Middlesbrough and 5% in Leeds. The gap closed if responses of 'substantially' and 'fairly substantially' are taken together; 67% in Leicester, 53% in Middlesbrough, 47% in Leeds and 36% in Peterborough. On the face of it, these responses give fair reason to believe that the city councils' leaderships are taking an holistic view of the responsibility / challenge in respect of 'the environment'. A closer examination of the responses, however, showed most of the optimism to be coming from the leadership respondents themselves. Even allowing for this likely bias, however, showed the difference in the degree to which 'the environment' was reported to be integrated into the city councils activities, between Leicester and Peterborough was to be massive. Informants reported Middlesbrough and Leeds as, notionally, mid way between these two extremes.

Significantly, only in the case of Leicester did any of the 'other' group (33% of them) answer 'substantially'. None of the 'other local government officers group' answered 'substantially' in respect of Leeds or Peterborough. No informants replied 'substantially' or 'fairly

substantially' in respect of Peterborough and only 25% of them opted even for 'moderately'. 50% opted for 'a little' and 25% for 'not at all'.

We might expect the political leadership of a city (especially an EC) which is committed to shallow green environmentalism to have environmental issues at the top, or even at equal top of its policy agenda. None of the four EC leaderships are committed to that degree. Leicester might again, however, be seen as the closest, placing environmental issues second only to economic ones. This finding that EC has served to put the environment on the formal agenda in Leicester is consistent with the findings of Rydin *et al.* (1994: 11). In a study of policy discoursing in four cities, Leicester (the only EC included), Edinburgh, Bologna and Florence, they concluded that, in Leicester:

There is a strong tendency in each city for the dominant economic interest to drive the policy discussion where the issues impinge directly or indirectly on economic development...The extent to which economic concerns are then also represented within the policy debate is heavily dependent on the involvement of environmental groups and their representatives. It is here that mechanisms of the Environment City project can be a significant contributory factor in raising the profile of the environment within local policy.

In Leeds traffic / environmental issues were close to the top but in Peterborough they were well down the list. Overall, the leadership of the cities considered economic and then social policy issues as the most important ones facing their city. Environmental issues took third place and the interviews confirmed that leaders saw the three sets of issues as forming part of a kind of 'Holy Trinity' with social and then environmental issues capable of resolution only if economic growth can produce the wealth to make this possible. This supports the belief that, whilst there is some concern amongst the leaderships in all of the cities (though very weak indeed in the case of Middlesbrough), they are all essentially locked into the belief that the solution to environmental and social problems (local and national) will be found largely through increasing wealth.

When asked for evidence of the degree to which their city is committed or lacks commitment to environmental issues, decision-makers and citizens answered quite differently from their different perspectives. Decision-makers most frequently quoted 'a lack of commitment by the council' and 'traffic'. The category 'when hard decisions have to be

made the environment loses out e.g. planning issues' was not far behind these two. 'Litter and cleanliness' and 'insufficient recycling facilities' came next but were a long way behind the frontrunners. In the Citizens' Survey, however, 'none / satisfied' was by far the most frequent response, with 'don't know' second and 'other' third, 'litter, cleanliness' fourth and 'traffic' fifth. Most citizens did not seem to be 'tuned into' this at all. This, again, illustrates the lack of any understanding by citizens that their city councils have any role in the saving the world '*broad environmental agenda*' (Ward, 1996). There is consequently little pressure on the leaderships from citizens to move from a *limited* to a *broad environmental agenda*.

These findings add weight to the view that the city council leaders have, largely unwittingly, hijacked the idea of broad agenda environmental care at city level. They have done this by expressing their support for the cause at the artifactual level and often also following the lead of others in believing that they are really committed at the level of espoused values. Unfortunately, when really pressed, and hard evidence is demanded, the dominant paradigm emerges as still bearing heavily on them. Economic concerns (and then social) are still paramount. Nevertheless, the findings are by no means totally negative and provide good evidence of some weakening of support for the paradigm in favour of, certainly social, and then environmental concern, especially in Leicester.

Business interests are seen clearly to dominate the thinking and strategic policy making of the leaderships and this demonstrates a high degree of corporatism. The EC initiative has had little impact on this. Business has thus, been allowed to treat the EC initiative as a 'good cause' which deserves some support so long as it satisfies those potentially disruptive protagonists of change and avoids any serious conflict with 'business as usual'. The result has, therefore, been essentially the marginalisation of environmental concern rather than its achievement of a place on the 'centre stage' of local authority politics as expected by A21 and EC. On the other hand, especially in Leicester and to a more limited extent in Leeds, there is evidence of some acceptance by the leaderships of the broad environmental agenda. There is also evidence of their recognition that this agenda *should* be more closely integrated with their unquestioned role in developing economic and social policies. The next chapter considers the extent to which the EC initiative has helped to bring this about.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### PRECIPITATING ATTITUDINAL AND BEHAVIOURAL SHIFTS AND AGENDA 21

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In many ways Sustainable Development today is like Equal Opportunities was in the UK in the 1970's. It took 70 years of *cultural change* before women were recognised as legally and socially autonomous individuals who could, and should receive equal pay for equal work - but even then it required legislation to ensure that it happened. And still, in practice, there is a gap between 'best practice' and many people's experience. Sustainable development requires a change which is more profound, and we do not have the 70 years in which to do it. Brook and Rowan (1996) (*My emphasis.*)

#### INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three argued that the Earth Summit and Agenda 21 called for a *major shift* of attitudes. Chapters Three and Four argued that the *sustainable development green* behavioural and ideological demands made of each of the four EC local authority leaderships by the EC Programme, in return for the privilege of being designated an EC, were not very different from Agenda 21's call. It was further argued, that the former has been influential in the Environment Cities in getting the environment issue on the formal agenda by offering exploitable prestige in return for shifts of behaviour and declared ideology. This has been so even though the potential of this influence has been considerably under exploited. Chapters Four and Five attempted to assess and explain the resultant nature of *basic ideological commitment* of the leaderships of the four cities to *sustainable development green* from two different theoretical perspectives. First, those of public policy agenda building theory and second, the (political) commitment precondition contained within policy implementation theory. This chapter attempts to complete the enquiry by opening two further avenues of research into what action might encourage the 'major shift'. The first avenue relates to an hypothesised public policy franchising / cognitive dissonance / statesmanship axis. The second relates to an hypothesised welfarism / 'environmentism'

axis. These avenues have been little explored in the literature and rely on some of the ideas of social psychology about how attitudinal and behavioural change is precipitated. They also rely, in large part, on *inferences* drawn from the EC attitudinal surveys.

## **AN OUTLINE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS FOR BEHAVIOURAL AND ATTITUDINAL SHIFTS**

While the scope for possible action may grow with technological developments, it is very clear that the obstacles to sustainability are not technical or even economic: they are social, institutional and political. (Bush, 1990: 1)

### **The 'Dominant Paradigm'**

As Moore (1994: 1) argues 'Many cultural values, government regulations, and financial accounting systems ignore the importance of taking responsibility for the environmental consequences of need-meeting activities.' They, thus, contribute to a society structured to support actions which do not support sustainability or a population which behaves in a way which is conducive to its own survival. The *perception* of which needs are to be met and what priority they are to be given is, therefore, crucial. (Stein, 1984: 122). As argued in Chapter Three, current dominant economic paradigms seem incompatible with present biophysical realities (See also, Rees and Wackernagel, 1992: 5). As Moore says (p2): 'Continuing to act in accordance with these paradigms may prevent the adoption of alternative actions which would place society on a sustainable track.' and (p3)<sup>1</sup>:

Given the scientific materialist paradigm's dominance in twentieth century society, it becomes very difficult to act in a manner that favours sustainable development. Governments which have co-evolved with scientific materialist beliefs unwittingly become their defender. Thus, defensive actions used to by-pass embarrassment and threat prevent opportunities for learning and for change. As a result, the *status quo* is maintained. One sees the accumulation of knowledge and the conceptualization of ideas to promote sustainability, only to have them stymied and prevented from being translated into actions.

From her case study of Vancouver, Moore concluded that council and civic staff, perceived the three biggest barriers to action-taking to be: limitation of jurisdiction, competing issues,

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<sup>1</sup>See also Argyris (1993: 20) for a more detailed argument in support of this.

and inadequate funds. She also concluded that among citizens a lack of understanding and perceived lack of empowerment were the most commonly cited problems. As argued in Chapter Five, these were all also found to be relevant to the degree of commitment by the EC local authority leaderships. Very significantly, however, Moore found that government officials did not identify themselves with the barrier titled 'Lack of Understanding About the Issues', but were often quick to point out how it applied to citizens. Citizens, however, identified *both* themselves and government as suffering from this problem. Moore's overall conclusion can be seen to be allied to a main conclusion of Chapter Five. She claimed that her research had demonstrated that despite government's intention to take precautions and to adopt behaviours that support sustainability, government nevertheless continues to function in a primarily reactive manner which, for the most part supports the *status quo*. How to encourage local authority leaderships to shift away from this dominant paradigm is, therefore, a crucial issue. It is argued, below, that an understanding of the social underpinning of this paradigm is necessary if attitudinal change by those leaderships is to be precipitated.

### **Irrational Society but Rational Individuals?**

The reasonable man adapts himself to the world: the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

Is it rational to act rationally in an irrational world?

Juvenal (c.60-130)

Chapter Three, presented the now commonly held belief that human society has, *irrationally*, produced an environmental crisis for itself. Individuals, however, usually claim to be more rational in recognising the need for humanity to care about its environment. This is especially so when they consider the need to be rational in this respect for our own sake. For example, when asked about the degree to which they care about environmental issues most people respond very positively. The 1993 British Social Attitudes Survey confirmed this (Jowell *et al.*, 1994) as did the Citizen Attitudinal Surveys carried out in the Environment Cities (Pell and Wright, 1994 and 1995). In spite of this concern, however, most people feel that our pursuit of a collision course with nature is beyond their control

(See Jowell *et al*: 134). From this, one might reason that, if initiatives such as those of the Environment City Programme or of Earth Summits are to succeed in encouraging a *major shift* of behaviour and ideology, then, they have to find ways of giving individuals (and individual nations) the feeling that they not only *should* but *can* make a difference and that *if* they make sacrifices for the benefit of the environment then most other people (and nations) *will do so* as well<sup>2</sup>. A full understanding of the implications of the sustainable development green ideology and its insistence that we must not just be concerned with our relationship with nature but also with our relationship with each other, *and that the two concerns are interrelated*, recognises social justice as a prerequisite of avoiding environmental disaster<sup>3</sup>. Some of the literature (e.g. Heinen, 1994) suggests that it is the *scale* of human society which is at the root of human society's apparent irrationality and this is the argument here.

There is nothing new about the idea that we are living in an irrational *society* e.g. Fromm's, (1963) 'insane' society and Popper's (see Burke, 1983) rational society. Wall (1990: 6), however, begins to explain the reason for our apparently irrational behaviour in respect of the rest of nature, by describing what he refers to as 'the psychological substructure which holds up our presently destructive society'. This focuses on self interest as the motor of neoclassical economics (p98):

Economic processes, even though they affect political events, are underpinned by *belief* systems without which they could not function. Economics is the study of collective, concentrated psychology. Medieval economics rested on the assumption of just price, rejecting not only usury but also inflation as a sin. The free market was founded on the idea of *self interest*....Much of the psychological substructure that holds up our present destructive society is *hidden or so internalised that its elements are no longer seen as concepts that can be accepted or rejected but as common sense closed from debate. ... much of what we take to be obvious or 'human nature' is part of a 'moral hegemony' or set of ideas put in place to support the status quo*. We could *behave* in a very different way but our economic behaviour is constrained by an ideological strait-jacket. Growth is the goal, sufficiency is

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<sup>2</sup> The tortuous negotiations at the Kyoto Climate Change Summit (UN, 1997) illustrated this point well, especially insofar as the developing world demanded that the developed countries first make cuts in their emissions of global warming gases.

<sup>3</sup> This was similarly made clear by the nature of the negotiations at Kyoto and the idea is wholly consistent with Brundtland's (UN, 1987) definition of sustainable development (See Chapter Three).

naïve. Some people have eight cars. others have no clean water...Hegemonies are thus a means of control. (My *emphasis*.)

In essence, then, as *individuals* we are locked into the 'dominant paradigm' of *human society* to such an extent that most of us would find it unthinkable to challenge it any more than we would challenge the values of justice or freedom of choice. It has become both the product and the expression of our *taken-for-granted assumptions* (Schein, 1987) even if we accept that its pursuit is destroying the environment on which we depend. The 'dominant paradigm' tends to dictate the nature of the *basic ideological commitment* which we find acceptable. Jacobs (1996) presents similar arguments on behalf of the Real World Coalition<sup>4</sup>.

At the level of the *individual*, a psychological perspective holds that it is particularly difficult for us to break out of Wall's '*ideological strait jacket*' because, in spite of having an illusion of personal invulnerability, we tend to be the kind of people others want us to be. Whilst it is generally accepted that each of us has unique internal characteristics such as our dispositional traits, it is also well established that we are greatly affected by the physical environment and the presence of other people. At one extreme, as Skinner (1975: 49) says '...the problems we face are not to be found in men and women but in the world in which they live, especially in those social environments we call cultures.' We all tend to respond to the *power of the situation* in which we find ourselves. As Zimbardo *et al.* (1977: 1) say:

... .. it is impossible to over-estimate the extent to which you are influenced daily to be the kind of person other people want you to be. "Tastes" in food, dress, art, music, friends, hobbies, and other things are acquired through subtle interpersonal influence processes....The language you speak, your dialect, pronunciation, hand gestures, body semantics, and displays of affection or temper are all the product of how people communicated in your family, neighbourhood, and cultural subgroup.

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<sup>4</sup> Real World is a coalition of non-governmental organisations which was formed in 1995 with the aim of raising the importance of environmental sustainability, social justice - including the relief and eradication of poverty, in the UK and internationally - and democratic renewal in UK political debate. The initial membership included Oxfam, Transport 2000, Friends of the Earth, New Economic Foundation, The Poverty Alliance, Public Health Alliance, Town and Country Planning Association, World Wide Fund for Nature, Christian Aid, Save the Children Fund, Forum for the Future, Charter 88 and Employment Policy Institute.

*Attitudes, values, and behavioral* tendencies are acquired gradually; we do not change, we grow. We are not succumbing and being persuaded, influenced, coerced, or induced to be other than we are. Rather, we perceive that we have chosen freely to become our own person....

In 1816, Robert Owen (Sarre *et al.*, 1996: 96) made a similar point in asserting that the character of man is not the result of will but is formed by his predecessors and the circumstances which surround him. Our character traits are determined, or at least much influenced, by the nature of the society in which we live. Much of the world has now nurtured those character traits which the founders of the American regime saw as its 'bedrock' i.e. 'individualism', 'acquisitiveness' and 'reputation' (Nigro and Richardson, 1987).

An understanding of how *individuals* in *social groups* use environmental *resources* is crucial to an understanding of what is argued to be a relationship between our relationship with each other and our relationship with nature. Hardin (1988) provided such an understanding by developing the concept of the 'tragedy of the commons', from earlier ideas and illustrated it through the analogy of the commons to which individual herdspeople have free access. The land has an economic optimum, that is the 'carrying capacity' which, if it is reached but not exceeded is 'sustainable' indefinitely. The social optimum is, thus, the point at which a common can carry the maximum number of sheep without the loss of any productive capacity. Individuals may, however, out of self interest, choose to add more sheep increasing their own wealth even if the result is overgrazing and an overall loss of output. The individual enjoys all the incremental gain by adding to his/her herd but the costs of reduced output are forcibly shared amongst all of the herdspeople. In the terminology of economic theory, those costs are thus 'externalised'. It is then argued that, only at the point when the increase from adding one sheep is balanced by the loss to the individual's herd from the carrying capacity of the commons will the individual consider ceasing to add more sheep to the herd. But, by that time, the overall loss in production will be considerable and the damage done to the common will probably be irreversible. The concept can be applied to pollution where the commons are the land, air and water from which 'resources' are extracted and into which waste is discharged. Since the costs are borne by society rather than the individual polluter there is no incentive for individual action to moderate extraction

or to incur costs in purifying waste before discharging it. It can, for instance, be applied to the overfishing of the oceans and to the use of private motor cars. Hardin concludes that 'Since this is true for everyone, we are locked into a system of 'fouling our own nest', so long as we behave as independent, *rational free enterprisers*.' (p1245) (My *emphasis*.)

There is, then, an apparent *conflict of rationality*, for what is rational for the individual person, business or nation is not rational for the whole of society - or, thus, collectively for the individual. We might, therefore, reason that therein lies, at least, part of the reason for the apparent irrationality of our species. As Jowell *et al.* (1994: 135) argue:

The fact is that any individual's contribution to both the problem and the solution is self evidently small, yet the costs to an individual of changing his or her behaviour may be large. The truly rational (*self interested*) individual will want to be a 'free rider', leaving other people to foot the bills while making none of the sacrifices that environmental improvements will require. (My *emphasis*.)

Whilst Hardin appears to be describing neoclassical economics (e.g. Smith, 1776), further examination shows that this tendency toward free riding is not limited to free enterprise economies. In any given situation the individual can choose to be self interested or altruistic and factors which are believed to determine this are examined by Heinen (1994). It is here that the potential importance of *scale* becomes clear.

### **The Significance of Scale for Attitudes and Behaviour**

Heinen describes a paradigm which seeks to explain human behaviour in relation to resources and relies on a belief about how social systems evolved. The essence of the argument is that humans evolved as hunter gatherers in relatively small groups and it is postulated that proximate, psychological mechanisms (recognition of others, formation of friendships, love etc.) come into play within these social relationships among individuals and that *reciprocity* is a vital characteristic of the successful (utopian) group. Thus, Heinen argues that, from the standpoint of the evolved human psyche, the modern nation state presents many evolutionary novel circumstances and that *effective resource management is not probable on that scale* (a dystopia). Heinen claims that humans have evolved to use

resources for their own reproductive success, and that this success is dependent on kinship and relationships based on reciprocity. From this he concludes that:

*If small, stable groups of kin and reciprocators (i.e. individuals who interact over long periods of time) have exclusive access to a resource, management of the resource is expected to be more sustainable than if large, non-interacting groups have access to the same resource. Thus, how the access is allocated, and on what scale, may be crucial in averting a tragedy of the commons.....If reciprocity has been an important force in the evolutionary history of our species, people are expected to act for the good of a social group, especially if the individual is rewarded by having his/her actions advertised to other group members who are potential reciprocators, or if the action directly helps actual reciprocators. ...people are expected to discount.... that which is not in their own direct, immediate interests. Some of our more urgent international environmental problems are therefore likely to be the most difficult to solve, precisely because people are not likely to consider them important. (My emphasis.)*

The significance of scale and its relationship to self interest is reflected in the findings of the EC citizen attitudinal surveys (Pell and Wright, 1994 and 1995). Whilst most respondents were aware of the major global environmental crises, few of them were prepared to change their lifestyles to help counter what, for them, are *remote* and, as yet, *non threatening* issues well beyond their sphere of influence. They are far more concerned about the clearer and more *direct threats* to their well being such as unemployment and crime. Environmental problems are viewed as the responsibility of the 'powers-that-be'.

### *City Life*

Not only has the Earth's population risen from less than 2 billion people in 1900 to almost 6 billion now, but the trend has been strongly towards urbanisation and large scale society. It is estimated that, by the year 2000 more than half of us will be living in cities or large urbanised areas and two thirds by the year 2050 (Geradet, 1992<sup>5</sup>). The tendency for large scale society, and city life in particular, to cause a breakdown in our care for each other and for nature, however, was recognised long ago. Engels (1969: 57-58), for instance, in 1844 in describing what could be modern day London or Manchester:

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<sup>5</sup> See also Gumuchjian (1997), based on Richard Roger's 1995 Reith Lectures, Keil (1995) and Elkin *et al.* (1991) for arguments about the environmental problematic in world cities. See also White (1994) for a view of urban environmental management and Lean, G. 'The Greedy Cities' (Independent on Sunday, 14 April, 1996: 17).

The very turmoil of the streets has something repulsive, against which human nature rebels. The hundreds of thousands of all classes and all ranks crowding past each other, are they not all human beings with the same qualities and powers, and with the same interest in being happy? And (yet) they crowd by one another, and their only agreement is the tacit one, that each keep to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd, while it occurs to no man to honour another with so much as a glance. The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his *private interests* becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together within a limited space. And, however much one may be aware that this isolation of the individual, this *narrow self seeking is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city*: The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate principle, the world of atoms, is here carried to its utmost extremes. (My *emphasis*.)

From a Marxist perspective, Engels saw links between three distinct levels of causality, the advent of capitalism, of industrialised society and of urban concentration; aspects of the affluence (A) and technology (T) factors in Ehrlich's identity (See Chapter Three) . Simmel (1901), a German psychologist, also concluded that city life had a profound effect on the psyche and related this to the money economy '...which is dominant in the metropolis' and argued that '...nobody can say whether the intellectualist mentality first promoted the money economy or whether the latter dominated the former.'<sup>6</sup>

The Chicago sociologist, Wirth (1938), however, took the debate a step further and formulated three sociological propositions regarding urbanism as a way of life. Firstly, he argued that 'The city is characterised by secondary rather than primary contacts (which are) impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental' i.e. the segmentalisation of human relationships. He suggested that, although city dwellers are free from the constricting social controls of small group society, they have lost the spontaneous self-expression and participation that comes from living in an integrated society. Thus, he saw urban life as rootless and manipulative in character where acquaintances are seen as a means for the achievement of one's own ends. Secondly, he argued that the denser the habitation, the more distant become the social contacts. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, Wirth presented the idea that social heterogeneity is significant in that it breaks down the rigidity

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<sup>6</sup> For a comprehensive overview and guide to the literature on quality of life in cities see Grayson and Young (1994)

of social distinctions. The greater variety of individuals means that they can mix and become members of widely divergent social groups, *each of which functions only with reference to part of the whole person*. Each person then is, potentially, *a member of many communities and is likely to reciprocate* (to use Heinen's paradigm) *in each but not in an integrated (or holistic) way with his/her neighbours; because true neighbours are rare.*<sup>7</sup>

Marxists such as Castells (see Pickvance, 1974) tend to explain the existence of the anonymous, impersonal and transitory social relations identified by Wirth as the result not of urbanism *per se*, but of the economic and social relations existing under modern capitalist industrialism or, as Simmel argued, the product of the money economy. As Wirth pointed out, however, this is not a sufficient explanation:

It is particularly important to call attention to the danger of confusing urbanism with industrialisation and modern capitalism. The rise of cities in the modern world is undoubtedly not independent of the modern power driven machine technology, mass production, and capitalist enterprise. But different as the cities of earlier epochs may have been by virtue of their development in a preindustrial and precapitalist order from the great cities of today, they were, nevertheless, cities.

This view, again, returns us to Ehrlich's identity and the relationship between his A and T factors. It holds that we cannot blame city or urban life as the *cause* of the breakdown of a utopian ideal of reciprocal and altruistic behaviour but that we should see the nature of many of our cities as another *result* of our advanced technological, albeit capitalist form of society. Technological determinists or convergent theorists (eg. Kerr, 1962), thus, argue that it is not capitalism which has produced modern society and its associated behaviours and social forms but *industrialism, whether capitalist or socialist*. The theory holds that *the technical and organisational requirements of mass industrial production lead to similarities in occupational and organisational structures, in urban form and social behaviour. Political ideology is of limited importance*. Schumacher's (1977) argument for the use of only 'intermediate technology', has thus, been seen by many to hold the key to the development of societies with attitudes and behaviour which are conducive to the adoption of sustainable development green ideology.

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<sup>7</sup> For an argument that city life can be good for us see Sherlock (1991).

From what has been said in this section and earlier, if it is considered irrational for a human society to pursue a collision course with nature then it is reasonable to conclude that 20th Century human society *is irrational*. Individually, we respond very little to this crisis because the *scale* of society is now such that each of us feels increasingly disconnected from each other and from the rest of nature. Moreover, we feel and that any individual response which we make to the environmental imperative will not only be insignificant but also, because it will not be made by most other people, will not be worth making. Against this, sustainable development green ideology might be seen as a Holy Grail and it might be reasoned that, like other now extinct or at least less ecologically dominant species, human society is now set on an unavoidable natural cycle of self destruction. If so, then our cognitive ability, unique among species, will cruelly tease us because we alone can recognise our *opportunity*, if only a delusory one, to *manage* our behaviour and to save ourselves and our dominant position. Moreover, if this pessimistic conclusion is justified then world level environmental summits and action programmes, such as Agenda 21, are little more than the manifestations of human society's delusion that it can actually prevent itself from misusing technology and creating its own environmental Armageddon.

A more optimistic conclusion which is consistent with the sustainable development green thinking of the Earth Summit Agenda 21 is founded on the belief that rationality by human society is possible and is worth struggling for.<sup>8</sup> After all, history shows us that when at war with a common enemy and given leadership we have the capacity to stand together and to shift our behaviour greatly. We are now at war with our own apparent irrationality in our relationship with the rest of nature. Whilst the common enemy is presently less visible, the argument was introduced in Chapter Three that it is rapidly becoming more apparent. The public and political responses to the Bhopal disaster, Chernobyl nuclear disaster, the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill and the Malaysian forest burning smogs are examples. Much of the literature also emphasises that environmentalism is the product of new social cleavages developing in industrial society and that it will, thus, continue to grow (Eckersley, 1989, Habermas, 1987, Offe, 1987 and Porritt and Winner, 1988). McGraw (1993: 21) points out

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<sup>8</sup> For 'rational' approaches to planning a sustainable cities see Stren *at al.* (1992), Breheny (1993) and Nijkamp and Perrels (1994).

that it is suggested that post-fordist production techniques, flexible specialisation and organisation and the shift to service economies is restructuring the nature of industrial capitalist societies to become 'post-industrial' with new social divisions and interests. In particular it seems that the professional, administrative and technical intelligentsia - the 'new middle class' - has grown rapidly. Further, it seems that this 'new middle class' has embraced environmentalism as an expression of its own values and interests. Others, e.g. Inglehart (1989), Inglehart and Rabier (1986) argue that western publics are now less concerned with material goals than with quality of life issues, including environmentalism. Galbraith (1993), however, presents a convincing argument that western publics are now enjoying a 'culture of contentment' and that they will not be ready to see it compromised.

It is in this wider context that research into ways of encouraging further behavioural and attitudinal shifts are important. Two possible ways are now suggested. The first is the effect which initiatives such as Environment City might have on our behaviour and beliefs and the second, explored only very provisionally, is the potential for similarly exploiting a suggested link between a concern for welfare and a concern for the environment.

### **ENVIRONMENT CITY, ITSELF, ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIPS TO BE COMMITTED TO AGENDA 21**

The most common approach to attempting to shift the attitudes and behaviour of society is so well embedded in our traditions and practices that its adequacy is rarely questioned. It involves 'awareness raising' through the provision of new information or introducing new factors into a situation. At its best, this approach includes a full appreciation of the complex processes involved in attitude change and, in particular, pays attention to the credibility of the communicator and the message, group influences and the likely susceptibility of individuals (e.g. see Hovland *et al.* 1953). Similarly, an understanding of the believed progressive phases in the decision-making process, such as awareness, interest arousal and decision-making, are relevant. This approach is well suited to campaigns such as those aimed at persuading people to wear car seat belts or to stop smoking. In the UK, it is usually perceived to be as well intentioned and rarely, unlike much advertising, to be at all

subversive.

'Dissonance theory' (Festinger, 1957) on the other hand, is less practised, especially wittingly, yet it appears to be of considerable relevance here. The essence of the theory is that we find it extremely uncomfortable to have basic assumptions (Schein, 1987) which are cognitively dissonant from the way we are behaving. Thus, by getting people to *behave* in a certain way (e.g. consistent with sustainable development green ideology) *voluntarily* (albeit through encouragement), many are likely to begin to shift their basic assumptions to decrease the uncomfortable dissonance. Through the mechanism of *public policy franchising*, identified in Chapter Five, the Environment City Programme has, thus largely unwittingly, made use of this approach by encouraging the cities to *volunteer* to make behavioural changes. This has included, in the case of the local authority leaderships, signing up to public declarations of commitment and leading a drive towards sustainable development in their cities. Being encouraged to take a lead on a wide range of demonstration projects similarly drew the leaderships and their partners into declaring their commitment, this time through their behaviour. *If* we accept dissonance theory, then, we might expect these leaderships to tend to shift their basic assumptions in favour of sustainable development green ideology.

This is an attractive theory but it has not become widely accepted. On the basis of experimental testing, there have been widely conflicting conclusions. At the height of interest in the theory Chapinis and Chapinis (1964), for instance, found it to be not proven. The main criticism has been that we may not change our attitudes to avoid dissonance. We may, for example, just avoid it by compartmentalising our behaviours and our assumptions. As Brehm and Cohen (1962: 300) argued, however, there is a weaker proposition based on Festinger's that is more readily observable and acceptable i.e. that 'a person will try to *justify* a *commitment* to the extent that there is information discrepant with that *commitment*' (*My emphasis*). Bramel's (1968) argument that cognitive dissonance is a feeling of unworthiness seems relevant here. Politicians, in particular, are rarely prepared to admit that they entered into a commitment which they did not believe in and they will usually go to great lengths to persuade their inquisitors that it is other factors (e.g. a lack of finance, other more

pressing priorities) which are to blame for any failure by them to meet their commitments. Distinguishing between genuine reasons and excuses which are designed to affirm their worthiness is then a matter for the inquisitor. Aronson (1968) examines commitment in the light of this difficulty in some depth.

From the literature on cognitive dissonance, then, one would expect that making behavioural commitments to sustainable development green ideology (and, therefore, also to Agenda 21) would, at least, encourage leaderships to *claim* to accept it as a basic assumption and, perhaps, also to *actually* accept it. The following analysis of findings from the Environment City case study attempt to begin to make some judgements about whether, and if so to what degree, this example of public policy franchising has caused the leaderships of the four local authorities to have shifted, or to claim to have shifted their actual commitment.

### **Degree to Which Being Designated an EC, Itself, Changed the Attitudes of the Leaderships of the Local Authorities to the Relationship Between People and the Rest of Nature**

The DM Survey first addressed this directly by asking:

Q6 Your city is an Environment City. Please say what degree of difference you feel this has made to your City Council's attitude to the relationship between people and the rest of Nature.

The options were: 'major difference'; 'fairly major difference'; 'moderate difference'; 'little difference'; 'no difference' and 'don't know'.

Table 14 in Appendix 5 sets out a detailed analysis of the responses. The bar charts in Figures 1, 2 and 3 present the findings overall city by city and, separately, for both the leaders' and informants' groups.

Figure 1.

Q6 Your city is an Environment City. Please say what degree of difference you feel this has made to your City Council's attitude to the relationship between people and the rest of Nature.

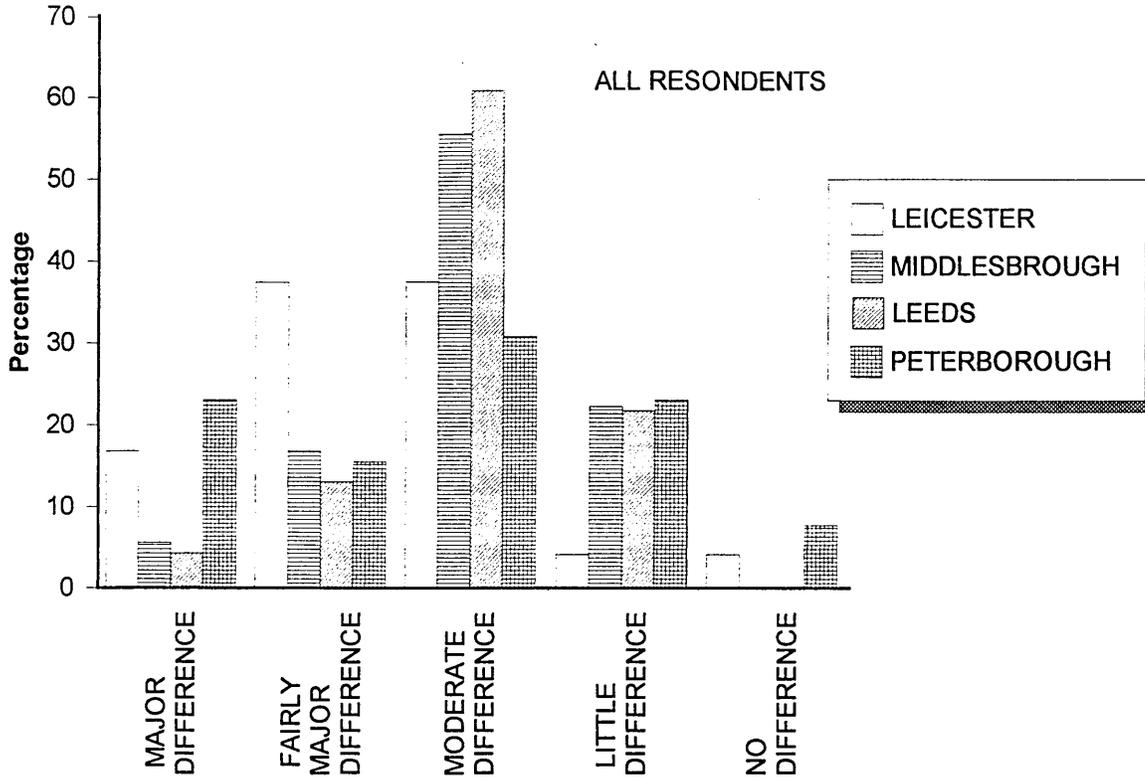


Figure 2. Q6

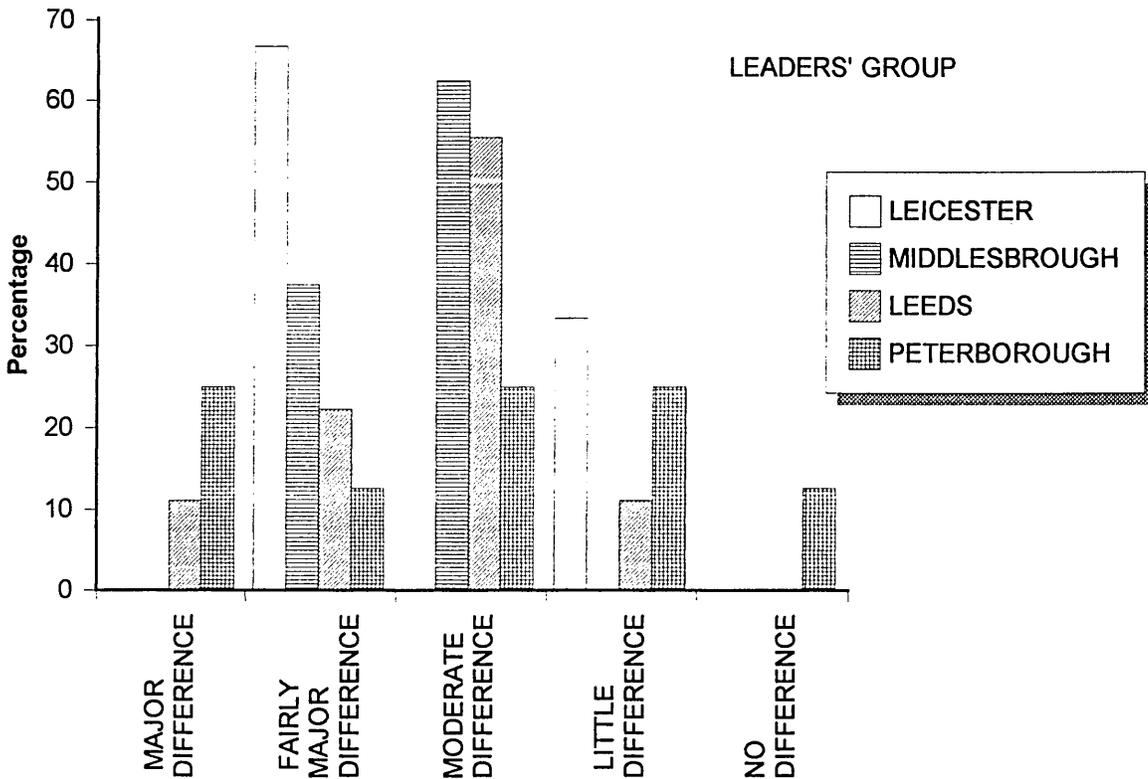
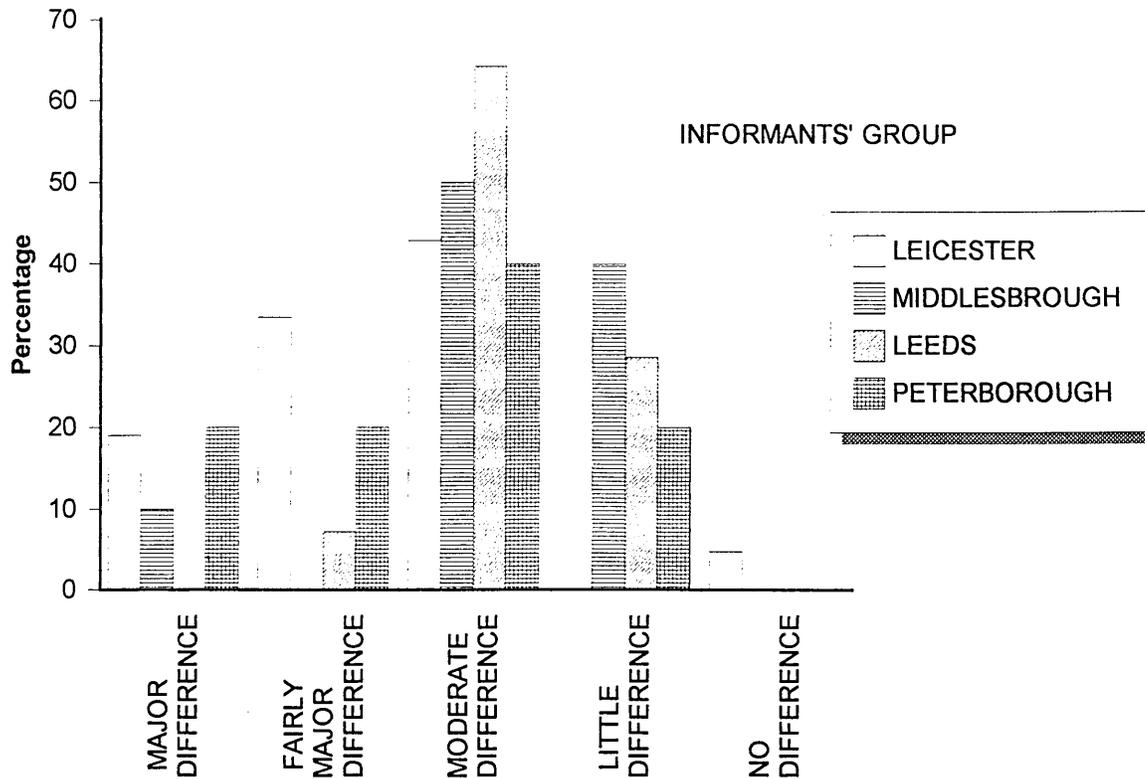


Figure 3.

Q6 Your city is an Environment City. Please say what degree of difference you feel this has made to your City Council's attitude to the relationship between people and the rest of Nature.



At the two most positive degrees, the following percentages of respondents in each of the cities replied as follows (in descending order of claimed degree of difference):

	Major difference	Fairly major difference	Total
Leicester	17 (0/19) %	38 (67/33) %	55 (67/52) %
Peterborough	23 (25/20) %	15 (12/20) %	38 (37/40) %
Middlesbrough	6 (0/10) %	17 (37/0) %	23 (37/10) %
Leeds	4 (11/0) %	13 (22/6) %	17 (33/6) %

The first figure in each set of brackets is the percentage of the leaders' group selecting that response and the second figure is the percentage of the informants' group selecting it.

Leicester, where evidence presented in earlier chapters shows the EC idea has been most firmly rooted is, thus, again seen by respondents as the city most positively affected by the call for a change in its attitudes and behaviour towards the environment, by both the leaders'

and the informants' groups. Very few Leicester respondents felt that being an EC had made 'little difference' and none thought it had made 'no difference'. The former, especially in Leicester, however, tend to be far more positive about this than the latter. Overall, the informants, many of whom are committed environmentalists, are clearly far less convinced than are their leaderships that being an EC has made a fairly major difference to this key attitude of their leaderships. Nevertheless, most of even these potential sceptics felt that it had made at least a moderate difference. Moreover, the fact that very few respondents in any of the cities felt that being an EC had made no difference and few felt it had made little difference, shows that the initiative is widely considered to have shifted this attitude of the leaderships in favour of the rest of nature.

It is possible that, in Peterborough, this question was interpreted differently insofar as much of Peterborough's EC activity has focused on nature e.g. its natural environment audits. This was, in part, due to the presence of the English Nature HQ in Peterborough. The commitment of the EC Manager to the 'natural environment' has probably also had a substantial influence on this level of activity. The other two cities were clearly seen as well adrift and few respondents (about one in five) thought that being an EC had made a major or a fairly major difference to their city council's attitude to the relationship between people and the rest of nature.

### **Evidence of Deeper Commitment Which Being an Environment City is Alleged to Have Induced.**

To press this theme further, in effect by seeking evidence for the claims made in response to Q6, the DM Survey asked respondents:

**Q15** Please would you list the five most important things which you feel your city has achieved and which, in your view, it would most likely not have achieved had it not been an Environment City.

In part, this was a question which straightforwardly tested respondents' views about what difference being an EC had made. In seeking evidence of this difference, however, it was similar to Q10 and Q11 (See Chapter Five) and a check on them. Table 15 in Appendix 5,

sets out the detailed findings. Figure 4., below, presents the overall findings as a bar chart.

The most frequently stated achievement resulting from EC status was that it has provided a high profile for the city and/or aided international links. It has been argued<sup>9</sup> that, with the possible exception of Peterborough, the city councils (and especially those of Leicester and Leeds) are very concerned to promote their cities, *largely for the purpose of aiding local economic growth*. Leicester and Middlesbrough respondents chose this achievement most often but, surprisingly, Leeds respondents did not. It was mentioned by them only equal sixth, most often (along with 6 other achievements). Peterborough respondents placed this achievement through being an EC even further down their list, at equal tenth with three other achievements. *It is, nevertheless, rather ironic that being an EC, whose purpose is to put environmental issues at the top of the local political agenda is, in fact, perceived by many to have been used, especially by two of the cities, to help promote economic growth*. In its typically environmentally negative form, such growth is seen as the 'enemy' of the environmental cause.

More positive from an environmental point of view, was the equal second placing of the belief by respondents that the EC initiative has *put sustainable development on the agenda of local politicians*. This, and many of the quotes set out below, supports the arguments presented in Chapter Four in relation to 'public policy franchising' as a means of formal agenda manipulation. Among the leaders' group, this was the equal first most frequently mentioned achievement. It was, however, rather less frequently cited by the informant's group, at seventh suggesting a rather generous interpretation by leaders. Among the cities, it was the most frequently cited achievement by Leeds respondents, fifth in Peterborough, tenth in Middlesbrough and twelfth in Leicester.

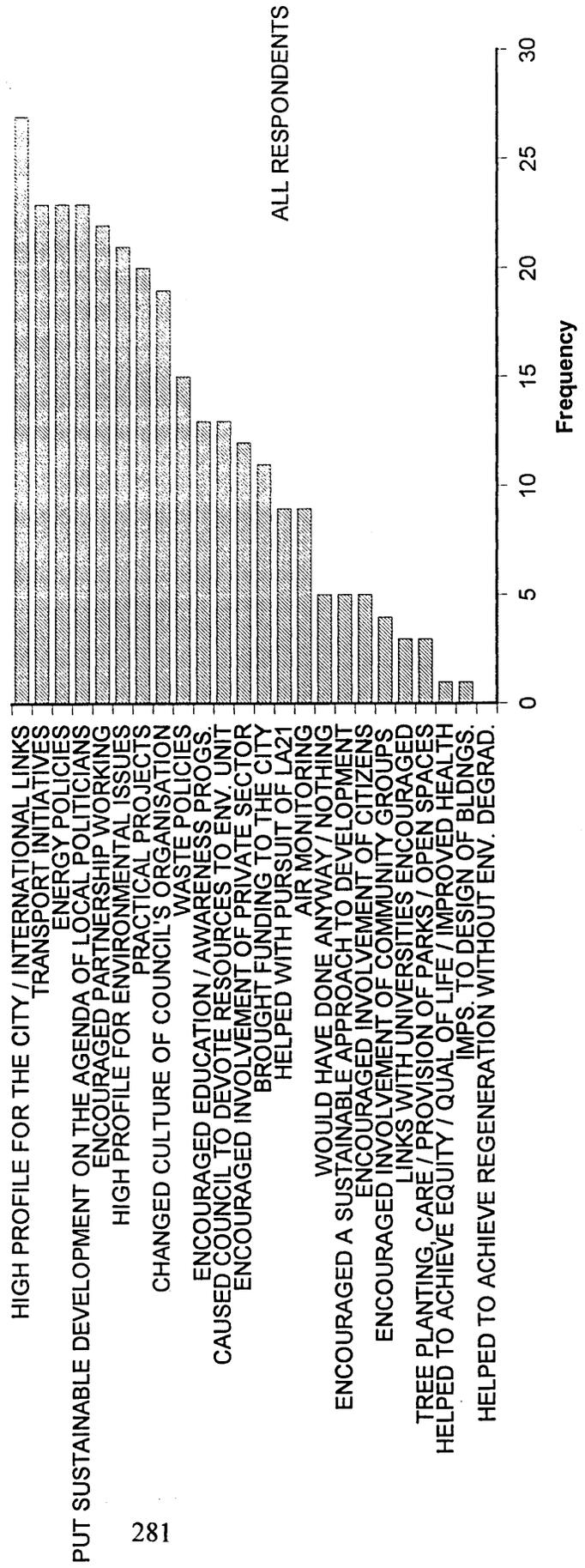
The history of how each city became an EC helps to explain these rankings. Many Leicester decision-makers believed that Leicester's local politicians were discussing sustainable development before almost any others in the country. In their case they saw the designation as simply building on that pioneering work. There is a similar but weaker view in

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<sup>9</sup> See Chapters Four and Five.

Figure 4.

Q. 15 Please would you list the five most important things which you feel your City has achieved and which, in your view, it would most likely not have achieved had it not been an Environment City.



Middlesbrough, though with much less justification. The responses in Leeds support the view that because the second and successful bid for EC status by Leeds was not really led or owned by the City Council, the local councillors simply 'rubber stamped' the bid. After the bid had succeeded, however, the Council then embraced it and to some extent held it so close as to almost exclude the other sectors from having any real say in its direction.

The specific comments reinforce these inferences. In Leicester they included, from a key officer 'Many will claim high change due to EC status. Whilst this is encouraging in that - at least when they think they ought to be quoting it - they believe it is important, the claim is in fact largely bogus. With a few minor exceptions, most change was coincidental or predated EC.' A senior officer said 'Designation worth keeping. Has helped to raise agenda locally. Banner, national, European.' A councillor noted 'Kerbside to begin.' A key outsider pointed to ' Environmental education, eco-house, Planet Works (MRF facility) with an education resource.'

Similarly an involved outsider commented that:

In most of my analysis (except achievements) I have looked at topic based issues or practical projects, rather than the process of change. Despite this, I feel that much of the real value of EC is about *legitimising* the desire for change, experimenting with innovative processes and projects to achieve it. A key reason why Leicester has achieved this to a fair extent is the LEC Trust effectively paid to have a well informed and independent (ish) group of green activists in place who were committed to the process of change. (My *emphasis*.)

An informed councillor was similarly positive about the difference which the EC designation has made:

I think *the public have made good use of EC to lobby, particularly through the Press*. We have recently set up an EC Communications Strategy with the Press on the Steering Group. They are very supportive, I think due to EC. There is no doubt that EC gave Leicester its accolade at Rio, *which led to Members seizing the opportunity and therefore being very committed to A21 in terms of resources*. Actually moving on into real partnership with others in the City is another issue! (My *emphasis*.)

In pre-reorganisation Middlesbrough, the EC designation undoubtedly put environmental issues on the political agenda, albeit only moderately so. Most comments from post-

reorganisation Middlesbrough, however, again inferred that they are barely on its agenda at all. This is demonstrated by the very modest nature of even the most optimistic response which came from a senior officer in Middlesbrough: 'The EC initiative is a worthwhile model to help the Council achieve its Environmental Strategy.' Respondents could point to nothing else even though, as recorded in Chapter Four, a number of initiatives are clearly to the credit of the EC challenge.

In Leeds, comments were much more positive and, importantly, included the comment of a very knowledgeable officer who said that 'EC has increased the standing of the Environment Unit, especially with Members.' Another said that 'Bidding process was the most valuable part - *thus need a new focus to keep it or to get a bar to the medal.*'. A senior officer noted that 'EC has a natural place in the psyche of the City.' and a voluntary sector partner claimed that the 'Bidding process fostered partnership.' A key comment was that of another closely involved officer who said that '*x does not want to lose. It has certainly brought the EC Manager (a fairly lowly officer in the City Council) into a close working relationship with the Leader.*' (My emphasis.) Others in Leeds were more negative. A councillor commented that 'Would have happened without EC' and a voluntary sector outsider felt that 'One or two Chapel Town Groups, otherwise all middle-class.'

In Peterborough comments included, from a senior officer '£100,000 / £1m for kerbside recycling. EC argument used with some sincerity.' A councillor commented that it 'Raises expectations.' and a very involved officer felt that the '*Concept is a winner.*' Yet another said that 'Targets would be OK.' (My emphasis.)

### **Environment City: More Environmental Initiatives as a Result of Being an EC?; EC as a Challenge Not an Accolade?**

Question 23, 24 and 25 checked again, from a different angle, the degree of commitment which respondents thought their city had made as a result of being designated an Environment City. Tables 16, 17 and 18 in Appendix Five set out a detailed analysis of the responses to these three questions and Figures 5 to 13 present the overall findings as bar

charts. The first of this battery of questions asked:

Q23 Please say the degree to which your city would (in your opinion) have taken the environmental initiatives, which it has, had it not been designated as an Environment City?

The options were: 'more initiatives'; 'just as many initiatives'; 'a few less'; 'moderately fewer'; 'substantially fewer'; 'no new initiatives' and 'don't know'.

This question was looking for behavioural *evidence* of the difference which EC designation has made as well as evidence of any ideological shift of commitment behind it.

The percentages of respondents saying that either 'moderately fewer' or 'substantially fewer' initiatives would have been taken had their city not been designated an EC were:

Table 2.	Substantially	Moderately	Total
Leicester	35 (66/30) %	40 (34/41) %	75 (100/71) %
Middlesbrough	29 (37/22) %	35 (37/33) %	64 (74/55) %
Peterborough	46 (38/60) %	15 (25/0) %	61 (63/60) %
Leeds	24 (10/33) %	33 (33/33) %	57 (43/66) %

The first figure in brackets is the percentage of leaders selecting this option and the second is the comparable percentage of informants.

In answering Q23, Leicester respondents, again, appeared to be the most positive being the most convinced of the difference being designated an Environment City has made. This was so from 'moderate' through to 'substantial'. Also again, Peterborough respondents were much more likely than respondents in the other cities to say that they felt that being an EC has had a 'substantial' positive influence on precipitating environmental initiatives in that city. Overall, with total percentages varying from 57% to 75%, it is fair to say that, in the view of the majority of respondents, the designation has had a moderate to substantial positive impact on the number of initiatives which the city's have taken in respect of environmental issues. Even more encouragingly for the EC Programme, between 24% and 46% of respondents in each city said they felt that being an EC had made a substantial difference.

The responses to DMQ23 show a broadly similar city by city response to both questions suggesting that respondents understood the questions and answered them thoughtfully.

Q23 Please say the degree to which your City would (in your opinion) have taken the environmental initiatives, which it has, had it not been designated as an Environment City or given any similar distinction / challenge.

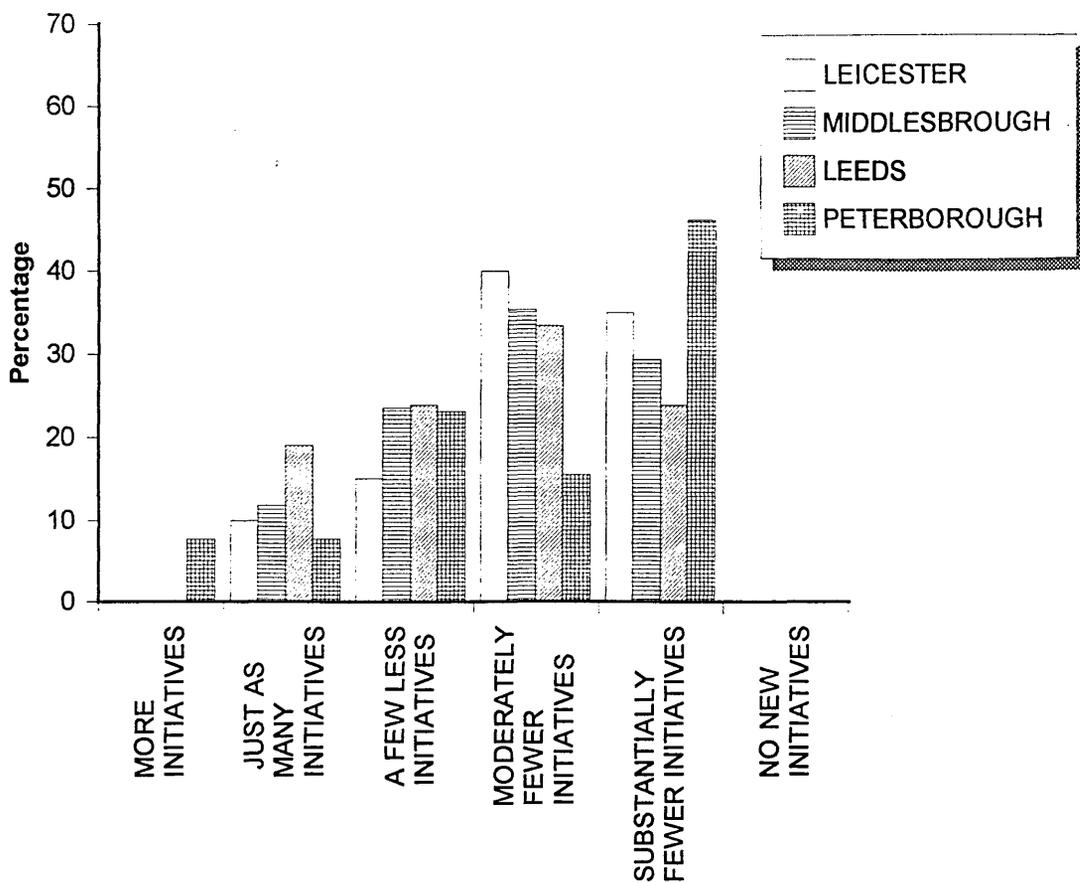


Figure 6. Q23

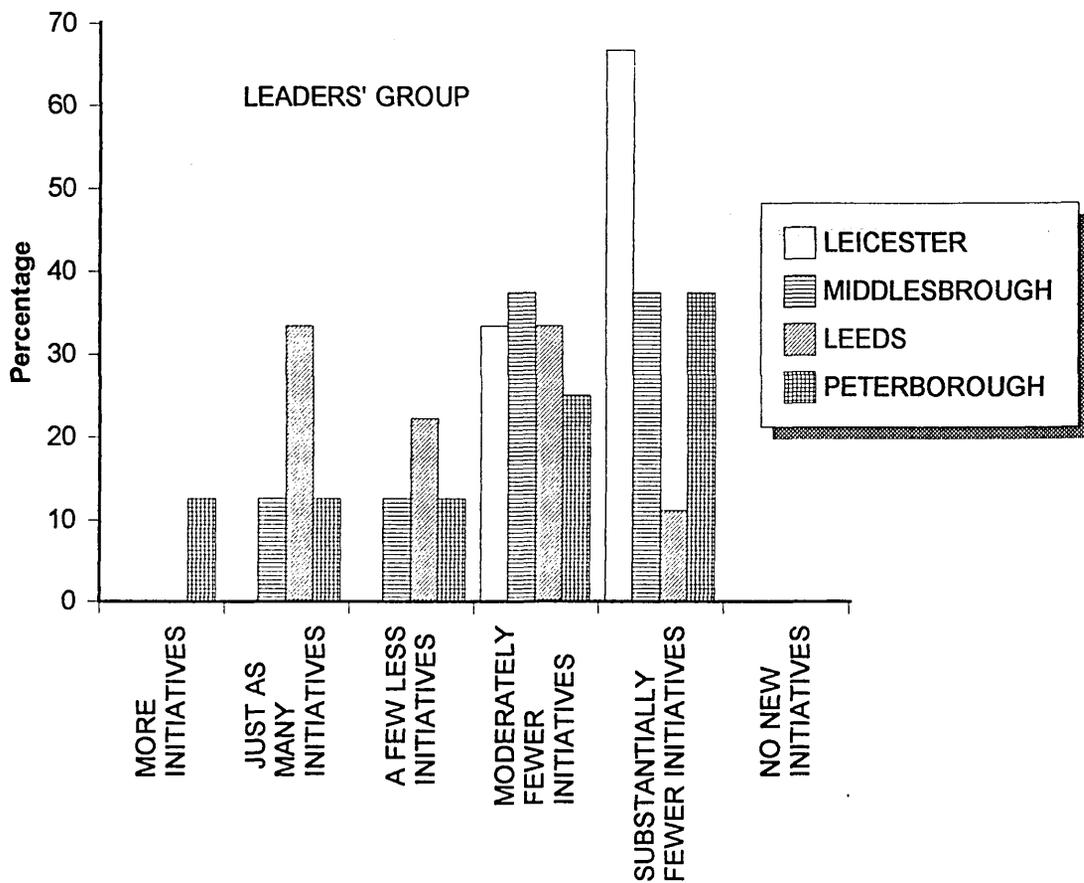
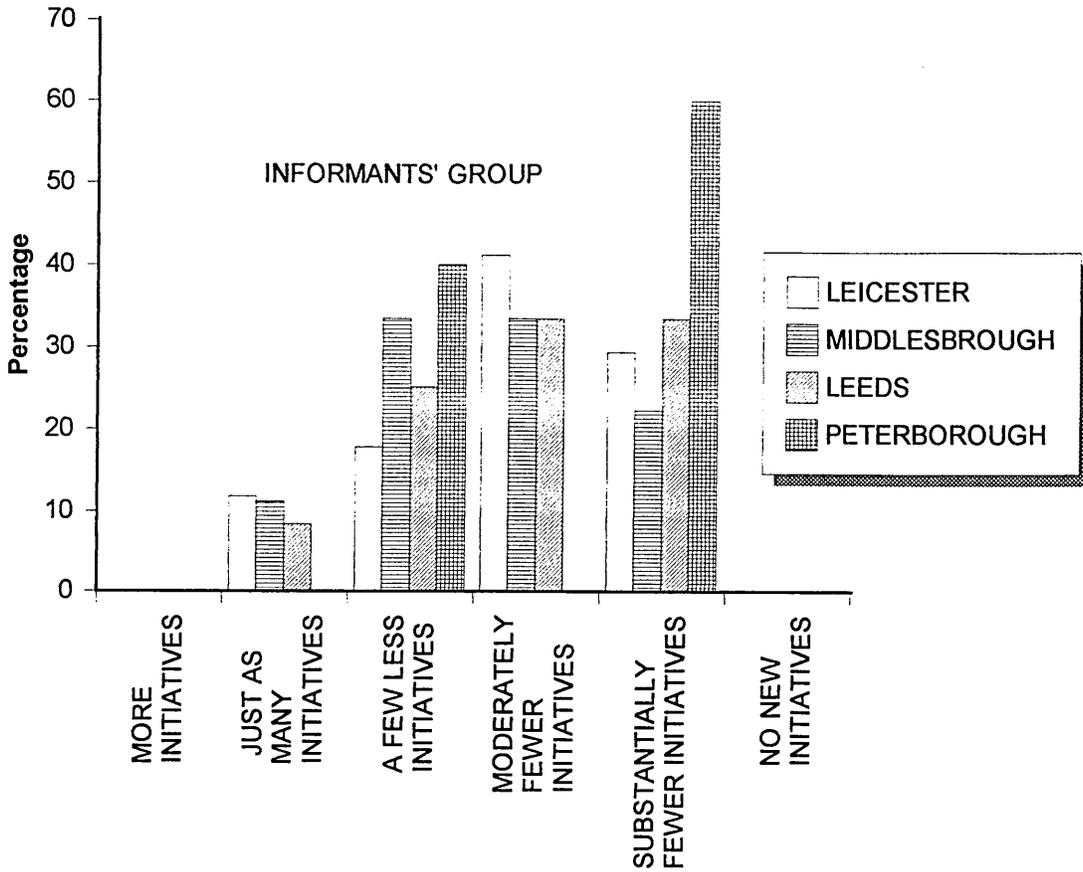


Figure 7.

Q23 Please say the degree to which your City would (in your opinion) have taken the environmental initiatives, which it has, had it not been designated as an Environment City or given any similar distinction / challenge.



How valid are these claims and, in particular, as explained above, might one not expect leaders claiming to be committed, in particular, to be very positive about their city's response to being an EC whether or not it has, in fact, made much difference? The breakdown of responses from each of the two groups, 'leaders' and 'informants', checks this and lends support to the integrity of the findings. In Leeds and Peterborough the informants are seen to be more positive than the leaders about the difference made. In Leicester and Middlesbrough the opposite is the case. In response to Q6 more informants than leaders were, again, positive in Peterborough but, here, the opposite was the case in Middlesbrough and Leeds. In Leicester, the responses of the two groups were similar.

As observed above, the interviews and other methods used revealed that in Leicester it is believed that the city has a long history of taking environmental initiatives which precedes the invention of the EC idea. Indeed, as the founding city for EC, it was Leicester's initiatives which led to the EC designation and not the other way around. It is understandable that Leeds informants were much more positive about initiatives resulting from EC than they were about it making a difference to the City Council's attitude to the people / rest of nature relationship. Leeds has been very active with EC initiatives but informants clearly doubt the degree to which attitudes have changed. In the case of Middlesbrough, the leaders group seemed very insecure and concerned to impress. This feeling was probably made stronger by the anxiousness of leaders to impress on me the integrity of the commitments they made recently to The Wildlife Trusts in return for the extension of the designation to the year 2000. The recent acquisition of unitary status with many new councillors, new roles and new responsibilities throughout the council also appeared to be causing leaders to feel insecure. The analysis of the responses to DMQ24 and DMQ25, below, throws further light on these thoughts. These questions were:

Q24 To what extent have you seen your city's designation as an Environment City as an accolade?

Q25 To what extent have you seen your city's designation as an Environment City as a challenge?

The options, for both questions, were: 'very much'; 'quite a lot'; 'moderately'; 'a bit'; 'not at all' and 'don't know'.

One might reasonably find it acceptable for the designation to be viewed as both an accolade and a challenge. As argued above, however, the 'inventors' and owners of the EC idea have been clearly of the view that regarding it as an accolade is largely unjustified because this makes it sound like an award for a (completed) job well done and that is not the intention. Far from it, they would say. There is a great deal to do and the designation needs to encourage the city to focus on the challenge of making progress rather than sitting back and enjoying the glow of an 'award'.

Figure 8.

Q24 To what extent have you seen your City's designation as an Environment City as an accolade?

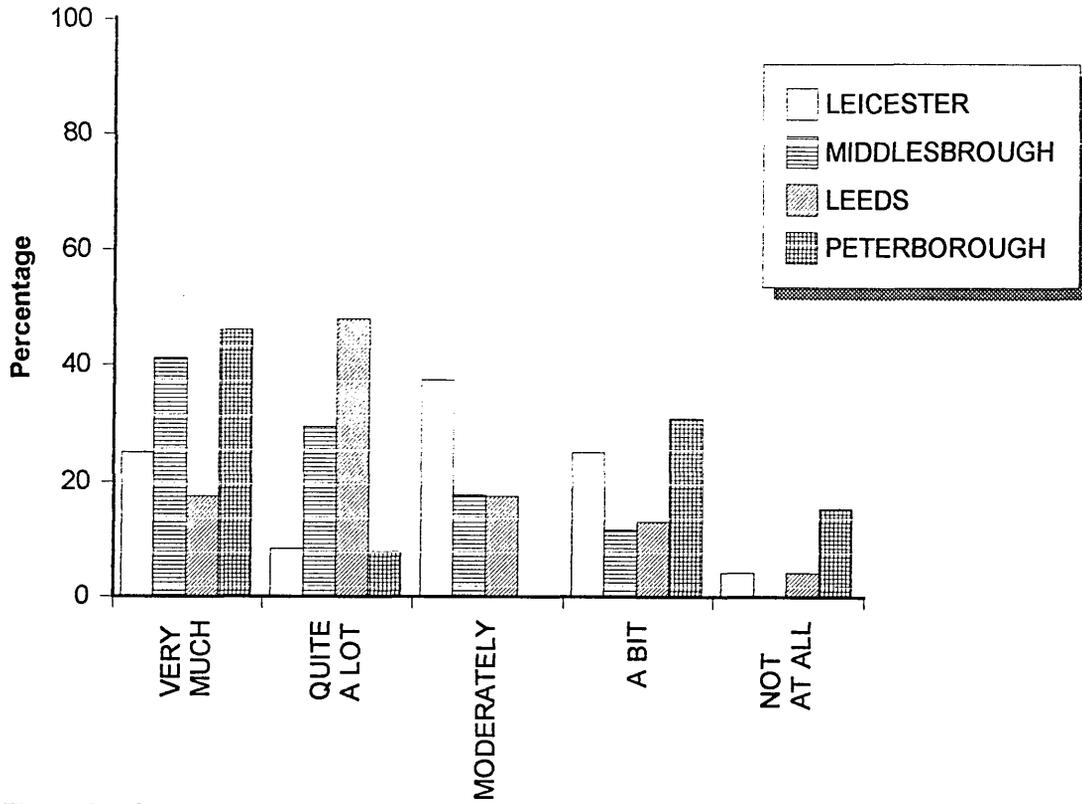


Figure 9. Q24

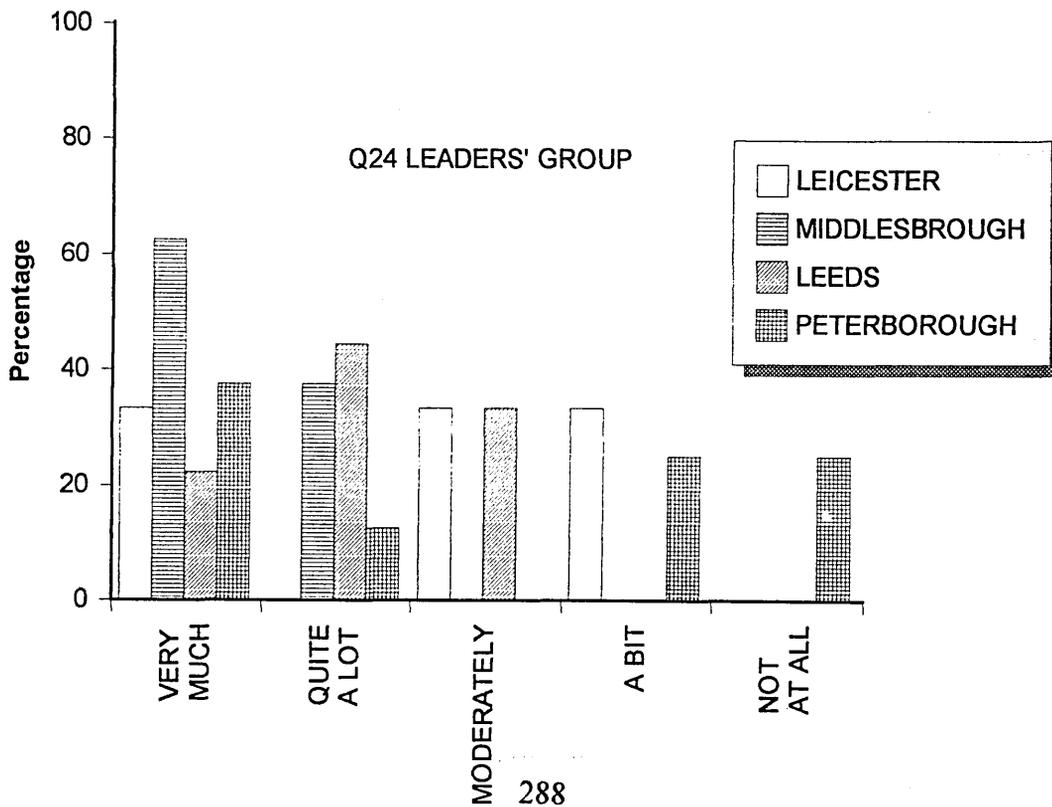
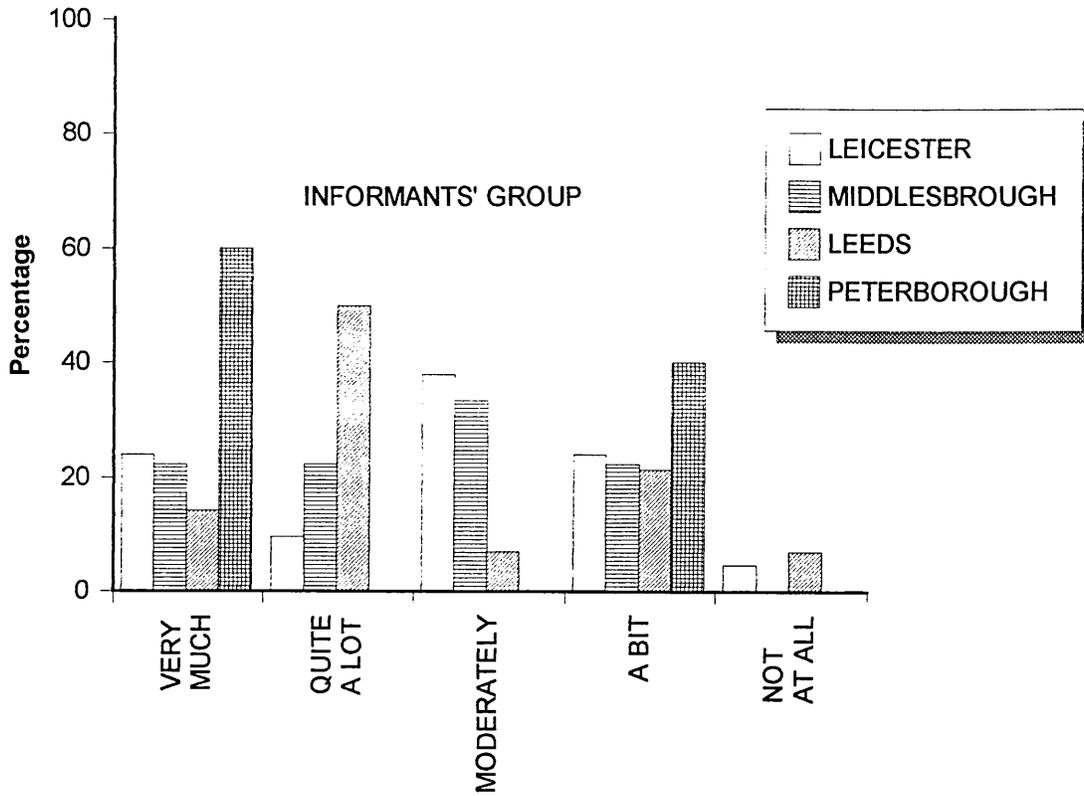


Figure 10.

Q24 To what extent have you seen your City's designation as an Environment City as an accolade?



The percentages of respondents who said they have seen their city's designation as an Environment City as an accolade either 'very much' or 'quite a lot' were:

Table 3.	Very much	Quite a lot	Total
Leicester	25 (33/23) %	8 (0/9) %	33 (33/32) %
Peterborough	46 (37/60) %	8 (13/0) %	54 (50/60) %
Leeds	17 (22/14) %	48 (45/50) %	65 (67/64) %
Middlesbrough	41 (62/22) %	29 (38/22) %	70 (100/44) %

The first figure in brackets is the percentage of leaders selecting this option and the second is the comparable percentage of informants.

Figure 11.

Q25 To what extent have you seen your City's designation as an Environment City as a challenge?

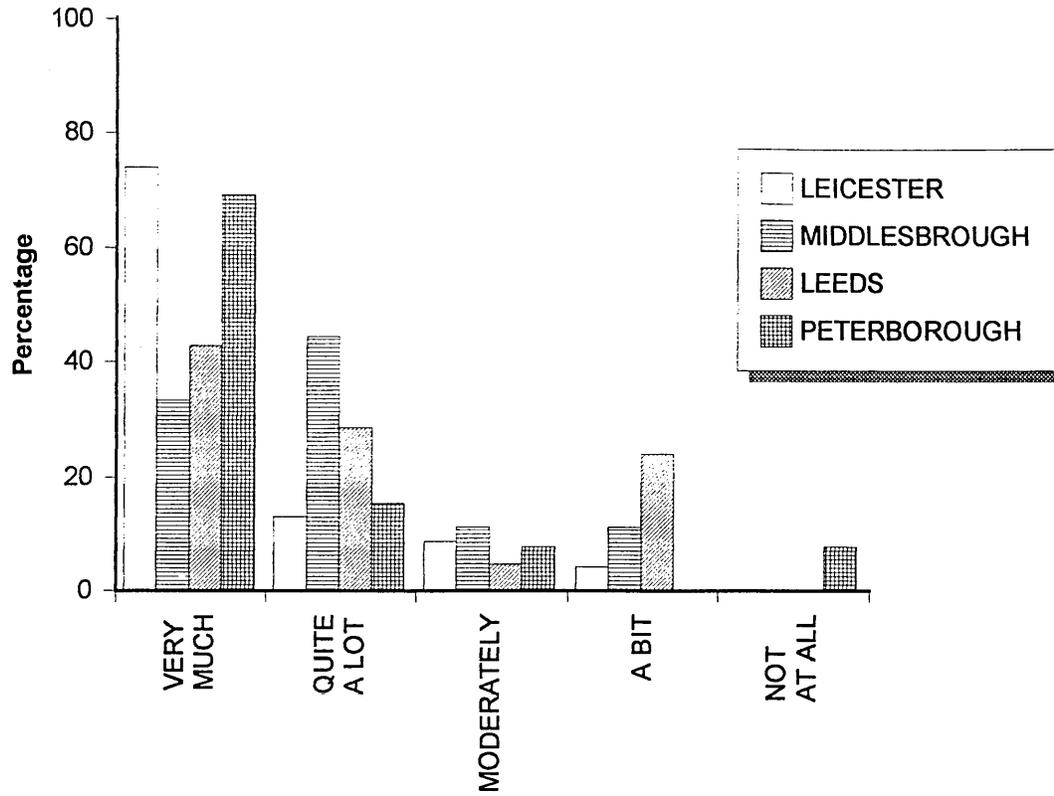


Figure 12. Q25

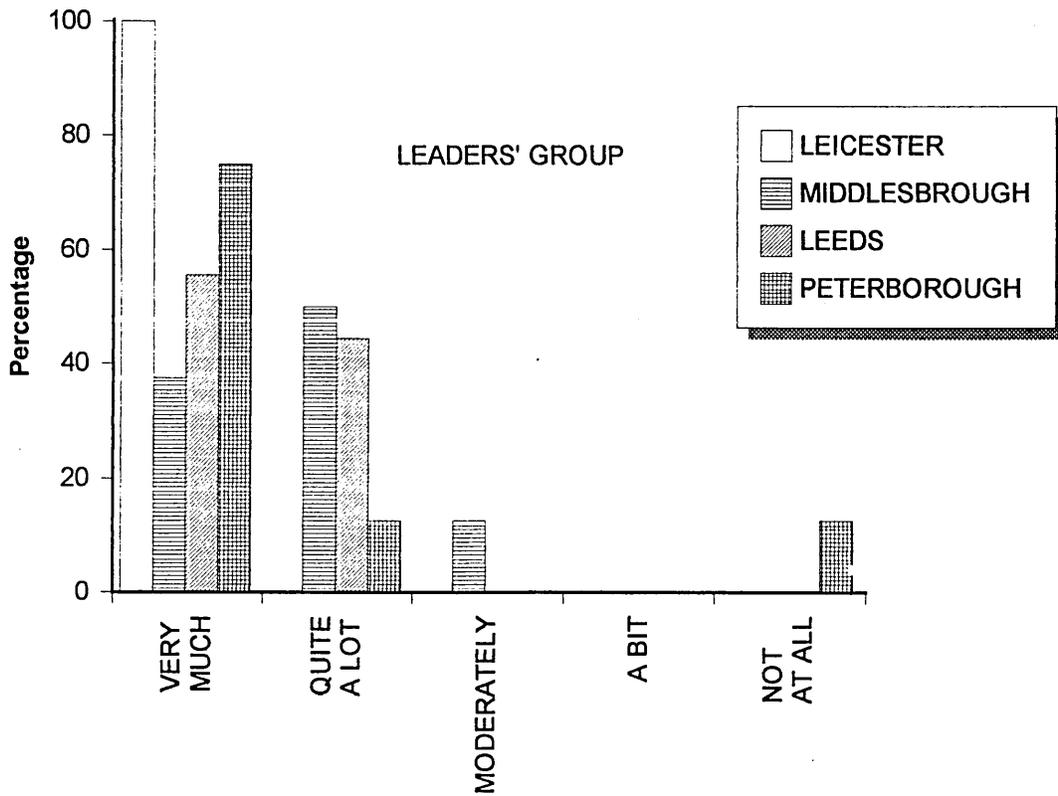
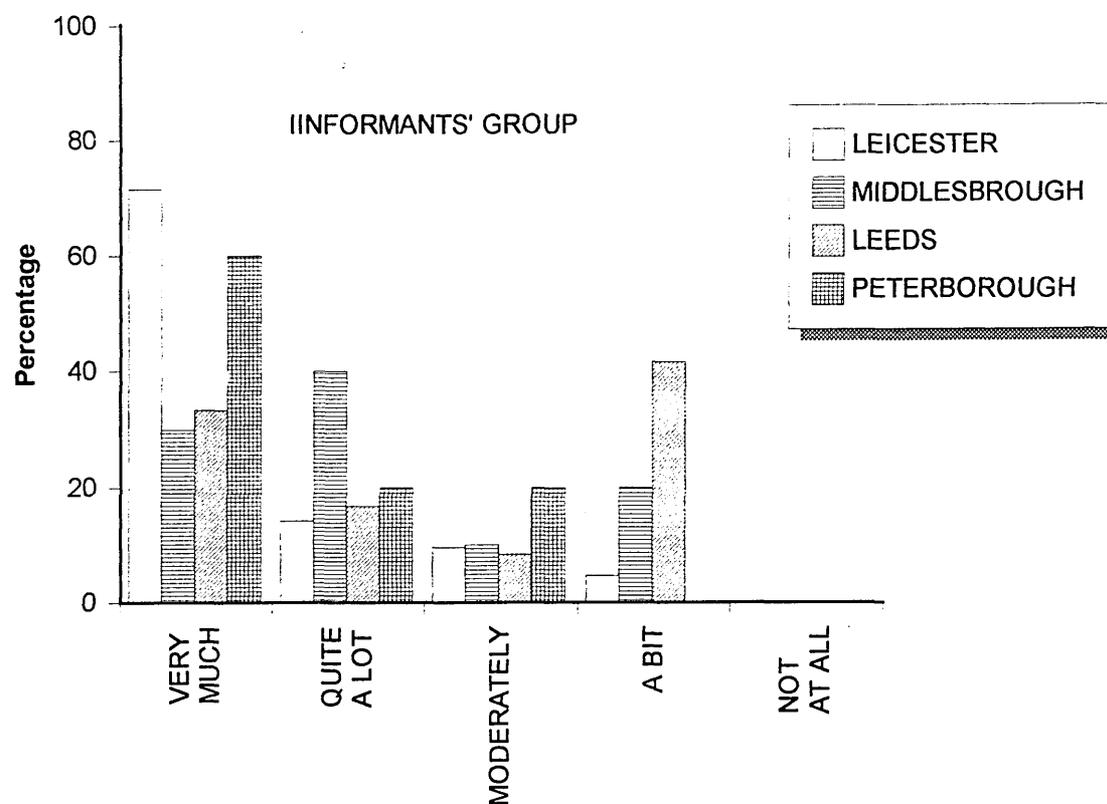


Figure 13.

Q25 To what extent have you seen your City's designation as an Environment City as a challenge?



The percentages of respondents who said they have seen their city's designation as an Environment City as a challenge either 'very much' or 'quite a lot' were:

Table 4.	Very much	Quite a lot	Total
Leicester	74 (100/72) %	13 (0/15) %	87 (100/87) %
Peterborough	69 (76/60) %	15 (12/20) %	84 (88/80) %
Middlesbrough	33 (37/30) %	44 (50/40) %	77 (87/70) %
Leeds	43 (55/33) %	29 (45/18) %	72 (100/51) %

The first figure in brackets is the percentage of leaders selecting this option and the second is the comparable percentage of informants.

The fact that to become an EC, a city had to compete with others and demonstrate its commitment to leading attitudinal and behavioural change, probably and understandably, caused the 'awarding' of the designation to be seen as an achievement. Each city's actions

prior to being an EC were, after all, judged as part of the process of selecting it. (See Chapter Four.)

The 'owners' of the EC idea would, no doubt, approve of Leicester's reported position through these two questions. Leicester respondents appear to have accepted the EC ideology well. Only 25% of Leicester respondents saw its EC status as 'very much' of an accolade (the second lowest percentage of all of the cities) and 74% of Leicester respondents saw it as a challenge (the highest percentage of the four cities). The fact that only another 8% of respondents in Leicester saw the designation as 'quite a lot' of an accolade, showed Leicester's respondents (if the two degrees are aggregated) as the least convinced that the designation is an accolade. This was confirmed at the other end of the scale with 29% of Leicester respondents replying 'a bit' (25%) or 'not at all' (4%). 46% of Peterborough respondents, however, also replied either 'a bit' (31%) or 'not at all' (15%). No Peterborough respondents selected the middle choice of 'moderately' and so, overall, respondents were less likely than Leicester, but more likely than respondents in the other cities, to feel that the EC designation is not intended to be seen as an accolade. .

From the comments about the responses of Middlesbrough's leaders to Q23 we should not be surprised to find that these leaders were also the most likely to say that they saw the EC designation as an accolade. The City's informants, however, were much less likely to do so.

With the exception of Leeds informants, where only 48% of them saw the EC designation as presenting a challenge, over 80% of respondents from both groups in all of the cities saw the designation as a challenge. The fact that 43% of the Leeds informants' group claimed to see the EC designation as only 'a bit' of a challenge needs further consideration. This was much higher than for the other cities. Another 9% of them saw it only moderately as a challenge, again the highest among the cities. The reasons for this are probably related to the considerable structure which Leeds has in place for overseeing and implementing its green initiatives, including LEBF and LEAF which existed before the city was an EC. Many of the respondents in the informants' group are involved with these structures and initiatives and think they would survive and, perhaps, even do just as well if the EC status had not

existed or was now withdrawn. The interviews of some of the key Leeds informants revealed that, of all the cities, Leeds would be the least worried if the designation were now withdrawn. There is a view in Leeds that it has *served its purpose in helping to get the various mechanisms in place and that the momentum will now be sustained without the status of being an EC*. In part, the view is founded on the size and standing of Leeds in comparison with that of the other ECs. It was the only metropolitan EC, over three times larger than the next largest EC (i.e. Leicester), 5 times larger than the other two (in population terms) and is the only one which has qualified for membership of the prestigious Eurocities. It sees its future as a European City first and foremost and not as just a member of a relatively parochial UK, EC group. The strength of the EMAS system which has tended to institutionalise the call for sustainable development green values as an espoused ideological commitment is probably also a significant factor in Leeds.

The leaders in all of the cities were more likely than the informants to see the designation as a challenge.

### **Citizens' Perceptions of the Environment Cities' Management of the Environment**

It is reasonable to expect that *if* a City's leadership (especially its city council leadership) has been influenced by being an Environment City then its citizens will have noticed that it seems to be *progressively* demonstrating it to them. The City should be, evidently, *managed* progressively differently in favour of the environment. CZ Questions 12 and 13 (also referred to in Chapter Five) asked for two alternative views on this local management of the environment indicating, first, *how* the city cares for the environment and, second, *how* it fails to care. As the question was put to citizens in each of the cities first in the Summer of 1994 and then again in late 1995 it was possible to gain an idea of the perceived progress made in the intervening period. The responses city by city are given in Tables 3,4 5 and 6 in Appendix Six.

Question 12 asked 'In what ways, if any, do you think (this city) shows that it cares especially about environmental issues?'

The most popular answers were:

Table 5.	1994	1995
None	135	94
General satisfaction with care	56	33
Cleanliness or tidiness	41	71
Other *	32	17
Precincts	31	48
Parks and open spaces	25	79
Public transport	24	5
Don't know/not answered	61	65

\* see definition of category in Appendix.

Overall, there was satisfaction with council services eg. recycling and litter collection, but much less satisfaction with the democracy / political aspects of the city councils. The tenor of responses to this question and the next often showed considerable cynicism about the motives, and a lack of trust, of local politicians.

A public opinion survey was carried out by MEC in early 1995 (Green Pages, March 1995) found a similar emphasis by citizens in the *limited environmental agenda* (Ward, 1996). A questionnaire was sent to 1% of households selected randomly and a 60% response rate, i.e. 300 questionnaires, was achieved. Free energy saving light bulbs were promised to those returning the forms. The main environmental concerns of residents were reported as less litter, less air pollution and less dog fouling. 75% of respondents thought air quality to be poor. 75% thought traffic was an environmental problem.

Question 13 asked 'In what ways, if any do you think (this city) shows that it does not care especially about environmental issues?'

The most popular answers were:

Table 6.	1994	1995
None/satisfied	151	157
Other*	47	35
Litter/cleanliness	36	43
Public transport	20	9
Traffic	16	43
Pollution	10	17
Don't know / not answered	112	68

This question provides a counterbalance to the previous question and is comparable with DMQ 11. In 1995, 163 out of 426 responses mentioned an issue which they believed to show that the city does not care compared with 203 out of 428 in 1994. Moreover, from the discussions with interviewees it was clear that, in the context of this question, 'don't know' or failure to answer could, in many cases, indicate satisfaction.

Three conclusions can be drawn from the responses to these two questions. First, there was an apparently significant increase in satisfaction with the environmental performance of the councils' management of the environment over the 18 month period between the two surveys. Second, the vast majority of respondents were quite satisfied with their city council's performance in respect of environmental issues - *as they understood them*. Third, and perhaps most significantly, the responses demonstrated a strong tendency of citizens to judge the environmental performance of their councils in terms of Ward's (1996) *limited* environmental service related definition, especially in terms of the way they manage civic infrastructure such as keeping the streets litter free and providing well maintained green areas. Only a minority recognised that their city councils have a role in respect of more 'environmentalist' matters, and even then they mostly saw the role as limited to environmental impact within the city boundaries, for instance in terms of pollution control, rather than seeing a role for their local authority in 'saving the world'. From the conversations during the interviews it was apparent that this was largely because, beyond litter, dogs and green areas, respondents had a very weak idea of what else their councils did or could do in this field. *None* made any reference to the responsibilities of their

councils deriving from Agenda 21 or the Earth Summit and the next section examines this tendency in greater detail.

This leads one to think that if rationality by society in respect of responding to the environmental crisis is to be locally led by local authority leaderships' then efforts to encourage them to act in a 'statesmanlike' way are likely to be the most productive.

### **PERCEPTION BY LEADERSHIPS AND CITIZENS OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS FACING THE CITY; AND 'STATESMANSHIP' AS A CATALYST**

It might be hypothesised that, *as a result of taking on the role of Environment Cities or otherwise*, the local authority leaderships are, to one degree or another, more ready to lead a major shift of behaviour than citizens are ready to acknowledge that this should be a priority for their city's leaders, or 'managers'. If so, then this would imply that the leaderships have, in fact, been acting in a 'statesmanlike' way in respect of the *broad environmental agenda* (Ward, 1996). To the degree that they have so acted, this might be seen as a positive move towards an attempt to lead a shift of behaviour and ideology by citizens who have tended to see the environmental role of their local authority as restricted to the *limited agenda* (Ward, 1996). By posing similar questions to both citizens and leaderships the surveys attempted to reveal their respective perceptions of the environmental agenda and to that extent to test this hypothesis.

Q8 and Q9 of the DM Survey and Q6 and Q11 of the CZ Survey asked decision-makers and citizens respectively for their perceptions of the most significant problems, and then the most significant *environmental* problems, facing their cities.

#### **Perceptions of The Most Significant Problems Facing the City**

The DM Survey asked:

- Q8 What do you think are the most significant problems (not necessarily environmental problems) facing your city? If you can, please list three in descending order of significance.

Similarly, the CZ Survey asked:

Q6 What do you think are the most significant problems facing L/L/M/P?

To avoid leading citizens into offering only environmental problems, this question was put to respondents before they were given any clues which might cause them to think that the survey was essentially about environmental issues.

To aid comparison, the responses to the DM Survey question<sup>10</sup> were analysed into the same 14 categories ('other' was dropped) as those used for the Citizen Survey plus three additional categories; 'the Government', 'public apathy' and 'service provision'.

Table 19 in Appendix Five sets out the responses of decision-makers, including the leadership groups, to DMQ8 and Tables 7 and 8 in Appendix Six set out the responses of citizens to CZQ6. The bar charts in Figures 14 to 16 illustrate the responses of decision-makers. The bar chart in Figure 17 illustrates the responses of citizens.

Taking the 1994 and 1995 Citizen Surveys together, traffic issues were the most frequently mentioned. Traffic was easily the most frequently mentioned in the 1995 survey with crime second. (As the second citizen survey was conducted in the period before Christmas 1995 in shopping precincts it is, arguably, not surprising to find that parking and traffic problems were much more frequently cited than in the Spring 1994 survey.) Crime, however, had taken first place in the 1994 survey with unemployment, a close second and traffic a close third. Unemployment issues were the fifth most often cited in the 1995 survey. As well as traffic and crime, parking and 'cleanliness and street cleaning' were cited more often. Indeed, in 1995, unemployment related issues were cited less than half as often as in 1994.

In the DM Survey, overwhelmingly, the most frequently mentioned issues were

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<sup>10</sup> Although DMQ8 asked respondents to list three problems in descending order of importance, insufficient respondents were able to list three issues to make an analysis based on ranking meaningful.

unemployment related. For the sake of comparison, however, the category was used to embrace all 'state of the local economy' issues. This was done because it was found that very few citizens speak about the state of the local economy but about (a consequence of the economy's 'weakness') unemployment. The decision-makers focused as much on the 'causes' of unemployment and other economic ills and took a more strategic view. Both groups were, therefore, looking at a similar set of 'problems' but from different perspectives, each describing the 'problem' in a different way. Whilst this is true also of the other categories it is especially true in this case. In the case of unemployment / economic issues, citizens tend to talk about 'jobs' whereas decision-makers talk about the need for 'economic regeneration'. Similarly, as argued in the last chapter, whilst citizens talk about crime, decision-makers have clearly 'bought into' conventional wisdom and talk about the need for 'social regeneration'. The decision-makers saw traffic as the second most significant problem though this was a very long way behind unemployment issues. Crime was a close third and pollution issues a close fourth.

It is very apparent from this that whereas citizens see crime, unemployment, traffic and some other issues such as parking and street cleanliness as problems at the top of their list of perceived issues facing their cities, decision-makers are very clear (arguably in a 'statesmanlike' fashion) that the need to get the local economy right is far and away the greatest issue facing their cities. As observed in the last chapter, this is seen as a prerequisite for funding first social and then environmental improvements.

There was a fairly high degree of consistency between the response of the leaders' and informants groups'. Both put unemployment / economic issues way ahead of all the others. The informants' group, however, put traffic issues a very poor though clear second. The leaders, on the other hand, cited pollution issues as joint second most often (with traffic, more or less, equal fourth with four other issues). Crime was joint second for leaders and third for informants.

Figure 14.

Q8 What do you think are the most significant problems (not necessarily environmental problems) facing your city? Please list three in descending order of significance.

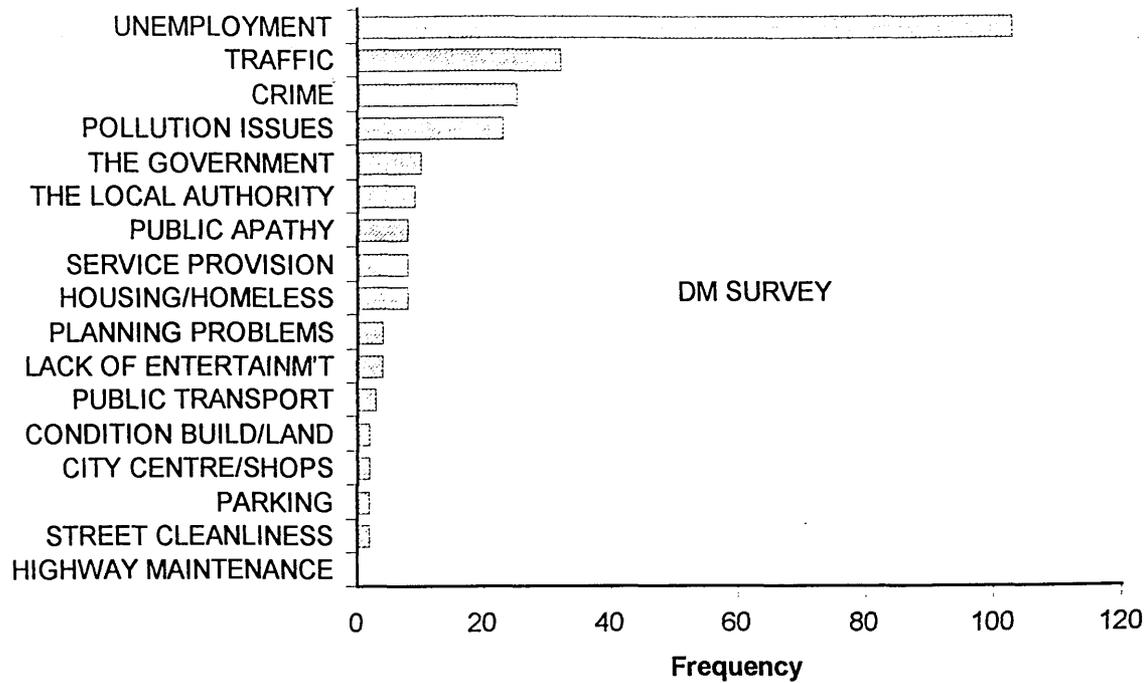


Figure 15. Q8

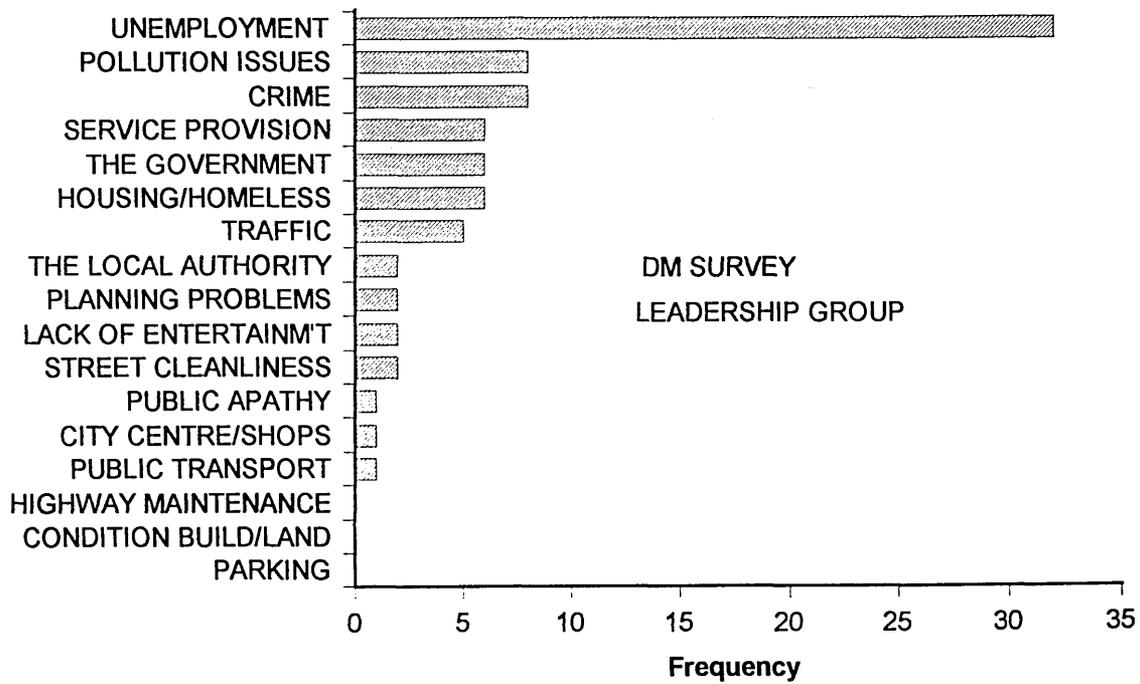


Figure 16.

Q8 What do you think are the most significant problems (not necessarily environmental problems) facing your city? Please list three in descending order of significance.

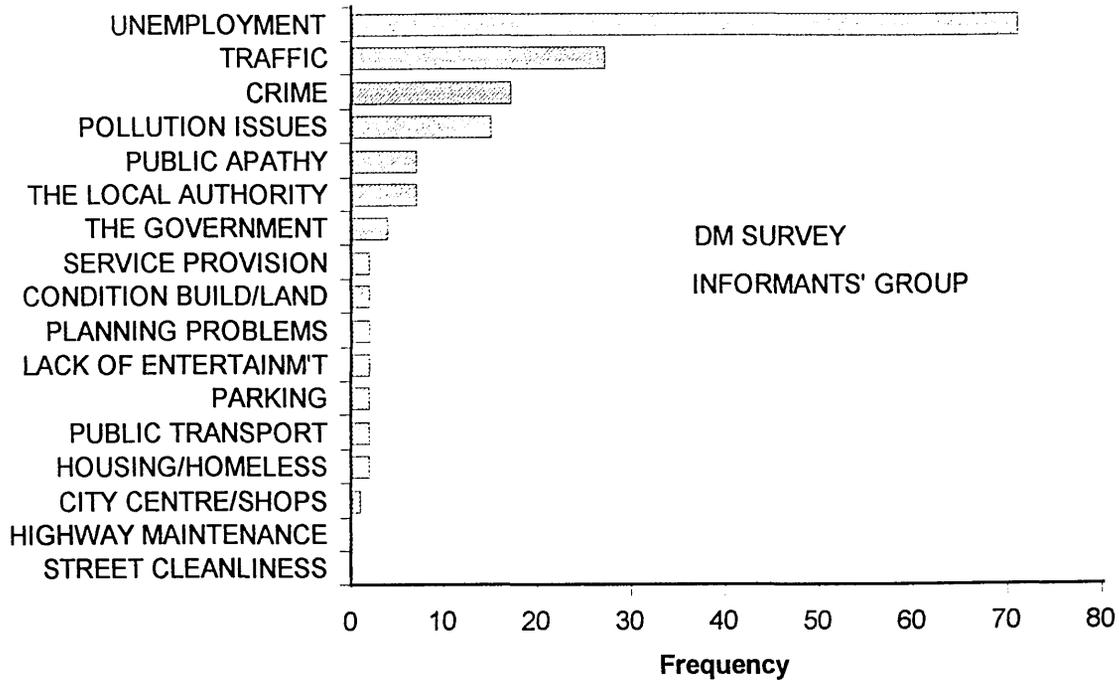
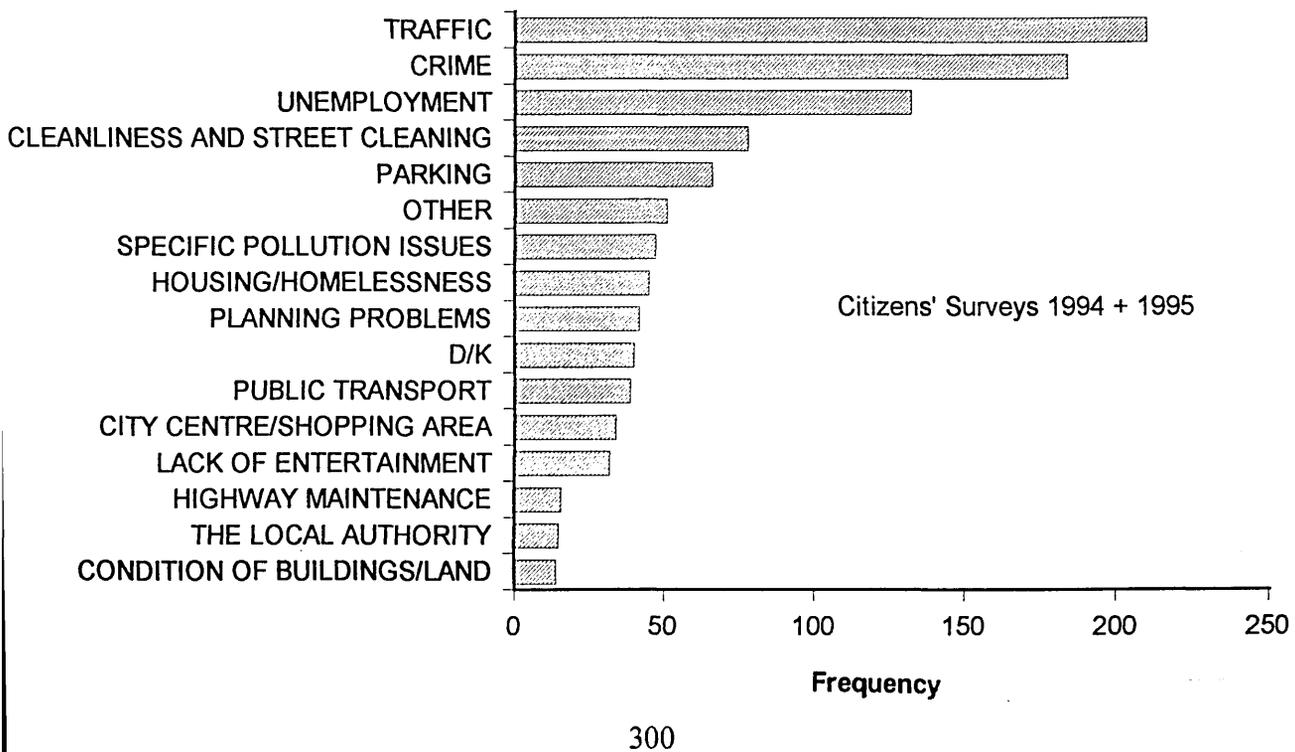


Figure 17.

Q 6 What do you think are the most significant problems facing L/M/L/P?



The city by city analyses of the response to the DM Survey were revealing, especially when compared with the city by city perceptions of citizens. In Leicester, the decision-makers put unemployment, traffic and pollution issues as one, two and three. Citizens, put traffic and crime as approximate equal first with unemployment as third. In Middlesbrough, decision-makers put unemployment way ahead with hardly a mention of any other issues (with the exception of crime and pollution issues - just). Middlesbrough's citizens put unemployment well ahead in the 1994 survey but in only third place in 1995. Traffic was first in 1995. Crime was a very significant second in both years and cleanliness and street cleaning was third in 1994. In Leeds, decision-makers put unemployment / economic problems well ahead but also gave a very significant second place to traffic problems. Crime and then pollution issues were also quite frequently cited. Citizens cited traffic problems substantially more often than any other problems in 1995 and jointly most often, with crime, in 1994. In 1995, crime had fallen to second place with unemployment just third above fourth placed 'cleanliness'. In Peterborough, the decision-makers gave unemployment / economic problems most often and mentioned crime related problems about half as often in second place. Traffic, pollution and planning problems were joint third most often cited. The citizens in Peterborough were much less focused. In 1994, crime issues were the most frequently mentioned but not by a long way over planning problems and unemployment as more or less equal second. In 1995, traffic and parking featured as first and second. Crime, a lack of entertainment and public transport problems were almost jointly third most cited.

Overall, the decision-makers were, then, much more focused - on economic 'problems'. This was seen as the cause of most ills. Citizens, on the other hand, saw only (and cited only) what decision-makers appear to see as the *consequences* of economic successes as well as failures e.g. traffic, jobs, crime and pollution. Middlesbrough decision-makers were at the extreme of this, with almost all of the problems cited being economic ones. This was a view supported to a large extent by citizens in 1994 but not in 1995, perhaps to a large degree because they were experiencing the problems of Christmas traffic. At the other end of the spectrum, even though Peterborough decision-makers put unemployment / economic problems well out in front, they perceived the widest range of other problems which they did not choose to relate specifically to the state of their local economy. Again, this view was

borne out by Peterborough citizen respondents who, in both years, distributed their priorities across the various categories more evenly than did the citizens of any of the other three cities. In this sense, there was a good correlation between the views of Peterborough decision-makers and citizens.

### **Perceptions of the most significant environmental problems facing the city**

Further questions in the DM and CZ Surveys pushed further the enquiry about the *broad* versus the *limited environmental agenda*, this time asking specifically about environmental problems, thus:

DMQ9 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing your city? Please list three in descending order of significance.

CZQ11 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing L/L/M/P?

An analysis of responses of decision-makers to DMQ9 is set out in Table 20 in Appendix Five and an analysis of the responses to CZQ11 is set out in Tables 9 to 11 in Appendix Six. Figures 18 and 19 present the response to both questions as bar charts. Again, to facilitate comparison, the same categories for the DMQ9 analysis were used as for CZQ11 but with the addition of some further categories to accommodate the extra dimensions to the decision-makers' responses. These were air pollution, regeneration / environmental balance, public apathy, the local authority, nature conservation, noise pollution, resource use inefficiency and crime. The highways category was not needed in the DM survey because no respondents mentioned highway maintenance problems.

Although DMQ9 asked respondents to list three problems in descending order of importance, insufficient respondents were able to list three issues to make an analysis based on ranking meaningful.

In both the 1994 and 1995 Citizen Surveys 'traffic pollution' was cited more frequently than any other problem. On both occasions 'litter and waste' was the second most frequently cited and 'traffic' a very close third. Taken together, these traffic related problems (plus the 'lack

of public transport' category) cited in 1994 represented 39% of the total (excluding the 'don't know' category). In 1995, the comparable figure was 43.2%. Decision-makers also cited traffic pollution most often. Traffic was a close second and the need for 'regeneration' and a balance between it and the environment was a close third. Air pollution (which is often traffic related) was the fourth most frequently mentioned problem area. Litter was a long way down their list.

A comparison between the responses of the decision-makers and the citizens again suggests that the former are, to a degree, taking a 'statesman-like' stance. Whilst, like citizens, they are clearly recognising the traffic problem as the most significant, they do not really see litter as an environmental problem. Moreover, they see the need for regeneration and the need to balance it with environmental considerations to be a real problem to be addressed. This is a strategic problem and, as such, citizens have no real perception of it.

The leaders' group cited 'traffic' most often with 'regeneration / environmental balance' second. Traffic pollution was third, just ahead of air pollution. Public apathy was a good fifth. In comparison, the informants put 'traffic pollution' first and 'traffic' third (the reverse of the leaders' responses). 'Regeneration / environmental balance' was, again, the second most frequently cited. Air pollution was a much poorer fourth than with the leaders' group and 'waste' was fifth. Public apathy was seventh.

Leicester leaders put traffic pollution well ahead of other problems. Regeneration / environmental balance was cited second most often and traffic third. Air pollution was fourth. Leicester citizens also put traffic pollution well ahead with traffic and 'litter and waste' mentioned second most often. Leeds leaders put 'traffic pollution', 'traffic' and 'regeneration / environmental balance at equal first'. In both surveys, Leeds citizens put traffic more clearly at the head of their list than did the citizens of any of the other cities. The responses from Middlesbrough were especially interesting. The decision-makers cited public apathy most often as the most significant environmental problem facing the city. Air pollution was a good second. Traffic pollution was third and traffic and regeneration / environmental balance joint fourth. Industrial pollution was joint sixth with five other

Figure 18.

Q9 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing your city?  
Please list three in descending order of significance.

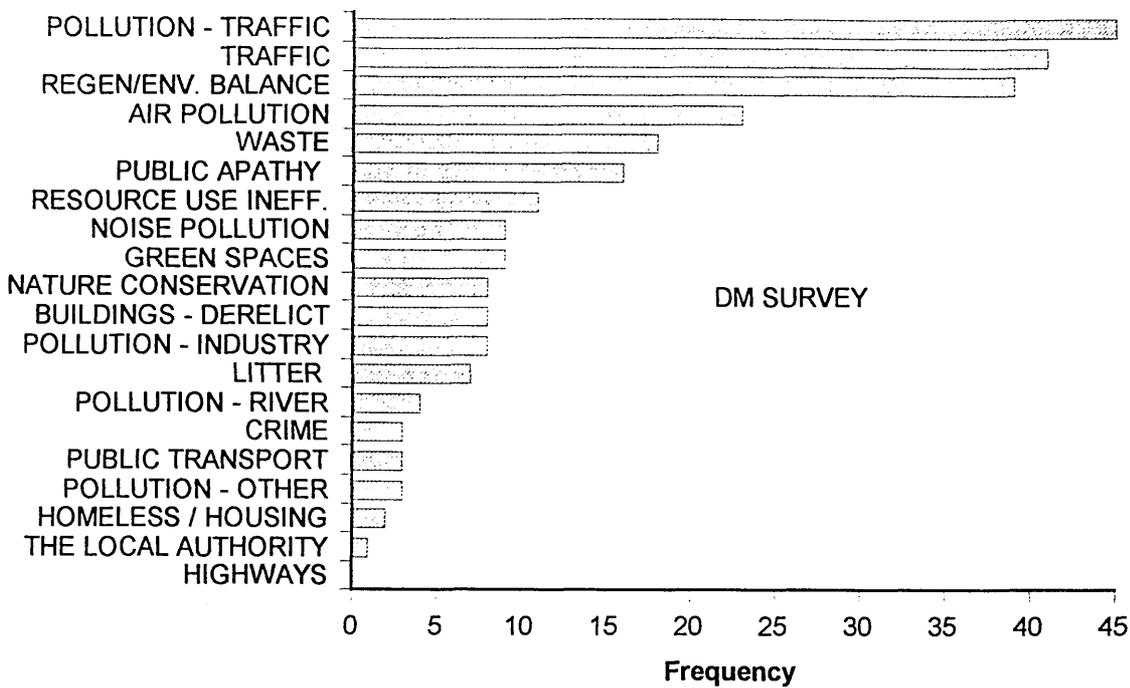
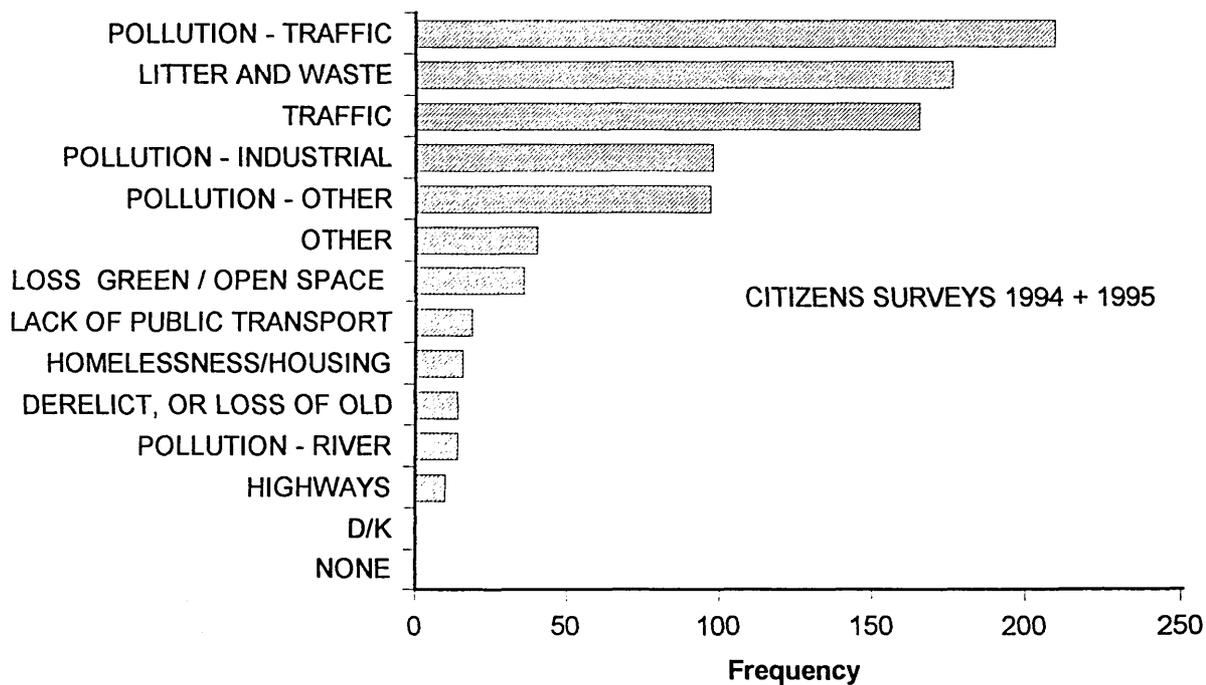


Figure 19.

Q11 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing L/M/L/P?



categories of problem. In both 1994 and 1995, citizens, however, cited industrial pollution far more often than other problems with litter and waste a very poor second and traffic third. Citizen's clear concern for industrial pollution is, however, picked up by decision-makers in their concern for air pollution, a concern which is much greater among these decision-makers than in any of the other cities. For Peterborough decision-makers, traffic was the most frequently mentioned environmental problem and regeneration / environmental balance was a poor second. Nature conservation was third most often cited. In 1994, citizens put litter and waste and traffic pollution in first place with other pollution a close third. In 1995, they put traffic pollution in first place with traffic and litter and waste in joint second. With the exception of traffic, then, Peterborough's citizens appear to be more concerned with litter and the decision-makers with nature conservation.

### **(Equal) Partnership Working**

The EC 'model' requires equal partnership working<sup>11</sup>. This provided partners with the opportunity to influence the attitudes of the leaderships of the EC local authorities. This was especially so because, as Ward (1996: 853) recognises, as a result of the 'fragmentation of legitimacy and the lack of resources and knowledge, local authorities are becoming increasingly reliant on the voluntary sector.' This is also consistent with the 'consensus developing' and attention to 'consulting citizens' required by Agenda 21. The EC local authorities have relied on them heavily. DM Survey Q7 tested the perceptions of respondents about the most dominant partner in each city's EC initiative. The findings are illustrated by the bar charts in Figures 20 and 21. These show that after the city council, the voluntary sector was seen by decision-makers as the most dominant sector, though this should not obscure the fact that the business sector also appeared dominant especially in Leeds and Middlesbrough. This was highest in Leeds at 65%. The finding that the city councils are seen to dominate the EC initiative provides further evidence for the argument, presented in Chapter Four, that the Councils have used EC to promote their own role. It also helps to demonstrate that the other sectors have not been able to make as much use of the initiative as they might have done to share in the challenge of 'Managing Planet Earth,

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<sup>11</sup> See Chapter Four.

Figure 20.

Q7 Please try to assess the relative dominance in relation to each other of the five partners which are involved in your Environment City partnership working arrangements. Please do this by placing a figure '1' in the box next to the sector which you consider to be the most dominant overall, a figure '2' against the sector which you consider to be the next most dominant and so on. If you feel that two or more sectors are equally dominant (even all of them) then please place the same number against them.

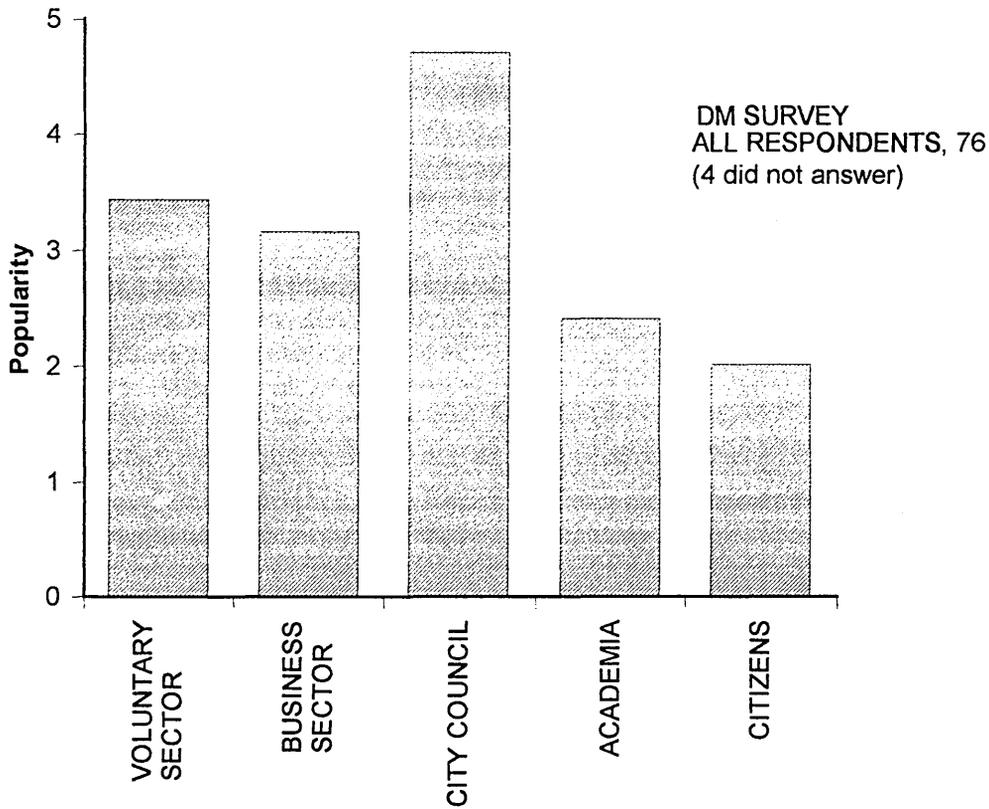
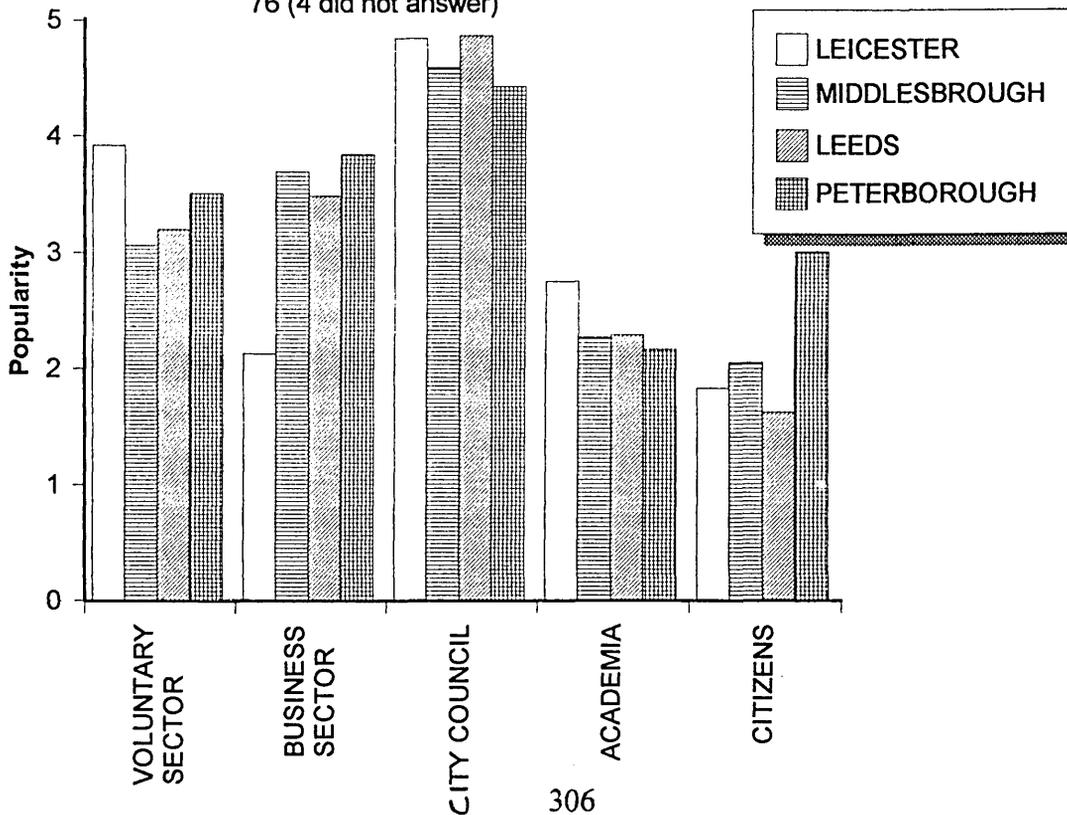


Figure 21. Q7 ALL RESPONDENTS, CITY BY CITY, 76 (4 did not answer)



Locally' (Pell, 1996. Also see Ch. Six). The initiative has not, therefore, achieved the equal partnership envisaged as a precipitator of change. Nevertheless, perceived as the second most dominant partner, the voluntary sector has prevailed over the other three. Again as argued in Chapter Four, parts of the voluntary sector (e.g. through Environ, LEAF, PECT and the Wildlife Trusts) have taken the opportunity to gain access as *insider groups* to influence the formal agenda to a moderate degree. As Ward (1996: 853) observes:

A number of studies have indicated that environmental groups previously regarded as outsiders have gained access through the environmental plan process. This access has often been negotiated through key individuals, who are both environmental group activists and also councillors or local government officials. Through such key individuals local authorities have become more aware of environmental agendas and environmental groups more familiar with local government capabilities and deficiencies.

The use by these groups of the politics of embarrassment and public policy franchising have helped them to achieve this.<sup>12</sup>

## **Inferences**

It can be inferred from these findings that the leaderships and, especially, the broader group of decision-makers surveyed, take a much broader strategic view of the problems faced by their cities than do citizens. Whilst they, like citizens, put economic issues firmly at the top of their agenda, they are also much more aware of the need for the city councils to tackle wider environmental issues than are citizens. This is especially so in Leicester and less so, but still significantly so in Leeds and Peterborough. This also holds good in Middlesbrough but more weakly so. The leaderships, therefore, demonstrate a degree of '*statesmanship*'. Taking these findings together with those from the other questions and interviews, this is consistent with the proposition that in the case of environmental concern, much of this '*statesmanship*' is due to the effect of the declared commitments induced by the EC

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<sup>12</sup> See Ward (1994), Agyeman and Evans (1995), Young (1996) and Freeman *et al.* (1996) for discussions of community participation in LA21.

designations. These have helped to put the environment (in the broad environmental agenda sense) on the policy agendas of the councils. It is arguable that this has contributed particularly to their actual commitment at the artifactual and espoused values levels. Further, it is also arguable that it has probably also contributed to their *actual ideological commitment*.

## **A WELFARISM / 'ENVIRONMENTISM' AXIS AS A CATALYST FOR BASIC IDEOLOGICAL COMMITMENT**

The 11th British Social Attitudes report (Jowell *et al.*, 1994) was based on a survey of 1,268 respondents in 1993 and reached conclusions which suggest ways of encouraging both leaders and citizens to become more ideologically committed to sustainable development. Again, perhaps largely unwittingly, these tend to rely on ideas drawn from cognitive dissonance theory. In essence, they argued that those who tend to be welfaristic are more likely to support green policies than those who are less so (p134-135):

In particular, our data suggest that much of the British public's concern about the environment is (still) relatively superficial....Environmental concern is far more widespread than either support for environmental policies or environmental activism. The more specific and costly any proposal to improve the environment seems to be, the more rapidly support dissipates...Support for green policies does not automatically follow from one's values towards or knowledge about the environment per se, *but rather from one's underlying social attitudes towards the economy and towards helping others*. So the belief among some natural scientists and policy makers that the most reliable way of building support for green policies is to increase public understanding may...be a form of romanticism. ..The willingness not to be a '*free rider*' depends not only upon knowledge but upon social values. In particular, it depends upon people's views about the proper relationship between the individual and society. *Those who place a high value on the welfare of others and on a collective approach to solving social problems are more likely to be willing to support environmental policies than those who do not....* (My emphasis.)

They also imply an acceptance that environmental concerns can reach the 'public' (in my terms, in fact, the 'formal') agenda without being a major concern of individual citizens (e.g. as a result of 'public policy franchising'):

Of course, public policies do not simply arise from individual attitudes; they may also follow from an institutional context which places environmental action higher on the public agenda than it currently is in Britain

Significantly, then, they argue that simple awareness raising may not be enough to shift attitudes and that the exploitation of what they believe is a positive relationship between a concern for welfare and a concern for the environment might be a more effective way of encouraging support for Ward's (1996) '*broad environmental agenda*' :

But nor are public attitudes irrelevant. Governments interested in increasing public support for the hard environmental *choices* which lie ahead may need to do more than increase public awareness of how the environment works. They could, of course, attempt to increase environmental pessimism as a way of increasing willingness to bear the costs of greener policies, but that is likely to make for a shriller public debate. Rooting the debate about the environment in a discourse centred on a *concern for others, and on a sense of collective identity*, may be a more stable route to a 'greener' Britain. That this too is a form of romanticism may be less important if it works.' (My *emphasis*.)

If Jowell *et al.* are right, then, one might reasonably expect that rooting the debate in a discourse centred on *a concern for others and on a collective identity*, might also be used not only to encourage public support but also as an effective means by which pressure groups *might encourage a major shift in the ideology of policy-makers* in favour of sustainable development green. Moreover, it might be reasoned that, if this is a likely effective means, then pressure groups would do well to seek to use *issue redefinition as a form of agenda manipulation* (See Chapter Four) to get care for the environment accepted as an inescapable component of ideologies which are founded on the belief that we should, collectively, care for each other i.e. eco-socialist ideology (See Kuper, 1996). I shall refer to this proposed relationship as the *welfarism / 'environmentism' axis* where the term '*environmentism*' describes concern for our relationship with nature, to a given degree, as distinct from '*environmentalism*' which implies commitment to an, at least, fairly radical position of '*environmentism*'. This term is, thus, intended to describes concern for the rest of nature in a similar fashion to the way in which '*welfarism*' describes a concern for each other, so aiding comparisons.

Being concerned with the precipitation of attitudinal shifts towards greater greenness, this study aimed to test, at the local level, amongst both citizens and policy-makers, the national findings of Jowell *et al.* 's (1994) BSA Survey by repeating some of their welfare / environment relationship questions in an attitudinal survey of 400 citizens (100 in each of

the four cities) and in the Decision-Maker Attitudinal Survey. The BSA survey's conclusions relied on a battery of self completion questions on 'welfarism' and a battery on 'environmentism'<sup>13</sup>. Whilst the wider scope of my study did not allow all of the questions used by Jowell *et al.* to be put, the opportunities provided by these two attitudinal surveys was used to repeat six key questions and so make what might reasonably be regarded as, at least, a provisional assessment at city level. Responses were sought to three questions to test degrees of 'welfarism' and three to test degrees of 'environmentism'.

The Citizens' Environment City 'Welfarism / Environmentism' Survey was carried out in late 1995 through street interviews on the basis of a representative quota sample of 100 respondents in each of the four cities. The Decision-Makers' Environment City 'Welfarism / Environmentism' Survey was carried out by putting the same six questions to the decision-makers in the Decision-Maker Survey in 1996. The method is explained further in Appendix One. The question table used in the CZ Survey is given in Appendix Four and the similar table used with the DM Survey questionnaire is given in Appendix Two.

Through comparison of the findings with those of the national survey, the principal aims were to secure, at least, provisional answers to the following questions:

1. Do residents and the local authority leaderships in the Environment Cities claim a greater readiness than the general British population to accept cuts to their standard of living in order to protect the environment and to accept that economic growth / progress harms the environment?
2. Do the residents (and leaderships) of the Environment Cities express themselves as more or less welfarist and 'environmentist' than the wider British population?

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<sup>13</sup> These questions were part of a European model developed by The European Consortium for Comparative Social Surveys (COMPASS). This was formed by Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR), an independent, non-profit research institute, and social research organisations in four other countries (Germany, the Irish Republic, Italy and The Netherlands). With funding from the European Union, it carried out its first study in 1993 - on comparative environmental behaviour and policy preferences in the five COMPASS countries. The British module was included in one of the BSA self-completion questionnaires.

3. Do the attitudes of residents and local authority leaderships in the Environment Cities support the finding of the BSA Survey, nationally, that a positive correlation exists between 'welfarism' and 'concern for the environment' ?

It was hypothesised that, in these Environment Cities, not only would the intensity of support for environmental issues and a readiness for change be greater than Jowell *et al.* found in their nation wide survey but also that the positive relationship between concern for environmental and welfare issues would be, at least, as strong as that which they found.

**Readiness to accept cuts to standard of living and to accept that economic growth/progress harms the environment ('environmentism')**

DMQ6 and the Citizens Attitudinal Survey Welfarism / 'Environmentism' component (CZWEQ1) asked:

- Q6 How willing would you be to accept cuts in your standard of living in order to protect the environment?

Table 7 sets out the findings. The responses suggested that, in the case of each city, a greater proportion of Environment City residents and local authority leaderships than is the case with the general British population, expressed their acceptance of the need for a *shift* in lifestyle, especially in relation to the economic implications of that shift. Overall, 5% of Environment City residents said they were 'very willing' and 46% said they were 'fairly willing' (51% total). These figures compare with 5% and 26% respectively in the British population (31% total). On a city by city basis, the Environment City survey indicated that Peterborough residents had the lowest level of acceptance at 4% and 40%; still much higher than the national experience (44% total). Peterborough also showed the smallest proportion of residents (22%) to be either 'unwilling' or 'very unwilling' to accept cuts, and consequently by far the largest proportion of 'fence sitters' (33%) who chose the 'neither willing nor unwilling' category. Leicester residents showed the greatest acceptance at 5%

Table 7. 'Environmentism' in the Environment Cities and Nationally: Contrasted

	ENVIRONMENT POSITIVE %					ENVIRONMENT NEUTRAL %					ENVIRONMENT NEGATIVE %					No. Respondents
Q4	Disagree / disagree strongly					Neither agree nor disagree					Agree / agree strongly					
National (BSA)	50					19					31					
Env. City	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	
1 Citizens	52	59	64	61	59	20	21	14	17	18	28	20	21	22	23	390
2 Councillors	100	50	84	83	77	0	25	17	17	17	75	0	0	0	6	18
3 Chief officers	100	75	66	100	80	0	25	33	0	20	0	25	0	0	0	10
4 Leaders' group	100	62	78	88	79	0	0	17	0	18	0	17	0	0	5	20
5 Other LGO's	100	83	83	100	90	0	0	17	0	5	0	17	0	0	5	20
6 Others	72	100	63	100	75	21	0	25	0	18	7	0	12	0	4	28
7 Dec.-makers	82	78	74	92	80	13	11	22	8	14	4	12	4	0	6	76
Q5	Agree / agree strongly					Neither agree nor disagree					Disagree / disagree strongly					
National (BSA)	24					33					43					
Env. City	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	
1 Citizens	52	27	29	49	39	27	29	28	17	25	21	44	44	34	35	385
2 Councillors	50	0	17	33	33	0	25	33	0	17	50	75	50	66	61	18
3 Chief officers	0	25	0	0	10	0	0	33	0	10	100	75	66	100	80	10
4 Leaders' group	33	12	11	25	18	0	12	33	0	14	67	75	55	75	68	28
5 Other LGO's	17	17	17	33	19	17	0	0	33	10	67	83	83	33	72	21
6 Others	7	0	12	0	8	27	0	0	0	14	67	100	87	100	79	28
7 Dec.-makers	12	12	13	23	15	21	6	13	8	13	67	82	74	69	73	77
Q6	Fairly willing / very willing					Neither willing nor unwilling					Unwilling / very unwilling					
National (BSA)	31					24					45					
Env. City	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	
1 Citizens	56	53	50	44	51	18	19	18	33	22	25	27	32	22	27	388
2 Councillors	100	100	100	83	94	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	6	18
3 Chief officers	100	75	67	50	70	0	0	0	50	10	0	25	33	0	20	10
4 Leaders' group	100	87	88	76	86	0	0	0	12	4	0	12	11	12	11	28
5 Other LGO's	83	60	67	50	70	17	20	17	33	20	0	20	17	0	10	20
6 Others	93	75	100	100	93	7	25	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	28
7 Dec.-makers	92	77	87	77	85	9	12	4	15	9	0	12	9	8	7	76

Key: Leicester (L), Middlesbrough (M), Leeds (L), Peterborough (P) and Overall (O).

and 51% (56% total) albeit Leeds showed more, 6%, as 'very willing'. This relates to the finding of the CZ Surveys that Leicester residents were also more aware than citizens in the other cities that their City is an Environment City (Pell and Wright, 1994 and 1995). (See also article from Leicester Mercury, 5 June 1996 reproduced in Appendix Six.) The fact that the figures for each city are quite close to each other supports the proposition that they provide a reasonable reflection of residents' expressed attitudes. The fact that in all the cities, both individually and collectively, a much greater readiness to accept standard of living cuts to protect the environment is shown than is the case in the British population at large supports the proposition that there is something different about living in one of these Environment Cities. Of course, there could be other explanations.

It could be that national attitudes have shifted in this direction between 1993 and 1995 but other national surveys suggest this is unlikely by showing a levelling out of concern about 'green issues' in recent years. On the basis of his MORI surveys, Worcester (1995: 35), for instance, suggests some settling of attitudes after the late 1980's:

By November 1990 the percentage suggesting that environmental issues were among the most important had faded to 9% and slid to just 4% in December 1991 and has stayed under 10% since then. (My emphasis.)

Another explanation which could be advanced is that these cities are, in any case, atypical for instance in terms of their relative economic wealth or their experience of environmental problems. The ECs are, however, quite diverse in social and economic character. It would, for example, be difficult to see Middlesbrough as relatively well off either economically or environmentally and, yet, 5% of residents claimed that they were 'very willing' and 48% 'fairly willing' to accept cuts.

In response to Q6, the leadership groups in all of the cities, as expected, claimed to be much more *environment positive* than either the national sample or the EC citizens' sample. Between 76% (Peterborough) and 100% (Leicester) claimed that they were either 'fairly willing' or 'very willing' to accept cuts. The figure for councillors alone was still stronger with 100% in three cities and 83% in Peterborough.

A check on the validity of the findings of Q6 was provided by two questions on respondents' beliefs about the relationship between human progress/economic growth and the environment. The first of these questions (Q4) asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement '*People worry too much about human progress harming the environment*'. Table 7 sets out and compares the findings. Overall, 52% of residents 'disagreed' with this statement and 7% 'disagreed strongly' (52% total). This compared with 42% and 8% nationally (50% total). *Again, respondents in each of the cities showed greater concern for the environment in responding to this question than did the population at large. Also, again, the local authority leaderships in all of the cities claimed to be much more environmentally positive with between 62% (Middlesbrough) and 100% (Leicester) disagreeing with the statement (79% overall).* In this case, the councillors' group was slightly weaker at 77%.

The second of these questions (Q5) asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement '*Economic growth always harms the environment*'. Table 7 sets out the findings. Overall, 3% of residents 'agreed strongly' and 36% 'agreed' (39% total) compared with 3% and 21% nationally (24% total). Again, each of the samples of respondents in the cities showed (in this case considerably) greater acceptance of the proposition than did the British population at large. This is a slightly 'slippery' question, however, because most of the economic and environmental cognoscenti (e.g. Jacobs and Stott, 1993) argues that economic growth does not *always* harm the environment and so, in fact, an informed 'environmentalist' response to this question is more likely to be negative. This was almost certainly the reason for the overwhelming rejection of the proposition by the environmentally informed 'other local government officers' (between 67% and 83%) and 'others' (between 67% and 100%) groups. Nevertheless, from the interviews, it was fair to assume (as did Jowell *et al.* for the national survey) that, with the current state of knowledge, most citizen respondents answering in the negative were in favour of economic growth achieved, if necessary, at the expense of the environment. The response of the leadership groups, with between 11% and 33%, on the face of it, claiming to be environmentally positive in response to this question, thus, needs to be treated especially cautiously. Nevertheless, it was clear from interviews with them that

most would have disagreed with the statement because they give a higher priority to economic growth. A small number, however, would have done so because they believe that there is not always a necessary conflict between the interests of the economy and those of the environment i.e. that greater environmental efficiency can be good for economic growth. This duality was not taken account of by Jowell *et al.*

Research by the Scottish Office (McCaig and Henderson, 1995) provides a further opportunity for comparison. In that study, while less than one quarter of the people surveyed recognised the term 'sustainable development' and only around one person in ten could explain what it meant, 64% of respondents said that protecting the environment was more important than economic growth.

### **Welfarism and its Relationship with 'Environmentism'**

The national survey found a positive correlation between the degree to which respondents supported 'welfarism' and 'environmentism'. After a detailed analysis of the degree to which 'rationality' (see discussion above, about this) or 'romance' (emotional motivation) encourage environmental commitment, Jowell *et al.* (p134) concluded with what they considered to be two important messages. The first was in respect of the influence of altruism on a readiness 'to make sacrifices for the environment' (see discussion above). The second was 'whether respondents agree or disagree with the proposition that 'private enterprise is the best way to solve Britain's economic problems.' They found that those who scored highly on their welfare scale were '...much more likely to be willing to make sacrifices for the environment' and that those who agree with private enterprise are less likely to be willing to make sacrifices. From this first finding, it was reasoned that if a higher degree of 'welfarism' was found in these cities (for whatever reason), then this might also help to explain the expressed relatively high level of willingness of their citizens to accept cuts to their standard of living in the interests of the environment, rather than their status as Environment Cities.

This possibility was tested, provisionally, in two stages. First, the findings of the three

Table 8. Welfarism in the Environment Cities and Nationally: Contrasted

	WELFARE POSITIVE %					WELFARE NEUTRAL%					WELFARE NEGATIVE %					No. Respondents
Q1	Disagree / disagree strongly					Neither agree nor disagree					Agree / agree strongly					
National (BSA)	38					29					33					
Env. City	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	
1 Citizens	38	47	48	43	44	12	15	17	17	15	49	38	35	40	40	388
2 Councillors	50	75	83	67	73	50	25	0	0	11	0	0	17	33	17	18
3 Chief officers	100	100	33	100	80	0	0	33	0	10	0	0	33	0	10	10
4 Leaders' group	66	87	67	74	75	33	12	11	0	11	0	0	33	0	10	10
5 Other LGO's	67	67	67	100	82	0	17	33	0	14	33	17	0	0	14	21
6 Others	42	50	50	0	43	29	50	12	50	29	29	0	38	50	29	28
7 Dec.-makers	52	72	61	69	62	22	22	17	8	18	25	6	22	23	20	77
Q2	Agree / agree strongly					Neither agree nor disagree					Disagree / disagree strongly					
National (BSA)	54					26					20					
Env. City	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	
1 Citizens	70	70	68	63	68	12	15	10	15	13	18	14	22	22	20	396
2 Councillors	100	75	100	84	89	0	25	0	17	11	0	0	0	0	0	18
3 Chief officers	100	100	33	100	80	0	0	33	0	10	0	0	33	0	10	10
4 Leaders' group	100	88	78	87	85	0	12	11	12	11	0	0	11	0	4	28
5 Other LGO's	66	57	50	100	65	17	33	33	0	25	17	0	17	0	10	20
6 Others	57	50	63	0	53	29	25	12	0	21	14	25	25	100	25	28
7 Dec.-makers	65	72	65	75	69	22	22	17	8	18	13	6	17	17	13	76
Q3	Disagree / disagree strongly					Neither agree nor disagree					Agree / agree strongly					
National (BSA)	52					25					23					
Env. City	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	L	M	L	P	O	
1 Citizens	33	48	50	44	44	23	20	20	14	20	43	32	29	41	37	389
2 Councillors	100	100	100	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18
3 Chief officers	100	100	67	100	90	0	0	33	0	10	0	0	0	0	0	10
4 Leaders' group	100	100	89	100	96	0	0	11	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	28
5 Other LGO's	66	33	50	50	50	17	50	33	50	35	17	17	17	0	15	20
6 Others	86	50	100	50	82	14	25	0	50	14	0	25	0	0	4	28
7 Dec.-makers	83	67	82	83	79	13	22	13	17	16	4	11	4	5	5	7

Key: Leicester (L), Middlesbrough (M), Leeds (L), Peterborough (P) and Overall (O).

'welfare' questions in the Environment Cities were compared and contrasted with the national findings (Table 8). Second, they were used with key 'environmentism' Q6 to gain an indication of whether Jowell *et al.*'s nationally observed phenomenon of a positive relationship between welfarism and environmentism is also apparent in the attitudes of Environment City residents and leaderships (Table 9).

Table 9. WELFARISM / 'ENVIRONMENTISM' AXIS CORRELATIONSHIP

	EC Respondents	More likely to be environment positive than environment negative if welfare positive.	More likely to be welfare positive than welfare negative if environment positive	No. of respondents
Q6 against Q1	Citizens	1.96	1.10	376
	Leaderships	18	9.87	28
	Decision-makers	3.37	21.75	76
Q6 against Q2	Citizens	4	2	385
	Leaderships	11	absolute	28
	Decision-makers	14.3	6.36	75
Q6 against Q3	Citizens	1.56	2.48	377
	Leaderships	absolute	12.71	28
	Decision-makers	16.6	17.6	75

The decision-maker category includes the leadership category.

It is clear from Table 8. that, in response to Q1, citizens in the Environment Cities expressed themselves as *slightly* more welfare positive than the national sample and, in response to Q2 *moderately* more so. In response to Q3, they expressed themselves to be a *little* less so. As anticipated, however, the Labour dominated leadership groups expressed themselves as much more welfare positive in each case.

It is clear from the relationships in Table 9. that, in the case of welfarism Q1, Q2 and Q3, citizens, leaderships and the broader decision-making groups in the Environment

Cities were all more likely to express themselves as environment positive if they also expressed themselves as welfare positive. In the case of citizens, the ratios for environment positive varied from 1.56 to 4 but for leaderships it was much stronger, varying from 11 to 'absolute' (i.e. where *no* departures from the correlation were found). Similarly, the ratios for welfare positive were strong. In the case of citizens the ratios varied from 1.1 to 2.48 and, in the case of leaderships from 9.87 to 'absolute'.

It is likely that, in responding to Q1 (*'The welfare state encourages people to stop helping each other.'*) positively, some respondents did not see this as 'welfare negative' but just agreement with a fact i.e. that *some* people stop helping each other because the state takes over. Generally, however, as in the national survey, it is assumed here that most welfare negative respondents supported this statement and most welfare positive respondents disagree with it. This interpretation was supported by knowledge of the interviews.

In comparison with the responses to Q1, far more citizen respondents agreed welfare positively with Q2's welfarism statement (*'The Government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes.'*). One might speculate that there is no inconsistency between wide support for the notion of giving help to the poor and a readiness to believe that a downside of this is that it encourages the recipients not to help themselves. Moreover, the former may be an indication that many people are now reluctant to see any further 'rolling back of the welfare state' begun in the Thatcher years as, perhaps, evidenced by the swing away from the Conservatives. Notwithstanding this difference, the ratio of welfare positivism to welfare negativism was still slightly higher amongst environment positive respondents than amongst the environmentally neutral and environment negative respondents.

As with Q1, it is likely that some people who expressed agreement with the statement offered in Q3 (*'Many people who get social security don't deserve any help.'*) did so without being 'welfare negative'. They may see themselves as simply agreeing with what they regard as a 'fact of life', but not one which renders welfarism undesirable. Again,

though, it is assumed here, as in the national survey, that most people agreeing with this statement will tend to be welfare negative. As with Q2, in comparison with the responses to Q1, more respondents agreed with this statement and the same reasons for this might be advanced<sup>14</sup>.

This response to the welfarism questions tends to counter any suspicion that Environment City respondents would have been more likely to respond in favour of environmental concern because they had to answer interviewers personally (and would, it might be said, be less likely to want to respond environment negatively) than people responding by self completion questionnaire used in the national survey. One might reasonably assume, however, that any tendency towards this would reflect, perhaps in equal measure, in response to both welfarism and environment questions thus serving to increase confidence in the reliability and comparability of the Environment City responses.

Leicester citizens and the City Council's leadership group claimed to be the most environment positive, followed by Middlesbrough, Leeds and then Peterborough. Taking the three welfarism questions (Q1, Q2 and Q3) together, Leeds and Middlesbrough citizens claimed to be the most welfaristic, followed by Peterborough and, then, Leicester. Notwithstanding that, however, the results of this analysis again show a strong degree of consistency between the cities.

## Inferences

It can be *inferred* that:

1. By a factor of 1.65 (51/31) the citizens of the UK's Environment Cities express themselves as more ready than the general population to accept cuts in their

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<sup>14</sup> The New Labour Government's reductions to single parent benefits in late 1997 evidence its belief that the public is ready to accept a retreat from what might be considered to be disincentives to work and support for welfare to work policies.

standard of living to protect the environment - and, thus, are more 'environmentalist'.

2. The citizens of all of the Environment Cities express themselves, overall, as at most, only moderately more welfaristic than the British population.
3. The expressed attitudes of residents and local authority leaderships in each of the Environment Cities support the finding of the BSA Survey, nationally, that a positive relationship exists between 'welfarism' and a concern for the environment ('environmentism').
4. The expression of a moderately greater degree of welfarism by EC citizens does not wholly explain the greater expression of environmentism, suggesting that there is something else which is different about living in an Environment City. This is evidenced in particular by the higher degree of expressed environmentism amongst citizens in Leicester where the EC approach has been at its most active.
5. The leadership groups in all of the cities claim to be considerably more environment positive and welfare positive than do their citizens.

## CONCLUSION

Our policy is a policy of active partnership with nature and with human beings. It is most successful in self-governing and self sufficient economic and administrative units, of a humanly surveyable size.... We want a society which is democratic and in which relations between people and with nature are handled with increasing awareness.

(Die Gruenen, 1983: 7)

It has been argued that the apparent *irrationality* with which human society has come to conduct its relationship with the rest of nature can be explained by considerations of the dominant paradigm under which we live. One such explanation is that the 'scientific materialist' paradigm is supported by a psychological substructure which relies on, and in turn encourages, our *disconnection from each other* through two closely related

tendencies. These are, first, the unquestioned and vigorous pursuit of self interest usually excluding even *self interested reciprocal altruism* and, second, the development of *large scale and impersonal society* which is increasingly the norm. Theories such as the 'tragedy of the commons' seek to explain how this has led to our disconnection from nature. Whilst that debate on *causality* is complex and unresolved, the *effects* of *scale* and especially urbanism on attitudes and behaviour are seen to be especially significant here because city life is the focus of this thesis and because it is expected that two thirds of us will be living in cities and major urban areas by the year 2030 (Sarre *et al.*, 1996, 257). Arguments have also been presented which suggest that, paradoxically, in spite of this apparent *irrationality* by human society, individuals tend to be *rational* in recognising that our collective behaviour will have to undergo a *shift* if we are to reverse our current collision course with nature.

It has been suggested that one way of precipitating such shifts might be by increasing environmental pessimism ('doom mongering') and it seems probable that, as the environmental degradation 'common enemy' becomes more evident (e.g. the intense smogs now enveloping much of Indonesia as a result of forest clearance by burning), this will become easier. The need to promote the environmental cause through democratic processes is, however, taken for granted as the most stable route to precipitating shifts of ideology towards the acceptance of sustainable development green, avoiding the need for further catastrophes or risking unnecessary panic. It has also been suggested that, advocating smaller scale self contained living patterns is idealistic and that other ways of helping humanity in its struggle for rationality in our relationships with each other and with nature are, therefore, being searched for by proponents of sustainable development green ideology. It was argued in Chapter Three, that Agenda 21's insistence that social justice must be sought as a prerequisite to seeking improvements in our relationship with nature has been their most significant attempt so far. To help to make it effective at the local level, however, proponents such as the Wildlife Trusts have various options some of which have been under exploited. In addition to the more usual awareness raising approaches of many pressure groups, for instance, two ways in which they might seek to precipitate attitudinal shifts at the local level by local authority leaderships were

considered in the light of the Environment City experience. The first is through the use of public policy franchising (in conjunction with the 'politics of embarrassment') to encourage 'statesmanlike' action by leaderships, action which might, arguably, then leave them open to the basic assumption shifting power of cognitive dissonance. The second is through recognising and making use of, the apparent relationship between caring for each other (welfarism) and caring for nature ('environmentism').

*Public policy franchising · cognitive dissonance · statesmanship axis*

The possible effectiveness of the first approach was assessed through an examination of the degree to which the Environment City has shifted ideological acceptance of sustainable development green, as opposed to simply getting it accepted on the formal agenda at the behavioural / artifactual or espoused value levels, i.e. turning a *declared ideological commitment* into *actual basic ideological commitment*. This relied, in part, on evidence from the attitudinal surveys of citizens and local authority leaderships in the Environment Cities. Some evidence that the Environment City designation has positively affected the attitude of the leaderships towards nature was found, especially in Leicester where 55% of respondents (including the informants' group at this level) to the DM Survey expressed the belief that it had made a 'major' or 'fairly major' difference. In the other cities the difference was considered to be more modest. Moreover, as a result of further questions, only limited evidence could be found of actual ideological commitment to sustainable development by the leaderships deriving from the designation. Nevertheless, it appears that the EC designation as a *declared commitment* has successfully got sustainable development onto the formal agendas of these leaderships, precipitating *actual artifactual and espoused ideological commitment*. It is, thus, possible that having successfully shifted *behaviour* and the culturally more *superficial attitudes* in this way, the EC Programme and similar initiatives can contribute to producing suitable conditions for *cognitive dissonance* to be used to begin to shift *basic ideological commitment*.

This possibility was reinforced by the apparent behavioural and attitudinal positions of

each of the cities. Leicester's leadership and citizens appear to be way ahead of the others in terms of having been influenced by the EC initiative. It is here where by far the strongest and most public declarations of commitment have been made largely as a result of the efforts of a local pressure group. At the other extreme, although the pre-organisation Middlesbrough Borough Council was beginning to understand, accept and act on the aims of EC, the new Council appears concerned only to keep and use the title to impress others e.g. to help with its prime concern for economic development. The mighty Leeds City Council was always less likely to be ready to be influenced by a small pressure group but, with the help of committed insider policy entrepreneurs, it appears that the EC Programme has shifted behaviour and espoused ideological commitment substantially (e.g. through EMAS). Small but significant progress is also apparent at the deepest level. Similarly, in Peterborough, behaviour has been much influenced but here it has consisted mainly of projects around the margins of the Council's concerns. Only in the case of Leicester, and to a more limited extent Leeds, could it be fairly claimed that EC designation has, apparently, shifted the basic ideology of the city council's leadership.

In all cases the informants' group was much less convinced than the leaderships that the broad environmental issue was *actually* on the agenda as a *basic ideological commitment*. They mentioned this achievement of the designation only seventh most frequently. This chapter has argued that this is probably so because each group places a different interpretation of what is actually meant by '*being on the agenda*'. To the political leaderships it has tended to mean that an issue is there for debate and some (often '*marginalised*') action on the (often '*limited*') environmental agenda. To the ideologically committed policy entrepreneurs (in this case environmentalist policy champions both inside and outside the local authorities) it has meant sticking to declared political commitments (such as those made when becoming an EC and to A21) by actual commitment to the ideology underpinning the *broad environmental agenda* and, thus, to *integrating* action on it into all of the local authorities policies and other behaviour.

It is significant that, whilst citizens in all of the cities express themselves as satisfied

with the degree of care which their city councils show for the environment, this is in relation to the *narrow environmental agenda*. They do not, even in these Environment Cities, have any real idea of expectations (such as those of Agenda 21) that their local authority should have a role in 'saving the world'; the *broad environmental agenda*. Even where they recognise such an agenda, they often have no idea what their local authority might be able to do. From this, it has been argued that these (and many other) local authority leaderships have begun to accept the need for them to act in a *statesmanlike fashion* on the *broad environmental agenda*. It is, therefore, important that those who seek to precipitate behavioural and ideological shifts at this level (and probably also at the higher levels) recognise that, at present, it is likely to be easier to get the *broad environmental issue* accepted by leaderships on their formal agenda than by citizens on the public agenda.

Also significantly, it was found that the greatest achievement of EC status was considered by the EC local authority leaderships to be that it provided a high profile for the city and/or aided international links. It is ironic that being an EC, whose purpose is to put environmental concerns at the top of the local political agenda has, in fact, been used to help promote economic development, frequently a perceived threat to environmental interests.

Again more positively, however, it was found that the political leaderships of the EC local authorities had greater knowledge of sustainable development ideology and were more committed to it than citizens. In part, this was seen to reflect the success of the EC initiative in getting environmental concern onto the *formal agenda*. In part, it was also seen to be the result of leaderships seizing the opportunity provided by their declared ideological commitment to sustainable development to help advance their prime political objective, that of economic prosperity. The equal second placing (to economic concerns) of the belief of respondents that the EC initiative has put sustainable development *on the agenda of local politicians* was encouraging. Among the leadership group this was the equal first most frequently mentioned achievement. Moreover, the leadership groups in all of the cities claimed to be considerably more *environmentally*

*positive* (as well as more welfare positive) than do their citizens, suggesting that they are, at least, *claiming* to be '*statesmanlike*' on these issues. This supports the argument advanced in Chapter Four about the effectiveness of '*public policy franchising*' in agenda manipulation; that with other forces in providing attention and legitimacy for the *broad environmental agenda*, the EC designation has secured a *declared*, and to some extent an *actual ideological commitment* to it which has derived from direct pressure group activity rather than the priority given to it on the public agenda alone. This suggests that those concerned to manipulate the *formal agenda* might do so most effectively by appealing to the possible economic benefits of embracing environmental values.

#### *The welfarism / 'environmentism' axis*

Secondly, a 'welfarism / environmentism axis' was theorised from the work of Jowell *et al.* (1994: 136) and tested against data from the EC attitudinal surveys. Their assertion that 'Rooting the debate about the environment in a discourse centred on a concern for others, and on a sense of collective identity may be a more stable root to a greener Britain' than increasing environmental pessimism, was provisionally tested in the EC's. The positive relationship which Jowell *et al.* reported between a concern for others (welfarism) and a concern for the broader environmental agenda ('environmentism') was found in the Environment Cities amongst both their citizens and their leaderships.

Whilst Environment City citizens expressed themselves as similarly welfaristic to the British population at large they were, however, about one and a half times more likely to express a readiness to accept cuts in their (economic) standard of living to protect the environment. In Leicester where the EC has been at its most vigorous, citizens expressed themselves as more environmentally positive than in the other cities and as the least 'welfaristic'. Albeit only provisionally, this suggests that living in an Environment City has a positive affect on attitudes to the environment.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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#### THE AGENDA 21 EXPECTATIONS OF (UK) LOCAL AUTHORITIES

##### **Calls for the Local Management of Planet Earth**

*Global management of a 'major shift' of behaviour and ideology by humanity, through 'sustainable development' green ideology, has been called for by Agenda 21*

This thesis has been concerned with the political commitment of local authority leaderships to 'managing Planet Earth, locally', in the context of global calls for action and, in particular, the Agenda 21 action plan. It has been argued that these calls are founded on a belief that there is an *environmental imperative* to respond for our own sakes to an *environmental crisis* of our own making. The expectations which these calls make of local authorities have been defined as seeking to *manage* a particular form of *rationality* into our relationship with each other and with the rest of nature, through the organising principle of *sustainable development*. Its concerns for human welfare and for the human environment have been seen to be indivisible. This concept has been examined against a spectrum of green value positions and a position of *sustainable development green* has been defined for the purposes of this thesis. It has been argued that the achievement of sustainable development green is called for by the UN Earth Summit, and requires a *major shift* of behaviour and ideology by humanity. It has also been argued that, as yet, these calls for a major shift have been largely unacceptable to national governments, including the UK's. Also, that this is especially so because the demands of sustainable development ideology and, thus, those of Agenda 21, seriously challenge the dominant scientific materialist paradigm which favours dry green 'business as usual' approaches. It has been argued that this top down managerial approach to precipitating the major shift and thereby securing our salvation from a feared environmental Armageddon has, itself, been derived from scientific materialism.

## **Sustainable Development, Hijacked.**

*The term 'sustainable development' has been hijacked by the defenders of dry green ideology.*

It has been argued that the woolliness of the term 'sustainable development' has rendered it very susceptible to '*hijacking*' especially by proponents of dry green ideology. This woolliness has, however, been a 'double edged sword'. It has given the term 'sustainable development' a '*wooden horse*' capacity which has been exploited by proponents of deeper green ideology. This is explained below.

## **A Global Pyramid of Declared Political Commitments**

It has been argued that, as a result of pressure from the proponents of sustainable development green (e.g. Brundtland, 1987), a global pyramid of declared political commitments has been constructed to provide the *managerial organisational framework* for *implementing* the calls. It has been explained that local authorities are seen by Agenda 21 as one of the 'major groups' of civil society which have a key role in this cascade of managerial delegation for the implementation of sustainable development. The role envisaged for local authorities in this essentially *top down* process has been examined and described as one of leading or 'implementing' the major shift, locally.

## **Declared and Actual Political Commitments: A New Typology**

To facilitate the analysis of political commitments it has been necessary to develop a theoretical framework which distinguishes between different types and levels of commitment. Using Schein's (1987) *three levels of culture model*, a matrix has been used to define three levels or depths of *actual political commitment* relating to each of three types of *declared political commitment*. Declared political commitments are defined as public statements of political undertaking such as those made by the leaders of the 178 nations signing the Earth Summit Declaration. Three types of declared political commitment are identified; '*nebulous*', '*specific*' and '*ideological*'. From the '*ideological*' type, three levels

of actual political commitment are identified; 'artificial ideological commitment'; 'espoused ideological commitment' and 'basic ideological commitment'. From the arguments of this thesis, Figure 1. presents a provisional assessment of such commitments at each level of government from global to EC local authorities and their citizens. This study has, however, been primarily concerned to assess the degree of basic ideological commitment by the case study local authority leaderships to sustainable development green ideology. Other studies have been cited which have focused on assessing actual ideological political commitment at the two more superficial levels.

Figure 1.		DRY GREEN	SHALLOW GREEN	DEEP GREEN
WORLD LEVEL	ART		X	
(Rio call for major shift to shallow green)	ESP		X	
	BAS	X		
NATION STATE	ART		X	
(UK Government)	ESP		X	NOTES
	BAS	X		ART, ESP and BAS correspond to Schein's 3 levels of culture ie. artifactual, espoused values and basic assumptions.
ENV. CITY PROG.	ART		X	
	ESP		X	The X's offer an <i>estimation</i> of the position of the organisation/level of government in relation to the environmentalism position spectrum at Schein's culture levels.
	BAS		X	
LOCAL AUTH.	ART		X	The aims of the representation are:
(Env. Cities)	ESP	X		a) to illustrate the belief that shallow green is much closer to dry green than it is to deep green,
	BAS	X		b) to promote discussion about the relative environmentalism positions of levels of government and other influential bodies which relate to each other,
CITIZENS	ART		X	
	ESP	X		c) to illustrate the belief that the world and local levels are ideologically closer to shallow green than the Government but that, at the local level, there is still a long way to go.
	BAS	X		

Figure 1. Estimations of environmentalism positions.

Pell, D. (1996) 'Local Management of Planet Earth: Towards a 'Major Shift' of Paradigm', *Sustainable Development*, 4 (3), 140.

## **UK Local Government, Calls for a Major Shift and Its Freedom to Govern**

*UK local government and local authorities have used the calls for a major shift, quite successfully, to help advance their own cause for greater freedom to govern.*

It has been argued that some part of the distance between dry green and sustainable development green ideology has been travelled already by the UK's major political parties. It is no longer acceptable to develop political theories which do not take a view about the impact of human political, social and economic arrangements on the biosphere without showing that they are defensible. Local governments have been particularly active in pushing the UN and nation states towards declarations of political commitment to the ideology which also seem likely to provide a key role for local authorities.

The position of UK local government in response to the calls for a major shift, so far, has been described as having been inextricably linked with its long-waged battle with central government for greater freedom to govern. It has been argued that UK local government at the national level has made considerable use of these world level calls to legitimise their, quite successful, campaign for more power for local authorities. Also, from the experience of the EC local authorities, it seems that individual local authorities have used the calls to legitimise their progressive incursions into a more governmental role, during a period of ever increasing central control of their activities. It has been reasoned, however, that this has, in fact, resulted in local authorities travelling only the first and easiest part of the ideological journey from dry to sustainable development green. As a result, it is feared that their progress is likely to stall unless events e.g. environmental crises or initiatives by proponents of sustainable development ideology, precipitate deeper levels of actual political commitment by local authority leaderships.

## **Progress by UK Local Authorities in a UK Government Context**

*UK local authorities have made their progress in a largely hostile 'business as usual' by Government context.*

The context within which UK local authorities have been charged with meeting the

expectations of them to lead the major shift at the local level has been presented as one of a lack of actual ideological commitment and only weak espoused and artifactual ideological commitment to Agenda 21 by Government. Commitment seems likely, however, to become stronger under the New Labour Government. In particular, the proposed 'power of community initiative', the proposed duty to act in the interests of the community and the signing of the European Charter of Local Self Government have been cited in support of that assertion. On the other hand, evidence from the Environment City case study local authorities has been seen to suggest that these new powers are unlikely to be exploited quickly because of pessimism by local politicians that Government will truly want to devolve significant governmental power to them.

### **THE NATURE OF THE COMMITMENT OF THE LEADERSHIPS OF THE ENVIRONMENT CITY LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO MEETING THE EXPECTATIONS OF AGENDA 21**

The need for actual commitment (described below) to sustainable development ideology as a *precondition* for real progress towards managing sustainable development into place was put into the context of *public policy implementation theory*. Evidence drawn from nationwide surveys of local authority environmental co-ordinators which cast very serious doubt on such commitment by local authority leaderships was presented. Nevertheless, it was argued that one might reasonably expect fairly strong commitment to sustainable development ideology by the leaderships of, so called, Environment City local authorities.

The degree of such commitment was tested using Schein's (1987) three levels of culture model and method for revealing the culture of an organisation or, as in this case, aspects of it. This included an attitudinal survey of decision-makers. As it was not possible to distinguish between responses which were based on a weak *knowledge* of the ideology and those based on a stronger knowledge, the findings were, thus, the result of both forces.

At Schein's level of basic assumptions, ideological commitment was found to be weak, overall. It was, however, found to be significantly stronger in Leicester. On the basis of the

findings, it was argued that in all of the cities, though less so in Leicester, the leaderships have *hijacked* (explained above) sustainable development ideology by expressing their support for it at the artifactual level and at best believing, at the level of espoused values, that they are committed to it. When really pressed, however, the dominant materialist paradigm and its associated dry green ideology was seen to press heavily on them with economic concerns weighing most heavily in their attitudes. Nevertheless, the findings were by no means totally negative and provided some good evidence of weakening support for the dominant paradigm in favour of, certainly, social and, then, environmental concern. These findings are explained further in relation to possible ways of precipitating behavioural and attitudinal shifts by local authority leaderships.

## **INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT CITY PROGRAMME INTO EFFECTIVE WAYS OF INCREASING THE COMMITMENT OF A LOCAL AUTHORITY'S LEADERSHIP**

### **Sustainable Development Green and Formal Agenda Manipulation**

*Sustainable development green has got onto the local authority agenda through direct formal agenda manipulation by the protagonists.*

From a public policy agenda building theory perspective, the experience of the Environment City local authorities shows that the impetus for most of the progress which has been made has not derived from the leaderships. Rather, it has derived from the manoeuvring and manipulation of *insider and outsider pressure groups* and from *insider policy entrepreneurs*. These groups and individuals have not relied on getting their issue on the *public agenda* as the route to getting it on the *formal (political) agenda*. They have, instead, worked as insider groups to manipulate the formal agenda *directly*. Moreover, often quite junior, insider policy entrepreneurs have worked in collusion with the pressure groups to use '*velvet glove*' manipulation of the agenda to promote their shared interests.

Several specific means of achieving this manipulation have been observed, none of which is adequately accounted for in the literature of agenda building theory.

## **A Suitable Climate for the Local Emergence of Environmental Issues**

*A climate providing legitimacy, feasibility and support for the acceptance of environmental concerns by local authorities on their formal agendas was created by external events and potential insider pressure groups, facilitating issue emergence.*

In considering issue emergence, it has been argued that FoE (as a '*potential insider group*') used its Local Government Green Charter to seize the opportunity provided by growing public concern about environmental issues. The creation of this new climate was aided by the strong Green Vote in the 1989 European Election, the Brundtland Commission (1987), the 1992 Earth Summit (and A21) and, in the case of the Environment Cities, the promise of prestige in return for a commitment to what appeared to be a 'good thing'. These helped to provide the '*legitimacy*', '*feasibility*' and '*support*' for declarations of commitment by local authorities to sustainable development ideology - as they understood it.

## **New Concepts in Public Policy Agenda Building Theory**

*From a public policy agenda building perspective, the ways which helped protagonists to get the environmental issue onto the EC local authorities' formal political agendas included: 'public policy wooden horsing' as 'issue joining as issue redefinition', 'the politics of embarrassment', 'public policy franchising' and 'public policy rewarding' - often in combination.*

*Public policy 'wooden horsing' as a radical form of 'issue joining as issue redefinition'.*

It has been argued that, in addition to the existence of a ripe issue climate, it was a lack of real understanding by local authority leaderships of the real *requirements* of sustainable development (and of the real *expectations* of A21) which helped the protagonists to get it on the agendas of the EC local authorities. The metaphor of '*wooden horsing*' has been used to describe in public policy agenda building theory how this was achieved, presenting it as a radical form of '*issue joining as issue redefinition*'. In the case of the ECs, protagonists have been seen to use a weak understanding of sustainable development to *push* their '*wooden horse*' through the EC local authorities' '*policy gates*'. Leaderships were allowed

to think that they were signing up to a *limited (amenity focused) environmental agenda* rather than the *broad agenda of properly understood sustainable development ideology*. Moreover, even some of those ideologically dry green policy makers who recognised sustainable development as a broad agenda, saw the benefits of hijacking the term of sustainable development for their own purposes. They, therefore, helped to *drag* the 'wooden horse' through the leaderships' policy 'gates'.

This form of issue redefinition is concerned to get a public declaration of commitment, preferably in writing, from the policy makers which is greater than they would make if they knew the full implications. Once through the 'policy gates' in this way the protagonists are then able to use what has been termed the '*politics of embarrassment*' and '*grand -mastery* (new concepts, referred to again below) to *ratchet* policy makers' support towards the full *broad agenda* implications of sustainable development and A21. This 'wooden horsing' is a distinct form of 'issue joining as issue redefinition' insofar as it utilizes an initial *deception* to extract a publically declared political commitment to a particular ideology from a political leadership, the expectations of which they do not know and which they, therefore, under estimate . A new concept of *public policy franchising* is introduced below to describe an observed means of securing such a declared commitment.

The more usual, less radical, form of 'issue joining as issue redefinition' was also observed in the actions of the Environment City local authority insider protagonists who joined the need for an Agenda 21 with various other *visioning processes* (as opposed to declarations of political commitment) which, because of their emphasis on local economic well being, were more readily accepted (e.g. City Pride and SRB Bids).

#### *Public policy franchising.*

It has been argued that, from the earliest days, the EC Programme has, largely unwittingly, used and developed what has been termed a '*public policy franchising*' arrangement. This metaphor has been used to describe what has been argued to be an important new concept in public policy agenda building theory, to explain how designations such as 'Environment

City' are used with the aim of shifting not only the behaviour of policy makers *but also* their ideology *on an ongoing basis*. It has been described as potentially able to deliver into the hands of small pressure groups, a 'David-like' power to manipulate the formal agendas, and to some extent the ideology, of 'Goliath-like' local authority leaderships *year after year*. By being persuaded to *declare publically* that this city is, *and will continue to be*, first and foremost concerned about the environment as an 'Environment City', the local authority's leadership has delivered itself into the hands of the franchisor. If it wants to avoid a potentially politically embarrassing climb down and so long as the franchisor does not press too hard, then, the franchise is probably as powerful as that on-going control which the McDonald's and Kall-Kwik franchisors wield over their private sector franchisees. A new term, *'the politics of embarrassment'* has been used to describe the concept of protagonists (including citizens) using 'declared political commitments' to 'beat policy makers over the head' unless they follow the protagonists' 'path of true virtue'. This will usually require behavioural change and may or may not push the policy makers towards changes of ideology. Other much less ambitious public sector examples of franchises are Sports City and, in terms of organisational environmental management, EMAS and BS7750 registration. Examples in the field of general management include Investors in People, BS5750 and the last Government's 'Charter Mark'. It is the EC designation, or 'franchise', however, which has been shown to be so strong in terms of drawing a very *public declaration* of political ideological commitment which now demands a new concept in public policy agenda building theory. It also helps to explain its potential power in agenda manipulation and, probably, also in precipitating shifts of ideology.

It has been argued that public policy franchising in the Environment City local authorities has been stronger because of the way in which a small number of ideologically committed insider policy entrepreneurs have, carefully, been able to work with the franchisor to push their own councils' leaderships towards sustainable development green ideology.

#### *Public policy rewarding.*

The concept of public policy franchising has been distinguished from an also new concept

in public policy agenda building theory, that of '*public policy rewarding*'. This describes a means by which protagonists reward policy makers (with 'accolades') for certain actions, often in the form of competitions e.g. for beautifying their town with flowers for Britain in Bloom or cleaning up their beaches for a European Blue Flag Award. This study has found that the EC Programme did not provide the EC designation as an *accolade* but as a *challenge*. The idea did, however, spring from the way in which an accolade was seen to shift the behaviour of a local authority i.e. Leicester City Council and the Euro Nostra Award.

### **Venues, Images and Declared Political Commitment**

*The multiplicity of different (shared) venues available in the pyramid of declared political commitments has provided the protagonists of sustainable development green with many opportunities to manipulate formal agendas.*

It has been observed that protagonists have been able to manipulate the world, European and local government agendas much more easily than those of the governments of nation states. This has been, largely, because of the relatively high priority which the governments of nation states (the only signatories to the Earth Summit Declaration) feel obliged to give to conventional economic growth. The protagonists have, however, as observed above, got the environment onto the formal agenda at all levels to different degrees, in part by relying on the fact that each institutional *venue* is home to a different *image* of the same question. The local authority venue, typified by the EC local authorities, did not, at least initially, see 'the environment' as an issue which would conflict with the currently perceived main responsibility of the venue, that of securing economic wellbeing. For local authorities, this is, in any case, less fiercely a priority than for national Government. The environment was seen by that venue, largely, in terms of the limited agenda which was acceptable and not far removed from its public health, planning etc. roles. Indeed, it can be seen as a 'New Public Health'.

It has also been argued that the creation of arm's length trusts, largely on the initiative of internal environmental policy entrepreneurs, has created a new venue giving them a greater

opportunity to exert leverage over their local authorities. As employees of the trust, they are no longer 'hired and fired' by the local authority and they exercise the power associated with both moderate insider and moderate outsider group status - as best suits their purpose at the time.

**'Issue management , inertia and fade' and (*the new concept*) of 'grand mastery'.**

Examples of how the experience of the EC local authorities demonstrates these established concepts have been given. Also, however, a concept of '*grand mastery*' was found to be needed to describe and explain a significant aspect of what was observed. Issue management was seen to be achieved through the manoeuvring of a single key 'green' policy entrepreneur within each of the local authorities. The case studies showed how agenda manipulation and management can be greatly influenced by individual, often quite junior, insider environmental policy entrepreneurs or groups. They are able to encourage their leaderships and the EC partners *incrementally* along a path to a destination which, by intention, only they are aware. With the aid of public policy franchising they have secured successive *declared commitments* to what they sense will be currently acceptable to their leaderships (and EC partners). This has enabled these proponents to *ratchet* progress forwards against a series of incremental goals. They have kept each successive goal to themselves until they have sensed that the time is right for it to be politically acceptable. This helps to avoid frightening the policy makers off. The ability of one officer in Peterborough to, almost single-handedly, win £12m of funding for his city as part of his 'grand-mastery' was explained. So too was the close working relationship which the EC Programme had given to another, quite junior, green policy entrepreneur in Leeds to work closely with the leader of his massive city council. This gave him considerable potential to 'grand master' progress.

**Human Rationality and Precipitating Shifts Towards Sustainable Development**

*An understanding of human rationality may hold the key to precipitating shifts towards greater actual ideological commitment to sustainable development green by local authority political leaderships and their citizens.*

The discussion so far has focused mostly on how sustainable development green behaviour and attitudes reach and are managed on the local political formal agenda. There is, however, a major difference between getting an issue on this agenda at the artifactual and espoused levels and getting it accepted by local politicians at the level of *basic ideology*. The remainder of this account of the conclusions of the thesis, focuses on this latter degree of commitment.

It has been argued that the apparent *irrationality* with which human society has come to conduct its relationship with the rest of nature can, to some extent, be explained by the suggestion that there is a psychological substructure which underpins the dominant scientific materialist paradigm and which relies on, and in turn encourages, our *disconnection from each other* through two closely related tendencies. These are, first, the unquestioned and vigorous pursuit of self interest usually excluding even *self interested reciprocal altruism* and, second, the development of *large scale and impersonal society* which is increasingly the norm. Arguments were also presented which suggest that, paradoxically, in spite of this apparent *irrationality* by human society, *individuals* tend to be *rational* in recognising that our collective behaviour will have to undergo a *shift* if we are to reverse our current collision course with nature. They do, however, feel powerless, as individuals, to do very much about this.

Further arguments from the literature were presented which suggest that one way of precipitating such shifts might be by increasing environmental pessimism ('doom mongering') and that as the environmental degradation 'common enemy' becomes more evident (e.g. the intense smogs now enveloping much of Indonesia as a result of forest clearance), this will become easier. It was also suggested that, advocating smaller scale self contained living patterns is idealistic and that other ways of helping humanity in its struggle for rationality in our relationships with each other and with nature are, therefore, being searched for by proponents of sustainable development green ideology. Agenda 21's insistence that social justice must be sought as a prerequisite to seeking improvements in our relationship with nature was seen as the most significant attempt so far. It was argued, however, that to help to make it effective at the local level, proponents such as the Wildlife

Trusts have various options some of which have been under exploited. In addition to the more usual awareness raising approaches of many pressure groups, for instance, two ways in which they might seek to precipitate attitudinal shifts at the local level by local authority leaderships were considered in the light of the Environment City experience. The first was through the use of 'public policy franchising' referred to above, (in conjunction with the 'politics of embarrassment') to encourage '*statesmanlike*' action; action which might, arguably, then leave them open to the possible basic assumption shifting power of *cognitive dissonance*. The second is through recognising and making use of, the apparent relationship between caring for each other (welfarism) and caring for nature ('environmentism').

### **Public Policy Franchising and Understanding Shifts of Ideology**

*The possible usefulness of the concept of public policy franchising in understanding how basic ideological shifts can be precipitated.*

This was assessed through an examination of the degree to which the Environment City Programme has shifted actual ideological commitment to sustainable development green, as opposed to simply getting it accepted on the formal agenda at the behavioural / artifactual or espoused value levels, i.e. turning a *declared ideological commitment* into actual *basic ideological commitment*. Some evidence that the Environment City designation has positively affected the attitude of the leaderships towards nature was found, especially in Leicester where 55% of respondents to the DM Survey expressed the belief that it had made a 'major' or 'fairly major' difference. In the other cities the difference was considered to be more modest. Moreover, little evidence could be found of *basic ideological commitment* to sustainable development by the leaderships deriving from the designation. Nevertheless, it appears that the EC designation as a *declared commitment* has successfully got sustainable development onto the formal agendas of these leaderships, precipitating actual *artifactual and espoused ideological commitment*. It is, thus, possible that having successfully shifted *behaviour* and the more *superficial cultural attitudes* in this way, the EC Programme and similar initiatives can contribute to producing suitable conditions for *cognitive dissonance* to be used to begin to shift *basic ideological commitment*.

This possibility was reinforced by the apparent positions of each of the cities. Leicester's leadership and citizens were seen to be way ahead of the others in terms of apparently having been influenced by the EC initiative. It is here where by far the strongest and most public declarations of commitment have been made, largely as a result of the efforts of a local pressure group. At the other extreme, although its pre-reorganisation Council was beginning to understand, accept and act on the aims of EC, the new Middlesbrough Borough Council appears concerned only to keep and use the title to impress others e.g. to help with its prime concern which is for economic development. The mighty Leeds City Council was always less likely to be ready to be influenced by a small pressure group but, with the help of committed insider policy entrepreneurs, it appears that the EC Programme has shifted behaviour and espoused ideological commitment substantially (e.g. institutionalizing it through EMAS). Small but significant progress is also apparent at the deepest level. Similarly, in Peterborough, *behaviour* has been much influenced but here it has consisted mainly of projects around the margins of the Council's concerns. Only in the case of Leicester, and to a more limited extent Leeds, then, could it be fairly claimed that the EC designation has apparently shifted the basic ideology of the city councils' leaderships.

The informants' group was much less convinced than the leaderships that the *broad* environmental issue was *actually* on the agenda as a *basic ideological commitment*. It was argued that this is probably so because each group places a different interpretation of what is actually meant by *'being on the agenda'*. To the political leaderships it has tended to mean that an issue is there for debate and some (often *'marginalised'*) action on the (often *'limited'*) environmental agenda. To the ideologically committed policy entrepreneurs (in this case environmentalist policy champions both inside and outside the local authorities) it has meant sticking to declared political commitments (such as those made when becoming an EC and to A21) by actual commitment to the ideology underpinning the *broad environmental agenda*. This demands *integrating* action on it into all of the local authority's policies and other behaviour.

## Statesmanship by Local Authority Leaderships

*Statesmanship by local authority leaderships on environmental issues is evident and might, profitably, be further encouraged.*

It is significant that, whilst citizens in all of the cities express themselves as satisfied with the care which their City Councils show for the environment, this is almost wholly in relation to the *limited* environmental agenda. They do not, even in these 'Environment' Cities, have any real idea of expectations (such as Agenda 21's) that their local authority should have a role in 'saving the world'; the *broad environmental agenda*. Even where they recognise such an agenda, they often have no idea what their local authority might be able to do. From this, it was argued that these (and probably many other) local authority leaderships have begun to accept the need for them to act in a *statesmanlike* fashion on the *broad* environmental agenda. It, therefore, appears important that those who seek to precipitate behavioural and ideological shifts at this level (and probably also at the higher levels) recognise that, at present, it is likely to be easier to get the *broad environmental issue* accepted by leaderships on their *formal agenda* than by citizens on the *public agenda*.

Again more positively, it was found that the political leaderships of the EC local authorities had greater knowledge of sustainable development ideology and were more committed to it than citizens. In part, this was seen to reflect the success of the EC initiative in getting environmental concern onto the *formal agenda*. In part, it was also seen to be the result of leaderships seizing the opportunity provided by their *declared ideological commitment* to sustainable development to help advance their prime political objective, that of economic prosperity. Equal second placing (to economic concerns) was the belief of respondents that the EC initiative has put sustainable development *on the agenda of local politicians*. Among the leaders group this was the equal first most frequently mentioned achievement.

The leadership groups in all of the cities claimed to be considerably more *environmentally positive* (as well as more welfare positive) than did their citizens, suggesting that they are, at least, *claiming* to be '*statesmanlike*' on these issues. This supports the thesis advanced above about the effectiveness of '*public policy franchising*' in agenda manipulation. It

suggests that, with other forces in providing attention and legitimacy for the *broad environmental agenda*, the EC designation has secured a *declared*, and to some extent a *basic ideological commitment* to it. This has been derived essentially from direct pressure group activity rather than from the priority given to it on the public agenda alone. This suggests that those concerned to manipulate the *formal agenda* might also be successful in doing so do by appealing to the possible economic benefits of embracing environmental values; that is through '*issue joining as a form of issue redefinition*'. It was, for instance, found that the greatest achievement of EC status was considered by the EC local authority leaderships to be that it provided a high profile for the city and/or aided international links - for economic advantage.

### **Welfarism / 'Environmentism' and Basic Ideological Shift Precipitation**

*The possible usefulness of the concept of a welfarism / 'environmentism' axis in understanding how basic ideological shifts can be precipitated.*

A 'welfarism / environmentism axis' was theorised from the work of Jowell *et. al.* (1994). Their assertion that 'Rooting the debate about the environment in a discourse centred on a concern for others, and on a sense of collective identity may be a more stable root to a greener Britain' (see above) than increasing environmental pessimism, was provisionally tested in the EC's through attitudinal surveys. The positive relationship which Jowell *et al.* reported between a concern for others (welfarism) and a concern for the broader environmental agenda ('environmentism' - my term) was also found in the Environment Cities amongst both citizens and their leaderships.

Whilst Environment City citizens expressed themselves as similarly welfaristic to the British population at large they appear to be more 'environmentist'. They were about one and a half times more likely to express a readiness to accept cuts in their (economic) standard of living to protect the environment. This view was reinforced by the findings in Leicester where the EC has been at its most vigorous. Citizens, here, expressed themselves as more environmentally positive than in the other cities even though they were less 'welfaristic'. Albeit only provisionally, this suggests that as this difference is not accounted for by a

more welfaristic population, living in an Environment City probably has a positive affect on attitudes to the environment.

### **The Future of Commitment to Sustainable Development Green Ideology at the Local Level.**

Two events during the last month provide examples of the radical change which our culture may be undergoing. They also say something about the *profound shifts* in culture and behaviour that will be needed to achieve anything close to sustainable life styles... First...The collective outpouring of national, or even global..grief (referring to the death of the Princess of Wales) is fascinating for what it tells us about how we as individuals define our culture. From arch rationalist to spiritually inclined, nobody could avoid being drawn in...One important cultural message to be gleaned from the event is that - whatever the manifestation, *people identify strongly and collectively with humanitarian values. Wouldn't it be nice to try and harness some of that resource for use at the local level.* ...Second...Those wanting out voted with their feet for a new assembly in Edinburgh. With this sort of momentum, it seems likely that sharing *a country with another fifty five million people individuals may no longer suffice.* (My emphasis and note.)

Elwyn Thomas, Editorial, Local Environment News, September 1997.

Thomas' suggestion that we can still care collectively and that there is a trend to smaller scale living may, if true, signal a greater readiness to accept Agenda 21's call for a major shift.

10 years after the Brundtland Commission reported and 5 years after the Earth Summit Declaration (and its Agenda 21 action plan) was made, it is timely to have considered the levels of commitment of local authority leaderships to the major shift of ideology called for. Returning to Brundtland's 1992 call, however, the picture does not look promising. If she was right that 'We are compelled to manage the most important global transition since the agricultural and industrial revolutions - the transition to sustainable development' (see beginning of Chapter Three) then there is little evidence of actual commitment to this scale of change even in the UK's Environment City local authorities. The local authority leaderships see continuing economic growth as the priority, though judged as necessary to provide the means to meet first social and then environmental ones. Moreover, if Fukuyama's (1997) apocalyptic view is right, then the need for us to address both our relationships with each other as well as our collective relationship with the rest of nature

does not appear to have been accepted by city local authority leaderships. He argues that we are living through a social revolution, a 'Great Disruption', which started in the mid 1960's, and is as profoundly earth shaking as the advent of communism in Russia, or indeed, the Industrial Revolution. He cites 30 years of rising divorce, illegitimacy, crime, working women and social chaos. The New Labour Government appears to be more ready to recognise this than the former Government. This was evidenced by the Prime Minister's assertion that 'We need to bring a change, too, in the way we treat each other.' (Labour Party Conference, Brighton: Reported in Independent 1-10-97).

The Environment City Programme has made a good beginning at shifting, especially behavioural and espoused, commitment by local authority leaderships. To a lesser, but nonetheless worthwhile extent, it has *begun* to shift their basic ideological commitment towards sustainable development green. It shows how small groups of activists can gain David-like power to shift the agendas of Goliath-like local authorities, even if, as in this case, it is not fully utilized. This study has attempted to make these and some of the other successful experiences of the Environment City Programme explicit and, from this, to make some improvements to the theory of precipitating behavioural and attitudinal change in the local authority political arena. It is hoped that it will be of academic interest and also, perhaps, of some practical interest to those who, at local authority level, are concerned with *managing* into the way we live, a *major shift* of ideology in favour of Agenda 21's calls for sustainable development.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

There are five particular areas where further study seems likely to be worthwhile.

Firstly, the theory of cognitive dissonance, from psychology, has been referred to on several occasions, in relation to shifting attitudes in favour of sustainable development green ideology. In essence, the theory proposes that by securing a, preferably voluntary, change of behaviour by individuals, they may then seek to reduce any difference between their basic ideology and their behaviour by adjusting the former. Whilst the EC Programme has been

observed to be much more effective in shifting behaviour than actual commitment towards the ideology in whose name it takes place, there appears to be a link between the two. Whether cognitive dissonance has played any part in this could be tested through clinical psychological testing of EC and other non EC local authority policy makers. (The ATLAS project may help with this, Environ, 1996B.)

Secondly, it appears that there is a positive relationship between 'welfarism' and 'environmentism'. This could be tested still further in other populations and in greater depth, with a view to understanding what factors are most likely to lead people, including policy makers, towards a sympathy for sustainable development green ideology.

Thirdly, there is a considerable literature on partnership and 'bottom up' working in response to Agenda 21. The Environment City Programme has relied on partnership working and a great deal of information has been assembled on this during the current study. This could be taken further to see the extent to which the EC partnership working experience can be explained by the existing literature and whether improvements are needed. A policy network / community perspective as advanced, for instance, by Ward (1996: 852) in respect of the response to A21 generally, could be explored in relation to the specific experience of the EC local authorities.

Fourthly, the next phase of the UK's Environment City Programme promises a major expansion in an effort to exert more influence on the policy makers in more cities. Researching the experience of this expansion is likely to secure further lessons from the Environment City 'open experiment'.

An ESRC bid has been made for further study of the EC experience and this embraces some of the above (Littlewood, S., Leeds Metropolitan University, Centre for Urban and Environmental Management). If successful, I hope to be involved with this work.

Finally, looking at the experience of some other UK, and perhaps some overseas, local authorities, through the same processes used in this study seems likely to produce some very

useful comparative data. This could, for instance, help to throw further light on whether the EC designation has made a significant difference to political commitment to the broad environmental agenda.

## ABBREVIATIONS

A21	Agenda 21
ADC	Association of District Councils
ACC	Association of County Councils
ACBE	Advisory Committee on Business and the Environment
ALANI	Association of Local Authorities Northern Ireland
AMA	Association of Metropolitan Authorities
ATLAS	Action Towards Local Authority Sustainability (Environ)
BS7750	British Standard 7750 (Environmental Management)
BSA	British Social Attitudes Survey
BT	British Telecom plc.
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
CC	City Council
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
CZ Survey	Citizens' Attitudinal Survey
DM Survey	Decision-Makers Attitudinal Survey
DoE	Department of the Environment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EC	Environment City
EMAS	Environmental Management and Auditing Scheme
ESIT	Environmental Strategy Implementation Team (Leicester City Council)
ESRC	Economic and Social Research Council
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GEC	Global Environmental Change (an ESRC Research Programme)
IBM	International Business Machines
ICI	Imperial Chemical Industries
LA21	Local Agenda 21
LEAF	Leeds Environmental Action Forum
LEBF	Leeds Environmental Business Forum
LEC	Leeds Environment City
LECI	Leeds Environment City Initiative
LET	Leicester Ecology Trust
LETS	Local Exchange Trading Scheme
LECT	Leicester Environment City Trust
LGMB	Local Government Management Board
LGO	Local Government Officer
LNCWG	Leeds Nature Conservation Working Group
LRTNC	Leicester Royal Trust for Nature Conservation
LUSC	Leicester Urban Study Centre (Leicester)
MBC	Middlesbrough Borough Council
MEC	Middlesbrough Environment City
MRF	Materials Recycling Facility
NGO	Non Governmental Agency
RSNC	Royal Society for Nature Conservation
SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
SWG	Specialist Working Group
TEC	Training and Enterprise Council
UDP	Urban Development Plan
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (1992, Earth Summit)
UNWCED	United Nations World Conference on Environment and Development (1987, Bruntland Commission)

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## APPENDIX ONE                      DETAILED METHODOLOGY

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### SOURCES OF PRIMARY DATA

The main sources of primary data for this research were:

- a. The 'Review of the Environment City Programme' (Pell and Wright, 1994) which included 66 structured interviews with key people. This (together with b. below) resulted in the publication of 'Painting by Numbers' (Wood, 1994) offering guidance to local authorities and their partners in responding to the environmental imperative and Agenda 21.
- b. The 'Review of the Environment City Programme - Attitudinal Survey' (Pell and Wright, 1994) which was based on 400 city centre street questionnaire interviews of Environment City citizens in Summer 1994.
- c. The 'Second Attitudinal Survey of the Four UK Environment Cities' (Pell and Wright, 1996) which was, again, based on 400 city centre street questionnaire interviews of Environment City citizens (this time in the pre Christmas period 1995) but, additionally, compared and contrasted the results with those of the 1994 survey.
- d. A Welfarism / 'Environmentism' Citizens Attitudinal Survey of the same 400 respondents referred to at c. above, made for the purposes of this thesis.
- e. Face to face structured interviews of 51 key people in the Environment Cities specifically for this research; a total of 71 interviews (some being interviewed more than once) including 28 'clinical iterative' interviews of 9 'insiders'.
- f. Face to face structured interviews of 20 key people in the Environment Cities using questionnaires as part of the 1996 Decision-Maker Attitudinal Survey.
- g. Telephone interviews of three key people in the Environment Cities.
- h. Eighty seven responses by key people in the Environment Cities to the Decision-Maker Survey. Eighty of the 160 questionnaires sent out were completed, 18 of these at the time of the personal interviews referred to at f. above and three completed and returned by people who were also interviewed by telephone and are referred to at g. above. The questionnaire included a welfarism / 'environmentism' attitudinal survey (this time of decision-makers) which was identical to that referred to at d. above.
- i. Working closely with the Wildlife Trusts (and involvement with the EC Programme) as well as with the four Environment Cities since December 1993 on

projects and keeping in touch with key people in them, especially the EC managers in each city and the National Environment City Programme managers at the Wildlife Trusts HQ in Lincoln (including 15 visits to the latter). The projects included, with Geoff Wright;

- i. Research and preparation for the publication *Stepping Stones II: The Inside Story* (Wood, 1995). This was a good practice guide for cities seeking to work towards sustainable development. It described, and assessed for environmental sustainability, 7 Environment City examples, 10 from the rest of the UK and 10 from the rest of the world.
  - ii. Similarly, following interviews of 13 key people (including eight face to face interviews), this was a paper for the Wildlife Trusts to guide the National Programme managers on alternatives for its future; *Taking the Environment City Programme into the Next Millennium*. We were then involved in an Environment City Think Tank Day in July 1996 which brought together 'key people involved in community and sustainable development and Local Agenda 21 work in the UK ' to help the Wildlife Trusts build on its ideas for the future of the Programme' (Shirley, 1996). The results of that day have also been drawn on for the purposes of this study.
- j. Participant and non-participant observation as described in Chapter Two: Methodology. The Wildlife Trusts kindly collaborated with this research and allowed free access to all files and other documents in their possession relating to the Environment City Programme. Attendance at relevant seminars where the progress of the EC initiative was under discussion was also especially helpful e.g. The Environment City Sustainability Indicators Workshop, 5 March 1997. The Environment City Managers in each city were also very helpful in allowing access to all documents requested and, again, through allowing attendance at various seminars where their work was being reviewed e.g. the AGMs of the Peterborough Environment City Trust.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Frey (1986) considered the question of anonymity and confidentiality and argued that very few surveys could be considered anonymous because there is usually some way of tracing respondents. In the Citizens Attitudinal Surveys (including the Citizens' Welfarism / 'Environmentism' Survey) respondents were not asked for their names or addresses. They were, thus, anonymous and virtually non traceable. A confidential response is one made by a respondent whose identity is known but kept secret. Respondents to the Decision-Maker Survey and associated Welfarism / 'Environmentism' Survey were assured of such confidentiality.

King (1970), Fuller (1974) and Wildman (1977) found no differences in response rates to postal questionnaires with pre-mailed identification numbers and those without. Moreover, research into the impact of confidentiality statements did not provide consistent evidence

that there was a significant impact on refusal rates or other data quality factors (Reamer, 1979 and Frey, 1986)). More important factors which had a bearing on response rates seemed to be the subject topic of the survey and the manner in which it was presented. In this study, confidentiality was promised and the readiness of many respondents to make strong negative statements about their political groups and the local authorities which employed them, suggests that they trusted in this. Many respondents were motivated to return their questionnaires by a genuine concern not to let me down. Had the Decision-Maker Survey been organised to secure anonymity, then, it seems probable that many respondents (most of whom were very busy people) may have felt less need to return their questionnaires.

## **DECISION-MAKER ATTITUDINAL SURVEY**

### **Conduct**

The Decision-Maker Survey invited a sample of 160 'decision-makers' to answer a battery of 24 questions about the demands on their council, about its policies and about its behaviour especially, but not entirely, in relation to environmental issues and Agenda 21. It was based on a self completion postal questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is given at Appendix Two.

Sciemiatycki (1979) noted that postal questionnaires secure the lowest response rate compared with telephone or face to face interviews. He found, however, that there was no evidence to suggest that face to face interviews secure a higher quality response than the other two and, indeed, that postal questionnaires tend to elicit more accurate information than the telephone. The postal questionnaire gives respondents time to reflect on the questions and to consult other people. Face to face interviews do, however, provide the opportunity for many supplementary questions to be put and for body language to be read into the responses. In this case, therefore, over a quarter of the questionnaires were completed either by the respondent or the researcher during face to face interviews. This included the key respondents such as the Leaders and Chief Executives of all of the City Councils. The same welfarism / 'environmentism' questionnaire put to 400 citizens in 1995 was also put to the sample of decision-makers.

### **Sample Design**

A sample of 160 'decision-makers' was selected for the DM Survey. A 54% response rate and a 50% questionnaire completion rate were achieved. The names of potential respondents were selected with the guidance of the four key officer 'insiders' referred to in the main text in respect of Schein's method for uncovering levels of organisational culture. They were each asked to nominate those decision-makers in their city (no matter which 'sector' of society) who they believed were the most knowledgeable and/or committed to the EC initiative and/or were in key decision-making positions in the city council's organisation in relation to the initiative and related matters.

The sample quota is, therefore, biased by intention insofar as its members have almost all had something to do with their city's Environment City initiative. The rationale for this is

explained below. This, inevitably, resulted in different numbers of people being nominated by the 'insiders' in each city i.e. Leicester 43, Middlesbrough 43, Leeds 45 and Peterborough 29. The numbers in each status group (see below) was also different in each city. The only standard figure was the number of councillors selected in each city i.e. 10. Fewer questionnaires were issued in the case of Peterborough because, as explained in Chapter Four, people involved with Peterborough Environment City were found to be typically more inclined than in the other cities to occupy more than one role/office.

## Responses

Analyses of the degree to which respondents have been involved with their city's EC initiative showed that 75% of respondents (now used to mean those completing questionnaires) claimed to have been involved for two or more years (with 6% not answering) and that 74% claimed that they had been 'fairly' (21%), 'quite heavily' (15%) or 'heavily' (38%) involved (with 5% not answering). The positions of respondents in the EC organisational arrangements and the interviews indicate that many of the respondents have made a commitment to EC themselves and that many are supporters of, or are sympathetic to, the 'environmentalist movement'. By selecting this well informed group, the survey again took advantage of an adaptation of the Delphi principle 'which relies on consulting a panel of 'experts' within an organisation.

Half of the councillors claimed to have been either 'heavily' (33%) or 'fairly heavily' (17%) involved in their city's EC initiative. A further 17% claimed to have been 'fairly involved' and 11% said they had been 'a bit' involved. 17% (3 councillors) said they were 'not involved' and 6% (1 councillor) did not answer. Only one other respondent (in the others - outsiders - group) claimed not to have been involved.

A detailed breakdown of returns against questionnaires sent out analysed by status and city by city is set out in the two tables below.

**TABLE 1.**

### **ENVIRONMENT CITY LOCAL AUTHORITY 'DECISION MAKER' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY: RESPONSES (Summer 1996)**

City	Responses	Questionnaires	
Leicester	25	24	
Middlesbrough	22	19	
Leeds	25	24	
Peterborough	15	13	
	-----	-----	
Totals	87	80	160 questionnaires issued.

The Delphi technique was developed by Helmer and Dalkey (Helmer, 1972) in the 1960's. It makes use of panels of experts for forecasting. It has evolved considerably over the years but retains the basic characteristics of anonymity and iterative interactive forecasting (Bozeman, 1977: 545)

ABLE 2.

ENVIRONMENT CITY LOCAL AUTHORITY 'DECISION-MAKER'  
 ATTITUDINAL SURVEY (Summer 1996)

RETURNS AGAINST QUESTIONNAIRES SENT

	Totals	Leic.	Midd.	Leeds	Pet.
<i>Decision-makers'</i>					
Councillors	18(19) /40	2 /10	4(5) /10	6 /10	6 /10
Response %	45%(48%)				
Exec's & Directors	10(12) /19	1 /2	4 /5	3(4) /7	2(3) /5
Response %	53%(63%)				
Total	----- 28(31) /59	----- 3 /12	----- 8(9) /15	----- 9(10) /17	----- 8(9) /15
Response %	47% (53%)	25%	53% (60%)	53% (59%)	53% (60%)
<i>Informants'</i>					
Other LG officers	22 /26	6 /7	7 /8	6 /8	3 /3
Response %	85%				
Others	30(34) /75	15(16) /24	4(6) /20	9 /20	2(3) /11
Response %	40%(45%)				
Total	----- 52(56) /101	----- 21(22) /31	----- 11(13) /28	----- 15 /28	----- 5(6) /14
Response %	51% (55%)	68% (71%)	39% (46%)	54%	36% (43%)
Overall total	80(87) /160	24(25) /43	19(22) /43	24(25) /45	13(14) /29
Return %	50% (54%)	56% (58%)	44% (51%)	53% (56%)	45% (48%)

Figures to left of / are numbers of questionnaires completed. Figures to right of / are numbers of questionnaires sent or offered at interviews. Bracketed figures include responses without questionnaires. Percentages rounded up.

## Questionnaire Design

A copy of the questionnaire used in this survey is given at Appendix Two.

The difficulties of questionnaire design are well documented. In particular, the need to structure, focus, phrase and pose sets of questions in a manner that is intelligible to respondents is vital (Gill and Johnson, 1991). Similarly, questions need to minimise bias and provide data which can be statistically analysed. Goode and Hatt (1952) stressed the need to undertake a pre-test study in order to test the questionnaire for any discrepancies or misunderstandings which may have inadvertently been built into it. The questionnaire was piloted with the help of the 'insiders' who completed the initial draft and let the researcher have their opinions on it. The supervisors of this thesis also commented on it. The final version reflected the experience of that piloting and those comments.

Goode and Hatt also provide advice on the extent to which a postal questionnaire represents a valid research method pointing out, especially, that the type of respondent reached is important. They indicated, however, that a questionnaire is extremely valid for select groups of respondents, especially if they are well educated, with a strong interest in the subject. It was, thus, felt that from this point of view, the use of a postal questionnaire with this group of decision-makers, all of whom were identified as having a direct interest in their city's Environment City initiative, was well justified.

On the other hand, the questions which needed to be asked were very sensitive ones and this had two particular dangers. First, the response rate might be very low because many people would not want to be 'disloyal' to their political group (in the case of councillors) or to their employers (in the case of officers). Second for the same reason, even if they replied, the answers might be unjustifiably generous. Whilst it would have been possible to make the questions less searching, this would most likely not have produced the information needed for this research.

In order to ensure the findings were as reliable as possible, the following strategy was developed:

- a. The letters which were sent with the 180 questionnaires were each a considerable adaptation of a standard form to make them as much of a personal appeal as possible. As the researcher knew many of the potential respondents this appeal was thought likely to carry some weight. This was intended to help overcome a problem causing non return identified by Sudman (1985) i.e. that the purpose of the survey is not clear and its value is viewed as low.
- b. The letters guaranteed confidentiality and, again being known to many of the respondents, it was hoped that my word on this would be accepted and remove any fear of the information being held against them. Sudman also identified this as a reason for non return.
- c. The fact that I had also been involved with the cities through consultancy

contracts for the Wildlife Trusts and that the Trusts was now collaborating with this work was emphasised and gave added credibility to the research. This may to some extent, however, have been a 'double edged sword' because some respondents may have been even more tempted to paint a rosier than true picture of commitment for fear of losing their designation.

- d. Some of the key people who were, probably, the most likely to want to give a good (even if false) impression and whose responses were particularly needed because of their position were not sent the questionnaire but were asked to allow me to interview them. This included the five Leaders of the Councils (Middlesbrough has two) and the four Chief Executives. The 'insiders' also completed them with me as part of the process of iterative interviews.
- e. Feedback from the 'insiders' on how the requests for the questionnaires to be completed were received within each of the organisations was gained and this informed the interpretation of the responses, including some 'reading between the lines'.
- f. Chasing of the questionnaires was not done as vigorously as it might have been in the case of a survey of many other groups. It was felt that information offered voluntarily was much more likely to be truthful than that which is given 'just to get the form off my desk and to stop that researcher from pestering me' or similar.
- g. In accordance with the advice of Goode and Hatt, to help achieve a good response rate, simple clear instructions were issued. A clear well presented layout was used on good quality (recycled) paper and pre-paid self addressed envelopes to facilitate return were enclosed.

DMQ's 2, 3, 4, 5, 17 and 18 asked directly about levels of commitment whereas others (e.g. DMQ's 8, 9 & 16) served to check these responses by probing less obviously. Similarly, other questions checked further still by seeking evidence of claimed commitment or lack of it (e.g. DMQ's 10, 11, 15 & 23).

A five grade scale, using terms appropriate to each question, was used throughout to help quantify the degree of commitment e.g. 'substantially', 'fairly substantially', 'moderately', 'a bit', 'not at all'. Commitment to Agenda 21 was taken as being very closely related to commitment to being an Environment City and to the concept of sustainable development.

The nature of the questions was such that 'degree of commitment' was pressed from many different angles. It was intended that the analysis would then reach its conclusions not from the responses to any one or even several questions but on the responses to them all, taken together. The order of the questions was such that very similar questions were not asked immediately after each other but were dispersed throughout the questionnaire.

Six partially open-ended questions were asked i.e. DMQ's 1, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 15. The final

question, DMQ26, was completely open-ended, giving respondents an opportunity to give any further views they wished on the EC initiative, their city council, A21, LA21 and related topics. This last question met Sudman's suggestion that room is left for expanded comments. Whilst Simon (1978) warned against the use of these because they require time and patience to complete, Conner's (1985) assertion that those with a keen interest in the topic, such as my sample group, give more detailed responses encouraged me to include, at least, this small element of open-endedness. In the event, the response was very encouraging indeed, with all of the respondents attempting at least some of the partially open-ended questions and 59 of the 80 respondents offering comments in response to the wholly open ended final question. Some of these also included additional sheets of comments and other relevant reports and studies, providing a rich source of data.

## Analysis

The analysis was designed to draw out the degree of commitment by testing the emerging trends against question after question and against the interview findings.

In the case of the closed questions and the five grade scale it was assumed that, if the leadership of the city council was wholly 'committed' to the 'major shift' in behaviour (which this thesis argues Agenda 21 expects) then one or other of the two most positive response choices would be given e.g. 'substantially' or 'fairly substantially'. Similarly, in the case of the open questions, (and at its most simplistic) the wholly committed response would be for environmental issues / policies to be seen to be at the top of the council's agenda, or at least on an equal footing with economic and social concerns.

Analysis of the survey responses was done using the Pinpoint<sup>2</sup> software statistics analysis package (which operates through Windows<sup>3</sup>). This was a very time intensive but rewarding task involving hundreds of comparisons which were analysed, especially in accordance with status groups and city by city.

Input was achieved with the aid of an on screen input sheet which was designed as part of the Pinpoint file. In the case of the open ended questions the codes were determined by the answers respondents gave rather than being predetermined. In other cases, however, where comparisons with the responses to the CZ Surveys were wanted, the categories which had been developed through manual analysis for the 1994 CZ Survey (and perpetuated in respect of the 1995 CZ Survey) were used.

The major advantages of carrying out this analysis personally rather than using specialist assistance (e.g. the University's Statistics Unit) were:

- a. In coding the responses to the open ended questions, I gained some clear indications of trends and complete control over their exploration.

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<sup>2</sup> 1993-94 Peter Cole and Logotron Ltd. Cambridge.

<sup>3</sup> Microsoft Corporation.

- b. Greater confidence in the integrity of the output and a knowledge of the limitations of the input technique / codings used.
- c. Exploring possible trends and relationships as the analysis progressed, I did not have to try to guess what these might be beforehand for the guidance of a colleague researcher.

To help check the integrity of this analysis Dr Jim Chandler, the Director of Studies for this thesis, selected questionnaires at random and I was able to show them on the PC screen properly entered.

## **CITIZENS' ATTITUDINAL SURVEYS**

### **Sample Design**

Quota sampling was used. Interviewers were instructed to carry out street interviews in the centres of each city with citizens (residents of the cities) who conformed to specified gender, age social class and ethnic group criteria. These criteria were selected to match as closely as possible those of the whole population of the city, using 1991 Census population profiles. Tables and bar charts A to H, set out at the end of this appendix show the closeness of the 'match' which was achieved.

### **Questionnaire Design**

A copy of the questionnaire is given at Appendix Three.

The questionnaire design recognised that, with interviewer completed schedules there are good arguments for both open ended and closed (usually multiple choice) questions. If relying on a large team of interviewers and non expert respondents, the latter are usually found to be more reliable because a number of different interpretations of responses to open ended questions is hard to avoid. In such a situation the reliable coding of responses for analysis can become extremely difficult. The questionnaire also recognised, however, that even non expert respondents are often frustrated by closed questions which tend to force them into giving answers which are not (usually only 'quite') what they feel. It is well accepted with interviews, generally, that the open ended question is much more likely to reveal the respondent's true feelings than Yes/No or other limited choice responses. Of course, data input is much simpler if multiple choice responses are sought and account was also taken of this.

The 1995 survey repeated the 1994 questions exactly but in this case there were only two interviewers as opposed to six requiring less supervision to ensure consistency. The outcome was responses which were expressed similarly to those of the 1994 survey.

Care was taken with the order of questions. Question 6 about 'problems facing your city' was put before any mention was made by the interviewer that the survey was concerned especially with environmental issues. Similarly, more personal questions such as about the respondent's occupation and about his/her behaviour in relation to environmental care were

arranged at the end of the questionnaire to be put when a rapport and increased confidence in the integrity of the interviewer and the survey had been developed.

### *Registrar General's Social Class Classification*

The Registrar General's Social Class classification was used. This is based on the interviewee's current or last occupation (or parental etc. occupation if never worked). The full six Social Classes were used (as opposed to the 'collapsed version' which produces only four groups).

- I Professional
- II Managerial and technical
- III a) Skilled (non manual)  
b) Skilled (manual)
- IV Partly skilled
- V Unskilled

This classification is used by the 11th British Social Attitudes Survey whose findings (Jowell *et al.* 1994) I compare with some of my own.

### **Conduct of Surveys and the Strengths and Weaknesses of Quota Sampling**

The sample obtained by quota technique is not statistically random and there is, thus, no justification for mathematically calculating statistical significance. It is, therefore, not possible to determine the precision of the work on a statistically valid basis. Against this weakness, however, (and unlike many quota samples which are taken (Illersic, 1970), all six of the RG's Social Classes were used. Moreover, ethnic grouping was allowed for along with the standard criteria of gender, age and social class.

There is a risk that interviewers will be unreliable. This potential unreliability can vary from leading interviewees (which can also happen with random sampling) to completing questionnaires on the basis of imagined interviews. These temptations, and especially the latter, were guarded against strongly with measures including the following:

- a. The interviewers were carefully chosen. For the 1994 survey only the two organisers (a consultancy colleague and I) our adult children and close friends (all in higher education) carried out the interviews. One or other of the organisers was present at all times while our colleagues were working.
- b. In 1995, all of the interviews were carried out, for payment, by a mature Environmental Management MSc student and her niece who was also in higher education. Our interviewer was very committed to environmentalism and to the purpose of this survey, was previously well known to my consultancy colleague and had very good references. Nevertheless, as an added safeguard, the findings of the first survey were not made available to our interviewer and examination of the comparison of completed interviews for each city between the two years showed very clearly that the interviews

had been carried out properly. As a further safeguard, spot checks were made in the cities on the days the interviewers were at work.

- c. The interviewers were thoroughly briefed with a strong emphasis on the need to avoid prompting. An instruction sheet for interviewers was used to reinforce this.
- d. According to Illersic (1970: 264), the more serious defects and mistakes in any survey tend to be made at the interviewing stage and in the processing of the schedules. Sometimes there are also defects in the schedule itself. He argues that the sample itself is probably a smaller source of error than these factors. Others (e.g. Moser, 1953) also argue that, in practical hands, this method gives fairly accurate results.

In this case, having designed the questionnaire and the sample, carried out many of the interviews on the streets and supervised many others, interpreted, coded and recoded all of the answers and calculated all of the correlations, I have had much stronger control of the whole process than is usually the case with such surveys. On that basis, I am satisfied that interviewing and processing errors have been kept to an absolute minimum. Having carried out about 25 of the interviews in each city, I was aware of the way in which people interpreted the questions and also able to relate this to their whole responses (rather than relying just on that which is recorded on the questionnaire). I was also, thus, better able to relate such responses to the other elements of this research and, in particular, to the Decision-Maker Attitudinal Survey interviews.

- e. A record was kept of refusals (although these were few) but, as this survey is not claimed to be a truly random sample such refusals are of no statistical consequence.
- f. Making two surveys in each of the four cities at a 17 month interval served as an important check on validity. As referred to above, the fact that the interviewer(s) involved on the second occasion were different and had no knowledge of the findings of the first was a powerful test of significance. Had the results of the second survey differed wildly from those of the first then there would have been very good reason to doubt the validity of the findings. This was especially so in the case of questions relating to the individual cities. In the event, the responses given in each survey were generally consistent supporting the view that the responses obtained were truly representative of the population of the cities at large.

To achieve 100 interviews in each city (first in 1994 and then again in 1995) of respondents who met the specified criteria it was necessary to interview more than 100 people. Whilst gender and ethnic group can usually be judged before approaching a potential interviewee, age and, to a much greater extent, social class is often revealed only as the interview progresses. Each form was numbered so that the highest numbered interview sheets which

were surplus after each quota had been achieved could be discarded.

## **Data Analysis**

Analysis of the 1994 survey responses was done manually in 1994 for the purposes of the consultancy report. Analysis of the 1995 survey responses was done in 1995/96 using the Pinpoint software statistics analysis package. The responses to the 1994 survey were reanalysed in 1995/96 using Pinpoint so that comparisons could be made between the findings of the two surveys using the statistics analysis package. Some of this information was used for the January 1996 consultancy report but a much more detailed analysis was made throughout 1996 for the benefit of this thesis.

Input was achieved with the aid of an input sheet which was developed during the analysis as part of the Pinpoint file. As open ended questions predominated, almost all of the codes were determined by the answers respondents gave to the questions rather than being predetermined. All of the responses were first copied onto the on screen input sheet. In some cases, they were then read several times and categories for coding were developed. In other cases, however, as categories had been developed through manual analysis for the 1994 Survey, these categories were perpetuated in respect of the 1995 Survey. This facilitated comparison. Coding data from 16 questions (10 of which were open-ended) from 800 completed questionnaires into categories (for instance, by gender, age, social class, ethnic origin, city by city, and year by year) was a huge and tedious task, albeit one which was rewarded when the comparisons and relationships began to emerge in the analysis.

The advantages gained by the researcher carrying out the whole of the computer input processes and all of analysis were as described above in respect of the analysis of the DM Survey questionnaire responses. Also similarly, the Director of Studies for this work, Dr Jim Chandler, selected sample questionnaires from the stack of 800 and in all cases the researcher was able to satisfy him that the details from those sheets had been sensibly interpreted and entered.

## **WELFARISM / 'ENVIRONMENTISM' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY**

The methods used for putting the questions and data analysis were as described for the CZ Survey.

To facilitate the examination of the relationships the responses to each of the questions are organised into three basic positions in respect of both 'welfarism' and 'environmentism'. These are, for example:

Willingness to accept standard of living cuts

Q6 very willing + fairly willing	=	'environment positive'
neither willing nor unwilling	=	'environment neutral'
unwilling + very unwilling	=	'environment negative'

Agreement/disagreement with welfarist statements.

Q1 agree strongly + agree	=	'welfare negative'
Q1 neither agree nor disagree	=	'welfare neutral'
Q1 disagree + disagree strongly	=	'welfare positive'

A similar approach was taken in respect of Q2,3,4 and 5.

**SAMPLE PROFILE 1**

Figures in brackets are those given in the Registrar General's 1991 Census of Population Profiles in respect of each city

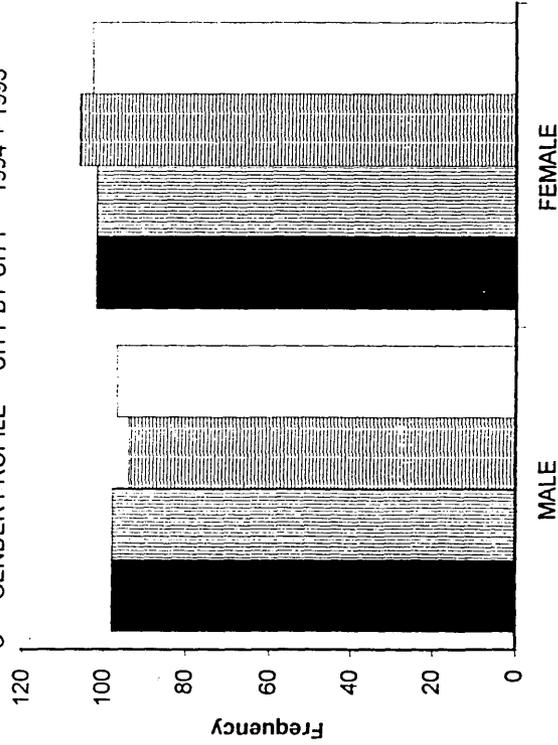
**A GENDER PROFILE CITY BY CITY 1994 + 1995**

CITY counts %/rows	GENDER PROFILE		Total
	MALE	FEMALE	
LEEDS	98 (49) 49%	102 (51) 51%	200
LEICESTER	98 (49) 49%	102 (51) 51%	200
MIDDLESBROUGH	94 (48) 47%	106 (52) 53%	200
PETERBOROUGH	97 (49) 48%	103 (51) 52%	200
Total	387 (49) 48%	413 (51) 52%	800

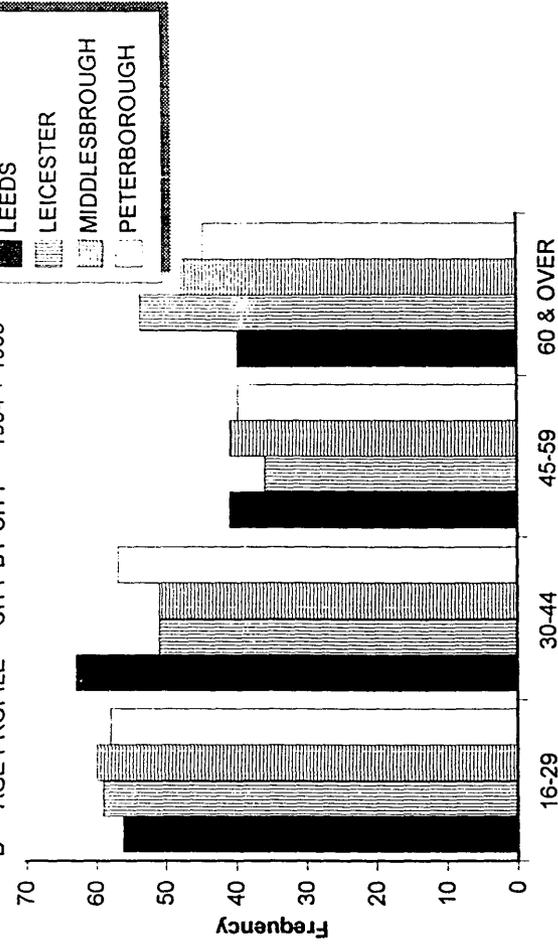
**B AGE PROFILE CITY BY CITY 1994 + 1995**

CITY counts %/rows	AGE PROFILE				Total
	16-29	30-44	45-59	60 & OVER	
LEEDS	56 (28) 28%	63 (32) 32%	41 (20) 20%	40 (20) 20%	200
LEICESTER	59 (30) 30%	51 (26) 26%	36 (18) 18%	54 (26) 27%	200
MIDDLESBROUGH	60 (30) 30%	51 (26) 26%	41 (20) 20%	48 (24) 24%	200
PETERBOROUGH	58 (29) 29%	57 (28) 28%	40 (20) 20%	45 (23) 22%	200
Total	233 (29) 29%	222 (28) 28%	158 (20) 20%	187 (23) 23%	800

**C GENDER PROFILE CITY BY CITY 1994 + 1995**



**D AGE PROFILE CITY BY CITY 1994 + 1995**

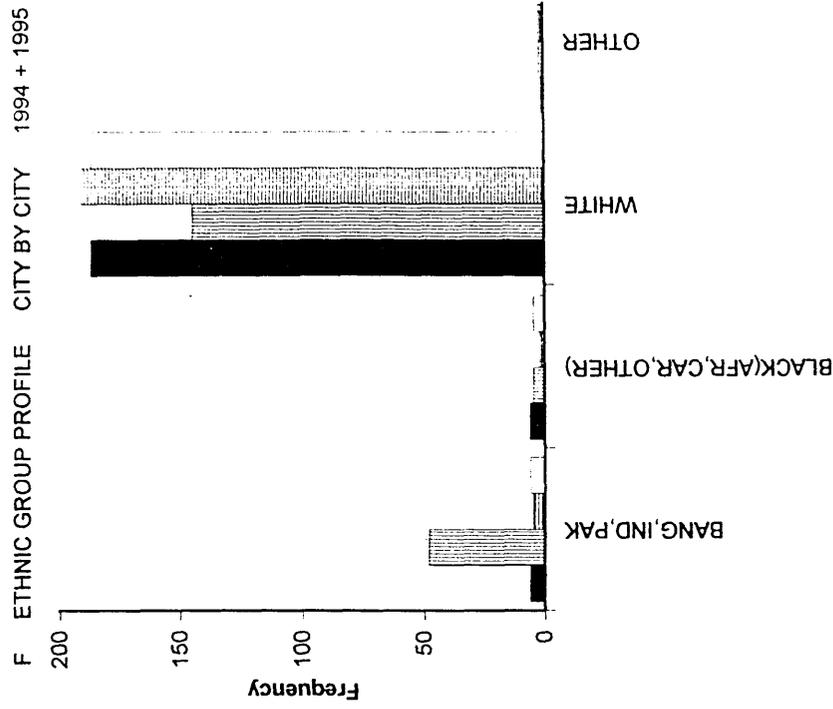


SAMPLE PROFILE 2

Figures in brackets are those given in the Registrar General's 1991 Census of Population Profiles in respect of each city

E ETHNIC GROUP PROFILE CITY BY CITY 1994 + 1995

CITY counts %rows	ETHNIC GROUP PROFILE				Total
	BANG, IND, PAK	BLACK(AFR, CAR, OTHER)	WHITE	OTHER	
LEEDS	6 (3) 3%	6 (2) 3%	187 (94) 94%	1 (1) 0%	200
LEICESTER	48 (24) 24%	5 (2) 2%	145 (72) 72%	2 (2) 1%	200
MIDDLESBROUGH	5 (3) 2%	2 (0.5) 1%	191 (96) 96%	2 (0.5) 1%	200
PETERBOROUGH	6 (5) 3%	5 (1) 2%	187 (93) 94%	2 (1) 1%	200
Total	65 (8.75) 8%	18 (1.4) 2%	710 (89) 89%	7 (1) 1%	800



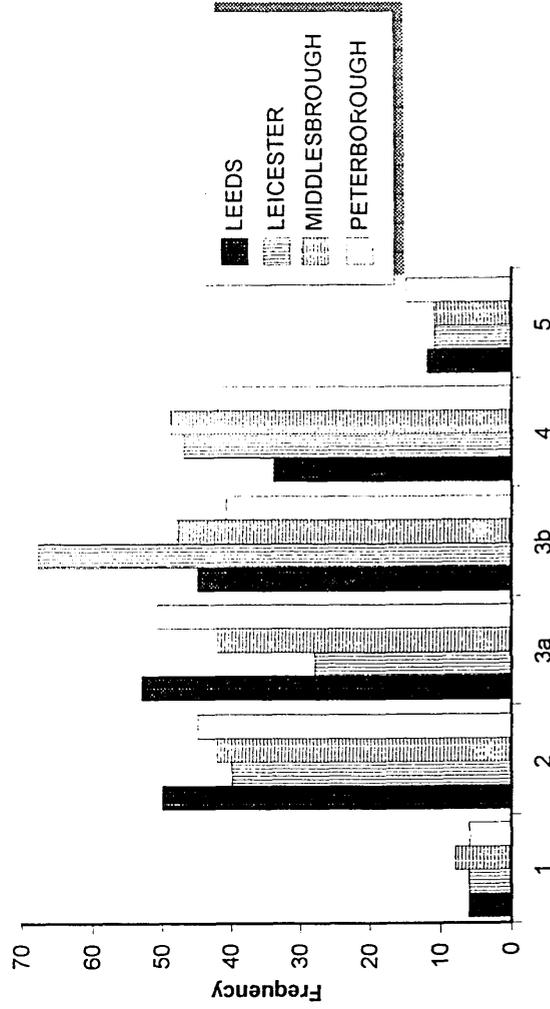
SAMPLE PROFILE 3

Figures in brackets are those given in the Registrar General's 1991 Census of Population Profiles in respect of each city

G SOCIAL CLASS PROFILE CITY BY CITY 1994 + 1995

CITY counts %rows	SOCIAL CLASS					Total	
	1	2	3a	3b	4		5
LEEDS	6 (4) 3%	50 (25) 25%	53 (24) 26%	45 (22) 22%	34 (18) 17%	12 (6) 6%	200
LEICESTER	6 (4) 3%	40 (21) 20%	28 (12) 14%	68 (35) 34%	47 (22) 24%	11 (5) 6%	200
MIDDLESBROUGH	8 (4) 4%	42 (21) 21%	42 (18) 21%	48 (25) 24%	49 (24) 24%	11 (6) 6%	200
PETERBOROUGH	6 (3) 3%	45 (25) 22%	51 (25) 26%	41 (20) 20%	42 (20) 21%	15 (6) 8%	200
Total	26 (4) 3%	177 (23) 22%	174 (20) 22%	202 (25) 25%	172 (21) 22%	49 (6) 6%	800

H SOCIAL CLASS PROFILE CITY BY CITY 1994 + 1995



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**APPENDIX TWO**

**DECISION-MAKERS' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

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# CITY 'DECISION MAKER' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY

CITY

RESPONDENT'S NAME

DATE

RESPONDENT'S ROLE

1 What do you think the LEADERSHIP of your city considers are the five most important overall policy issues facing the city? Please indicate them in declining order.

1
2
3
4
5

2 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.

MAJOR CHANGE  FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE  MODERATE CHANGE  LITTLE CHANGE  
 NO CHANGE  DON'T KNOW

3 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'.

MAJOR CHANGE  FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE  MODERATE CHANGE  LITTLE CHANGE  
 NO CHANGE  DON'T KNOW

4 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.

MAJOR CHANGE  FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE  MODERATE CHANGE  LITTLE CHANGE  
 NO CHANGE  DON'T KNOW

5 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'.

MAJOR CHANGE  FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE  MODERATE CHANGE  LITTLE CHANGE  
 NO CHANGE  DON'T KNOW

6 Your city is an Environment City. Please say what degree of difference you feel this has made to your City Council's attitude to the relationship between people and the rest of Nature.

MAJOR DIFFERENCE  FAIRLY MAJOR DIFFERENCE  MODERATE DIFFERENCE  LITTLE DIFFERENCE  NO DIFFERENCE  
 DON'T KNOW

7 Please try to assess the relative dominance in relation to each other of the five partners which are involved in your Environment City partnership working arrangements. Please do this by placing a figure '1' in the box next to the sector which you consider is the most dominant overall, a figure '2' against the sector which you consider to be the next most dominant and so on. If you feel two or more sectors are equally dominant (even all of them) then please put the same place number against them.

- VOLUNTARY SECTOR     BUSINESS SECTOR     CITY COUNCIL     ACADEMIA     CITIZENS  
 DON'T KNOW

8 What do you think are the most significant problems (not necessarily environmental problems) facing your city? If you can, please list three in descending order of significance.

1
2
3

9 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing your city? If you can, please list three in descending order of significance.

1
2
3

10 In what ways do you think your city shows that it cares especially about environmental issues? If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance to your city.

1
2
3

11 In what ways do you think your city shows that it does not care especially about the environment? If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance to your city.

1
2
3

Please say how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

The welfare state encourages people to stop helping each other.  AGREE STRONGLY  AGREE  NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE  DISAGREE  DISAGREE STRONGLY

The Government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes.  AGREE STRONGLY  AGREE  NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE  DISAGREE  DISAGREE STRONGLY

Many people who get social security don't deserve any help.  AGREE STRONGLY  AGREE  NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE  DISAGREE  DISAGREE STRONGLY

People worry too much about human progress harming the environment.  AGREE STRONGLY  AGREE  NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE  DISAGREE  DISAGREE STRONGLY

Economic growth always harms the environment.  AGREE STRONGLY  AGREE  NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE  DISAGREE  DISAGREE STRONGLY

13

How willing would you be to accept cuts in your standard of living in order to protect the environment?  
 VERY WILLING  FAIRLY WILLING  NEITHER WILLING NOR UNWILLING  UNWILLING  VERY UNWILLING

4 Please indicate the degree to which you feel local economic interests eg. business, dominate the policy and actions of the City Council.

SUBSTANTIALLY  FAIRLY SUBSTANTIALLY  MODERATELY  A LITTLE  NOT AT ALL  DON'T KNOW

which, in your view, it would most likely not have achieved had it not been an Environment City.

1
2
3
4
5

16 Please say to what degree, in your view, your City Council sees 'the environment' as an overarching LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL and LOCAL STRATEGIC value rather than as just another LOCAL SERVICE RESPONSIBILITY to be ADMINISTERED LOCALLY alongside many other local services such as economic development, environmental health, housing, planning, compulsory competitive tendering etc.

- SUBSTANTIALLY    FAIRLY SUBSTANTIALLY    MODERATELY    A LITTLE    NOT AT ALL    DON'T KNOW

17 Please try to assess about what percentage of your City Council's Councillors believe that a major or a fairly major behavioural change is needed in respect of calls for change towards greater 'greenness'.

- MORE THAN 80%    60-79%    40-59%    20-39%    1-19%    0%    DON'T KNOW

18 Please try to assess about what percentage of your City Council's Chief Officers believe that a major or a fairly major behavioural change is needed in respect of calls for change towards greater 'greenness'.

- MORE THAN 80%    60-79%    40-59%    20-39%    1-19%    0%    DON'T KNOW

19 Please indicate the degree to which you feel the City Council is free to act as it would choose.

- VERY FREE    QUITE FREE    MODERATELY FREE    A LITTLE FREE    NOT AT ALL FREE    DON'T KNOW

20 Please indicate the degree to which you feel an incoming Labour Government would increase the degree of freedom which the City Council has to act.

- SUBSTANTIALLY    MODERATELY    NOT AT ALL    DON'T KNOW  
 FAIRLY SUBSTANTIALLY    A LITTLE    WOULD REDUCE IT

21 To what degree would you say you have been involved with your city's Environment City initiative?

- HEAVILY INVOLVED    QUITE HEAVILY INVOLVED    FAIRLY INVOLVED    A BIT INVOLVED    NOT INVOLVED

22 For about how long have you been involved to the degree stated in the previous question?

- MORE THAN 4 YEARS     BETWEEN 2 AND 4 YEARS     BETWEEN 6 MONTHS AND TWO YEARS  
 LESS THAN 6 MONTHS

23 Please say the degree to which your city would (in your opinion) have taken the environmental initiatives, which it has, had it not been designated as an Environment City or given any similar distinction/challenge.

- MORE INITIATIVES     A FEW LESS INITIATIVES     SUBSTANTIALLY FEWER INITIATIVES  
 JUST AS MANY INITIATIVES     MODERATELY FEWER INITIATIVES  
 NO NEW INITIATIVES

24 To what extent have you seen your city's designation as an Environment City as an ACCOLADE?

- VERY MUCH     QUITE A LOT     MODERATELY     A BIT     NOT AT ALL

25 To what extent have you seen your city's designation as an Environment City as a CHALLENGE?

- VERY MUCH     QUITE A LOT     MODERATELY     A BIT     NOT AT ALL

26 PLEASE GIVE ANY FURTHER VIEWS YOU WISH ON THE ENVIRONMENT CITY INITIATIVE, YOUR CITY COUNCIL, THE EARTH SUMMIT, AGENDA 21, LOCAL AGENDA 21 AND RELATED TOPICS.

ALL VIEWS AND RESPONSES GIVEN WILL BE TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL AND WILL NOT BE QUOTED AS RELATING TO ANY PARTICULAR RESPONDENT WITHOUT HIS/HER PRIOR CONSENT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

D.J.PELL 0114 253 4472

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**APPENDIX THREE**

**CITIZENS' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

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REVIEW OF BT ENVIRONMENT CITY PROGRAMME: ATTITUDE SURVEY No.

- 1 Do you live in L/M/P/L ? YES ( ) NO ( )  
If NO, do not proceed with interview.
- 2 Do you know your post code ? Please state ..... (or give area)
- 3 AGE: 16 - 29( ) 30 - 44( ) 45 -59( ) 60 & over ( )
- 4 EG: Bang, Ind, Pak ( )  
Black (Afr, Car, other) ( )  
White ( )  
Other ( )
- 5 GEN: M ( ) F ( )
- 6 What do you think are the most significant problems facing L/M/P/L ?

- 7 Have you heard of L/M/P/L BT Environment City ? YES ( ) NO ( )  
(If NO, skip to 11)
- 8 If YES, where did you hear about it ?
- 9 If YES, what do you think it means in practice for L/M/P/L ?

Explain to all respondents from card what is meant by BT Environment City.

- 10 If YES, has the fact that L/M/P/L is an Environment City influenced you in any way and if so how ?
- 11 What do you think are the most significant **environmental** problems facing L/M/P/L?

- 12 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/P/L shows that it cares especially about environmental issues ?
- 13 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/P/L shows that it does not especially care about environmental issues ?
- 14 What efforts, if any, have you been involved in to help tackle environmental problems in L/M/P/L ?
- 15 If any, which do you think came about as a result of L/M/P/L being a BT Environment City ?
- 16 What do you feel are the most important environmental issues which must be tackled at the world wide level ?
- 17 What is your occupation / last occupation/ partner's / father's / mother's?  
SC: 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3a ( ) 3b ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( )
- 18 With which of the following three statements do you agree most strongly ?
- A I care about the environment but it is someone else's job to keep it clean and legislation should look after the environment.
- B It is important. I do what I can about the things I use. I don't leave a mess around and I use the car as little as possible.
- C I feel very strongly about the environment and would be very willing to give up some of my time to join a committee / work / contribute to plans to help protect the planet for everyone.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP Interviewer .... Date

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**APPENDIX FOUR**

**WELFARISM / 'ENVIRONMENTISM' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

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## QUESTIONS

Please say how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:  
 (Show table to respondent and read each statement to him/her. Circle the x corresponding to his/her level of agreement/disagreement with each statement.)

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	D/K
1. The welfare state encourages people to stop helping each other.	x	x	x	x	x	x
2. The Government should spend more money on welfare benefits for the poor, even if it leads to higher taxes.	x	x	x	x	x	x
3. Many people who get social security don't really deserve any help.	x	x	x	x	x	x
4. People worry too much about human progress harming the environment.	x	x	x	x	x	x
5. Economic growth always harms the environment.	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Very willing	Fairly willing	Neither willing nor unwilling	Unwilling	Very unwilling	Can't choose
6. How willing would you be to accept cuts in your standard of living?	x	x	x	x	x	x

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**APPENDIX FIVE**

**DECISION-MAKERS' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY**

**PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

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Table 1.

Q19 Please indicate the degree to which you feel the City Council is free to act as it would choose.

FREEDOM TO ACT counts %columns %rows	STATUS				CITY							Total
	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	Total			
QUITE FREE	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	3 18% 43%	4 14% 57%	3 12% 43%	3 18% 43%	1 5% 14%	0 0% 0%	7 10%			
MODERATELY FREE	4 24% 31%	1 10% 8%	4 24% 31%	4 14% 31%	6 25% 46%	2 12% 15%	5 25% 38%	0 0% 0%	13 18%			
A LITTLE FREE	8 47% 22%	4 40% 11%	8 47% 22%	16 57% 44%	11 46% 31%	8 47% 22%	13 65% 36%	4 36% 11%	36 50%			
NOT AT ALL FREE	5 29% 31%	5 50% 31%	2 12% 12%	4 14% 25%	4 17% 25%	4 24% 25%	1 5% 6%	7 64% 44%	16 22%			
Total	17 24%	10 14%	17 24%	28 39%	24 33%	17 24%	20 28%	11 15%	72			

Table 2.

Q20 Please indicate the degree to which you feel an incoming Labour Government would increase the degree of freedom which the City Council has to act.

LABOUR GOV. counts %columns %rows	STATUS			CITY							Total
	COUNC	C/E		OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH		
		DIR	DIR								
SUBSTANTIALLY	2 12% 33%	2 20% 33%	2 11% 33%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	1 4% 17%	2 12% 33%	1 5% 17%	2 17% 33%	6 8%	
FAIRLY SUBSTANTIALLY	4 24% 57%	0 0% 0%	1 6% 14%	2 7% 29%	2 9% 29%	3 18% 43%	2 9% 29%	2 9% 29%	0 0% 0%	7 9%	
MODERATELY	5 29% 21%	3 30% 12%	6 33% 25%	10 34% 42%	7 30% 29%	5 29% 21%	9 41% 38%	3 12% 12%	24 32%		
A LITTLE	4 24% 16%	3 30% 12%	6 33% 24%	12 41% 48%	8 35% 32%	4 24% 16%	9 41% 36%	4 16% 16%	25 34%		
NOT AT ALL	2 12% 17%	2 20% 17%	3 17% 25%	5 17% 42%	5 22% 42%	3 18% 25%	1 5% 8%	3 12% 25%	12 16%		
Total	17 23%	10 14%	18 24%	29 39%	23 31%	17 23%	22 30%	12 16%	74		

Table 3.

Q20 Responses tabulated against Q19 responses.

FREEDOM TO ACT counts %columns %rows	Not answered	LABOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD INCREASE DEGREE OF FREEDOM CITY COUNCIL HAS TO ACT										Total
		Substantially	Substantially	Fairly Substantially	Moderately	A Little	Not at all	Don't know				
Not answered	3 100%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 4%
QUITE FREE	0 0%	2 33%	0	0	1 4%	2 8%	2 17%	0	0	0	0	7 9%
MODERATELY FREE	0 0%	1 17%	4 57%	0	4 17%	3 31%	3 29%	0	0	0	0	13 16%
A LITTLE FREE	0 0%	1 17%	1 14%	1 3%	14 58%	16 64%	2 17%	2 67%	0	0	0	36 45%
NOT AT ALL FREE	0 0%	2 33%	2 29%	2 12%	3 19%	4 25%	5 42%	0	0	0	0	16 20%
DON'T KNOW	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 8%	2 40%	0	0	0	0	1 33%	5 6%
Total	3 4%	6 8%	7 9%	24 30%	25 31%	12 15%	3 4%	80				

NB. As 'don't know' and 'not answered' responses are included in this table, the percentage figures against each count will not correspond with the percentage figures given elsewhere in this analysis of the findings of the responses to these two questions.

Table 4.

Q2 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.

CHANGE DEGREE STATUS counts %columns %rows	CITY			CITY			Total		
	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH		LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH
MAJOR CHANGE	10 56% 24%	5 50% 12%	9 43% 21%	18 60% 43%	15 62% 36%	5 28% 12%	12 50% 29%	10 77% 24%	42 53%
FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE	5 28% 17%	3 30% 10%	11 52% 38%	10 33% 34%	7 29% 24%	11 61% 38%	8 33% 28%	3 23% 10%	29 37%
MODERATE CHANGE	3 17% 43%	2 20% 29%	1 5% 14%	1 3% 14%	1 4% 14%	2 11% 29%	4 17% 57%	0 0% 0%	7 9%
LITTLE CHANGE	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	1 3% 100%	1 4% 100%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	1 1%
Total	18 23%	10 13%	21 27%	30 38%	24 30%	18 23%	24 30%	13 16%	79

Table 5.

Q3 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'.

CHANGE DEGREE STATUS counts %columns %rows	CITY						Total		
	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH		LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH
MAJOR CHANGE	11 65% 25%	5 50% 11%	10 50% 23%	18 60% 41%	17 71% 39%	5 29% 11%	13 57% 30%	9 69% 20%	44 57%
FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE	5 29% 20%	4 40% 16%	8 40% 32%	8 27% 32%	4 17% 16%	10 59% 40%	7 30% 28%	4 31% 16%	25 32%
MODERATE CHANGE	1 6% 17%	1 10% 17%	2 10% 33%	2 7% 33%	1 4% 17%	2 12% 33%	3 13% 50%	0 0% 0%	6 8%
LITTLE CHANGE	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	2 7% 100%	2 8% 100%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	2 3%
Total	17 22%	10 13%	20 26%	30 39%	24 31%	17 22%	23 30%	13 17%	77

Table 6.

Q4 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the expectations of the Earth Summit and Agenda 21.

CHANGE DEGREE STATUS counts %columns %rows	CITY						Total		
	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH		LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH
MAJOR CHANGE	4 24% 36%	3 30% 27%	1 6% 9%	3 11% 27%	5 21% 45%	0 0% 0%	1 5% 9%	5 50% 45%	11 15%
FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE	5 29% 21%	2 20% 8%	6 33% 25%	11 41% 46%	9 38% 38%	6 38% 25%	8 36% 33%	1 10% 4%	24 33%
MODERATE CHANGE	7 41% 22%	5 50% 16%	10 56% 31%	10 37% 31%	7 29% 22%	9 56% 28%	13 59% 41%	3 30% 9%	32 44%
LITTLE CHANGE	1 6% 20%	0 0% 0%	1 6% 20%	3 11% 60%	3 12% 60%	1 6% 20%	0 0% 0%	1 10% 20%	5 7%
Total	17 24%	10 14%	18 25%	27 38%	24 33%	16 22%	22 31%	10 14%	72

Table 7.

Q5 Please say what degree of behavioural change you feel your City Council thinks will be needed to meet the requirements of 'sustainable development'.

CHANGE DEGREE STATUS counts %columns %rows	CITY						Total		
	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH		LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH
MAJOR CHANGE	3 18% 30%	4 40% 40%	0 0% 0%	3 11% 30%	5 21% 50%	1 6% 10%	0 0% 0%	4 40% 40%	10 14%
FAIRLY MAJOR CHANGE	7 41% 26%	2 20% 7%	7 39% 26%	11 41% 41%	10 42% 37%	5 31% 19%	11 50% 41%	1 10% 4%	27 38%
MODERATE CHANGE	5 29% 17%	3 30% 10%	10 56% 34%	11 41% 38%	7 29% 24%	9 56% 31%	10 45% 34%	3 30% 10%	29 40%
LITTLE CHANGE	2 12% 33%	1 10% 17%	1 6% 17%	2 7% 33%	2 8% 33%	1 6% 17%	1 5% 17%	2 20% 33%	6 8%
Total	17 24%	10 14%	18 25%	27 38%	24 33%	16 22%	22 31%	10 14%	72

Table 8.

Q17 Please try to assess about what percentage of your City Council's Councillors believe that a major or a fairly major behavioural change is needed in respect of calls for change towards greater 'greenness'.

% MEMBERS counts %columns	CITY				STATUS				Total
	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	
MORE THAN 80%	1 5%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 12%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%
60-79%	4 18%	4 31%	4 24%	3 38%	3 19%	3 38%	5 36%	4 18%	15 25%
40-59%	7 32%	4 31%	7 41%	0 0%	5 31%	2 25%	4 29%	7 32%	18 30%
20-39%	6 27%	3 23%	2 12%	1 12%	2 12%	1 12%	3 21%	6 27%	12 20%
1-19%	4 18%	2 15%	4 24%	3 38%	5 31%	1 12%	2 14%	5 23%	13 22%
0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 12%	1 6%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	1 2%
Total	22	13	17	8	16	8	14	22	60

Table 9.

Q18 Please try to assess about what percentage of your City Council's Chief Officers believe that a major or fairly major behavioural change is needed in respect of calls towards greater 'greenness'.

% CHIEF OFFICERS counts %columns	CITY					STATUS					Total
	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	Total		
MORE THAN 80%	4 17%	3 21%	1 6%	2 25%	2 13%	3 38%	1 6%	4 17%	10 16%		
60-79%	4 17%	1 7%	5 28%	1 12%	3 20%	1 12%	3 18%	4 17%	11 17%		
40-59%	6 26%	4 29%	6 33%	1 12%	2 13%	3 38%	7 41%	5 22%	17 27%		
20-39%	7 30%	5 36%	3 17%	1 12%	3 20%	0 0%	5 29%	8 35%	16 25%		
1-19%	2 9%	1 7%	3 17%	3 38%	5 33%	1 12%	1 6%	2 9%	9 14%		
Total	23	14	18	8	15	8	17	23	63		

Table 10.

Q16 Please say to what degree, in your view, your City Council sees 'the environment' as an overarching LOCAL GOVERNMENTAL and LOCAL STRATEGIC value rather than as just another LOCAL SERVICE RESPONSIBILITY to be ADMINISTERED LOCALLY alongside many other local services such as economic development, environmental health, housing, planning, compulsory competitive tendering etc.

STRATEGIC ? counts %columns	CITY				STATUS				Total
	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	
SUBSTANTIALLY	10 42%	2 13%	1 5%	2 18%	2 12%	4 44%	4 22%	5 19%	15 22%
FAIRLY SUBSTANTIALLY	6 25%	6 40%	8 42%	2 18%	9 56%	2 22%	4 22%	7 27%	22 32%
MODERATELY	4 17%	5 33%	7 37%	3 27%	3 19%	3 33%	6 33%	7 27%	19 28%
A LITTLE	3 12%	2 13%	1 5%	3 27%	2 12%	0 0%	3 17%	4 15%	9 13%
NOT AT ALL	1 4%	0 0%	2 11%	1 9%	0 0%	0 0%	1 6%	3 12%	4 6%
Total	24	15	19	11	16	9	18	26	69

Table 11.

Q10 In what ways do you think that your City shows that it cares especially about environmental issues? If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance.

CITY CARES ENV. courts	CITY			STATUS						Total
	LEICESTER	MIDDLES BROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS		
Not answered	1	1	2	2	3	0	1	2	6	
QUALITY OF PHYSICAL ENV. (INCL. PARKS AND OPEN SPACES)	7	4	5	4	3	2	7	8	20	
CLEANLINESS OR TIDYNESS	3	1	0	3	2	1	1	3	7	
COMMITMENT TO CYCLING	4	0	0	2	2	0	1	3	6	
WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING FACILITIES	7	4	12	8	9	4	9	9	31	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT / TRANSPORT POLICY / TRAFFIC CONTROL MEASURES	4	4	10	2	4	3	4	9	20	
REDUCTION IN INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
ENVIRONM ENTAL PUBLIC AWARENESS	8	5	3	0	2	3	3	8	16	
ENERGY CONSERVATION INVESTMENT	5	1	1	1	1	0	2	5	8	
BEING AN ENVIRONMENT CITY	7	4	11	5	7	5	5	10	27	
SPECIFIC INITIATIVES / PROJECTS	1	3	0	1	1	1	2	1	5	
INTERNATIONAL LINKS	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	
AIR POLLUTION MONITORING	5	10	0	0	4	0	6	5	15	
ENVIRONMENT THEMING	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	
ALLOCATION OF SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES	8	9	9	5	6	5	12	8	31	
NEIGHBOURHO OD / COMMUNITY WORKING / CONSULTING CITIZENS	2	3	0	1	0	2	3	1	6	
PARTNERSHIP WORKING	0	4	6	0	2	2	3	3	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>* 24</b>	<b>* 19</b>	<b>* 24</b>	<b>* 13</b>	<b>* 18</b>	<b>* 10</b>	<b>* 22</b>	<b>* 30</b>	<b>* 80</b>	

\* This total relates to the number of respondents not to the number of ways city cares were mentioned.

Table 12.

Q11 In what ways do you think that your City shows that it does not care especially about the environment?  
If you can, please list three ways in descending order of significance.

CITY NOT CARES counts	CITY									Total
	LEICESTER	MIDDLES BROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS		
Not answered	4	3	5	3	3	2	5	5	15	
LITTER AND CLEANLINESS	1	5	3	3	2	4	2	4	12	
TRAFFIC	5	4	13	4	8	2	7	9	26	
BUILDINGS AND ROADS	5	1	3	0	1	1	3	4	9	
LACK OF ENV. PUBLICITY	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
INSUFFICIENT RECYCLING FACILITIES	2	5	1	2	3	1	3	3	10	
LACK OF, OR LOSS OF, OPEN SPACE	5	3	0	1	1	1	1	6	9	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT INADEQUATE	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	2	
OUT OF TOWN SUPERMARKETS / STORES	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	4	
NONE / SATISFIED	1	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	4	
WHEN HARD DECISIONS - ENVIRONMENT LOSES OUT E.G PLANNING ISSUES	10	2	9	2	4	1	7	11	23	
LACK OF COMMITMENT BY COUNCIL	6	8	9	3	2	2	10	12	26	
IGNORANCE / DENIAL BY BUSINESS SECTOR	2	1	1	1	0	2	2	1	5	
LACK OF FINANCE AVAILABLE TO COUNCIL	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
IGNORANCE / DENIAL BY ALL SECTORS	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	2	4	
FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE WITH CITIZENS	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	
IGNORANCE / DENIAL BY CITIZENS	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	
WASTING RESOURCES	1	0	4	1	2	0	0	4	6	
INADEQUATE CYCLE ROUTES	1	1	1	1	2	0	0	2	4	
Total	24	19	24	13	18	10	22	30	80	

\* This total relates to the number of respondents not to the number of ways city shows it does not care were mentioned.

Table 13.

Q14 Please indicate the degree to which you feel local economic interests e.g. business, dominate the policy and actions of the City Council.

DOMINATE counts %columns %rows	STATUS		CITY							Total
	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER		LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH		
			LGO	OTHERS						
SUBSTANTIALLY	5	1	4	4	4	1	5	4	14	
	28% 36%	10% 7%	22% 29%	15% 29%	17% 29%	6% 7%	25% 36%	4 36% 29%	19%	
FAIRLY SUBSTANTIALLY	4	0	6	10	8	4	8	0	20	
	22% 20%	0% 0%	33% 30%	38% 50%	33% 40%	24% 20%	40% 40%	0% 0%	28%	
MODERATELY	7	5	5	4	5	6	5	5	21	
	39% 33%	50% 24%	28% 24%	15% 19%	21% 24%	35% 29%	25% 24%	5 45% 24%	29%	
A LITTLE	2	1	2	6	6	4	1	0	11	
	11% 18%	10% 9%	11% 18%	23% 55%	25% 55%	24% 36%	5% 9%	0% 0%	15%	
NOT AT ALL	0	3	1	2	1	2	1	2	6	
	0% 0%	30% 50%	6% 17%	8% 33%	4% 17%	12% 33%	5% 17%	2 18% 33%	8%	
Total	18	10	18	26	24	17	20	11	72	
	25%	14%	25%	36%	33%	24%	28%	15%		

Table 14.

Q6 Your city is an Environment City. Please say what degree of difference you feel this has made to your City Council's attitude to the relationship between people and the rest of Nature.

DIFFERENCE counts %columns %rows	STATUS			CITY							Total
	COUNC	C/E		OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH		
		DIR									
MAJOR DIFFERENCE	2 11% 22%	1 10% 11%	2 10% 22%	4 14% 44%	4 17% 44%	1 6% 11%	1 4% 11%	3 23% 33%	9 12%		
FAIRLY MAJOR DIFFERENCE	6 33% 35%	2 20% 12%	4 19% 24%	5 17% 29%	9 38% 53%	3 17% 18%	3 13% 18%	2 15% 12%	17 22%		
MODERATE DIFFERENCE	5 28% 14%	7 70% 19%	12 57% 32%	13 45% 35%	9 38% 24%	10 56% 27%	14 61% 38%	4 31% 11%	37 47%		
LITTLE DIFFERENCE	4 22% 31%	0 0% 0%	3 14% 23%	6 21% 46%	1 4% 8%	4 22% 31%	5 22% 38%	3 23% 23%	13 17%		
NO DIFFERENCE	1 6% 50%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	1 3% 50%	1 4% 50%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	1 8% 50%	2 3% 3%		
Total	18 23%	10 13%	21 27%	29 37%	24 31%	18 23%	23 29%	13 17%	78		

Q15 Please would you list the five most important things which you feel your City has achieved and which, in your view, it would most likely not have achieved had it not been an Environment City.

ACHIEVED counts	CITY		STATUS							Total
	LEICESTER	MIDDLES BROUGH	LEEDS	PETERB OROUGH	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS		
Not answered	1	0	5	1	3	0	1	3	7	
HIGH PROFILE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	8	5	5	3	2	2	7	10	21	
HIGH PROFILE FOR THE CITY / INTERNATIONAL LINKS	10	10	5	2	5	4	9	9	27	
BROUGHT FUNDING TO THE CITY	6	0	0	5	3	1	3	4	11	
PUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON THE AGENDA OF LOCAL POLITICIANS	4	3	12	4	4	7	6	6	23	
CHANGED CULTURE OF COUNCIL'S ORGANISATION	5	3	8	3	4	7	5	3	19	
PRACTICAL PROJECTS	7	2	5	6	1	3	8	8	20	
ENCOURAGED INVOLVEMENT OF COMMUNITY GROUPS	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	
ENCOURAGED INVOLVEMENT OF CITIZENS	3	1	1	0	0	0	5	0	5	
ENCOURAGED INVOLVEMENT OF PRIVATE SECTOR	3	3	5	1	1	2	3	6	12	
ENCOURAGED PARTNERSHIP WORKING	8	4	8	2	3	3	8	8	22	
CAUSED COUNCIL TO DEVOTE RESOURCES TO ENV. UNIT	5	0	5	3	3	2	4	4	13	
ENCOURAGED A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	5	
ENERGY POLICIES	6	2	11	4	4	4	9	6	23	
AIR MONITORING	2	6	1	0	2	3	0	4	9	
IMPS. TO DESIGN OF BLDNGS.	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
TREE PLANTING, CARE / PROVISION OF PARKS / OPEN SPACES	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	
HELPED TO ACHIEVE EQUITY / QUAL OF LIFE / IMPROVED HEALTH	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
LINKS WITH UNIVERSITIES ENCOURAGED	2	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	
ENCOURAGED EDUCATION / AWARENESS PROGS.	1	3	7	2	1	4	5	3	13	
WASTE POLICIES	4	6	1	4	1	3	3	8	15	
HELPED WITH PURSUIT OF LA21	7	0	2	0	0	0	5	4	9	
TRANSPORT INITIATIVES	6	9	5	3	4	2	8	9	23	
WOULD HAVE DONE ANYWAY / NOTHING	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	3	5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>* 24</b>	<b>* 19</b>	<b>*24</b>	<b>*13</b>	<b>*18</b>	<b>*10</b>	<b>*22</b>	<b>*30</b>	<b>*80</b>	

\* This total relates to the number of respondents not to the number of achievements.

Table 16.

Q23 Please say the degree to which your City would (in your opinion) have taken the environmental initiatives, which it has, had it not been designated as an Environment City or given any similar distinction / challenge.

EFFECT OF BEING counts AN EC %columns %rows	STATUS			CITY						Total
	COUNC	C/E DIR	OTHER LGO	OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH		
MORE INITIATIVES	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	8%	1%
	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%		
JUST AS MANY INITIATIVES	3	2	2	2	2	2	4	1	1	9
	17%	20%	11%	8%	10%	12%	19%	8%	8%	13%
	33%	22%	22%	22%	22%	22%	44%	11%	11%	
A FEW LESS INITIATIVES	3	1	5	6	3	4	5	3	3	15
	17%	10%	28%	24%	15%	24%	24%	23%	23%	21%
	20%	7%	33%	40%	20%	27%	33%	20%	20%	
MODERATELY FEWER INITIATIVES	4	5	4	10	8	6	7	2	2	23
	22%	50%	22%	40%	40%	35%	33%	15%	15%	32%
	17%	22%	17%	43%	35%	26%	30%	9%	9%	
SUBSTANTIALLY FEWER INITIATIVES	7	2	7	7	7	5	5	6	6	23
	39%	20%	39%	28%	35%	29%	24%	46%	46%	32%
	30%	9%	30%	30%	30%	22%	22%	26%	26%	
Total	18	10	18	25	20	17	21	13	13	71
	25%	14%	25%	35%	28%	24%	30%	18%	18%	

Table 17.

Q24 To what extent have you seen your City's designation as an Environment City as an accolade?

ACCOLADE counts %columns %rows	STATUS					CITY							Total
	COUNC	C/E		OTHER		OTHERS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	Total		
		DIR	LGO	LGO	OTHER								
VERY MUCH	7 39% 30%	4 40% 17%	5 25% 22%	5 25% 26%	7 24% 30%	6 25% 26%	7 41% 30%	4 17% 17%	6 46% 26%	23 30%			
QUITE A LOT	4 22% 21%	4 40% 21%	5 25% 26%	6 21% 32%	6 24% 30%	2 8% 11%	5 29% 26%	11 48% 58%	1 8% 5%	19 25%			
MODERATELY	3 17% 19%	1 10% 6%	3 15% 19%	9 31% 56%	9 31% 56%	9 38% 56%	3 18% 19%	4 17% 25%	0 0% 0%	16 21%			
A BIT	3 17% 20%	0 0% 0%	6 30% 40%	6 21% 40%	6 21% 40%	6 25% 40%	2 12% 13%	3 13% 20%	4 31% 27%	15 19%			
NOT AT ALL	1 6% 25%	1 10% 25%	1 5% 25%	1 3% 25%	1 3% 25%	1 4% 25%	0 0% 0%	1 4% 25%	2 15% 50%	4 5%			
Total	18 23%	10 13%	20 26%	29 38%	29 38%	24 31%	17 22%	23 30%	13 17%	77			

Table 18.

Q25 To what extent have you seen your City's designation as an Environment City as a challenge?

CHALLENGE counts %columns %rows	STATUS			CITY										Total
	COUNC	C/E		OTHER		LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH	Total				
		DIR	LGO	LGO	OTHERS									
VERY MUCH	9 53% 22%	7 70% 17%	11 55% 27%	14 50% 34%	17 74% 41%	6 33% 15%	9 43% 22%	9 69% 22%	41 55%					
QUITE A LOT	7 41% 37%	2 20% 11%	5 25% 26%	5 18% 26%	3 13% 16%	8 44% 42%	6 29% 32%	2 15% 11%	19 25%					
MODERATELY	0 0% 0%	1 10% 17%	1 5% 17%	4 14% 67%	2 9% 33%	2 11% 33%	1 5% 17%	1 8% 17%	6 8%					
A BIT	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	3 15% 38%	5 18% 62%	1 4% 12%	2 11% 25%	5 24% 62%	0 0% 0%	8 11%					
NOT AT ALL	1 6% 100%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	0 0% 0%	1 8% 100%	1 1%					
Total	17 23%	10 13%	20 27%	28 37%	23 31%	18 24%	21 28%	13 17%	75					

Table 19.

Q8 What do you think are the most significant problems (not necessarily environmental problems) facing your city? If you can, please list three in descending order of significance.

SIG. PROBLEMS counts	CITY					STATUS					Total
	CITY					LEADERSHIP			INFORMANTS		
	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	LEEDS	PETERBOROUGH		COUNC	DIR	C/E	OTHER	OTHERS	
CRIME	6	6	9	5		4	4	9		9	26
UNEMPLOYMENT	31	34	29	9		20	12	30		41	103
TRAFFIC	14	0	15	3		3	2	11		16	32
STREET CLEANLINESS	0	0	0	2		2	0	0		0	2
HOUSING/HOMELESS	1	2	3	2		4	2	1		1	8
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	0	0	3	0		1	0	0		2	3
PARKING	1	0	1	0		0	0	0		2	2
POLLUTION ISSUES	9	4	7	3		5	3	6		9	23
LACK OF ENTERTAINMT	1	0	1	2		2	0	0		2	4
PLANNING PROBLEMS	0	0	1	3		1	1	2		0	4
CITY CENTRE/SHOPS	1	1	0	0		0	1	1		0	2
CONDITION BUILD/LAND	1	1	0	0		0	0	0		2	2
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE	0	0	0	0		0	0	0		0	0
THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	5	2	0	2		2	0	2		5	9
THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE PROVISION	3	2	4	1		5	1	1		3	10
PUBLIC APATHY	0	3	3	2		3	3	2		0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>34</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>68</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>246</b>

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**APPENDIX SIX**

**CITIZENS' ATTITUDINAL SURVEY**

**PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS**

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Table 1. Q12 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows that it cares especially about environmental issues?  
CZ Surveys 1994 + 1995

CITY CARES ENV. counts	GENDER		CITY					Total
	MALE	FEMALE	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH		
PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	49	52	34	27	24	16	101	
CLEANLINESS OR TIDYNESS	54	58	26	29	21	36	112	
PRECINCTS	36	43	38	25	5	11	79	
RECYCLING FACILITIES	17	40	28	15	7	7	57	
CENTRE ATTRACTIV E/PLEASANT	17	23	20	9	4	7	40	
CYCLE ROUTES	5	10	0	5	0	10	15	
REDUCTION IN INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION	10	3	0	2	8	3	13	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	13	16	13	6	7	3	29	
ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICITY	3	6	3	4	1	1	9	
GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH CARE	45	44	21	27	12	29	89	
OTHER	25	24	12	14	11	12	49	
NONE	115	114	43	61	76	49	229	
D/K	68	58	11	23	44	48	126	
Total	387	*413	*200	*200	*200	*200	800	

\* This total relates to the number of respondents not to the number of ways city cares were mentioned.

Table 2.

Q13 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows that it does not especially care about environmental issues?

CZ Surveys 1994 + 1995

CITY NOT CARES counts	GENDER		CITY					Total
	MALE	FEMALE	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH		
LITTER AND CLEANLINESS	35	45	25	24	22	9	80	
TRAFFIC	23	36	18	27	7	7	59	
POLLUTION	18	9	4	5	12	6	27	
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE	3	5	7	0	1	0	8	
PEOPLE ABUSE ENVIRONMENT	7	3	3	4	1	2	10	
BUILDING AND ROADS	11	10	9	6	3	3	21	
LACK OF ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICITY	5	9	5	4	3	2	14	
INSUFFICIENT RECYCLING FACILITIES	8	3	4	2	3	2	11	
LACK OF, OR LOSS OF, GREEN OR OPEN SPACE	9	8	8	1	1	7	17	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	15	14	14	8	2	5	29	
OUT OF TOWN SUPERMARKETS/STORES	3	6	7	1	1	0	9	
HOUSING /H'LESS	3	6	5	2	2	0	9	
NONE/SATISFIED	152	156	89	81	66	72	308	
OTHER	42	40	23	19	23	17	82	
D/K	83	97	11	29	61	79	180	
Total	*387	*413	*200	*200	*200	*200	*800	

\* This total relates to the number of respondents not to the number of ways city shows it does not care were mentioned.

Table 3.

Q12 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows that it cares especially about environmental issues?

CZ Survey1994

CITY CARES ENV. counts	CITY				Total
	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH	
PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	32	18	19	10	79
CLEANLINESS OR TIDYNESS	13	22	14	22	71
PRECINCTS	28	7	5	8	48
RECYCLING FACILITIES	21	8	5	4	38
CENTRE ATTRACTIV E/PLEASANT	11	7	3	6	27
CYCLE ROUTES	0	3	0	7	10
REDUCTION IN INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION	0	0	4	0	4
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	3	2	0	0	5
ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICITY	1	3	1	1	6
GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH CARE	3	12	5	13	33
OTHER	5	2	2	8	17
NONE	10	29	31	24	94
D/K	7	9	25	24	65
Total	100	100	100	100	400

Table 4.

Q12 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows that it cares especially about environmental issues?

CZ Survey 1995

CITY CARES ENV. counts	CITY				Total
	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH	
PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	2	9	5	6	22
CLEANLINESS OR TIDYNESS	13	7	7	14	41
PRECINCTS	10	18	0	3	31
RECYCLING FACILITIES	7	7	2	3	19
CENTRE ATTRACTIVE/ PLEASANT	9	2	1	1	13
CYCLE ROUTES	0	2	0	3	5
REDUCTION IN INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION	0	2	4	3	9
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	10	4	7	3	24
ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICITY	2	1	0	0	3
GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH CARE	18	15	7	16	56
OTHER	7	12	9	4	32
NONE	33	32	45	25	135
D/K	4	14	19	24	61
Total	100	100	100	100	400

Table 5.

Q13 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows that it does not especially care about environmental issues?

CZ Survey 1994

CITY NOT CARES counts	CITY				Total
	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH	
LITTER AND CLEANLINESS	18	9	13	4	44
TRAFFIC	13	21	6	3	43
POLLUTION	3	2	8	4	17
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE	6	0	0	0	6
PEOPLE ABUSE ENVIRONMENT	3	0	1	2	6
BUILDING AND ROADS	8	3	1	2	14
LACK OF ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICITY	2	2	3	0	7
INSUFFICIENT RECYCLING FACILITIES	4	0	1	2	7
LACK OF, OR LOSS OF, GREEN OR OPEN SPACE	5	1	1	4	11
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	8	1	0	0	9
OUT OF TOWN SUPERMARKETS/STORES	7	1	0	0	8
HOUSING /H'LESS	3	1	2	0	6
NONE/SATISFIED	30	46	35	46	157
OTHER	10	6	10	9	35
D/K	6	10	24	28	68
Total	100	100	100	100	400

Table 6.

Q13 In what ways, if any, do you think L/M/L/P shows that it does not especially care about environmental issues?

CZ Survey 1995

CITY NOT CARES counts	GENDER		CITY					Total
	MALE	FEMALE	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH		
LITTER AND CLEANLINESS	19	17	7	15	9	5	36	
TRAFFIC	8	8	5	6	1	4	16	
POLLUTION	5	5	1	3	4	2	10	
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	
PEOPLE ABUSE ENVIRONMENT	3	1	0	4	0	0	4	
BUILDING AND ROADS	4	3	1	3	2	1	7	
LACK OF ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLICITY	1	6	3	2	0	2	7	
INSUFFICIENT RECYCLING FACILITIES	3	1	0	2	2	0	4	
LACK OF, OR LOSS OF, GREEN OR OPEN SPACE	1	5	3	0	0	3	6	
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	11	9	6	7	2	5	20	
OUT OF TOWN SUPERMARKETS/STORES	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	
HOUSING/H' LESS	1	2	2	1	0	0	3	
NONE/SATISFIED	73	78	59	35	31	26	151	
OTHER	25	22	13	13	13	8	47	
D/K	49	63	5	19	37	51	112	
Total	191	209	100	100	100	100	400	

Table 7.

Q6 What do you think are the most significant problems facing L/M/L/P?  
CZ Survey 1994

SIG. PROBLEMS counts %columns	GENDER		CITY				Total
	MALE	FEMALE	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH	
CRIME	51 26%	52 25%	30 30%	23 23%	28 28%	22 22%	103 26%
UNEMPLOYMENT	62 32%	36 18%	20 20%	22 22%	41 41%	15 15%	98 24%
TRAFFIC	44 22%	41 20%	30 30%	34 34%	11 11%	10 10%	85 21%
CLEANLINESS AND STREET CLEANING	12 6%	28 14%	13 13%	9 9%	12 12%	6 6%	40 10%
HOUSING/HO MELESSNESS	22 11%	13 6%	9 9%	9 9%	4 4%	13 13%	35 9%
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	7 4%	8 4%	7 7%	3 3%	1 1%	4 4%	15 4%
PARKING	10 5%	14 7%	6 6%	5 5%	5 5%	8 8%	24 6%
SPECIFIC POLLUTION ISSUES	17 9%	14 7%	9 9%	4 4%	10 10%	8 8%	31 8%
LACK OF ENTERTAINMENT	8 4%	7 3%	2 2%	1 1%	0 0%	12 12%	15 4%
PLANNING PROBLEMS	6 3%	19 9%	6 6%	3 3%	1 1%	15 15%	25 6%
CITY CENTRE/SHOP PING AREA	8 4%	12 6%	4 4%	10 10%	1 1%	5 5%	20 5%
CONDITION OF BUILDINGS/LAND	2 1%	5 2%	1 1%	3 3%	2 2%	1 1%	7 2%
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE	5 3%	1 0%	5 5%	0 0%	1 1%	0 0%	6 2%
THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	6 3%	2 1%	1 1%	4 4%	0 0%	3 3%	8 2%
OTHER	9 5%	17 8%	4 4%	6 6%	6 6%	10 10%	26 6%
D/K	16 8%	16 8%	5 5%	9 9%	8 8%	10 10%	32 8%
Total *	*196	*204	*100	*100	*100	*100	*400

\* This total relates to the number of interviews not to the number of problems mentioned.

Table 8.

Q6 What do you think are the most significant problems facing L/M/L/P?  
 CZ Survey 1995

SIG. PROBLEMS counts	GENDER		CITY				Total
	MALE	FEMALE	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH	
CRIME	47	34	17	33	19	12	81
UNEMPLOYMENT	22	12	11	7	13	3	34
TRAFFIC	59	66	41	31	29	24	125
CLEANLINESS AND STREET CLEANING	14	24	10	10	10	8	38
HOUSING/ HOMELESS'	4	6	2	1	1	6	10
PUBLIC TRANSPORT	7	17	3	6	3	12	24
PARKING	19	23	6	7	11	18	42
SPECIFIC POLLUTION ISSUES	10	6	2	11	3	0	16
LACK OF ENTERTAINMENT	10	7	4	0	1	12	17
PLANNING PROBLEMS	10	7	2	6	5	4	17
CITY CENTR E/SHOP'	5	9	3	4	4	3	14
CONDITION OF BUILDINGS/LAND	4	3	5	1	0	1	7
HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE	6	4	8	1	0	1	10
THE LOCAL AUTHORITY	3	4	1	4	1	1	7
OTHER	13	12	8	9	4	4	25
D/K	16	27	4	5	14	20	43
Total *	* 191	* 209	* 100	* 100	* 100	* 100	* 400

This total relates to the number of interviews not to the number of problems mentioned.

Table 9.

Q. 11 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing L/M/L/P ?

CITIZENS' SURVEYS 1994 + 1995

SIG. EN. PROBLEMS CITY counts	SIG. EN. PROBLEMS CITY					Total
	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH		
POLLUTION - TRAFFIC	68	71	29	41		209
POLLUTION - INDUSTRIAL	3	6	76	12		97
POLLUTION - RIVER	7	1	5	1		14
POLLUTION - OTHER	32	27	20	18		97
TRAFFIC	65	43	30	27		165
LITTER AND WASTE	49	49	41	37		176
LACK OF, OR LOSS OF, GREEN OR OPEN SPACE	16	9	4	7		36
BUILDINGS - DERELICT, INAPPROPRIATE OR LOSS OF OLD	4	7	1	3		15
LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT	7	5	4	3		19
HOUSING/ H' LESS	5	2	3	6		16
HIGHWAYS	7	1	1	1		10
OTHER	10	6	6	18		40
NONE	7	11	12	29		59
D/K	4	9	16	34		63
Total *	* 200	* 200	* 200	* 200		* 800

\* This total relates to the number of respondents and not to the number of problems mentioned.

Table 10.

Q11 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing L/M/L/P ?

CITIZENS SURVEY 1994

SIG.EN.PROBLEMS CITY counts	SIG.EN.PROBLEMS CITY				Total
	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH	
POLLUTION - TRAFFIC	38	37	16	13	104
POLLUTION - INDUSTRIAL	3	0	33	5	41
POLLUTION - RIVER	6	1	4	0	11
POLLUTION - OTHER	10	5	11	12	38
TRAFFIC	29	20	15	3	67
LITTER AND WASTE	23	20	19	13	75
LACK OF, OR LOSS OF, GREEN OR OPEN SPACE	11	4	2	5	22
BUILDINGS - DERELICT, INAPPROPRIATE OR LOSS OF OLD	2	5	1	2	10
LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT	5	2	0	0	7
HOUSING/ H' LESS	3	2	2	3	10
HIGHWAYS	3	0	0	0	3
OTHER	6	3	5	14	28
NONE	5	10	6	19	40
D/K	4	7	8	26	45
Total *	* 100	* 100	* 100	* 100	* 400

\* This total relates to the number of respondents not to the number of problems mentioned.

Table 11.

Q11 What do you think are the most significant environmental problems facing L/M/L/P ?

CITIZENS SURVEY 1995

SIG. EN. PROBLEMS CITY counts	SIG. EN. PROBLEMS CITY				Total
	LEEDS	LEICESTER	MIDDLESBROUGH	PETERBOROUGH	
POLLUTION - TRAFFIC	30	34	13	28	105
POLLUTION - INDUSTRIAL	0	6	44	7	57
POLLUTION - RIVER	1	0	1	1	3
POLLUTION - OTHER	22	22	9	6	59
TRAFFIC	36	23	15	24	98
LITTER AND WASTE	26	29	22	24	101
LACK OF, OR LOSS OF, GREEN OR OPEN SPACE	5	5	2	2	14
BUILDINGS - DERELICT, INAPPROPRIATE OR LOSS OF OLD	2	2	0	1	5
LACK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT	2	3	4	3	12
HOMELESSNESS/HOUSING	2	0	1	3	6
HIGHWAYS	4	1	1	1	7
OTHER	4	3	1	4	12
NONE	2	1	6	10	19
D/K	0	2	8	8	18
Total *	* 100	* 100	* 100	* 100	* 400

\* This total relates to the number of respondents not to the number of problems mentioned.



**Mrs Evelyn O'Riley (67), Pensioner, Malham Road, Oadby.**  
"I don't think Leicester lives up to its title as Environment City. The centre is really scruffy; it's not half as nice as it used to be. Giving it a fancy name hasn't changed my lifestyle."



**Miss Clare Nicholas (20), Student, Evington.**  
"I had no idea Leicester was Environment City. I try to do my best to be environmentally friendly and recycle things. But despite my good intentions they seem to end up in the bin."



**Mr Chris Howard (37), Bull Jing society Inspector, Wigston Harcourt.**  
"Living in the Environment City hasn't drastically changed my way of life. I do use lead-free petrol and try to recycle in the home but with three children and a busy job it can be difficult."

# Awareness high of city's green status



**Miss Tiffany Burchett-Vass (23), Sports attendant, Fosse Road South, Leicester.**  
"I know Leicester is Environment City but it doesn't live up to its reputation. The council should be helping people to look after the planet but I don't even know where the nearest recycling place is."

**THERE IS greater public awareness in Leicester of its "Environment City" title than in the UK's three other designated environment cities, according to a survey.**  
A study by the Wildlife Trust shows that 65 per cent of people polled in Leicester know about its status as Britain's first environment city.  
However, in Peterborough, the country's second environment city, only 33 per cent of locals are clued up on what it means. In Leeds, only 27 per cent of survey respondents are on the ball about its environment city standing.  
And even fewer people in Middlesbrough - 24 per cent - are in touch with its title.  
In all four cities, 41 per cent

by Kay Wright, Political Correspondent

of people have found out about it through the Press.  
Mr Ian Roberts of Environ, Leicester's green action charity which has spearheaded much of Environment City's work, praised the Mercury for its role in informing people about it.  
He said the paper's weekly GreenLife page had had "a major impact" on public thinking on environmental matters.  
"This has contributed to the remarkably high percentage of people who are aware of Leicester's environment city status," he said.  
But when it comes to influencing the public, 84 per cent of Leicester respondents say the Environment City theme has failed. But that figure is better than the other cities. Peterbor-

ough comes bottom, with only 5 per cent of people saying Environment City had inspired them to become greener.  
Local councillors say they are delighted with Leicester's top-of-the-table ranking and they claim it shows the environment city message is getting through.  
Councillor Ted Cassidy, Leicester City Council's chair of environment and development, said: "We can't expect people to change their habits of a lifetime overnight."  
"Environment City is a long-running commitment."  
But opposition councillors have labelled the research results disappointing.  
Liberal Democrat Councillor Roger Blackmore claims the fact that Leicester's environment city status had influenced only 16 per cent of those locals polled showed the title was just a public relations gimmick.



**Mrs Teresa Watkinson (44), Civil Servant, Rothley.**  
"I think we deserve the title of Environment City. There are some lovely green areas in Leicester, like Abbey Park, and people are always cleaning the streets."



**Mr Leslie Green (72), Pensioner, Beatty Avenue, Leicester.**  
"Visitors wouldn't know Leicester is Environment City with all the litter everywhere. I still don't recycle anything although I might start if people collected stuff from the door."



**Mrs Enid Hartwell (45), Care assistant, Rowletts Hill, Leicester.**  
"I can understand why Leicester is Environment City - I try to do my bit towards recycling by giving clothes to charity instead of throwing them away."



**Miss Sheila Barlow (23), Nurse, Hinckley Road, Leicester.**  
"I think Leicester's status as Environment City has made a difference - I've stopped buying aerosols and I even buy environmentally-friendly washing powder."

**How green is your garden? See Page 24**

## First weapons handed in

THE guns amnesty in Leicestershire has already produced seven weapons including a hand grenade which have been



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