Sustainable Development and Local Planning: A Study of the Plan Making Process in the London Borough of Southwark

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Submitted for the award of PhD, March 2009

UMI Number: U615480

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Abstract

The research explores the incorporation of the concept of sustainable development in UK land use planning policy through an in-depth case study of the planning policy formulation process in the London Borough of Southwark (LBS). The thesis questions the notion of a formal policy cascade as a standardised and therefore neutral influence. It seeks to look beyond the written guidance to investigate the influence of the informal within the formal plan making process.

Adopting a New Institutional perspective of the formal and informal, stable and dynamic, strategic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions (Lowndes 1997), the research examines how sustainable development is interpreted and enters established local planning policy. The context of the research in an arena of emerging local governance is explored with particular reference to local managerial and participatory governance as applied to planning policy formulation.

The research employs qualitative techniques using documentary and content analysis, semi-structured interviews and observation.

The research concludes that during the LBS plan making process, the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy became eroded by a combination of inter-related formal institutional and political forces. The argument is made that strong interpretations of sustainable development were able to appear through the informal personal and professional influence of local planning officers.

The research concludes that the New Institutional perspective adopted offers a useful way of understanding the complexity of introducing new concepts such as sustainable development into established institutions. Recommendations for enhancing the theoretical framework and for further research are made.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks go to the following people:

My supervisors at the London School of Economics & Political Science:
Professor Yvonne Rydin, Professor Andy Thornley and Dr Nancy Holman.

My dearest mum who listens always to my dreams.

The organisations and colleagues with whom I have worked during the course
of this research and who have provided both financial and social support:

- CRISP, especially Dr Richard Anderson
- Sharjah Urban Planning Symposium, especially Professor Ali Parsa
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Research Foundation
- London Southbank University, Faculty of the Built Environment & LEPU
  staff, in particular Professor Bob Evans, Sue Percy and Margaret Hollins
- London Borough of Southwark, Elephant Links Project team
- LSE staff, in particular in Estates and in Residences
- Project partners in the HEFCE Moving Towards Zero Waste activities
  and the London's University Halls of Residence Recycling project.

My fellow PhD students and staff in Geography & Environment especially:

- Elaine Gascoyne, John Fyson and Lee Major for their friendly help
- Dr Richard Perkins, Dr Martina Klett-Davies, Dr Simon Dietz,
  Dr Paola Jiron and Dr Mike Mason for reading various drafts.

My case study, the London Borough of Southwark, and all the staff of the
Planning Policy Research Unit for their honesty and generosity in particular:

- Simon Bevan, Director of Planning.

My teachers:

- Professor Malcolm Smith whose energy and passion I shall never forget
  and attempt always to emulate
- Professor Mike Saward for introducing me to Environmental Politics
- Professor Brian Wynne who inspired me to bridge academia and practice

The staff and my fellow graduates at Landmark Education, each and every one
of you, for being a stand for transformation in the world.

My PhD completion team for giving their time so generously to support me
through the final stages:

- Dr Giulia Sinatti for getting me organised and motivated
- Lois Bolton for her attention to detail and contagious laughter
- Dave Forrest for his reliability and great listening
- Michael Mulholland for ensuring I was focused to study
- Simone Contasta for encouraging me to start and helping me to finish.

Finally, thanks to my proof reading family and friends:

Shirley Hands, Georgina Yik, Richard Anderson, Chris Connelley, Alma Gibbons, Jane Wakiwaka.

Any mistakes that remain are my own.

For my nephew Lukas whose beginning
so inspired the completion of this research

"We did not inherit the land from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."
Antoine de Saint Exupery

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BV Best Value
CASE Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering
CDF Community Development Foundation
CPA Comprehensive Performance Assessment
CRISP Community Recycling in Southwark Project
DCLG Department of Communities and Local Government (established May 2006)
DEFRA Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (established June 2001)
DETR Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (established May 2007)
DoE Department of the Environment
DTLR Department of Transport, Local Government & Regions (established May 2001)
EA Environment Agency
EAP Environmental Action Programme
ECI European Common Indicators
EDEU Environmental Development and Education Unit
EIA Environmental Impact Assessment
EU European Union
ESRC Economic and Social Research Council
G8 Group of Eight (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, United Kingdom, United States of America)
GIS Geographic Information System
GLA Greater London Authority
GOL Government Office for London
HMSO Her Majesty's Stationery Office
ISO International Standardisation Organisation
IUNC International Union for Nature Conservation
LASALA Local Action for Sustainability At the Local Authority
LA21 Local Agenda 21
LBS London Borough of Southwark
LDA London Development Agency
LDDC London Docklands Development Corporation
LDF Local Development Framework
LIFE The Financial Instrument for the Environment – L'Instrument Financier pour l'Environment
LITMUS Local Indicators To Monitor Urban Sustainability
LPA Local Planning Authority
LPAC London Planning Advisory Committee
LSC Local Skills Council
LSP Local Strategic Partnership
MA Master of Arts
MOL Metropolitan Open Land
MORI Market and Opinion Research International
NI New Institutionalism
NIMBY Not In My Back Yard
NPM New Public Management
ODPM Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (established July 2006)
OJL Official Journal of the European Communities 'L' series
PASTILLE Promoting Action for Sustainability Through Indicators at the Local Level in Europe
PI Planning Inspector
PI Public Inquiry
PPG Planning Policy Guidance
PPS Planning Policy Statement
PPRU Planning Policy Research Unit
PSA Performance Service Agreement
RCI Rational Choice Institutionalism

RPG Regional Planning Guidance
RTPI Royal Town Planning Institute
SA Sustainability Appraisal
SDA Service Delivery Agreement
SDC Sustainable Development Commission
SDO Sustainable Development Objective
SDS Sustainable Development Strategy
SEA Strategic Environmental Appraisal
SEF Southwark Environment Forum
SPG Supplementary Planning Guidance
SPS Supplementary Planning Statement
SSP Sustainable Southwark Partnership
SSMI Sustainable Southwark Members Initiative
UDP Unitary Development Plan
UK United Kingdom
UNCED United Nations Committee on Environment and Development
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme
UWE University of West of England
WCED World Commission on Environmental Development
WWF World Wildlife Fund

CHAPTER ONE:
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE POLICY RESPONSE

Introduction

This thesis was undertaken as an ESRC CASE[1] studentship for doctoral award. It was based on a collaborative arrangement between the London Borough of Southwark (hereinafter referred to as LBS) and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) within the Geography and Environment Department. The research adopted a qualitative approach using a single case study to exemplify how one institution incorporated sustainable development in the planning policy process[2] for the LBS Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The implications of the CASE studentship, the suitability of a single case study approach and a contextualisation of the LBS are discussed in Chapter Three.

The case study of the LBS plan making process is particularly interesting as it is at the urban level that there is most need and possibly potential for sustainable development (Harvey 2000). This may mean the creation of new spatial arrangements which support sustainable lifestyles and behaviour, and the spatial is ultimately regulated by planning policy. This thesis sets out to explore how one institution incorporates sustainable development in planning policy with the aim of expanding knowledge on the factors influencing this process. In this way, the thesis hopes to be able to contribute to the creation of the new spatialities which sustainable development may require. This chapter sets out the geographical roots of the research and explores the existing literature on sustainable development and planning.

There is increasing global pressure in terms of legislation and guidance documents for the new policy goal of sustainable development to be incorporated in established planning policy. These formal pressures are explored later in this chapter but the thesis questions the notion of formal policy cascade as a standardised and, therefore, neutral influence (Nadin, Brown and

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[1] CASE (Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering) was one response to the 1993 White Paper *Realising Our Potential* on policy relevant research. The ESRC CASE award for doctoral research is a collaboration between a university department and a non-academic organisation to enable the PhD holder to gain academic and industry skills to prepare for a career in both academic or non-academic areas. (ESRC 2002).
[2] The terms planning policy process, plan making process and planning formulation process are used interchangeably throughout the thesis, as they were in the case study.

Duhr 2000). The thesis defines the formal as the visible (usually written), agreed, consciously produced rules which describe collective interests, provide regularity and govern behaviour (discussed fully in Chapter Two). However, it is proposed that there is something beyond the formal imperative for sustainable development which influences its incorporation in planning policy and this chapter examines the literature on planning and sustainable development in search of what these other influencing factors might be.

The existing literature explored later in this chapter has taken a focus on the content analysis of development plans and the resulting interpretations of sustainable development which appear in them. A dual research gap is identified which fits well with the opportunity offered by the CASE studentship of an in depth study. Firstly to look in detail at the policy making process behind the content of planning documents. Secondly, to do this in a way that enables a view beyond the formal policy imperatives for sustainable development to other factors that may influence its incorporation in planning policy. With such a focus on the policy making process, a brief review of the policy studies literature was also conducted and highlighted some key issues used to guide the research and to inform the methodology.

The thesis is therefore based on the premise that the relationship between sustainable development and local planning policy is reflected not only in the content of development plans. The thesis proposes that in addition, it is possible that the ways of thinking that shape interpretations of sustainable development in the development plan and the ways of doing in local planning policy formulation play an important role. The thesis is further predicated on the belief that ways of thinking and ways of doing are represented in institutions, yet they may not be immediately or overtly visible and may lie beneath the formal surface of operations. Institutions are defined as 'the rules of the game' including the formal rules defined above and also the informal rules which in contrast are the less visible habitual actions shared by a group mirroring collective interests which unconsciously become embedded and influence behaviour but may support, contradict or undermine the formal rules (discussed fully in Chapter Two). The literature on institutional theory is therefore explored

in Chapter Two. A way of narrowing the research on certain dimensions of the many features of institutions was presented by Lowndes' New Institutionalist (NI) work which identified three main dimensions of institutions; encapsulating both the formal and informal institutional rules; as well as change and stability within institutions; and the strategic and norm-governed basis for action (Lowndes 1997 p180). These dimensions gave a focus for exploring the ways of thinking and the ways of doing in local planning policy and were used to form the research questions and subsequent methodological approaches employed in the thesis.

To summarise, the research proposes that there is something beyond the formal policy imperatives for sustainable development that influences the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. This is predicated on the following:

1) Ways of thinking and ways of doing in the policy making process influence the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy.

2) Ways of thinking and ways of doing are represented in institutions.

3) Institutions can be defined by three main dimensions:
   - formal and informal,
   - stable and dynamic, and
   - strategic and norm-governed.

As a result, the research questions set out to discover why the particular approach to incorporating sustainable development has been adopted by LBS asking the following:

1) How is sustainable development interpreted in the LBS UDP, other related documents and in the plan making process?

2) How are both the LBS plan making process and the interpretations of SD within it influenced by the three dimensions of institutions (the

formal and informal, stable and dynamic, and strategic and norm-governed)?

3) To what extent do the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions influence the incorporation of sustainable development in the LBS UDP?

Starting the Research

The research is rooted within a geographical perspective in that it looks at spatial organisation in a specific geographical location. Geography has always concerned itself with explorations of the spatial within both human and physical geography. Certainly, the global challenge of sustainable development is one which sits well within a discipline that has always embraced the global whilst recognising the important interactions and impact of the local. Whitehead (2007) reviewed the work of geographers on sustainable development, tracing the first studies from the late 1980's on sustainable development in less economically developed countries (LEDCs). This was followed by neo-Marxist critiques of sustainability (O'Riordan 1989) and spatial planning studies on different local and regional scales outlined later in this chapter (for example Marshall 1992, Bruff and Wood 1995, Counsell 1998, Hales 2000). Whitehead traced the rise of urban sustainability as a key focus of attention for geographers, with increasing discussions on the sustainable city (Haughton 1999) in line with policy guidance in this area (UNCHS/UNEP 2001) discussed later in this chapter. Whitehead concluded that:

> "there does appear to be a considerable degree of consensus over how the international political community should address the complex hybrid of social, economic and ecological problems which face urban areas. The axiomatic response at the moment is to build 'sustainable' cities" (Whitehead 1997 p3).

A geographical perspective implies looking at the spatial, this makes sense to the research in two ways. Firstly, one of the key features of the case study is its geographical location on the edge of the Thames in central London, this spatial placement acts to both support and constrain the sustainable development of LBS, discussed in Chapter Three. In this respect, a geographical perspective

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allows the research to delve into the specifics of LBS which are locally distinctive and unique. However, it also allows the research to explore how:

> "sustainability is expressed and lived through both ... formal spaces, as well as more radical and liberated spaces." (Whitehead 1997 p26).

For the purposes of the research, focusing on local government, the formal space Whitehead refers to can be seen as the formal planning formulation process. The more liberated space can be seen as the informal activities within that formal process. Local planning policy guides the use of the spatial in a specific way appropriate to local conditions but following principles which are similar at the international, European, national and regional levels. Similarly, the study of the interaction between these formal and informal spaces in LBS and the arena they provide for the playing out of economic-socio-political-environmental issues around the incorporation of sustainable development may offer interesting principles that could potentially inform the geography of sustainable development in the UK or beyond.

Geographers have traditionally focused their studies on the implementation of sustainable development (Whitehead 1997 p7) but this research looks at the stage before that – the policy making process and the arena it provides for the interpretation of sustainable development and its incorporation into planning policy. It takes a focus on the London Borough of Southwark and tracks the policy making process for the new Unitary Development Plan from 2000-2006.

Formal Policy Imperatives for Sustainable Development

This chapter now turns to introducing the relatively new concept of sustainable development[3]. It explores the basis for its so-called 'contested' nature (Chatterton and Style 2001 p440) that has resulted in many different interpretations of the term, reflected in policy statements on sustainable development. These are explored at the international, European, UK national

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[3] Sustainable development was first used in 1980 by the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN) which published the World Conservation Strategy following calls for sustainable development at the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (UNCHE). The term *sustainable development* is occasionally replaced by the term *sustainability* but this should be taken to mean the same thing for the purposes of this research

and regional levels and discussed in relation to Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretations for sustainable development.

Local government has been identified as an important arena for the delivery of sustainable development (UNCED 1992, CEC 2002, DoE 1994). An overview is presented of the policy tools, specifically designed for the delivery of sustainable development[4] that UK local government has utilised to date to respond to the sustainable development policy goal. This started through *Local Agenda 21* (LA21), and research shows that sustainable development has achieved a high degree of penetration in local government as a result (Lafferty 2001, LASALA 2001). However, the LA21 initiatives of the 1990s were usually allocated time-limited funds and the Government's intention was that sustainable development should become mainstreamed across local government (ODPM 1999 and 2000). Accordingly, and in parallel with the Labour Government's *Modernisation Agenda* (DETR 1998 and 1998b), the *Community Strategy* (ODPM 2000a and 2001) and their *Local Strategic Partnerships* (LSPs) have been tasked with delivering sustainable development.

At the same time, Government policy has highlighted the key role of the land use planning system in achieving sustainable development in England (ODPM 2002). The land use planning system is introduced with its dual role of development control and planning policy. The latter is the focus of the research and is an important and long established local government role, laying down the parameters for the spatial aspects of local government activity. The planning policy formulation process is outlined and located within the empirical object of the research in LBS, where it takes the form of the UDP.

The academic literature is reviewed on how the long established land use planning system has taken account of the relatively new policy goal of sustainable development. Whilst current research has analysed the content of various planning policy documents (Bruff and Wood 1995, Counsell 1998, Bruff 2000, Hales 2000), little is known about the factors that influence this content.

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[4] This research is concerned only with 'sustainable development' as a generic whole. There are many other government policies which contribute to sustainable development, for example policies on energy efficiency, public transport and biodiversity, but these are beyond the scope of this research.

A research gap is identified in the need to go beyond analysis of the content of local planning policy documents alone to explore the processes underpinning their creation and uncover the factors shaping the incorporation of sustainable development in the planning policy formulation process at the local government level.

Introducing and Interpreting Sustainable Development

The research seeks to explore how land use planning incorporates the new policy goal of sustainable development. The first hurdle to negotiate is the so-called "highly contested" nature of sustainable development (Chatterton and Style 2001 p440). It's holistic and ambiguous definition has attracted criticism and this poses challenges for conventional assumptions about how policy goals are achieved, for they assume clearly defined terms. The contested nature of sustainable development is partly due to its very origins: it aimed at finding a middle ground or consensus between conventional economic growth and calls for zero growth to protect the environment (Meadows et al 1974, Daly 1977). Springing up between the two opposing forces, sustainable development was put forward as a way of allowing some compatibility or integration between the two. More importantly perhaps, it offered a bridge to unite the different interests representing these forces, though Baker et al (1997) argue that it united only the anthropocentric views. However, as Edwards et al (2004) concluded in their research into sustainable property development, any apparent agreement over sustainable development because of its broad and vague definition is deceptive as:

> "it comes from the very different meanings people use" (Edwards et al 2004 p6).

Sustainable development has an inherent ambiguity as a policy concept. This fact has allowed for a multitude of wide ranging interpretations (Torgerson 1995, Mitlin and Satterthwaite 1995) meaning that:

> "many people think they know what sustainability means yet define it in almost infinitely various ways..." (Elkington 1999 p7).

Interpretation in a specific context is shaped by a range of factors including background, culture, values and knowledge, which differ not only from person to

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person and organisation to organisation, but also spatially and temporally. This is best summed up by 'where you stand, depends on what you see' and means that sustainable development is both politically and socially constructed (Baker et al 1997 p7). As a social and political construct, sustainable development therefore has the potential to reflect the range of deeply entrenched values and norms in society and how they evolve over time. Different interpretations of sustainable development reflect different visions of reality. In fact, a precise definition of sustainable development is less important to the thesis than an exploration of the different interpretations accorded to sustainable development, the factors influencing these interpretations and their impact on local planning policy. Indeed, O'Riordan pointed to the benefits of sustainable development as a contested term, seeing it as a:

"...catalyst for creative thinking and practice..." (O'Riordan 1985 p52).

Brown and Duhr (2002) noted that:

> "the definitions and interpretations of sustainable development employed by different actors can (and have) changed over time and this clearly has its effects on planning policy" (Brown and Duhr 2002 p257).

They identified several related reasons for changing interpretations of sustainable development. These included: increased understanding; lessons from evaluation and monitoring of policy and practice; experimentation; and changes in political priorities. These and other issues are found in the research and discussed in subsequent chapters. It is important to point out here that the contested nature of sustainable development and its constantly evolving interpretations require a research stance capable of embracing and exploring this uncertainty or dynamism, alongside the values and norms that may be reflected in different interpretations (discussed in Chapter Two).

It is an interesting and relevant starting point for the research to illustrate the current range of interpretations of sustainable development relevant to the local planning context. This is done by investigating how sustainable development has been interpreted in relevant policy documents at different governmental levels from the international to the local. To assist in the task, reference is

made to Baker et al (1997) who conducted a review of European sustainable development policy. Baker et al created a ladder of interpretation to explore different interpretations of sustainable development and used it as a:

> "heuristic device for situating and grouping the range of policy imperatives associated with the provision and implementation of sustainable development policies." (Baker et al 1997 p1)

Table 1 and Table 2 below summarise the range of interpretations of sustainable development from weak to strong, discussed in more detail shortly, giving examples of each in relation to different aspects of society (Baker et al 1997). The different aspects in Table 1 include the role of the economy, the role of nature, the geographical focus and the equity focus. However, these are strongly linked to and constrained by the current paradigm of demand-led growth, based on the exploitation of natural resources for short term economic gain in response to global markets, where equity is not an issue. The case study operates within this paradigm, which cannot be said to contribute to the goal of sustainable development but which does undoubtedly influence the 'ways of thinking' and therefore the 'ways of doing' within an institution. Baker et al (1997) also looked at the role of technology but this was not deemed to be relevant to the case study and has been excluded.

Of most relevance to the case study, embedded as it is within the local government context, is the role accorded to civil society, institutions, policy instruments or tools and cross-sectoral integration in Table 2. The case study is able to provide a wealth of information on these different aspects of institutions.

Approach to sustainable development	Role of economy	Geographic focus	Role of nature	Equity focus
Ideal model of sustainable development	Right livelihood; meeting needs not wants; changes in patterns and levels of production and consumption	Bioregionalism; extensive local self sufficiency	Promotion and protection of biodiversity	Inter- and intra-generational equity
Strong sustainable development	Environmental regulated market; changes in patterns of production and consumption	Heightened local economic self sufficiency promoted in context of global markets	Environmental management and protection	Strengthened redistribution policy
Weak sustainable development	Market reliant environmental policy/changes in patterns of consumption	Initial moves to local economic self-sufficiency; minor moves to alleviate power of global markets/ economy	Replace finite resources with capital; exploit renewable resources	Equity a marginal issue
Treadmill	Exponential growth	Global markets/ global economy	Resource exploitation	Equity not an issue

Table 1: Interpretations of Sustainable Development – Economy, Geography, Nature and Equity (Adapted from Baker et al 1997 p17[5])

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[5] The role of technology has been removed from Baker et al's (1997) original table as it is deemed beyond the scope of this research.

Approach to sustainable development	Civil society focus	Role of institutions	Policies and sectoral integration	Policy instruments and tools
Ideal model of sustainable development	Bottom up community structures and control	Decentralised political, legal, social and economic institutions	Holistic inter-sectoral integration	Full range of policy tools; sophisticated use of indicators to measure sustainable development holistically
Strong sustainable development	Open ended dialogue	Some restructuring of institutions	Environmental policy integration across sectors	Advanced use and wide range of policy tools
Weak sustainable development	Top down initiatives; limited state and environmental movement dialogue	Minimal amendments to institutions	Sector driven approach	Token use of environmental indicators; limited range of market led policy tools
Treadmill	Very limited dialogue between state and environmental movements	No change	No change	Conventional accounting

Table 2: Interpretations of Sustainable Development – Civil Society, Institutions, Integration and Instruments (Adapted from Baker et al 1997 p17[6])

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[6] The role of technology has been removed from Baker et al's (1997) original table as it is deemed beyond the scope of this research.

The role of civil society, institutions, policy instruments or tools and cross-sectoral integration in Table 2 can be seen in the 'ways of doing' in the policy formulation process and there is considerable room for movement within these aspects. The role of civil society refers to the opportunities for public involvement and dialogue. The case study is embedded within the context of local government influenced by calls from various policy levels for enhanced public involvement in decision making. The role of institutions refers to the way that institutions are changing to adapt existing structures to respond to new policy imperatives such as sustainable development. LBS itself and the UDP formulation process in particular (both types of formal institutions as outlined in Chapter Two) are explored in this respect. The role of policy instruments and tools is seen in the case study in the new managerial tools being introduced to support sustainable development. These include the Environmental Review of the existing UDP, the sustainability appraisals throughout the plan making process and the use of indicators for sustainability and other forms of monitoring. Cross-sectoral integration is influenced by various policy imperatives and is demonstrated in the case study by the working practices of planning officers and their colleagues across the Council. These findings are discussed in detail in Chapter Four to Chapter Seven.

The range of interpretations is a reflection of different societal views ranging from anthropocentric, or weak interpretations of sustainable development to 'eco-centric' (Dobson 2000 p2) or strong interpretations of sustainable development. (Pearce et al 1989, Turner 1993, Gibbs et al 1998, Pearce and Barber 2000, Pepper 2000). At the bottom of the ladder is the 'treadmill' approach:

> "as epitomised by transnational industrial incorporations and the world of high finance... [wherein]...the natural environment is seen in terms of its utility to the economic system...and policy tools continue to aim at maximising production and growth." (Baker et al 1997 p12)

This interpretation of sustainable development is based on the prevalent view that society is separate from nature. This is characterised by a continuing economic focus on growth or 'business as usual'. The next step on the ladder is weak sustainable development, however, weak interpretations are open to

capture by different interest groups that interpret sustainable development primarily with the purpose of promoting or justifying existing modes of operating or activities.

Strong interpretations of sustainable development require a complete re-focus of predominant views, to see society located within and dependent upon the natural environment. The focus is on meeting basic needs at a local level (Schumacher 1973, Douthwaite 1996). Within this perspective, protection of environmental resources is seen as safeguarding human activity as it is the environment that conditions this activity. This view is associated with deep ecology (O'Riordan 1985, Eckersley 1992) or rational ecology (Dryzek 1987). The researcher and therefore the research itself takes a view of sustainable development within the strong interpretation, where institutions are restructured, sustainable development is integrated cross-sectorally, there is open ended dialogue with all stakeholders and a wide range of policy tools are used to an advanced level. Within this interpretation of sustainable development, the environment has priority in decision making so patterns of consumption and production alter, natural resources are protected and redistribution creates equity within a global market based on local self-sufficiency.

Beyond this, on the top step of the ladder, is the ideal model of sustainable development known as bioregionalism, where needs (as opposed to wants) are met and activity is organised on the local level. Biodiversity and equity are central to decision making and this manifests in decentralised institutions, bottom up community structures and full integration. Like all other models the ladder is normative in nature but it provides a useful way of assessing interpretations of sustainable development in the relevant policy documents discussed next.

Interpreting Sustainable Development at the International Policy Level

The different interpretations in Table 1 and Table 2 are now explored in brief discussions of relevant policy documents at different policy levels featuring sustainable development. The origins of the contemporary use of the term *sustainable development* are often traced back to the international level, and the 1972 *United Nations Conference on the Human Environment* which called

for sustainable development on a global scale. It emphasised the need for planning and managing human settlements to respond to the need for sustainable development (Recommendation 1). By 1978 the United Nations created the Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS)[7] to support the building of more sustainable urban and rural communities. By 1980, the *World Conservation Strategy* embraced the term (IUCN 1980) interpreting it with a purely environmental focus on the conservation of living resources. Not surprisingly, this found little purchase with pro-growth parties and was not able to unite a broad range of interests behind it. Subsequently, interpretation of sustainable development was broadened and popularised on a global scale with the publication of the Brundtland Report *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987). Its interpretation was based on a committee concept, formed through compromise and consensus. The Brundtland Report stated clearly its anthropocentric interpretation of sustainable development:

> "Our message is, above all, directed towards people, whose well being is the ultimate goal of all environment and development policies" (WCED 1987 pxiv).

It acknowledged human needs and aspirations for growth but also environmental limits to meeting these (though there was a belief that environmental limits could be mitigated by human advances in technology and organisation[8]). The Brundtland Report criticised the primary weighting given to traditional, short term, economic imperatives in decision making, resulting in the most widely quoted, if rather broad definition of sustainable development as:

> "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987 p5).

Instead, it proffered a balanced and integrated approach to decision making, combining environmental, social, economic, equity and futurity imperatives. It focused on the interdependence of these imperatives and defined sustainable development as:

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[7] Renamed in 2003 the UN-Habitat (United Nations Human Settlement Programme)
[8] Organisational changes are the focus of the research and reference to technology is deemed beyond the scope of this research

"a process in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations" (WCED 1987 p8).

So, the Brundtland Report interpreted sustainable development in terms of an integrated approach to decision making, encompassing protection of the environment and prudent natural resource use for efficient human activity, and high quality of life for everyone, now and in the future. The equity aspects encompassed both inter-generational or temporal (dealing with the present and future) and intra-generational or spatial (dealing with the local and global). The latter aimed to address the widening gap between the rich and the poor and the former acted as a counterweight to the traditional economic imperative of short term gain. Although integration, equity and futurity were new approaches to decision making, they were framed within an anthropocentric outlook and this interpretation of sustainable development, although questioning the treadmill approach was at best an example of weak sustainable development (Baker et al 1997) and rested firmly within the conventional growth paradigm (Dryzek 1987).

The Brundtland Report did go someway to outlining more practical steps for achieving sustainable development, acknowledging the need for political and social changes, including individual lifestyle and institutional behaviour (WCED 1987 p8-9). However, the need for change was based on the premise that limits to growth were due only to the current limitations of technology and social organisation (the focus of this thesis), and that any changes to these would enable continued growth. Accordingly, although some of the report focused on 'The Urban Challenge' and the need to create more sustainable urban communities (WCED 1987 Chapter 9), the steps for achieving this included increased democracy through stakeholder participation pointing to the role of local government to develop this (Pearce and Barber 2000). Related concepts included the application of the precautionary principle; internalisation of the full (environmental, social, economic and future) costs of all human activity and; local appropriateness (or subsidiarity). This interpretation of sustainable development remained vague enough to unite a wide range of stakeholders from contrasting perspectives and avoided the difficult and unpopular issues surrounding the pro-growth and zero growth polarities. Justifying this

interpretation and following the concept of local appropriateness, the Brundtland Report argued that it was not able to set out a more specific blueprint for sustainable development, as the international variety of local contexts made this impossible. Hence, although the United Nations established a *Sustainable Cities Programme* in 1990, local government was accorded an important role in the delivery of sustainable development and the creation of more sustainable communities.

Even so, the Brundtland interpretation of sustainable development as an integrated, overarching approach, over much longer timescales than policy had previously covered and with equity as a driving force, presented a considerable challenge to existing ways of thinking and ways of doing. In addition, the challenge was compounded because all the aspects of sustainable development were capable of interpretation in different ways in different situations. In practice, the delivery of sustainable development remained limited (Lafferty 2001) due partly to this multiplicity of interpretations and partly to the weak or treadmill nature of some of these. Attempts to translate such broad policy statements on sustainable development into social organisation resulted in an ever expanding and evolving range of broad interpretations. This was evident at the international, European (discussed next) national and local levels. The United Nations *Sustainable Cities Programme* reflected the Brundtland definition stating:

> "A sustainable city is a city where achievements in social, economic, and physical development are made to last. A Sustainable City has a lasting supply of the natural resources on which its development depends (using them only at a level of sustainable yield). A Sustainable City maintains a lasting security from environmental hazards which may threaten development achievements (allowing only for acceptable risk)." (UNCHS/UNEP 2001 p1).

The 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, produced the *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (UNCED 1992) and the first plan of action for sustainable development known as *Agenda 21*. It requested all national governments prepare a national sustainable development strategy and local governments a *Local Agenda 21 Action Plan*. It highlighted the need for "Sustainable human

settlement development" (UNCED 1992 Chapter 2) and crucially for this thesis, the key role of land use planning for implementation of sustainable development (UNCED 1992 Chapter 28). Consequently, sustainable development entered all levels of policy making as an overarching goal. A plethora of policy documentation appeared, demonstrating a stated commitment to the approach. In 1996, the focus of the United Nations conference, Habitat II was on the implementation of *Local Agenda 21* in urban areas.

Progress was reviewed at the Johannesburg World Summit in 2002. No new policies were required as implementation of sustainable development from the existing policies was limited. There was a rallying call to keep pushing forward on progress but distinctive resignation from many countries. The *Millennium Development Goals* (UN 2000) had been launched and included that all countries achieve sustainable development. Their key focus was on meeting human needs, for example: access to drinking water; education; healthcare; equity; protection of biodiversity; and local self sufficiency. The economic costs of inequity were seen to be a driving force for change. This was and still is the clearest demand for a paradigm shift from the international level and has prompted many governments into action. In fact the *Millennium Development Goals* called for the ideal model of sustainable development described in Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretations.

Interpreting Sustainable Development at the European Policy Level
The European Union has taken a lead in rolling out sustainable development throughout its Member States, producing numerous directives dealing with issues relating to sustainable development, in particular the environmental aspects. Harmonisation and standardisation remain key considerations for the European Union in developing new legislation. This has sometimes led to criticisms both from those countries more experienced in promoting sustainable development, such as Germany and Scandinavia who have felt held back and those less well placed, such as Italy and Portugal who have felt challenged (ENDS July 2002). But the European Union also represents a powerful political coalition and its role at the Johannesburg World Summit in 2002 prompted Roger Levett, a leading UK commentator on sustainable development and planning, to comment:

"With all its faults and internal contradictions, it [the European Union] is the best political force for sustainable development the planet is likely to get." (Levett 2002 p249).

A strong feature of the European Union's interpretation of sustainable development and its policy formulation has been its focus on environmental policy since the 1970s (Baker et al 1997). Legislation relating to climate change, biodiversity, conservation, pollution and transport has made significant contribution. From the late eighties, the term *sustainable development* was used in EU policy making. However, it was the *Fifth Environmental Action Programme (EAP) "Towards Sustainability" the European Community Programme of policy and action in relation to the environment and sustainable development* (CEC 1988) which made sustainable development its central focus. This interpretation took the Brundtland discussion of sustainable development as its starting point but emphasised a new positive focus on an integrated spatial approach, rather than a conventional sectoral approach to sustainable development. The Fifth EAP had two underpinnings relating to this integrated spatial focus; it advocated integration across all policy areas; and shared responsibility, signalling a move towards strong sustainable development in these areas. Its four key objectives were to maintain the overall quality of life; to maintain continuing access to natural resources, yet at the same time; to avoid lasting environmental damage; and to consider as sustainable, development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (repeating the Brundtland definition). Although this interpretation signalled an important move towards strong sustainable development in terms of sectoral integration, it remained generally weak. However, the new positive focus on integration had an incremental impact.

With the backdrop of the Fifth EAP definition of sustainable development, the European Commission's *Green Paper on the Urban Environment* in 1990 (CEC 1990), highlighted the relative neglect of urban environmental issues (in comparison with the focus on rural areas). To address this, the European Commission's *Expert Group on the Urban Environment* (CEC 1996) was convened in 1991 to consider how future town and land-use planning could

develop the urban environmental delivery of the Fifth EAP. As a result the *European Sustainable Cities Programme* was launched in 1993 and a year later the *European Sustainable Cities Campaign* brought together a coalition of eighty urban and regional authorities implementing sustainable urban policies. The working definition of a sustainable city was heavily reflective of the Fifth EAP emphasising the need for integration and going further to focus on improved institutional arrangements and hinting at the need for civil society engagement (co-operation) and appropriate administrative tools for implementation:

> "Sustainable urban management should challenge the problems both caused and experienced by cities, recognising that cities themselves provide many potential solutions, instead of shifting problems to other spatial scales or shifting them to future generations. The organisational patterns and administrative systems of municipalities should adopt the holistic approach of ecosystems thinking. Integration, co-operation, homeostasis, subsidiarity and synergy are key concepts for management towards sustainable development." (CEC 1996 p10).

The interpretation of sustainable development in the Fifth EAP was also influential in deciding the content of the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) governing all EU actions. The Treaty gave greater emphasis to the importance of sustainable development, the need for integration of environmental considerations into all other policy areas and the requirement for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for projects with significant environmental implications. It was the first policy document to explicitly call for the incorporation of sustainable development within the internal practices of the European Commission which had obvious institutional implications. This was important as, although overall interpretation of sustainable development remained weak, the focus on cross-sectoral integration and the requirement to use new managerial tools to support sustainable development was an example of a move towards strong sustainable development.

A progress report on the *Fifth EAP* (CEC 1998) concluded that progress had been made towards sustainable development, but that priorities should be reviewed to move further towards strong sustainable development and to focus on: improved integration of the environment into other policies, in particular agriculture, transport, energy, industry and tourism; the use of a wider range of

policy instruments such as market based or horizontal instruments; increased implementation and enforcement measures by improved and simplified legislation; additional action in the field of communication and information to raise public awareness; reinforcement of the EU's role in international action and the recommendation for a global assessment (OJL 275 10 October 1998).

The *Global Assessment* (CEC 1999) informed the *Sixth Environmental Action Programme of the European Community 2001-2010. Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice* (CEC 2002) which also formed the environmental component of the first *EU Strategy for Sustainable Development* (CEC 2001). The *Sixth Environmental Action Programme* identified four priority areas: climate change; nature and biodiversity; environment and health; natural resources and waste. It set out five approaches for achieving policy outcomes: to ensure the implementation of existing environmental legislation; to integrate environmental concerns into all relevant policy areas; to work closely with business and consumers to identify solutions; to ensure better and more accessible information on the environment for citizens; and to develop a more environmentally conscious attitude towards land use. It pointed to the use of wider stakeholder participation (naming business particularly) and new instruments for dealing with the complexities of sustainable development. It also suggested the use of European Social Funds to support member states in sustainable land use planning decisions. These evolving interpretations of sustainable development based on assessments of progress were clearly moving away from a treadmill approach and starting to exemplify weak sustainable development in many ways. However, these interpretations notably shied away from any commentary on the role of the economy or equity and maintained an acceptance of global growth and exploitation of natural resources. The emphasis on cross-sectoral policy integration was indicative of a move towards strong sustainable development in policy documents in this area alone, but as various progress reports noted implementation was less evident.

In the *EU Strategy for Sustainable Development, A Sustainable Europe for a Better World* (CEC 2001), interpretation of sustainable development focused for the first time specifically on the need to change ways of thinking and ways of

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doing in institutional settings. It called for a review of and changes to the working methods and structures of the EU institutions for better co-ordination, co-operation and consistency to support and enable sustainable development. The *EU Strategy for Sustainable Development* (CEC 2001) was based closely on the Brundtland definition of sustainable development and identified a key role for Europe, acknowledging the importance of the economic sector to any success in this goal and prioritising market based approaches. It called for long term, cross-cutting policies and consideration of the benefits and costs of all policy actions in terms of sustainable development in order to improve policy coherence. In very practical terms, it called for exploitation of research findings and exchange of best practice in the field and aimed to promote individual and collective responsibility for sustainable development. It also called for improved land use, specifically in terms of transport planning, highlighting again a key role for the planning system. *Review of the Sixth Environmental Action Programme* in 2005 (CEC 2005) called for joined-up thinking to allow policy coherence; co-operation, solidarity and continued dialogue between a range of stakeholders; research, technology and education; continued impact assessment for the internalisation of the external dimensions of sustainable development; and measurement of progress. It pulled these recommendations together in a list of *Guiding Principles for Sustainable Development* adopted by the EU Council and later included in the amended *EU Strategy for Sustainable Development* (CEC 2006). This latest version highlighted the following issues for priority: consumption and production (questioning the role of the economy); the protection of natural resources; global poverty and development (bringing equity to the fore). It also flagged up the linkages between sustainable development and climate change (including transport and energy) and between sustainable development and public health (including social exclusion and demographics). It called for strengthened governance structures for implementation including new institutional arrangements; new policy instruments such as progress reports and impact assessment; and increased involvement of all stakeholders, through public involvement and in addition peer review. It called for better regulation and represented the strongest interpretation of sustainable development at the EU level. However, it was strongly linked to the *Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs* (CEC 2006a) which had a very different view of the role of the economy, although it recognised that:

"the EU way of doing things is well suited to the challenges of the twentieth century. The combination of market dynamism, social cohesion and environmental responsibility is a unique mix." (CEC 2006a para 1.3).

Interpreting Sustainable Development at the UK National Policy Level

Both the Brundtland process and the European policy documents briefly discussed above had an impact on UK policy, but there still remained substantial scope for UK national policy to develop its own interpretation of sustainable development which in turn guided regional and local policy making. After the 1992 Earth Summit, the UK became one of the first governments to publish a national strategy specifically for sustainable development in 1994 (DoE 1994), discussed below. This made sustainable development an overtly stated national policy aim. However, this strategy had its roots in the 1990 *White Paper on the Environment: This Common Inheritance* (DoE 1990). This was the first ever White Paper on the environment, but it also had a sustainable development focus. It introduced institutional reform in the appointment of Green Ministers to each Government department to promote sustainable development therein and collectively to promote sustainable development across Government. It also highlighted the role of towns and cities in delivering sustainable development (DoE 1990 Chapter 8). The 1994 *UK Strategy for Sustainable Development* (DoE 1994) built upon this featuring towns and cities (Chapter 26) and emphasising the potential of an environmental/economic win-win scenario (based on the extensive use of environmental economics and market-based instruments).

However, the interpretation of sustainable development took a different emphasis when the strategy was updated by the Labour Government (elected in 1997) based on consultation and planning papers (DETR 1998c and 1998a) emerging as *A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK* (DETR 1999). The environmental aspects of sustainable development were given a back seat in comparison to the social and economic aspects that were highlighted as a way of improving quality of life. The well quoted Brundtland definition of sustainable development was now interpreted by the UK Government as encompassing three key areas: sustainable

economy, building sustainable communities and managing environment and resources. Whilst these related directly to the three traditional pillars of sustainable development, when they were unpacked into aims, the economic pillar was equated with 'maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment'. This was strongly contested within UK environmental circles, where it was argued that sustainable development did not necessarily mean continued economic growth (Jacobs 1991). This interpretation of sustainable development was clearly based on the treadmill approach

A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK (DETR 1999) was based on ten principles and approaches for achieving sustainable development: putting people at the centre; taking a long term perspective; taking account of costs and benefits; creating an open and supportive economic system; combating poverty and social exclusion; respecting environmental limits; the precautionary principle; using scientific knowledge; transparency, information, participation and access to justice; and making the polluter pay. The Strategy acknowledged that:

> "There is a need to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives at the same time, and to consider the longer term implications of decisions" (DETR 1999 para1.10).

The Strategy also promoted the use of monitoring and review, supported by indicators. This resulted in the production of *Quality of Life Indicators* (DETR 2001a 2001b) and recognised the need for new forms of dialogue based on wide public participation and new policy instruments to meet the challenge of sustainable development, but this remained firmly set within a growth paradigm. The use of the term *quality of life* was reflective of an attempt to simplify the complexities of sustainable development and avoid contestation over its definition and allow a focus on implementation. Progress on the *Quality of Life Indicators* was reviewed in 2001 and whilst there had been a flurry of activity at both the national and regional level, there was little evidence of progress towards sustainable development.

In his April 2001 speech, *Improving your Local Environment*, the Prime Minister made *'liveability'* an explicit political objective in the UK for the first time (Blair 2001). He defined *liveability* as:

> "short hand for all the things which improve our daily experience of life where we live" (Blair 2001).

This was very similar to quality of life, yet the advent of a liveability agenda raised questions over the political future of sustainable development itself. This is discussed further in Chapter Eight. As a result, *The Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future)* (ODPM 2003) was intended to improve housing supply issues and promote improvements to the local environment. It took a new focus on liveability rather than sustainable development per se. Its roots were in the 1999 *Urban Task Force Report* (DETR 1999h) which highlighted the importance for addressing recurring problems experienced within urban environments and *Our Towns and Cities: The Future, Delivering an Urban Renaissance* (DETR 2000). It brought together previously separate strands of Government policy which had included elements of sustainable development, most importantly via the regeneration initiatives. Regeneration initiatives since the nineties, in the form of *City Challenge*, had attempted "sustainable improvements in deprived areas" (Rhodes 2002). With the introduction of *The Single Regeneration Budget* in 1994, the guidance on forming partnerships made explicit reference to sustainable development (DETR 1998 p22-23) based on a review entitled *The Impacts of Environmental Improvements in Urban Regeneration* (DoE 1995). The *Communities Plan* (ODPM) thus signalled a move to integrate sustainable development in very practical terms.

The Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) – an advisory body to the Government - aptly summed up its views on the effect of the *Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK* (DETR 1999) in the title of its report "*Shows Promise: But Must Try Harder*" (SDC 2004). Both the SDC and the House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee[9], have challenged the Government's fundamental belief that economic growth should be the driving force behind all policy decisions. Their shared perspective demonstrated a

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[9] Since 2002, the EAC has also reported on the Government's own annual reviews on sustainable development.

different interpretation of sustainable development urging Government to move away from the traditional treadmill approach. It is important to note how, even at the heart of Government, contrasting interpretations continue to coexist.

The Environmental Audit Committee additionally launched a *New Inquiry: The Sustainable Development Strategy: Illusion or Reality?* (EAC 2005) to assess the overall impact and effectiveness of the *UK Strategy for Sustainable Development* (DETR) to date. It considered the role and adequacy of the indicators which the Government developed (including target setting), and the interaction between indicators and targets on the one hand and departmental objectives and Performance Service Agreement (PSA) targets on the other. The Inquiry concluded that the Strategy did indeed act as a driver for change, impacting departmental priorities and that the sustainability indicators reflected the UK's 'sustainability gap'. However, it recommended that sustainable consumption should be integrated within the Strategy to reduce natural resource use and concluded that organisational structures and costs should be defined so that they could be improved. Finally, it recommended that the definition of sustainable development should be clarified. It is interesting to note that the latter conclusions relate directly to the research area and that the definition of sustainable development remained a constant issue.

A new strategy and monitoring system was launched *Securing Our Future –the UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy* (ODPM 2005). The timing of the General Election, in 2005, the UK hosting of G8 early on in the year and the UK Presidency of the EU starting July 2005, may all have influenced the final outcome. The Strategy is the most important document setting out sustainability in the UK and sets out the national framework based on four familiar themes: social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of natural resources; and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

National policy on sustainable development is on the whole based on the treadmill approach showing only a few moves to weak sustainable development in terms of stakeholder participation, sectoral integration and new policy instruments. Strong importance remains attached to a global growth paradigm

based on exploitation of natural resources and without due consideration of equity. None the less, the long time frames and process of law making acted as potential barriers to greater moves towards strong sustainable development and are less onerous at the regional level discussed next.

Interpreting Sustainable Development at the London Regional Policy Level

Regional policy is required to comply with national policy so the treadmill approach has also influenced this level. Regional planning guidance at the start of the plan making process in LBS took the form of *Strategic Guidance for London, RPG3* (Secretary of State for the Environment 1989). It was based on the 1988 *Strategic Planning Advice for London* (LPAC 1988) and clearly focused on economic growth. Although the environment was listed as a priority for preservation, the tone of the document continued to prioritise economic growth as can be seen in the seven objectives to: foster economic growth, bearing in mind the importance for the national economy of London's continuing prosperity; to contribute to revitalising the older urban areas (including LBS); to facilitate the development of transport systems which are safe, efficient and have proper respect for the environment; to maintain the vitality and character of established town centres; to sustain and improve the amenity of residential districts; to allow for a wide range of housing provision; to give high priority to the environment, maintain the green belt and metropolitan open land preserve fine views, conservation areas, surrounding countryside and the natural Heritage. Such a focus showed regard for the environment but did not mention sustainable development and clearly adhered to the treadmill approach.

Following a 14-year absence, a metropolitan tier of government was reformed for London in 2000 in the shape of the Greater London Authority (GLA), headed up by Ken Livingstone. As the DETR (now DTLR) had created eight new Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in 1998, the ninth was now established in London. The RDAs had a statutory requirement to contribute to sustainable development at the regional level, as well as the usual focus on economic development, competitiveness and employment. The RDAs also took responsibility for regeneration funding. The GLA was supported by a number of 'functional bodies' or agencies, including the London Development Agency

(LDA), which was charged with overseeing the expenditure of regeneration programmes, reporting back up to the central government unit, the Government Office for London (GOL) and commenting on the local planning policies written by the London Boroughs. The Mayor was given responsibility for strategic planning in London through *The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London* (GLA 2004). Known as *The London Plan*, it mapped out the spatial vision for London for the next 15 to 20 years and signalled a new formal planning instrument with statutory force within the planning system. This meant that the London Boroughs were now required to comply with it. How the *London Plan* interpreted sustainable development is discussed next.

Interpreting Sustainable Development in the London Plan

Published in February 2004, the *London Plan* set out an 'integrated' framework for development in London. Integrated was taken to mean the integration of social, economic and environmental factors and represented a move towards strong sustainable development in this area. The Mayor's vision demonstrated this:

> "My vision is to develop London as an exemplary sustainable world city, based on three interwoven themes: strong diverse long term economic growth; social inclusivity to give all Londoners the opportunity to share in London's future success; and fundamental improvements in London's environment and use of resources" (GLA 2004 pxii).

Although the economic growth of the capital was a priority for the Mayor, he worked closely with his Environment Advisors and there was a new indication that growth should be 'diverse and long term' alongside 'improvements to the environment and use of resources' and 'social inclusivity'. This indicated an, albeit, covert move towards weak sustainable development in terms of resource use, local economic self sufficiency and equity. All of the Mayor's strategies[10] were based on London's growth, equity and sustainable development (GLA 2004 pvii para3) and are interrelated (in line with integrated policy formulation) to achieve sustainable development. (GLA 2004 para2.7). The *London Plan* used the Brundtland definition of sustainable development and recognised the

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[10] The Mayor's strategies included Economic Development; Transport; Biodiversity, Air Quality; Waste; Noise; Energy; Culture and more recently a Climate Change Action Plan, launched in 2007.

importance of land use planning and a spatial framework for achieving the physical aspects of the other strategies:

> "The vision seeks to achieve the maximum possible from the forces to which the city is subject and which it can influence. It is a challenging vision involving clear choices, priorities, resources, determination and the resolution to conflict. But the alternative – a failure to secure economic growth and to match it with social inclusion and a more sustainable environment would have serious long term consequences for London, the surrounding regions and the UK. This vision underlies all of my strategies. The London Plan provides the unified, spatial framework for these, designed to ensure that Londoners benefit from sustainable improvements to their quality of life" (GLA 2004 pxii).

The six objectives of the London Plan took a spatial focus and whilst they related to economic growth it was also apparent that they responded directly to sustainable development. The six objectives were: making the most sustainable and efficient use of space in London; encouraging intensification and growth in areas of need and opportunity; making London a better city for people to live in; making London a more prosperous city with strong and diverse economic growth; promoting social inclusion and tackling deprivation and discrimination; improving London's transport; and making London a more attractive, well designed and green city (GLA 2004 p12). The first two objectives in particular play a key role in later discussions of the density issue in LBS (see Chapter Seven).

The London Plan policies all related to sustainable development as verified by Forum for the Future's independent sustainability appraisal and based on the Sustainable Development Framework for London written by the London Sustainable Development Commission (LSDC 2003). The GLA viewed its own sustainable development policies as being stronger than those of Government and more responsive to Londoner's desires for the future, most recently reiterated by the Mayor on the 2007 launch of the Climate Change Action Plan for London in (GLA 2007).

UK Local Government and Sustainable Development

Discussions of sustainable development at the international, European, national and regional policy level have all placed responsibility for operationalising sustainable development, at least partly, at the local level and have flagged up the importance of the role of planning. Initial moves to incorporate sustainable development at the local government level were prompted at the international level in the form of *Chapter 28 of Agenda 21* (UNCED 1992 para28.1) which gave guidance on how the goal of sustainable development might be reflected in the activities of local government, by requiring that local authorities write a *Local Agenda 21 Action Plan* (LA21). It identified the particular potential of local government for delivering sustainable development at the local level highlighting the potential role of different stakeholders with whom, *Agenda 21* argued, the local authority was best placed to interact. These included the business sector; the voluntary sector; the community and; young people (UNCED 1992). This participatory approach allowed the local authority to tap into existing and create new grassroots activities in support of sustainable development. LA21 was less about producing an end policy document and more about the process of stakeholder dialogue and interaction that informed the formulation of the policy document. There was a stress on local consultation and consensus building as a way of raising awareness of sustainable development issues and providing a mutual learning opportunity.

The *Aalborg Charter* (1994), promoted by the *European Sustainable Cities Campaign* put forward a model for how to implement the *LA21 Action Plan* which started with acknowledgement of existing plans and programmes; identification of problems through consultation; prioritisation of solutions; creating a shared vision; considering alternative options; establishing a long term action plan with measurable targets; timetabling solutions; allocating responsibility amongst partners; and monitoring procedures (Aalborg Charter 1994 part III). Research showed that sustainable development had achieved a high degree of penetration within local government as a result of LA21 (Evans et al. 2005). The UK, along with Sweden and Denmark, led the way in making

early progress with a large number of local authorities, producing *Local Agenda 21 Action Plans*[11] (Lafferty 2001).

At the same time, other national policy moves also contributed to sustainable development. Following the Labour Government's *Modernisation Agenda* (DETR 1998 and 1998b), the *Local Government Act 2000* (ODPM 2000a) gave local authorities a duty to prepare a *Community Strategy*. Government guidance recommended this be used as a practical tool to:

> "promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well being of their areas, and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK" (ODPM 2000b part1).

There was an emphasis on the need for an integrated approach to dealing with economic, social and environmental well being, and a warning not to treat them as "separate strands" (ODPM 2000b). This indicated a move to weak sustainable development in terms of integration. It also gave local authorities broad new powers to improve and promote well being at the local level. Local appropriateness was highlighted giving flexibility to the individual local authority. There was a clear requirement to engage local communities, involve councillors, work through a *Local Strategic Partnership* (LSP) and assess needs and resources. Government guidance also highlighted the need for local ownership of the community planning process, which they said should be 'bottom up' rather than 'top down'. The important link with LA21 was made as it was pointed out that Councils with LA21 strategies:

> "should have gone a long way towards developing effective partnership working, a long term vision for the area and the necessary implementation mechanisms - as well as having staff with potentially relevant skills and experience" (ODPM 2000b part1).

Pinfield and Saunders (1999) explored the links between LA21 and the *Community Strategy* and concluded that there was indeed potential for sustainable development. This was not least because the *Community Strategy* was part of Government policy for local government modernisation (and therefore, unlike LA21, was resourced by the local authority). In addition, there

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[11] Interpretations of sustainable development in the *Local Agenda 21 Action Plan, Essence,* for the London Borough of Southwark are discussed in Chapter Four.

was potential with regard to the creation of LSPs under the *Community Strategy*[12], which could provide a site for continuing debate and promotion of sustainable development. However, Pinfield and Saunders (1999) also raised concerns that sustainable development may struggle for priority with other better established concerns which also belong in the LSP, such as economic regeneration (discussed in Chapter Five). The *Local Government Act* (ODPM 2000a) questioned the treadmill approach to sustainable development and went some way to move towards a weak approach to sustainable development, in some areas in particular, through increased participation and cross-sectoral integration. Overall, as O'Riordan (2001) aptly stated, the philosophy behind the *Community Strategy* was a:

> "weaker version of that which lies behind sustainable development (integrated economic, social and environmental well being without the explicitly global or futurity aspects), however, its undeniable benefit is that it is closer to the mainstream of decision making" (O'Riordan 2001 p5).

Whilst all areas of local government activity were required by law to take account of sustainable development, the initial response in the form of LA21, was normally hosted within a niche area of local government. This was a reflection of existing institutional ways of thinking and ways of doing. The *Community Strategy* offered potential for the cross-sectoral integration of sustainable development, but this remained largely overlooked. Emerging following the Labour Government's *Modernisation Agenda*, the *Community Strategy* was introduced primarily with a customer service emphasis on economic efficiency and effective delivery. Sharing the same origins was the *Best Value* programme[13], additionally backed up with a high political profile and supported by legislation. The potential for sustainable development in *Best Value* was also considered by some to be great, though once again overlooked. This is demonstrated by the ironic fact that, whilst every local authority Chief Executive in the country is familiar with the principles behind *Best Value*, evidenced by the *Best Value* monitoring, there is no evidence that the same can be said for sustainable development. None the less, the emphasis of the *Modernisation Agenda* on wide local consultation and consensus building,

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[12] Interpretations of sustainable development in the *Local Strategic Partnership* and *Community Strategy* for the London Borough of Southwark are discussed in Chapter Five.
[13] Under the *Modernising Local Government White Paper*, DETR, 1998.

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added to that of the *Local Government Act* (ODPM 2000a) and alongside the international agreement for a LA21 process did have the intended effect of broadening the participatory basis for sustainable development. However, it also left sustainable development wide open to more interpretations. Gathering these numerous interpretations into a coherent strategy presented an ongoing challenge for local government. The thesis now moves to explore how one sector of local government and the focus of the thesis – land use planning – started to meet this challenge.

English Land Use Planning and Sustainable Development

Land use planning has long been a core part of local authority work and has been cited by the UK Government as being crucial to achieving a diverse range of key national policy objectives including sustainable development (DoE 1992, DoE 1994, DETR 1999, ODPM 2002). For the purposes of this research, planning is taken to mean land use planning in England according to the *Town and Country Planning Act* (DoE 1990). The Act was the subject of planning reforms promoting spatial planning which came into force midway through the research period, in 2004, and are discussed below. The aim of land use planning has been to secure the most efficient and effective use of land in the public interest (DETR 1997). The planning system has played an important role in shaping and protecting the quality of our towns, cities and the countryside and remains one of the oldest instruments of environmental protection. The Government has promoted planning as a strategic, proactive force for long term economic prosperity, social cohesion and environmental protection - the Government's interpretation of sustainable development. Similar views have been echoed by practitioners (Lusser 1993, County Planning Officers' Society 1993) and academics (Healey and Shaw 1993, Owens 1994). A three-fold reason can be identified for this.

Firstly, planning's traditional concern and long standing aim has been for environmental quality, long before the concept of sustainable development specifically focused on this dimension. The nature and scope of the English planning system has emphasised the protection of natural and cultural heritage and the quality of the environment. Secondly, planning's traditional major areas of work therefore have included the built environment, transport and

infrastructure, environmental quality and development control, making it well placed to work on sustainable development. Thirdly, the land use planning system has operated at the local level of administration and implementation, with the role of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) falling to local government. This level of government has been identified as significant for the operationalisation of sustainable development (UNCED 1992). However, as Winters (1995) has pointed out there is a significant constraint on how sustainable development is interpreted in planning. In order for the land use planning system to deliver sustainable development there would have to be a need for:

> "two essential qualities which are distinct from the traditional approach of the planning process to environmental issues: inter-generational equity and concern for the transboundary effects of development." (Winters 1995 p884).

The absence of these two qualities has often been overlooked and challenges the suitability of the land use planning system to deliver sustainable development.

In planning, there are two mechanisms for directing development and land use. One is development control, which covers decision making on planning applications and appeals. It is beyond the scope of this research, apart from noting one salient fact. The various planning application forms are produced by the different LPAs and differ both in the information they require from applicants and their style. This means that there are considerable inconsistencies between planning authorities, which the formal regulations do not account for. The development control process is not the focus of the research but clearly something other than the formal imperative for planning influences the process of decision making for applications and appeals. This has the result that where different development control processes incorporate criteria for meeting sustainable development, they do so in different ways. In this respect the development control process was seen to briefly influence the research in the form of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers discussed in Chapter Seven.

The second mechanism is the formulation of development plans and this is the focus of the research. Development plans are statutory and strategic documents drawn up by the LPA setting out the boroughs' policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area. The development plan provides a firm basis for rational and consistent planning decisions, giving all stakeholders concerned with development in the area a measure of certainty about what kind of development is or is not permitted during the plan period. When considering applications for planning permissions, the LPA is required to have regard to the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (S.70(2) and S.54A TCPA 1990).

Sustainable development was noted as a key element of development plans. *The Town and Country Planning Act* (1990) stated that:

> "UDP Part 1 policies shall include policies in respect of the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land; the improvement of the physical environment; and the management of traffic" (TCPA 1990 section 12 (3A)).

This was strengthened and specified when the *Town and Country Planning Act* was updated in 1999:

> "in formulating policies for part one of the UDP, the LPA should have regard to economic, environmental and social considerations" (OPSI 1999 para 1).

In 1999, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution started to examine whether the existing land use planning procedures were adequate to deliver sustainable development. Its report was published in 2002, entitled *Environmental Planning* and concluded that there was both considerable challenge and potential, some of which was highlighted in the subsequent planning reforms. So, how was planning supposed to take account of sustainable development? National Planning Policy Guidance stated that for sustainable development to be achieved:

> "planning policy makers, developers, and decision makers at national and local levels must take full account of the long term social, economic

and environmental impacts of proposed development." (ODPM 2002 para 3).

Whilst this identified the range of stakeholders who must take account of sustainable development, there was little more explicit direction on how this should happen or how these stakeholders might be trained.

National planning reforms intended to enhance the ability of the planning system to deliver sustainable development. The duty placed upon each UK LPA to prepare its own development plan was supplemented by a duty to have explicit regard to sustainable development in the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act* (OPSI 2004). This was at the time of the *Second Draft UDP* for deposit and the implementation of these reforms therefore lies outside the timescale of the research. The LBS plan making process followed the 1990 Act guidelines and upon adoption of the UDP in 2007 there will be a period to allow gradual conversion to the new system. However, it is relevant to outline these moves as they responded to calls for reform from the progress assessments of the sustainable development policies discussed above. For instance, *Sustainable Communities: Delivering through Planning* (ODPM 2003) called for:

> "a clear signal that sustainable development is a policy outcome the Government [is] seeking" (ODPM 2003 p1).

The planning reforms emphasised that sustainable development required transparency, participation and access to information and justice. This was translated into practice by ensuring that planning information was easily available, and easily understood with the opportunity for dialogue through participation and involvement, particularly with traditionally excluded groups. Participation was strengthened with the requirement for a *Statement of Community Involvement* setting out policies for involving the community in the processes for preparing local development documents and taking decisions. Of particular importance was the requirement that planning policy undergo sustainability appraisal and submit annual progress reports (when formulating the plan) or monitoring reports (upon adoption). Whilst the requirement for monitoring represented a positive policy tool, monitoring can only be as good as the indicators developed to track sustainable development and can only make a

contribution to the implementation of sustainable development if they are fed effectively back into the decision making process (Pastille 2002). This very interaction between indicators and the delivery of targets was raised in the *Environmental Audit Committee Inquiry into Sustainable Development* (EAC 2005).

The new planning reforms made the delivery of sustainable development overt, requiring those responsible for preparing regional spatial strategies and local development documents in England, to exercise those functions:

> "with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. These persons or bodies must have regard to policies and guidance on sustainable development in meeting this requirement" (OPSI 2004 Clause 38).

The ODPM[14] published a note to explain how the requirements of Clause 38 might be delivered in practice and referred to Planning Policy Guidance (recast as Planning Policy Statements under the new reforms and discussed next) and specific advice on sustainable development in the existing *Planning for Sustainable Development: Towards Better Practice* (1998). The planning reforms saw development plans being recast as Local Development Frameworks (LDF). A LDF is a portfolio of documents including a *Statement of Community Interest* (SCI), a core strategy and a variety of local planning documents. The procedures for preparing and approving these documents vary from the procedures studied in the thesis. The research findings however remain of relevance to the new policy and procedures as the main focus is on the informal dimensions of the plan making process rather than the changing formal imperatives of policy documents.

As a result of the many references to sustainable development at the local level, local authority planning officers have found themselves on the frontline of operationalising sustainable development and the plan making process and development plan itself have therefore been accorded a particular role in defining sustainable development at the local level.

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[14] ODPM has now been reorganised to DCLG

The Development Plan and Sustainable Development

In preparing the LBS UDP, the greatest procedural influence on how sustainable development was interpreted came from Government guidance. Planning policy at the local government level has been assisted by the production of Government Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). At the start of the LBS plan making process there were twenty-four in total, mainly covering various substantive aspects of planning such as retail development and town centres, though some covered procedural aspects. Introduced in 1988, they have never formed statutory documents but have been a material consideration for development control. The interpretations of sustainable development in the PPGs expressed contemporary Government thinking on specific planning issues and were the basis of the development plan. They were intended as supporting documents, giving more detailed and practical Government advice and were intended to be updated relatively quickly to keep up with latest Government thinking. In July 2002, as part of the planning reforms, it was decided that PPG's would be replaced by national Planning Policy Statements (PPS). The research period fell within the scope of the PPGs and it is these which are discussed below as the plan making process complied with the existing PPGs. The new PPS1 *General Policies and Principles* is discussed briefly to indicate how sustainable development has risen in prominence after the planning reforms.

Coverage of sustainable development in the PPGs as a whole was fairly weak (Spectra 1999). Appendix 2 maps out the range of PPG documents which made specific reference to sustainable development. Examples are given of how sustainable development was interpreted in each PPG along with the guidance for the LPA. Ten of twenty-four PPGs made no reference to sustainable development which was not coherent with the Government's stated intentions at the time, of delivering sustainable development through planning. The understanding of sustainable development in relation to these traditional planning issues was still vague and open to varying interpretations. Of most relevance to the research were two PPGs covering the procedural aspects of planning: PPG1, General Policies and Principles; and PPG12 on Development Plans. It was here that there was the greatest coverage of sustainable development. These two PPGs are discussed in detail next.

PPG 1 on *General Policies and Principles* (DoE 1988) showed the presumption of the land use planning system in favour of development, stating that the planning system should:

> "operate on the basis that the applications for development should be allowed....unless the proposed development would cause demonstrable harm to interest of acknowledged importance." (DoE 1988 para5).

It was only in 1992 that PPG1 (DoE 1992) first made reference to sustainable development in stating that:

> "the sum total of decisions in the planning field, as elsewhere, should not deny future generations the best of today's environment" (DoE 1992 para3).

This reference was non specific and was weak in terms of guidance for the LPA. By 1997, PPG1 was updated and stated much more clearly its role in delivering the policies that underpinned the Government's approach to the planning system, including sustainable development. It referred explicitly to sustainable development in its aims for development plans which were to:

> "enable the provision of homes, buildings, investment and jobs in a way which is consistent with the principles of sustainable development." (DoE 1997 para1).

It stated that the Government was committed to the principles of sustainable development (set out in DoE 1994, 1999) and went into some detail interpreting sustainable development as being able: to provide for the nation's needs for commercial and industrial development, food production, minerals extraction, new homes, and other buildings while respecting environmental objectives; to use already developed areas in the most effective way while making them more attractive places in which to live and work; to conserve both the cultural heritage and natural resources, including wildlife landscape, water, soil and air quality, taking particular care to safeguard designation of national and international importance; and to shape new development patterns in a way which minimises the need to travel (DoE 1997 para4). This interpretation of sustainable development showed a very limited understanding and juxtaposed continued

development patterns with respect for the environment as per the treadmill approach. However, it also highlighted the role that development plans should play to support sustainable development objectives, stating that the land use planning system:

> "has a key role to play in contributing to the Government's strategy for sustainable development by helping to provide for necessary development in locations which do not compromise the ability of future generation, to meet their needs" (DoE 1997 para22).

This clearly indicated the Brundtland definition and the update for the new millennium reiterated the commitment to sustainable development and the role of planning in delivering this:

> "The Government is committed to sustainable development, the planning system and development plans in particular can make a major contribution to the achievement of the Government's objectives for sustainable development" (ODPM 2000 Ch4).

It was this 2000 update of PPG1 that LBS used as guidance during the plan making process but, following the 2004 planning reforms this was replaced by *Planning Policy Statement 1, Creating Sustainable Communities* (Consultation draft, January 2004) and finalised as *Delivering Sustainable Development* (2005). This document formed the basis of guidance to support the duty in Clause 38 of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004*. Paragraph 1.1 placed sustainable development at the heart of the plan led system, and stated that development plans should be used to encourage sustainable development. However, this fell outside of the research period and did not directly influence the planning policy formulation process under investigation. None the less, officers kept up to date with changes and expressed satisfaction in seeing the emphasis the new documents took on sustainable development, which they considered would only support their efforts to make progress in this respect.

Of particular relevance for the purposes of the research was *PPG 12 on Development Plans* (ODPM 2000). PPG12 (DoE 1992) first set out how sustainable development considerations could be addressed in local development plans in 1992 making sustainable development an official objective of the land use planning system, yet this followed a treadmill

approach, bolting sustainable development onto a growth-as-usual paradigm, stating:

> "the planning system and the preparation of development plans in particular, can contribute to the objectives of ensuring that development and growth are sustainable" (DoE 1992 para1.8).

A new version of PPG12, issued in 1999 (DETR 1999), confirmed the Government's commitment to sustainable development and followed the interpretation of sustainable development set out in *A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK* (DETR 1999). Based on the four objectives identified by the research as a treadmill approach to sustainable development (discussed earlier), it detailed a range of objectives, key actions and commitments and a series of indicators to help measure progress towards sustainable development. The Government's *White Paper on* Competitiveness *Our Competitive Future: Building the Knowledge Driven Economy* (DTI 1998) was also reflected in PPG12 (DETR 1994). This was indicative of the traditional economic imperative driving much Government policy. Social objectives were referred to but did not give reference to any supporting national policy. PPG12 (DETR 1999) highlighted the potential for the planning system to play a role in delivering the social, economic and environmental elements of sustainable development, especially through development plans and pointed to the necessity for joined-up thinking throughout the policy making process. This meant that the UDP was required to fit with the whole range of strategies prepared by the local authority, for example on waste, transport and energy. This indicated a move towards weak sustainable development in terms of the use of indicators and cross-sectoral integration.

The 2001 update of PPG12 (ODPM 2001), stressed the importance of integrating sustainable development, in particular with transport and land use policies in development plans. It stated that:

> "Development plan policies should implement the land use planning aspects of sustainable development" (ODPM 2001 para4.2).

It outlined elements of the compulsory environmental appraisal for development plans which consisted of a scoping study and evaluation of alternative options.

It recommended a user friendly format, including the use of accessible and therefore non-technical, jargon-free language to appeal to a range of stakeholders (developers, planning officers, Council members and local community alike) and the involvement of a range of stakeholders through public participation. Because planning policy formulation can impact upon citizens both directly (if it involves planning applications for their own activities) and indirectly (if it involves planning applications elsewhere), public participation through community consultation became an integral part of the planning policy formulation process. This is discussed in Chapter Five in particular, although public participation formed an ongoing part of the whole plan making process. These participatory activities overlapped considerably with the duty of the local authority to produce a *Community Strategy*. In fact, the 2004 planning reforms linked the development plan and *Community Strategy* processes officially via Clause 18 of the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act* (OPSI 2004), which required the development plan to have regard to the *Community Strategy*. PPG12 (ODPM 2001) certainly moved into a weak interpretation of sustainable development in terms of public participation and the use of policy tools and cross-sectoral integration, yet still did not question the growth paradigm.

PPG12 (ODPM 2001) emphasised the importance of key indicators built into the development plan which were intended to allow regular monitoring and review to ensure sustainable development remained a key objective. This supported Baker et al's (1997) strong view of sustainable development with respect to new policy tools. PPG12 (ODPM 2001) also indicated that the LPA could draw up Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to provide more detail to development plan policies. Of twenty-nine SPGs produced by LBS, the Sustainability SPG is of particular interest to the research and is discussed later in Chapter Six. PPG12 has now been replaced by PPS12 on *Local Development Frameworks* which is outside the timeframe of the research but has continued to reinforce the importance of sustainable development in the UDP. However, the research would argue that it has not progressed beyond a weak interpretation of sustainable development to question the growth paradigm as demand for new housing continues to place pressure on the land use planning system.

This chapter has so far outlined the policy imperatives for sustainable development at the international, European, national and regional level. A special role has been accorded to land use planning and interpretations of sustainable development in relevant national and regional planning policies and guidance documents have also been explored. Interpretations of sustainable development in these documents exert a formal influence on the incorporation of sustainable development in the planning policy formulation process. Using Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretation for sustainable development, it becomes clear that whilst there are some moves away from a treadmill approach towards weak sustainable development, these are predominantly in relation to civil society (discussed as public participation in the research), institutional arrangements, cross-sectoral integration and policy tools and instruments. Cross-sectoral integration in particular has been recognised widely as key for sustainable development and is a constant stated goal of the sustainable development and planning policies discussed. At the London level in particular, the integration of sustainable development throughout the range of different Mayoral policies is clear and owes much to the relative newness of this metropolitan tier of government in the capital. National government relies on the incremental review of existing policy to integrate sustainable development. The planning reforms have lead to the adoption of a portfolio approach represented by the Local Development Framework (LDF) and this is an example of the intention to allow a more regular inclusion of new policy imperatives, in land use planning at least. On the other hand, it is clear that there is little movement for change in relation to the geographic scale of activity which continues with a globalisation focus, and the role of the economy which continues to be based upon the demand-led growth paradigm. There is a little recognition of changes to the role of nature and equity, both of which are prominent in the media in terms of negative impacts on the environment (flooding, heat waves, drought) and related social poverty and malaise (often as a direct consequence).

Figure 1 below gives the researcher's assessment of the current state of international European, national, regional and Planning Policy Guidance documents mapped against Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretation. It notes the more integrated nature of regional policies. The focus of the thesis on

local planning policy provides an ideal platform to continue to explore the role of civil society, institutions, cross-sectoral integration and policy tools and instruments (shaded grey in Figure 1) in the case study.

It is notable that the relatively longer timeframes for updating national planning policy guidance may be one factor to explain the absence of sectoral integration within these documents. Europe clearly provides much of the impetus for change and the newness of the regional tier of the London government means it's policies are in keeping with the slightly more advanced European emphasis on cross-sectoral integration. This assessment was conducted towards the start of the research process to understand the formal context of the research and much has changed since with the introduction of new policies and revision of the planning system, inevitable over a prolonged research process.
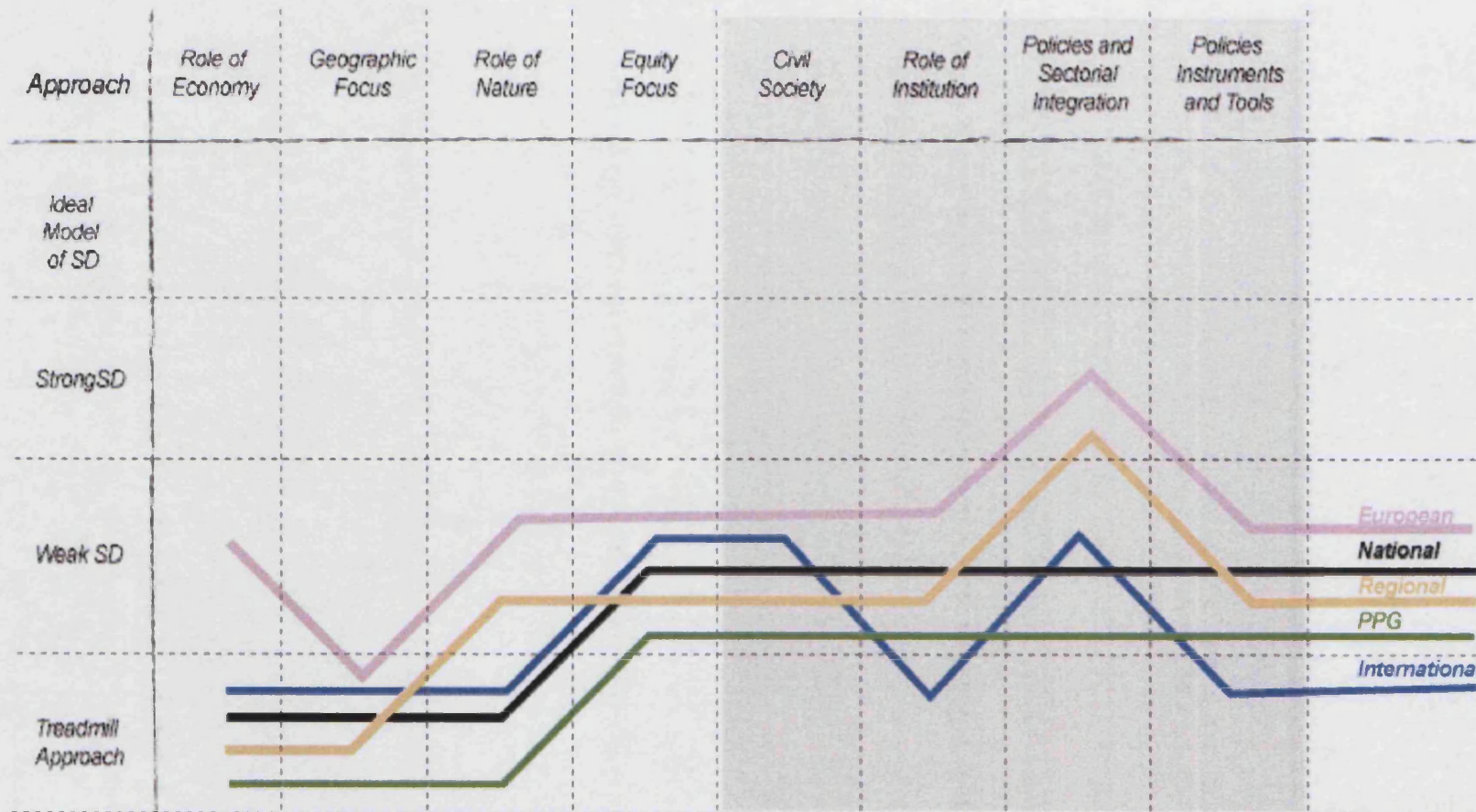
Figure 1: Interpretations of Sustainable Development in international, European, national, regional and UK Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) documents, based on Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretation.

This chapter has also highlighted the requirement for local policies for sustainable development such as *Local Agenda 21* and the *Community Strategy*. These are explored later from the case study perspective (in Chapter Four and Chapter Five respectively). In spite of the persistent ambiguities of and scope for interpreting sustainable development, the discussion on international, European, national, regional and local policy above has demonstrated the long term emphasis from Government on incorporating sustainable development in land use planning policy. It has also served to highlight the flexibility of interpretations of sustainable development and outlined the policy framework for the research. Subsequent chapters explore interpretations of sustainable development in the LBS UDP (Chapter Six) and the plan making process itself (Chapter Five and Chapter Seven).

Existing Literature and the Research Gap

This chapter now turns to a review of academic research. It starts by reviewing literature on sustainable development and the land use planning system before moving to review studies of policy making processes in particular at local government level. A chronological approach has been adopted for the literature review of sustainable development and the land use planning system to emphasise trends and relate the academic research to the Government activity described above. It is traced from the early 1990's when work on the early stages of the UK *Strategy on Sustainable Development* (DETR 1994) began in earnest. However, academic research on sustainable development and planning was sparse at this time. Marshall (1992) wrote on environmental sustainability in London's UDPs. He drew three conclusions: that the majority of plans demonstrated an explicit awareness of sustainable development issues; that approximately one-third of plans translated this into specific statements; but that there was little or no link between these statements and mechanisms to ensure sustainable development moved beyond policy to action in practice. Winters (1994) examined the role of the planning system to deliver sustainable development from a legal perspective concluding that there was potential as yet unexplored. Bruff and Wood conducted evaluative research into development plans in metropolitan areas (Bruff and Wood 1995, Bruff 1997 doctoral thesis). At this point, it was notable that the body of research on sustainable development and planning divided and the predominant strand took a focus on

the environmental appraisal of development plans in the form of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and later, sustainability appraisal at both local and regional levels. This is beyond the scope of this thesis but the focus on specifically defined tools and statutory mechanisms for implementing sustainable development was another impact of the ambiguity of sustainable development as a concept and signalled the development of new managerial mechanisms to support sustainable development. The literature on sustainable development and the land use planning system continued to progress but not so prolifically.

Wong (1998) assessed the planning techniques of the nineties highlighting the traditional role of planning as suitable to delivering the new sustainable development challenge. However, she also cautioned against unquestioning acceptance of older techniques in planning which she warned may prove detrimental to innovation and allow for repetition of past mistakes. Counsell (1998) identified broad academic agreement on the need to research how:

> "sustainable development can be operationalised, i.e. incorporated into [an] implementable and rigorous development plan" (Counsell 1998 p178).

However, he also identified a gap in the research and underlined emerging development plans and the policy formulation process including the Public Inquiry as key research areas. This is the focus of the current thesis. Counsell (1998) responded to a lack of evaluation on the application of sustainable development in development plans by developing criteria. These included the presence of key themes in the plans, the individual policy content and the procedures. Key themes included the use of overarching policy; environmental assessment; state of the environment reporting; and indicators and targets. Using these criteria, he reviewed twenty-seven County Council structure plans outside London and ranked them. He concluded that the better performing local authorities had a geographical and temporal bias in the South of England and made sustainable development visible at earlier stages in the plan approval process. He proposed that this may have been as a result of specific contextual factors, including the influence of formal regional guidance (SERPLAN's *Sustainability Principles* 1995). However, the reasons behind different

performance levels were not expanded upon. The thesis locates itself here, where most studies end and intends to explore the factors shaping the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy formulation. It takes account of contextual factors, in the form of the relevant policy framework, by exploring different interpretations of sustainable development both in policies for sustainable development as well as where sustainable development is highlighted in planning policy. In addition, the broader context of the planning system is taken into account in the form of local government experiencing a shift towards governance, explored in Chapter Two. Other policy issues are seen to exert influence, in particular the pressure for urban growth and public participation, both exemplified in the case study and discussed in subsequent chapters.

Counsell (1999) went on to undertake documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews with senior planners to identify the different approaches to operationalising sustainable development in the five best performing local authorities (Counsell 1999). He identified different interpretations of sustainable development coming from Government, developers, environmental and community interests. He concluded that the planning system:

> "probably provides greater scope for accommodating the resource protection [theme of sustainable development] than the socio-economic themes." (Counsell 1999 p50).

He pointed to the:

> "need and considerable scope" for "..further empirical data on the interpretation and operationalisation .... of sustainable development in development plans" (Counsell 1999 p52).

Indeed, subsequent research is summarised below and the current thesis intends to make a useful contribution to this debate. Spectra (UWE 1998-2000) was a transnational research project, including the UK. It examined and compared the capacity of planning systems to incorporate sustainable development in planning policy formulation and implementation. A key concern for Spectra was the influence of context in terms of factors that shape planning policy formulation. Spectra identified key contextual factors for the UK, these

included: underlying economic and geographic characteristics; the planning system itself; other policy issues which shape it (including the need for integrated spatial planning, pressure for urban growth, coordination of sectoral policies and Government performance targets) and; public and professional awareness of environmental issues. Some of these factors are present in the research and are discussed in subsequent chapters. They are also reflected in previous discussions on interpretations of sustainable development, in particular the underlying economic characteristic for short term demand-led growth.

As part of Spectra, Brown and Duhr (2000) explored the sustainability content of planning policy at the national level (all PPGs published before February 2001), regional level (RPG for South West of England) and local level (Bristol City Council's sectoral strategies on Nature Conservation 1991, City Centre 1998 and Local Transport 2000 and planning documents Local Plan 1997 and Draft Structure Plan 1999). Their findings indicated:

> "serious gaps in the coverage of sustainability by [national] planning policy..." and "..ongoing rivalry between economic competitiveness and environmental concerns" [at the regional level] (Brown and Duhr 2000 p257).

At the local level, they noted a "marked difference" between the statutory planning documents which gave a broad coverage of sustainable development and included sustainability indicators and the sectoral strategies which:

> "operationalise sustainability in a weaker and much more uneven way" (Brown and Duhr 2001 p257).

This led them to question "the notion of a policy cascade from the national level to the local level" (Brown and Duhr 2001 p258) and indicated that there were other factors at play on the local level which influenced the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. Uncovering the other factors influencing the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy is the aim of this thesis. Brown and Duhr's research confirmed the importance of different interpretations of sustainable development and pointed to the importance of the context of local planning policy and the policy formulation process (and the interactions between them) as key factors influencing the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy.

Hales (2000) conducted a questionnaire based survey of local planning authorities in England. He generated a:

> "status report outlining the contemporary influence of sustainable development on the specific process of development plan preparation [and the land use planning system's]...actual and potential abilities to both facilitate and constrain the advancement of sustainable development through the preparation of statutory development plans" (Hales 2000 p200).

He concluded by identifying "areas of potential opportunity" including public participation, LA21, partnership building, environmental appraisal, data gathering, resources and guidance. He also identified a number of constraining factors, the most significant of which were lack of resources and lack of understanding and commitment from elected members (local Councillors) and other departments. But this begs the question of how these potentially constraining or enabling factors are mobilised at the local level to respond to sustainable development.

Bruff (2000) presented a review of UDPs for all 36 English metropolitan district authorities outside London, conducted in 1995. The review discussed the contested nature of sustainable development and established an operational definition to inform the survey, based on twenty-nine policy directions specific to planning. Whilst it found that UDP's covered the whole spectrum of issues, the "quality of attention" varied greatly. Not surprisingly, considering the traditions of land use planning, the "built environment and rural land" received the best quality of attention but so did "natural habitats and biodiversity" whilst "energy issues and issues of land, air and water quality" were not high on the UDP agenda at the time. Counsell, writing in 2000, noted the increasing importance of energy conservation over the five-year period but raised concerns that biodiversity, rated as good in 1995, did not feature so highly by 2000. These findings led Bruff to conclude that "certain issues and areas of policy concern" are better accommodated by the planning system than others - an indication that the planning system does not offer a level playing field for sustainable development. To respond to these weaknesses, both Bruff (2000) and Counsell (2000) recommended partnership working with other Council departments or

external bodies like the Environment Agency to respond fully to all aspects of sustainable development. Conversely then, a solution to what first presented as a major weakness for sustainable development in planning policy, actually fits very well with the joined-up thinking and doing approach advocated by sustainable development. Bruff concluded:

> "The results from this survey question the basic applicability of sustainable development as a suitable paradigm for the development of planning policies" (Bruff 2000 p262).

In contrast to the Government's view of planning as traditionally suited to delivering sustainable development through an integrated spatial approach, Bruff's findings indicated that the "holistic and wide ranging concept" of sustainable development was not something which the planning system could easily cope with and that it:

> "therefore requires a more comprehensive management framework than that offered by the planning system alone" (Bruff 2000 p262).

Land use planning was relegated "as a necessary but insufficient ingredient" in ensuring sustainable development at the local level and Bruff went on to expand that:

> "It is necessary in the sense that planning is still one of the most important powers exercised at the local government level, and therefore needs to be in line with the general aim of sustainable development. However, it is insufficient in the sense that local authorities cannot rely on their development plans to meet the demands of sustainable development in its fullest sense" (Bruff 2000 p263).

Rather than question the remit of the development plan and the process by which it is made, Bruff pointed to the need for an overarching strategy which would:

> "allow development plans to complement other social, economic and environmental initiatives and so work towards common objectives or targets" (Bruff 2000 p264).

Several mechanisms were proposed with potential to do this including LA21, Local Authority Eco-Management and Audit Schemes (Levett 1996) and local

environmental auditing (Barton and Bruder 1995). However, these mechanisms are all non-statutory and dependent on time-limited funding. This thesis notes their relative absence in the case study and the lack of a strong contender for this role, beyond planning policy.

Whilst from the preceding discussion it is clear that there is some valuable research looking at sustainable development and planning, the existing literature pointed to some clear gaps. On the whole these related to the difficulties encountered by the reality of multiple interpretations of sustainable development and the challenges this posed for research. Amongst the literature reviewed on sustainable development and the land use planning system, the challenge of multiple interpretations of sustainable development was reflected in the dominance of content analysis of planning policy. There are two problems with this approach.

Firstly, undertaking a content analysis requires a set of parameters to measure policy against. As we have seen, there can be a multitude of interpretations of sustainable development and in the same way a multitude of criteria for measuring the sustainability content of planning policy. A more useful analysis focuses on the processes behind undertaking such reviews, whatever the criteria used. A focus on process allows identification of a full range of contextual influences expanding beyond the formal influence of policy to include informal influences, norms and the potential for change. These three dimensions are not discrete elements and do not operate in isolation; they may, be accompanied by other contextual factors, or have a reflexive impact upon one another. It is these factors and their relationships that this thesis aims to reveal. That said, this thesis does benchmark the incorporation of sustainable development through a content analysis to locate the research in local circumstances, but it uses existing criteria rather than devising a new set based on the researcher's own interpretation of sustainable development.

Secondly, whilst content analysis of planning policy is used in this thesis for researcher familiarisation, research which stops at this point holds little scope for institutional learning for sustainable development. The research reviewed above gives surprisingly scant space to such processes. This may be because

some of the challenges to sustainable development are self–evident and constantly recurring in planning policy – lack of resources being a classic example. It may be because there is little potential for addressing these underlying processes, as they are too complex to identify succinctly. This thesis intends to reveal the realities. The reality of sustainable development involves ambiguity, multiple interpretations and resulting complexities that require research theories and methodologies able to acknowledge and cope with this reality. These are introduced in the following chapters.

Policy Studies

Now this chapter explores relevant literature on policy studies to highlight issues that may arise from the research focus on the policy making process. Hogwood and Gunn (1984) identified and placed into ten categories[15] the every day usage of the word *policy* to clarify the "many points of departure and...many different reasons" (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p13) for research on policy. The most relevant usage for this research is clearly that of policy as process but what Hogwood and Gunn highlighted is that the policy making process is made up of a series of specific decisions (or even non-decisions), so immediately the basis for decision making becomes important to the research, and will be discussed in Chapter Two.

Hogwood and Gunn (1984) adopted a focus on the policy process which they identified has having different stages, summarised in Table 3 below.

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[15] Label for a field of activity for government intervention/involvement; Expression of general purpose or desired state of affairs; Specific proposals; Decisions of government; Formal authorisation; Programme; Output; Outcome; Theory or model; Process. Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p13-19

Policy studies (knowledge *of* policy and *of* policy process)			Both	Policy analysis (knowledge *in* the policy process)			
Study of policy content	Study of policy process	Study of policy outputs	Evaluation	Info. for policy making	Process advocacy	Policy advocacy	
						analyst as political actor	political actor as analyst
FOCUS OF EXISTING LITERATURE - STARTING POINT OF THESIS	THESIS FOCUS	LIMITED MATERIAL pertaining to previous UDP			CASE researcher *IN* POLICY PROCESS		
Chapter 6	Chapters 5, 7	Chapter 4			Referred to in Chapter 3		

Table 3: Types of Public Policy Making adapted from Hogwood and Gunn (1984 p29)

The research timeframe meant that the implementation and outcomes of the LBS UDP were not part of this thesis, so in Hogwood and Gunn's terms the research is located within the field of policy studies as it focuses on knowledge of policy content and knowledge of the policy process itself. It is the study of the policy process which presents the most opportunity for this thesis to contribute to the research on sustainable development as there is little focus on the process of incorporating sustainable development in the literature to date. As Chapter Four outlines, the research was able to use the evaluation of the previous UDP policy as a starting point, though the material was limited in quantity and nature. Due to the nature of the CASE award the researcher did enter very occasionally into the field of policy analysis when asked to provide specific information on either the process or content of policy. This pertained to the sustainability assessment of the UDP discussed in Chapter Six and other smaller pieces of work discussed in Chapter Three for their methodological implications (policy analyst as political actor discussed in terms of action research).

As Hogwood and Gunn (1984) outlined in their research, the planning policy formulation process in LBS followed the standard range of planning activities within the plan making process summarised as the identification of issues,

leading to policy formulation, requiring implementation, through to a process of review and evaluation, in a cyclical process, as shown in Figure 2 below.
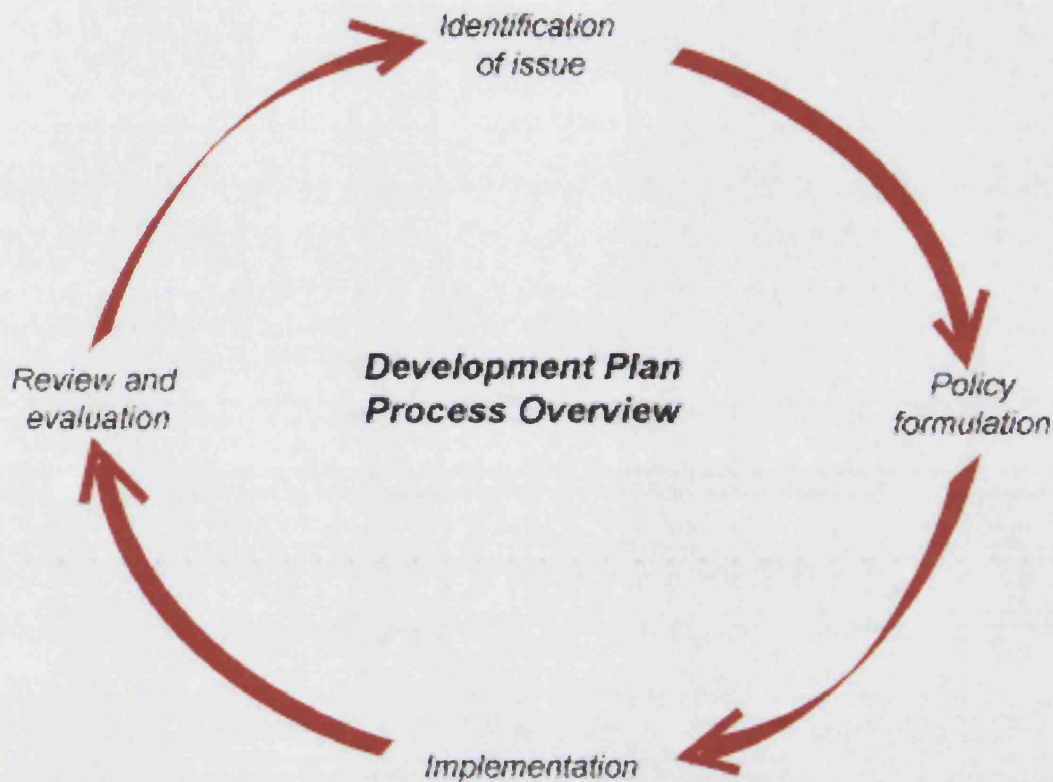
Figure 2: The Cyclical Process of Unitary Development Plan Activities

This took the form of very specific formal stages of the plan making process with specific dates and periods for consultation, redrafting and seeking approval from Government, highlighted in the banner below.
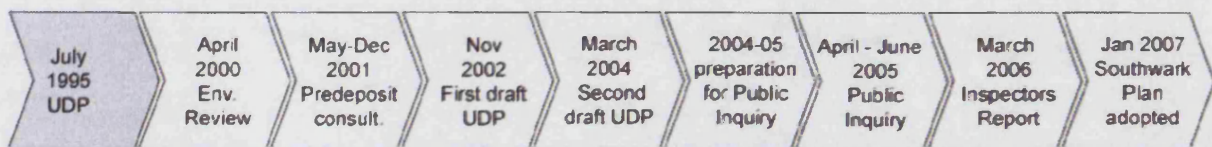
Hogwood and Gunn (1984) discussed a range of issues visible to varying degrees in the various stages of policy making and which the researcher took into consideration in examining the policy making process. Those of particular interest to the research included the impact of timing. This took several forms including the influence of political priorities which meant that issues with immediate impact became the focus, Hogwood and Gunn warned "foresight is not rewarded" (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p35). Political overtones did not just refer to party political issues in LBS but also to internal and professional issues.

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Timing also came into play with the practicalities of policy making when sufficient time was not available for policy makers to prepare background information or other items not formally included in the policy making process. They also warned of unequal access to the policy making process and made recommendations which the methodology has attempted to follow to always identify who is not accessing the process. Their studies showed that the informal attitudes of policy makers from the perspective of career rewards and experience were a prominent feature and this often influenced the criteria used to examine an issue (p91) leading to politicalisation along informal lines. They also pointed to the centrality of context as an influence stating that:

> "...an understanding of the larger policy requires some study of decisions both preceding and following" (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p19)

the making of those decisions as well as establishing the influence of:

> "events and the larger environment [if they] have forced a particular policy direction upon the agencies of government." (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p20).

With this in mind, Chapter Two explores the broader context of local government and Chapter Four presents a summary of the historical context of the case study.

Policy making has thus been defined as an arena for government intervention, where formal guidance and then authorisation is given to specific plans. But Hogwood and Gunn also pointed out that those outside the formal auspices of traditional government (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p19) may also contribute to the policy making process either through formalised participation procedures or by informal lobbying and other actions. Similarly, Barrett and Fudge (1981) explored the relationship between policy and action (or implementation) and one of their conclusions was that implementation involved "interaction and negotiation over time". They crucially stated that implementation starts with the policy making process and they criticised the literature for assuming a top down or policy centred perspective which ignored the scope for officials to informally influence policy making. Similarly, Lipsky (1980) studied "street-level bureaucrats" whom he defined as interacting:

"directly with citizens in the course of their work and who have substantial discretion in the execution of their work..." (Lipsky 1980 p3).

Although planners who make planning policy do not interact with the public in the same way as Lipsky's social workers or teachers, they do none the less experience "analytically similar work conditions" (Lipsky p6) and shape the social and political context in which the public interact with planning policy. This in fact leads the research to summarise that the public encounters planning through both the planning documents and the policy officers who write them and form part of the plan making process. Lipsky argued that:

> "..the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively become the public policies they carry out." (Lipsky 1980 p67)

Lipsky also pointed to some potentially common work pressures within the institutional setting which included: limited time and information; cost constraints of obtaining information; lack of understanding; working with uncertainty; pressures for frequency and rapidity of making decisions. Importantly, Lipsky highlighted the virtuous and viscious cycles of learning by doing via new leadership which signals new rules and therefore new actions. This has its parallels to the research focus on the ways of thinking and the ways of doing within the plan making process.

This thesis therefore aims to focus on the policy making process to identify the influence of factors beyond the formal policy imperative for sustainable development. The policy studies literature has provided substantial inspiration and detail with plenty of considerations for the empirical arena and to inform the methodological design of the thesis. However, it does not offer a clear theoretical framework to enable the specification of factors beyond the formal policy imperative in the planning policy process. A theoretical framework will be refined in Chapter Two which is able to capture the scope for officials to informally influence policy making and the informal pressures to which they are subject. These include timing, political priorities, professional and personal issues, access to decision making, participation and context. These pressures may not be visible in the formal policy making process but are present in

institutions and are a recurring but overlooked element influencing policy making for sustainable development in the literature reviewed.

Conclusion

This first chapter has outlined the research focus on the plan making process in LBS and identified the geographical basis of the research which seeks to explore the plan making process and its potential to contribute to a "sustainable city". Reviews of both the policy documents and academic literature at the start of the research process have provided both substantial background information and a sound foundation for the research context. The new policy goal of sustainable development has been introduced, highlighting its contested nature. This chapter has demonstrated the flexibility in interpretations of sustainable development by highlighting different policy interpretations using Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretations. This policy review shows that interpretations of sustainable development are strengthening in relation to civil society, institutional arrangements, sectoral integration and policy instruments. Policy documents at the international, European and national and regional level have significant impact on the local implementation of sustainable development. International policy documents have identified the local government level as a key site of action for sustainable development and given the planning system particular responsibilities for achieving sustainable development. The essentials of the UK planning system have been outlined including interpretations of sustainable development in central Government planning policy and guidance documents.

An examination of the literature on planning and sustainable development has revealed a focus on the content analysis of development plans. The policy studies literature gives a useful view of the methodological issues of examining the policy making process and a clear commonality in the role of institutions and individuals within them. However, neither bodies of literature provide an analytical framework to enable enhanced understanding of the factors influencing the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. A dual research gap has been identified through reading of the existing literature and can be filled in two ways. Firstly by looking in detail at the policy making process behind the content of planning documents. Secondly, to do this in a

way that enables a view beyond the formal policy imperatives for sustainable development to other factors that may influence its incorporation in planning policy. A theoretical framework that has potential to do this is identified next in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER TWO:
THE NEW INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, there is pressure from international, European, national and regional policy for the established land use planning system to respond to the new goal of sustainable development. The response to this challenge is explored through the local planning policy formulation process for the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) in the London Borough of Southwark (LBS).

On the one hand, there is the new formal policy goal of sustainable development discussed in Chapter One, but the research questions the notion of simple policy cascade and hypothesises that there is something beyond the formal policy imperatives which influences the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy. Sustainable development does not fit easily into the existing planning paradigms, commonly based on demand-led growth, and is a contested concept (as discussed in Chapter One). This implies some form of interpretation by those incorporating it into local planning policy. On the other hand, there is the established land use planning policy arena. Sustainable development, as a policy objective for planning and, in spite of its contested nature, puts pressure on established local government and local planning processes to adapt and change. Broadly speaking, such change involves a shift away from predominant 'ways of thinking and ways of doing' towards new 'ways of thinking and ways of doing'. This thesis starts from the premise that the relationship between sustainable development and local planning policy is reflected not only in the content of development plans but also, and perhaps more importantly, in the ways of thinking and ways of doing in local planning policy formulation.

The thesis argues that there are two common misconceptions in the existing literature on sustainable development and planning policy and this has dominated research in the field: the first misconception is that the contested definition of sustainable development is a (or the) key influence in its

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incorporation in planning policy; the second is the notion of policy cascade as being a formal, standardised and therefore neutral influence on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. This thesis contends that there is something beyond the content of the local planning policy document (the focus of much research), and something beyond the formal aspect of the policy making process that exerts influence on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. The interpretation of sustainable development per se and the formal 'rules of the game' do not fully determine the processes and practices for the incorporation of sustainable development, which are shaped by other factors. The thesis aims to explore the range of factors, beyond the formal, shaping both the interpretation and subsequent incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. The research hypothesises that these influencing factors are to be found in what can be broadly termed the 'ways of thinking and ways of doing' in local planning practice and that these are embodied in the institutions of planning practice. This chapter now examines how the literature on institutions and on governance may be able to frame the in-depth exploration of how planning policy is incorporating the new policy goal of sustainable development.

The academic literature on sustainable development, planning policy and policy research explored in Chapter One does not provide an analytical framework to enable an understanding of the ways of thinking and ways of doing in local planning policy. This chapter now takes a broader view of the literature in this area and takes into account the case study situation. This chapter aims to show how an analytical framework transferred from the concept of New Institutionalism (NI[1]) may have the potential to analyse and expand upon our current understanding of how sustainable development enters planning policy. NI appears to offer a lens to be able to identify the factors beyond the formal policy imperatives discussed in Chapter One as it:

> "is less interested in describing formal structures and constitutions and more in unearthing the deep structures and rules of the game which influence political behaviour" (Rhodes 1995 p43).

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[1] NI is used from now on to refer to the theory of New Institutionalism.
[3] For further insight, see Ostrom 1999 amongst others

The potential of NI to explore and explain both the interpretation and incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy is tested in the research. The thesis seeks to contribute to the theoretical framing of sustainable development, to assist research which can support policy makers in ensuring the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy.

Overview

Chapter Two highlights the role of institutions in bringing about sustainable development. It locates the research within the context of local government characterised by emerging institutional processes known as governance (Rhodes 1996, Kohler-Koch 1996, Newman 1996, Clarke and Newman 1997, Pierre 1998, Pierson 2000, Jessop 1997, 2000, Stoker 2000, Newman 2001). This is important as the research explores factors embedded within this context of governance. Both the emerging managerial and participatory governance context also shape the incorporation of sustainable development in land use planning and are outlined in relation to NI. Both embrace the informal aspects of government and demonstrate or require flexibility. The extent of this adaptability determines the extent of stability or change within an institution and impacts the basis for decision making. The complexities of the empirical arena are outlined and these result in a dynamic research arena that requires a theoretical framing able to contain the extent of such complexity in a balanced way. The research starts from the premise that institutions matter (following traditional institutionalism) but that equally important is the role of individuals, context and the interactions between them which form the basis for actions and decisions on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy (following NI). NI is discussed as the theoretical framework because it is a theory capable of allowing exploration of a wide range of multi-faceted aspects of institutions, individuals and the context within which they are embedded. This promises to provide insight into and explanation of how policy is formulated, focusing on what planners actually do. This chapter discusses the benefits and challenges of testing the NI approach. It sets out how institutions are defined according to different approaches to the study of institutions. This involves discussion of the traditional institutionalist approach, usually focused on the formal aspects of institutions, of which NI is an extension. NI contains

many varieties but the research follows the work of Vivien Lowndes (1996) on processes of change in local government. Accordingly, NI is explored in relation to three key analytic criteria that Lowndes identifies as characterising institutions. These three dimensions of institutions encompass informal as well as formal factors, change as well as stability and norm-governed as well as strategic action. They are embedded within the context of local government that is experiencing a shift towards governance. This takes on particular importance and makes the NI approach particularly apposite as it is capable of embracing change in the form of emerging new ways of thinking and ways of doing.

Sustainable Development, Institutions and Institutional Change

Put simply, institutions are particular 'ways of thinking and ways of doing'. The research starts from the premise that institutions therefore matter to the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy. More precisely, institutions are:

> "persistent and connected sets of rules and practices that prescribe behavioral roles, constrain activity and shape expectations" (Keohane 1988 p381).

The presence of rules defines an institution. These can be formal or informal, embodied in established law, custom or practice. Formal rules (mainly based on written agreements) are consciously designed whilst informal rules are not neatly specified but are part of habitual action. What distinguishes them is that they are informally agreed and followed voluntarily and collectively. The influence of these informal rules has a major impact on institutions but the impact is reflexive as the formal aspect of institutions in turn shapes the evolution of informal rules. This reflexive interplay happens automatically and for the most part without conscious effort or awareness, routinised and deeply entrenched below the surface of everyday activity. This allows the institution the appearance of stability, or what Clarke and Newman term 'settlements' (Clarke and Newman 1997) whilst at the same time the institution is in continuous gradual evolution. Equally, such embeddedness acknowledges that whilst institutions are collectively devised by individuals, institutions in turn influence individual action, either imposing constraints or providing opportunity,

for example in the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy. This has been the focus of academic debate around the concentration and dispersal of power and how this impacts institutions and changes for increased governance (Jessop 1997, 2000 and Clarke 2000, 2004). Indeed the NI framework is able to encompass a broad view of the dispersal of power within the case study. This includes for example, issues around professional and lay knowledge, local politics, local community demands and aspirations, business or land developer aims and the inclusion or exclusion of these and other stakeholders in the planning process. The planning arena has been the subject of studies on collaborative planning (Healey 1998) and also what happens outside of formal power structures such as those for public participation activities. These studies highlight the role of informal activities such as networks and lobbying (Hillier 2000 and Phelps and Tewdwr-Jones 2000). All of these issues are underpinned by power relations and within each stakeholder perspective, power is understood differently and exercised differently, sometimes being overt and sometimes more covert and harder to trace. For the thesis, the issue of power is looked at in terms of how the institution constrains or supports the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. The different dimensions of institutions identified shortly, exert different constraints or supports which therefore limit or expand the incorporation of sustainable development.

Giddens and Beck in particular use reflexive modernisation as a concept to explore the workings of modern government and get to the roots of such institutional interactions (Giddens, Beck, Lash 1995). They see these interactions and the power that underpins them as a result of broader economic and social pressures including the complexity of pervasive (or wicked) issues like sustainable development, which challenge existing ways of thinking about governing and lead to new ways of doing. Such a view means that institutions operate on different levels. At the same time they are part of the broad social fabric, but are also the medium through which day to day decisions and actions are taken (as procedures or processes). Whilst institutions are often embodied in organisations, like LBS, they are also embodied in social phenomenon like the planning policy formulation process and indeed the UDP itself, as well as

various working practices. The common denominator is that institutions are characterised by:

> "durability, legitimacy and distinct codes of conduct" (Lowndes 1997 p55).

These factors are mutually reinforcing which means that institutions become embedded spatially and temporally. Thus they acquire value beyond contemporary individual preferences and beyond their immediate functions. For example, changes in the political makeup of LBS (potentially every four years) and (more regularly) in officer staffing have relatively little sway on the institutional raison d'etre or long term strategic direction of LBS. None the less, they may impact how things happen on a short term or at the tactical every day level. This view of institutions as both human products and social forces, at the same time, means that whilst they are stable, they are not static and undergo constant reproduction and change in a dynamic and evolving arena, providing opportunity for new ways of thinking and ways of doing. This is the contemporary definition of institutions which mirrors the evolution of institutional theory, discussed shortly.

The focus of the research is on the local government level, also the target for the Labour Government's *Modernisation Agenda* as outlined in Chapter One, aiming for a:

> "new local government [which] requires new ways of working" (Blair 1998 p16).

Sustainable development in local government therefore operates within a context of institutional change, in the form of an emerging governance defined and discussed later in this chapter). Literature on methods of governance in the public sector (Newman et al 1996 and Newman 2001) therefore become of interest. For Newman, this has resulted in a managerialist approach which tends to "manage problems" (Clarke and Newman 1997 p159) and links with the growth in New Public Management (NPM) explored later. At the same time, the expansion of the actors involved in processes of governance means that the role of civil society groups and other bottom up influences become much more

important in the formal processes of government. The organisational literature also provides a view of the practicalities of the implementation of governance highlighting the key role of stakeholders as strategic actors with power beyond the formal exercise of their duty (Lipsky 1980). Informal institutions have been explored by other authors who have sought to find out how informal institutions become formalised over time (Helmke and Levitsky 2004 review some of this work and much of it surrounds transition in Eastern European countries). However, this thesis focuses on a formal policy process and seeks to find the informal and other influences which shape the incorporation of sustainable development within that process.

The overarching theme in the discussion of these broad areas is that of institutional change. This can be manifested in new institutional forms and new ways of operating which may (or may not) support the goal of sustainable development (Evans et al 2004). Sustainable development by its very nature requires and/or may bring about institutional change. Links between modernisation, governance and sustainable development are beginning to be made in practice (Carter and Petty 1999 explore the role of the Community Strategy) but the potential has not yet been fully explored. This relates to the interest in institutional transformation of recent years (Albrechts 2005) and attention to processes of institutionalisation, the notion of institutional thickness (Amin and Thrift 1994) or the thickening of horizontal structures of governance and institutional design (Alexander 2005) for building institutional capacity for local governance. Amin and Thrift (1994) identified four factors which build institutional thickness: a strong institutional presence; a high level of interaction; well-defined power structures (for coalitions, collective representation and minimisation of unwanted behaviour); and perception of a common agenda. Although intended for use on a regional or local level these factors may also be seen to exert influence on the planning policy process. In particular, high levels of interaction relates back to the aspect of policy and sectoral integration used to assess interpretations of sustainable development in Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretations.

Thus, while local government offers an important arena for pursuing sustainable development, what is already happening in local government offers multiple challenges, making for an interesting if not complex and dynamic arena to research. In light of this, the work of Vivien Lowndes on processes of managerial change in local government is pertinent (Lowndes 1996, 1997, 1999, 2001). This is all the more so, because Lowndes acknowledges the empirical complexity of examining changes within local government and takes a NI approach. Lowndes draws on NI to develop a "middle range theory" to provide a framework for the analysis of such complexity (Lowndes 1996). Rhodes also identifies NI as a suitable theoretical tool for the analysis of new management practices, decision making processes and interactions within and without local government. However, he bemoans the fact that NI "does not constitute a single and coherent body of theory but comprises many streams of argument and debate." (Rhodes 1995). Whilst this makes the use of NI less straightforward in many ways, it is indicative of the very complexity which NI is attempting to contain. Lowndes sees the different streams of NI as a source of strength in the application of the theory. The various streams of NI are referred to briefly in this chapter but the aim of the research is not to find a 'one size fits all' form of NI but to start with the complex reality of the case study setting and use NI as a broad conceptual framework within which to explore this complex arena.

Research into sustainable development in local planning policy formulation involves the exploration of a complex array of interactions. It involves the study of: formal management and decision making processes (rules); and how these are implemented (procedures and working practices); interactions internally - within the Council and externally, with the citizen, through public participation (stakeholders and networks); and the various factors which shape how these interactions occur (context); both formally and informally and; based on strategic or norm-governed actions and decisions. In particular, the capture of potential informal imperatives for change - perhaps in the form of 'change agents' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992) is essential. The dynamic shape of the local arena is a key factor to consider in constructing a theoretical framework. There are multiple stakeholders and layers of interactions. These are being

constantly reshaped by, at two extremes, demands from central government above and from the public below, as well as a whole range of contextual factors. The research will identify and explore the forces shaping the incorporation of sustainable development into planning policy. It is important that a theoretical framing can encompass aspects of the macro and micro, without favouring one over the other. This requires the ability to remain in the dynamic, constantly shifting, middle ground where the only certainty is that of constant change, or uncertainty. Lowndes termed this the "meso mess" and used NI to successfully explore the realities of local government (Lowndes 1997 p49).

The Institutionalist Approach

In order to clarify NI and its suitability for the research, it is important to look briefly at its origins. NI sprang from a broader institutionalist approach most commonly used in political science and public administration. This focused on the study of institutions for the delivery of public services (Hood 1988 p504). As a result, many descriptive accounts have been written about institutions as a subject, covering the rules, procedures and formal organisations of government. However, description provides only one element of the possible explanations and analytical generalisations which this thesis aims to expand upon. Similarly, Hales used an institutional approach in his work on sustainable development and planning as a way of going beyond "the fine detail of policies" (Hales 2000) to "identify both general patterns in the form and content of planning practices and the forces that drive them" (Healey 1997 p22 quoted in Hales 2000). He referred to Friedmann's perspective that

> "the manner of deciding will influence what it is one *can* decide and thus is bound to influence the results of the decision." (Friedmann 1967 p32, original emphasis, quoted in Hales 2000).

The aim of this thesis is to focus on the 'forces which drive' decisions on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy formulation.

The methods of (old) institutionalism were summarised by Rhodes (1997). These focused on three styles: the descriptive-inductive, describing and analysing the past to explain the present, exemplified by public administration studies; the formal-legalistic, studying written documents, exemplified by

constitutional studies; and the historical-comparative, understanding institutions by comparisons with others (Marsh and Stoker 1995 p50). These three styles represent a "state-centred approach" (Nordlinger 1981 p1) and have led to calls to include the study of informal and contextual aspects, or a "society-centred" approach. Theories have emerged to respond to these calls, for instance, whilst organisational theory generally maintains a focus on formal dimensions, one branch of study looks at the impact of context on organisations. Known as policy network theory it gives major emphasis to the study of stakeholder behaviour (Rhodes 1997). However, such an emphasis on context or socio-centric approaches swings the pendulum too far in the opposite direction for the purposes of this research. It neglects the role of the institution itself as an autonomous actor (March and Olsen 1984 p734) and the complexity of examining institutions, stakeholders and context together, and their interactions, as they occur in reality.

Whilst traditional institutionalism produces valuable material, it is unable to explain why there is often a gap between formal policy statements and the practice of government (Blondel 1976 p20, 68 and 127). The contested nature of sustainable development which allows for multiple interpretations (as outlined in Chapter One) also points to the importance of a combination of factors to explain the causes and consequences of institutions. These factors include formal policy statements, but also extend to encompass informal values and norms, the influence of context and the reflexive nature of interactions between and within these aspects. These various elements have been mixed together to influence the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy formulation and NI is tested for its capacity to embrace the reality of this complex mix.

New Institutionalism

Table 3 below shows that the origins of NI in a traditional or 'old' institutionalist approach embrace the more visible, formal aspects of institutions and remain key in NI. However, the newness of NI is signaled by giving equal regard to: the less visible, informal and contextual aspects of institutions; their non static or dynamic nature; the impact of norms and values and; expanding the basis of

decisions from purely strategic to norm-governed. The potential for influence may also come from interactions and reflexivity. These strengths of NI are well suited to the research case study and promise to reveal a range of factors which receive scant attention in existing research on sustainable development in local planning policy. The institutional arena is described using polar dualities, for the sake of clarity. These are explored fully below, but first, it is key to note that reality is rarely located at the polar extremes of such dualities, but rather in the middle ground where they meet. Hence NI is often referred to as a "middle ground theory" (Lowndes 1996 p183). Goodin's (1996) view of NI as capturing the "moving spirit" is thus particularly appropriate. The unavoidable use of dualities tends to take on a normative aspect which implies that one is better than the other, but whilst the research recognises this, it does not support such a distinction. Lowndes used movement along analytical continua (with the polarities at either end), as a framework for negotiating this. There are many streams of NI, however, they are all united in two critical points: they all agree that institutions matter and are the best way of examining and explaining policy; they all disagree with "atomistic accounts of social processes" (Lowndes 1996 p181), the main criticism of the traditional or 'old' institutionalist approach.

OLD INSTITUTIONALISM / INSTITUTIONALIST APPROACH		NEW INSTITUTIONALISM
Institutions Matter		
Focus on elected local government: > - official, formal, internal arrangements >	extended to look **additionally** at	< Broader, informal, external influences (business/community etc) < Interactions within/between local government/external
Descriptive basis, combination of methods, highly atheoretical		Attempts to make theory explicit (but remains abstract)
Atomistic accounts (unable to offer explanations) Institution divorced from impact of time and space		Exploration of complexity/dynamism only way to gain explanations Recognise embeddedness of institution
"under socialised accounts of social, economic and political behaviour" (Lowndes, 2001, p1953)		The double life of institutions as human products and social forces
Role of formal and informal rules		
Formal arrangements >	extended to	< Informal arrangements, often provide raw material for formal
Focus on organisational arrangements/procedures >	extended to encompass	< Sets of informal but agreed rules which determine < behaviour
Role of change and stability		
Holistic (whole systems) view >	refocused to	< Disaggregated view allowing recognition of local/regional < institutional importance
Static view unrealistic, so >	movement to embrace	< (less comfortable) messy reality/organic/dynamic/flux/transition
Strategic and norm-governed actions and decisions (in creating or sustaining institutions)		
Submerged values >	exposed to become	< Explicit values and critical value stance
Institution is not independent, neutral or one way, it is > reflexive >	encompassing	< Interactions between individual/institution, consideration of institutional role of constraint or facilitation, < Embeddedness in context
Polar dualities not realistic - Middle ground melds so neither one is readily separated out - Critical Realism as epistemological stance		

Table 3: The Evolution of Old Institutionalism to New Institutionalism (based on Lowndes exploration of varieties of New Institutionalism, 1996)

Having identified the potential of NI to capture the reality of the case study, there are some barriers to its use which are discussed next. The diversity of NI may well have developed as a way of coping with the increasing types of institutional form, a case of institutional fragmentation mirrored in the theoretical fragmentation of the study of institutions. However, this theoretical diversity has led to confusion, particularly on application to research, which is the main weakness of the theory. Many academics have tried to clarify NI and this thesis draws on the work of Lowndes in this respect. Other clarifications of NI were also considered, but it is beyond the scope of the research to do more than outline these and indicate their unsuitability. They are summarised in Table 4 below and include Hall and Taylor's (1998) identification of three schools of institutionalism: historical; rational choice; and sociological institutionalism and Peters (1999) expansion to add normative; empirical; interest representation; and international institutionalism.

Whilst this identification of broad types of NI is useful, it also highlights the problem with this diversity as some of the identified types seem to overlap in parts promising integration but others contrast starkly and do not sit comfortably with each other or the focus of this research. None of them alone, or combined, were considered to provide an approach suited to embracing the complex reality of the case study. Debate, for the most part, focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and where potential for integration lies. NI is variously discussed in relation to its different strands, its different authors or its different applications, however, as DiMaggio and Powell point out, there are almost as many types of NI as social science disciplines (DiMaggio and Powell 1991). Historically, the theory of institutionalism has been largely ignored as many commentators have pointed out (Marsh and Stoker 1995). A traditional research focus on the facts:

> "led to a neglect of the general framework within which these facts could acquire meaning" (Easton 1971 p89).

Some of the 'old' institutionalists were able to address the lack of theory by locating research within a multi-theoretical frame and drawing on a plurality of

methods. Rhodes (1995) also points to the rationale of NI as being multi-theoretic linking back to Finer's institutionalist approach of the early 1970's (Marsh and Stoker 1995 p48). Indeed, a multi-theoretic approach using a plurality of research methods remains the trend in responding to the challenge of applying NI.

Types of New Institutionalism (NI)	Main Issues
Normative Institutionalism "Good government" based on changing norms Compatible with RCI	Individual is not autonomous actor / Individual choice conditioned by institutions (structuralist view) Institution normatively embedded / Normative basis for individual behavior (values not rules eg: democracy) Return to institutional and collective roots
Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) Associated with institutional economics Compatible with normative and empirical institutionalism (for good and efficient institutions)	Institution as aggregation of individual actions Institutions channel individual action (they do not impact individual choices) Institutions merely determine basis of exchange between utility maximising rational actors Individual rational choice to solve collective action problems (via deliberate design (rules) / voluntary agreement (norms)
Historical Institutionalism Traditional approach - integration possible	Institutions historically embedded / History major influence on institutions /Institutions exist across time Long range perspective – path dependency / Limited capacity to explain and predict (future)
Empirical Institutionalism NPM, Social Capital, Governance In opposition to individualistic RCI (it is collective)	Different types of institutions impact on performance Legitimacy comes from this functionalist approach or logic of efficiency Structures and institutions matter (though not always a direct correlation with performance)
Sociological Institutionalism In opposition to RCI as institutions embody values, interests, identities, not based on rational choice	Focus on organisation (form and process) and persistence of institutions Institution has autonomous role in determining appropriate behaviour Legitimacy comes from this logic of appropriateness No clear distinction between institution, norms, values and culture – they are reflexive
Interest Representation Institutionalism Urban Politics, policy networks (Rhodes 1997)	Institutions are informally constituted but stable Roots of policy network analysis / Focus on relationships, consensus and coalition building Political parties, interest groups regimes, partnerships
International Institutionalism	Regime analysis allows consideration of values, as well as power and conflict Sees international regimes as institutions

Table 4: Types of New Institutionalism (summarised from Hall and Taylor 1998 and Peters 1999).

Of most use to the research is the work of Lowndes (1996, 1997, 2001), who firstly identified a core set of propositions in the form of six vignettes of NI that, she claimed, provided the basis for a multi-theoretic approach to the study of institutions and institutional change in her work on local government. These are outlined in Table 5 below for interest, yet again, the vignettes themselves are not of direct concern to the research, rather it is how Lowndes developed and implemented the vignettes that is important. Lowndes argued that NI is well placed to explore the complexities of local government because of its very diversity:

"the variety of positions, sometimes competing and sometimes complementary is actually a source of strength." (Lowndes 1996 p181).

Whilst the study of institutions is not new, NI signals a theory capable of according a new balance to a range of potentially influential factors operating within institutions. This allows a new and more precise definition of institutions as:

"formal rules, compliance procedures and standard operating practices that structure relationships between individuals in various units." (Rhodes 1995 p52).

A NI approach therefore accords an equal role to institutions, stakeholders and context. This means that institutions are recognised as:

"arenas for contending social forces, but also as collections of standard operating procedures and structures that define and defend interests, they are political actors in their own right" (March and Olsen 1984 p738).

NI takes institutions (the organisation, policies and processes) as a starting point for analysis but also explores the informal side of institutions (identified in stakeholders and their values and attitudes) and the influence of context. The interactions between and within these various elements are explored. NI is adopted as a theoretical framework for this research as it *specifies and explains* the characteristics of institutions and the dynamics of institutional change.

NI VIGNETTES	Baseline Elements	Main Focus
MYTHIC INSTITUTION How does change occur, how does sustainable development enter?	Mythic/symbolic elements of organisation's environment are incorporated into its structures, cultures and outputs, forming templates for organising and conferring legitimacy through sameness.	How to organise. Eg: professions, public policy frameworks, prevailing ideologies
EFFICIENT INSTITUTION What about sustainable development?	Located firmly in time and space with specific practical demands. Dependent upon personal relations and networks of relations. Aiming at efficiency.	Efficacy and meeting demands of work to an economic rationale.
STABLE INSTITUTION Is change possible at the same time as stability?	Institutions are incentive structures for stability	Stability
MANIPULATED INSTITUTION What values underpin? What are the drivers?	Over time manipulation occurs to serve private/individual interests.	Manipulation according to rational choice.
DISAGGREGATED INSTITUTION Why does institutionalisation occur?	Policy community/ network approach. Looks at conditions for new arrangements for policy making. Institutionalisation, or routinisation of relations between governing and non governing stakeholders.	Continuity and stability through institutionalisation of relations
APPROPRIATE INSTITUTION How is change explained? Do norms result in change?	Procedures and structures are not neutral but embody values, norms, interests, identities and beliefs. Rules are sustained by trust but do not confer stability as their interpretation and application can change incrementally.	Providing order in political life. Norms provide logic of appropriateness for behaviour. Appropriate institutions always ambiguous/in flux.

Table 5: New Institutionalism Vignettes (summarised from Lowndes 1996)

Dimensions of Institutions

Through the development of the six vignettes, Lowndes was able to take a new and different approach to exploring the various streams of NI, in an attempt to address the lack of theory and identify the reasons for such diversity. She noted that the main differences between the varieties of NI lay in the role they accorded to three main dimensions of institutions (Lowndes 1997 p180). Lowndes subsequently developed her vignettes of institutions into an approach:

> "in terms of movement along ... analytical continua" (Lowndes 1996 p181).

She thereby reduced emphasis on the different streams of NI. She introduced three dimensions of institutions, formed of recognisable peripheral dualities and presented them as a scale focusing on mobility and movement in the centre, or middle ground. This was a major development in clarifying the theory of NI and is useful for the research in terms of discussing NI and focusing theoretical questions and methodological approaches around these three key dimensions of institutions. The three dimensions of institutions she identified are the formal and informal, the stable and dynamic and the strategic and norm-governed. This thesis requires a theoretical framework capable of embracing the range between these dualities and the dimensions of institutions therefore offer a very promising theoretical framework.

Table 6 below, based on Lowndes local government work (1997), highlights the three general dimensions of NI which form the key focus of the research: the formal/informal, the stable/dynamic and strategic/norm-governed action. It identifies the value to the research of a focus on these general dimensions of NI. Whilst they are summarised here as three distinctive dimensions, they are inextricably linked and interact with one another.

Characteristics of institutions	Value for research
Formal and informal	Formal rules and networks expanded to include informal rules and networks norms and values
Stable and dynamic	The potential for change which may include institutional capacity and/or learning
Strategic and norm-governed behaviour	The basis for making decisions as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour

Table 6: Characteristics of Institutions and their Value for the Research

Not surprisingly, the machinery of government is steeped in norms and as such, it is often difficult to isolate formal institutional rules from norms or policy from administration. Hogwood and Gunn (1984) pointed to the potential confusion between the formal rules devised to regulate activity and the informal rules or patterns which emerge from shared norms and values as that activity is repeated. This was expressed in the circular relation between the formal and informal by Storper (1997). Although this was with specific reference to the economy, it is useful to this discussion. He pointed out that the informal is important not only in it's own right but also in relation to the formal. On the one hand, institutions generate regularity and precedent in the formation of rules which govern stakeholder behavior. On the other hand, this formal aspect of the institution can only function successfully if its rules and procedures are integrated into the informal norms and values, which also play a key role in influencing behaviour (Storper 1997 p269). This highlights the importance once again of the informal aspect of institutions in the evolution of the norms which shape activity and therefore play a role in determining policy formulation.

Rules are also important as they provide "... information on the probable future behaviour of others and on the nature of sanctions for non compliance" (Knight, 1992 p17). Rules also indicate what is appropriate behaviour (March and Olsen 1984 p39). Rules play an important role in any form of change. As activity is repeated, new rules, based on informal practices are created and embedded into the institution. This is also known as learning by doing. Whilst formal rules

can be rewritten and changed fairly quickly, informal rules change more gradually. Informal rules may feed the development of and sustain formal rules, but equally may contradict or undermine them (Knight 192 p172). This is a key consideration for the sustainable development agenda which demands that current behaviour patterns change. There is a gap between the intention of policy directives and continuing behaviour. This thesis hypothesises that the gap may be explained by the interactions between such formal and informal rules. NI has great potential for explaining policy formulation processes by allowing identification and analysis of the different values held within different parts of the same institution (Bulmer 1998 p363). These informal influences influence how formal rules and guidance documents are followed.

The traditional institutionalist approach focuses on the formal aspect of institutions but NI explores beyond this to encompass the informal dimensions and the reflexive relationships amongst them which embody cultural norms. March and Olsen define institutions as a mix of informal and formal elements, at the same time acknowledging the influence of context as:

> "the routines, procedures, conventions, roles, strategies, organisational forms and technologies around which political activity is constructed. We also mean the beliefs, paradigms, codes, cultures, and knowledge that surround, support, elaborate and contradict those roles and routines." (March and Olsen 1989 p22).

NI offers the opportunity to analyse what Burch and Holliday (1996) termed the "disposition of an institution". This institutional disposition indicates the institutional capacity for learning or change to occur. The institutional disposition or culture accumulates and embeds (Granovetter 1973) norms and values. The process is reflexive as institutional elements play a role in defining values, norms, interests, identities and beliefs (March and Olsen 1989 p17) which then become embedded or institutionalised as part of the formal and informal rules which make up the disposition of the institution. Rules make some courses of action possible and others less likely or impossible. As such institutions can perform enabling and constraining functions. In this way they also embody patterns of distributional (dis)advantage, providing opportunities for some actors but constraining others (Knight 1992 p9). As a consequence,

institutions are not neutral because they condition the access of stakeholders to the processes they frame. This creates bias or restricted access for influencing the policy process, sometimes referred to as the 'uneven playing field'.

Formal and Informal

One of the major dimensions of institutions is their formal and informal nature which is particularly important to this thesis. Formal aspects of institutions consist of visible (usually written), agreed, and consciously produced elements like contracts, hierarchies, legislative and decision making procedures. These can be termed as shared rules. Lowndes defined institutions as:

> "a set of rules shared by members of a particular organisation, community or society" (Lowndes 1997 p192).

Informal rules are unconsciously created but are also recognised or shared by a group. They manifest themselves in routines, customs, traditions and conventions that are part of habitual action (North 1990 p172). So institutions come about either through deliberate design or voluntary agreement around a set of rules (Hall and Taylor 1998 p16). In their entirety, formal and informal rules (re)create what North (1990) defined as "the rules of the game" in a society, in other words, its institutions. Rules operate at different levels to guide and constrain action and can be formal or informal (Ostrom 1986 p21). They are sustained by trust in informal shared values and mirror collective interests, identities and norms. In this respect the informal plays a major role in contributing to stability.

Thus the NI framework recognises the importance of both formal and informal rules. This is particularly relevant to planning policy where formal rules, such as legislation, exist to frame and guide working practices, such as the preparation of policy. However, formal policy guidance and rules do not fully determine the processes and practices for undertaking the task, which are shaped by norms.

Strategic and Norm-Governed Basis for Decisions

Norms evolve gradually over time, through repeated activity or learning by doing, they become embedded and have a significant impact on how policy evolves, is prepared and subsequently implemented. In addition, the spatio–temporal element of planning (located within a specific local authority and timeframe), means that working practices are shaped by specific norms originating at national, regional or local authority levels. In the case study this includes the strategic local government level – the London Borough of Southwark; the departmental level – the Regeneration Department; the unit level – the Planning Policy and Research Unit (PPRU); and the team level – the UDP team. Different levels may be distinct from each other and contain very different types of formal and informal rules and norms that have potential to influence different stakeholders in different ways.

NI enables the researcher to view strategic interests and/or norms and values as the basis for decision making and action within the institution. Traditional institutionalist approaches emphasise rational choice (this research takes this to mean strategic choice) as the basis of decision making. In brief[3], rational choice theory claims that decisions are rational because they are based on the intention of individuals to maximise gains, or be efficient. This view has its roots in an economic tradition that regards institutions as fixed and deliberately created by individuals to channel individual action. Some institutional economists like Veblen (1914, 1919), Myrdal (1970) and Commons (1924) criticised such a simplification and acknowledged the potential impact of other forces and the resulting complexity. Indeed, this research takes the stance that institutions are both human products and social forces in their own right (Grafstein 1988 p577) and NI embraces both. Strategic choice theory[4] (Friend and Jessop 1969) acknowledged the capacity for both stability and change and the uncertainty inherent in institutions by identifying three kinds of uncertainty and how to manage them. These were uncertainty about the environment, managed by research to expand knowledge; uncertainty about relationships, managed by participation and networking to understand the plans of other

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[4] The application of the Strategic Choice approach to Structure Plans was the subject of an extended action-research project between 1974 and 1976, funded by DoE and conducted by IOR, involving 19 County Councils (Hickling 1979).

stakeholders; and uncertainty about value judgements managed by political decisions (sometimes informed by participation).

Clearly strategic choice embraces complexity and the norm-governed basis of decision making and action. In fact, here norm-governed action is part of strategic choice. NI goes further and proposes that decisions and action are in fact more likely to be norm-governed and influenced by interactions and context in the form of social networks and wider frames of societal and cultural reference (DiMaggio and Powell 1991, Healey 1999). NI therefore allows a value-critical stance that acknowledges the influence of norms and works to make them explicit. Stakeholders are influenced by institutions and are seen to act not only according to their own values and beliefs but also as a result of social learning. This is of particular interest for sustainable development as it therefore follows that it is possible that institutions can be designed (Alexander 2004):

"in order to cultivate desired values within society at large" (Lowndes 2001 p1959).

Similarly, Sabatier (1999) saw action as shaped by institutions (institutionalised or formalised cultural values) or by norms (informal values which may become institutionalised). Sabatier (1999) acknowledged action based on the strategic or on advocacy coalition (informal preferences). For the purposes of the research, within the framing of NI, both strategic action, which may be functional, instrumental or useful (and may sometimes be fed by informal norms) and norm-governed action (based on norms and values) are important. This is because whilst it is strategic action which drives institutional change, it is informal norms which sustain an institution over time. So importantly, NI allows the examination of the role of norms and values in institutions, their role as the basis for decisions and the impact they have on the institution. Figure 3 below highlights the dimensions of institutions that NI allows to be embraced.
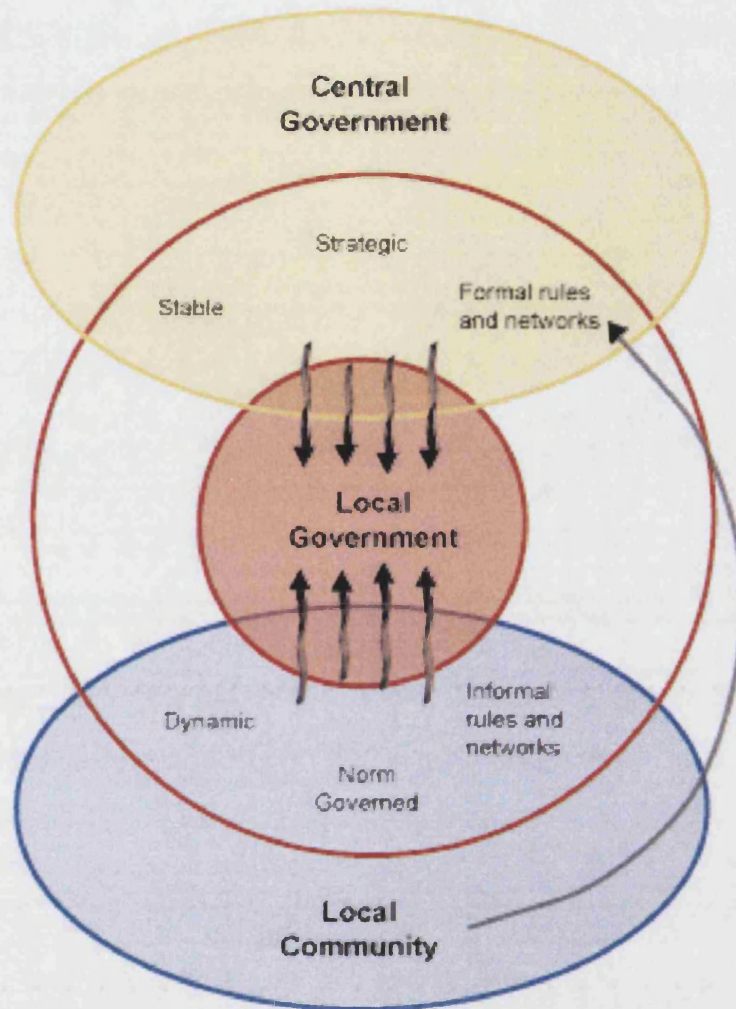
Figure 3: The Dimensions of Institutions

Stable and Dynamic

One of the defining dimensions of institutions is as stable and recurring patterns of behaviour. However institutions are not static, they have a dynamic nature and in fact, are never complete or certain and are in a state of constant change. NI allows the observation of the institution as it is in reality, in constant flux, with all its uncertainties and potential for change or stability. The nature and source of change abides in a process of interplay and interaction. This is largely dependent on the arena within which interaction takes place, so context becomes important. The results of interaction may support and reproduce or challenge and shift the current paradigm. Change occurs:

> "as a result of accident, evolution or intentional intervention" (Lowndes 2001 p1959).

The interplay between formal and informal is one such source of movement or change. This is because, under normal circumstances, the informal is more susceptible to new ideas and trends from wider society which then undergo transformation before they become norms and values of individuals and eventually become institutionalised in the shape of new formal rules:

> "routines, rules, and forms evolve through history-dependent processes that do not reliably and quickly reach unique equilibria; the institutions of politics are not simple echoes of social forces" (March and Olsen 1989 p159).

Even so, this ever changing 'institutional disposition' or culture provides some kind of stability through the constant accumulation of norms and values. In turn, this means that interpretation and application of formal rules are subject to influence and are equally likely to be sustained or changed. So, institutions undergo constant re-creation, but alongside this potential for change, they remain relatively stable over time. Change and stability are therefore different phases of the institutional lifecycle. In this respect, institutions can be regarded as processes; the journey as opposed to the destination is the focus of the action. Society tends to seek stability and certainty (De Botton 2004) and is less comfortable with constant change or a state of flux. Whilst there is a synergy between the legitimacy of institutions and their stability, there is also a synergy between legitimacy and the institution's capacity to be responsive and undergo change (sometimes referred to as institutional learning or institutional transformation, McLellan 2004). This is particularly relevant in light of sustainable development where it may appear that the current demand-led paradigm is no long appropriate and the values behind it may be eroding, expiring and being replaced. The change in norm-governed dimensions is always slow moving but there is institutional design as Alexander (2005) pointed out when norms can be read and institutional change either predicted or institutions designed to achieve certain policy goals more effectively. This relies on a speeding up of the opportunities for learning within an institution. As shared norms or ways of thinking change (Mintzberg et al. 1998), then institutional learning takes place in relation to achieving institutional goals. The reflexive element of institutions and individuals leads to institutional learning which Argyris and Schon referred to as double-loop learning (Argyris and Schon

1978, Argyris 1999). This captures the creative or entrepreneurial actions of individuals within the institution. By identifying the existing institutional perspective or institutional disposition the research may be able to discover if sustainable development can be incorporated into planning policy more effectively. Some parts of the disposition of institutions may now be outmoded or "bankrupt" (Albrechts 2005) yet a lack of review (Wong 2006) or capacity for institutional learning may result in "institutional lock-in" or "institutional inertia" (Pierson 1996) or even "trained incapacities" (Veblen 1914 and 1919). Whilst institutional learning is a relevant field of study, NI still offers a broad framework in which to discover if these learning opportunities are a reality within the case study.

NI Framework

NI allows the research to embrace dimensions of the institution ranging from formal to informal, stability to change, strategic to norm-governed. This in turn allows the exploration within the case study of formal and informal rules and networks, norms and values, institutional capacity for change and the exploration of the factors influencing decisions and actions to meet the challenge of sustainable development. These three general dimensions of NI form the basis for empirical study and drive the methodology, discussed in the following chapter.

To summarise, from the reading of the NI literature, a number of important elements of institutions have been identified. In order to focus the research, Lowndes' dimensions of institutions have been selected to frame the case study exploration. The definitions of these dimensions as they are used in the research are summarised next.

The formal dimension of institutions relates to the consciously produced, agreed rules which describe collective interests and normally provide regularity or stability, though they are fairly quick to change. The formal dimension of institutions is usually found in written documents such as legislation, procedures and minutes. The informal dimension of institutions relates to the rules which

are unconsciously created yet recognised by the collective as they mirror shared cultural norms and values. As such they are norm-governed. They are constantly but very gradually shifting and are susceptible to new trends. The informal dimensions of institutions are normally less visible and found in habitual action so they may be manifest in working practices, values and interests. Stability is supported by the formal rules and procedures described above but also by the informal shared norms and values and how both of these are communicated to others. It is also to be found in training, education and communications. The dynamic dimension of institutions refers to the potential for change visible in review, evaluation and institutional learning as well as in training, education and communications. The strategic dimension of institutions is generally based on maximising efficiency and can therefore be found in the more formal dimensions. Equally, the norm-governed dimension of institutions is influenced by interactions and context and can be seen in social networks and meetings. These definitions are summarised in Chapter Three, Table 9 as they are the starting point for developing the research methodology. Clearly, however, the context of the research is also important to consider when discussing the theoretical framework and represents one of the factors shaping the three dimensions of institutions. This is explored next.

Governance as Context

The case study of local government in LBS firmly operates within a context of institutional change and is characterised by emerging governance patterns (defined next). These contemporary conditions of governance make NI an even more relevant theoretical perspective as governance is distinguished by a broadening of conventional government roles to encompass and 'formalise' the informal and in itself affects the ways of thinking and ways of doing in an institution. There are two different aspects which distinguish the role of local government (Keating 1991): to provide democratic and participatory mechanisms for managing political conflict; and managerial and organisational mechanisms for resolving collective needs and interests through service production and delivery. The *Modernising Government White Paper* (DETR 1998) specifically addressed the problems associated with the administration of

cross-cutting or overarching policies such as sustainable development and the two aspects of local government identified by Keating. The *Modernisation Agenda* aimed, on the one hand: to improve public participation in policy formulation (via public participation, greater stakeholder involvement and more 'joined-up thinking'); and on the other hand, to facilitate public administration in policy implementation (via the use of indicators and other monitoring and measuring mechanisms). Its overarching aim was to encourage policy integration and cooperation across traditional administrative boundaries. The *Modernising Government* White Paper (DETR 1998) identified the key barriers to this as being a provider-centred (not user-centred) policy focus; lack of incentives, skills and capacity within government; and the vertical structure of funding and accountability. It aimed to provide central guidance on effective leadership; improving cross-cutting policy making (through the involvement of relevant stakeholders); skills training; flexible funding; external scrutiny; and an appropriate role for central Government.

The *Modernisation Agenda* also implied more target setting and performance measurement and included the introduction of a number of new organisational and management practices. At the central Government level this took the form of Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs), whilst local authorities are seeing more elements of their work fall under the powerful Best Value (BV) performance system and the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) system. As befits the Government's penchant for a third way, these aspects of managerial governance are accompanied by a move towards greater participatory governance, encouraging partnership working not only across Government but also with the private, voluntary and community sectors. These moves have been accompanied by policy initiatives such as the *Community Strategy* and *Local Strategic Partnerships*, (under the *Local Government Act 2000*). Implemented at the local authority level, they have potential to influence and change the structures and methods of working at the local level. The case study is embedded within such institutional changes, both those specific to local government as well as to particular policy imperatives such as sustainable development and planning. These influence how institutions respond to the

new policy goal of sustainable development and how it enters the policy arena at the local level as Figure 4 below shows.
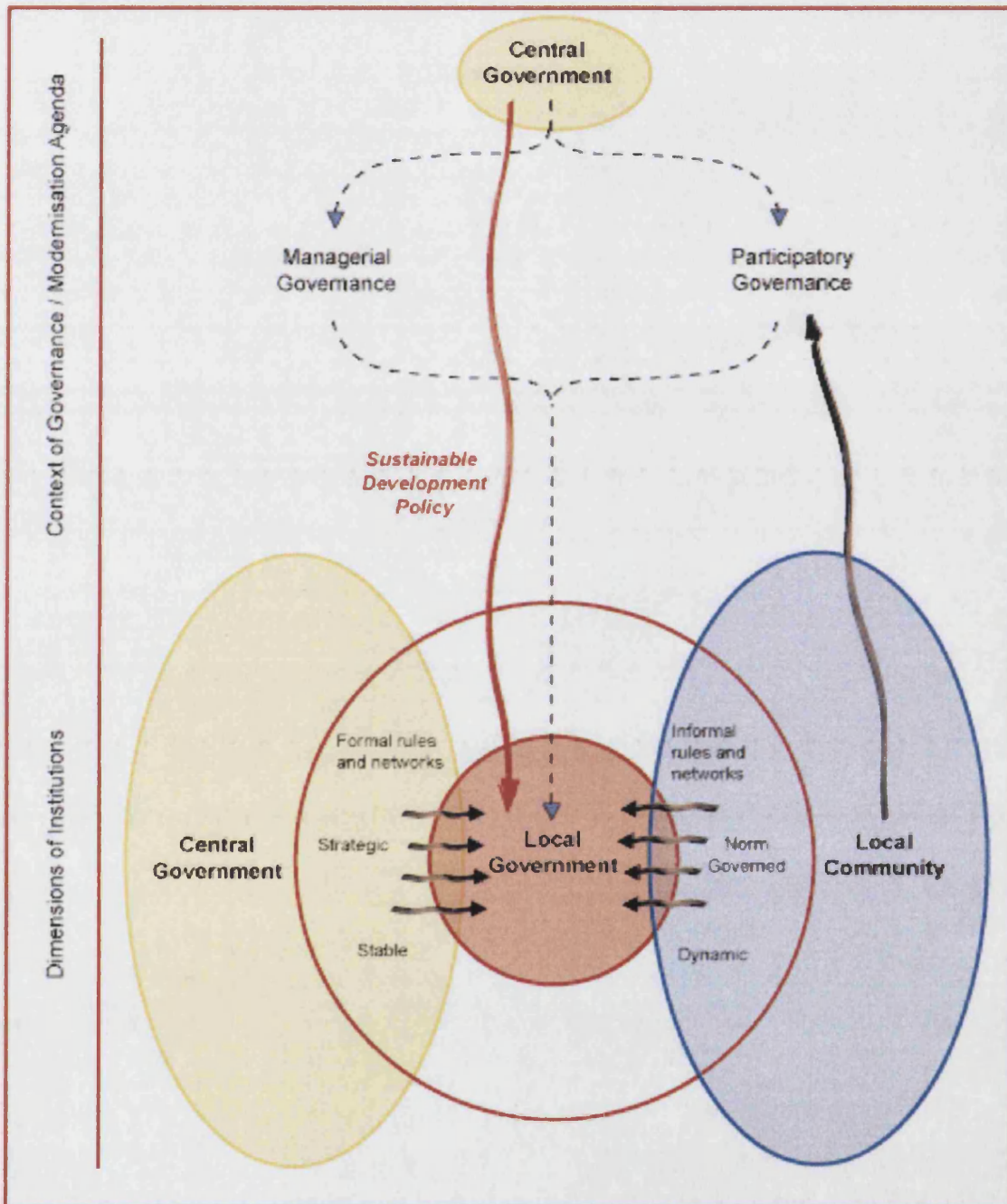
Figure 4: Local Government Case Study Embedded in Emerging Context of Governance

Since governance describes the contemporary circumstances of local government activity, this makes the NI framework discussed above particularly apposite for two reasons. On the one hand, governance forms the context to the research, which is fully encompassed through the use of a NI approach. On

the other hand, the conditions of governance are characterised by a highly dynamic arena experiencing a shift (or transformation) from government to governance. Within this dynamic, the relationships between the formal and informal are changing and their potential for change is dependent upon actions which may have a strategic or norm-governed basis. NI can be sensitive to these aspects of governance and the context in which they are embedded. Governance exemplifies some of the very issues that NI is capable of embracing. Although Rhodes criticised the term governance for being imprecise (Rhodes 1996 p652), it is clear that it refers to processes of regulation, coordination and control and focuses on the relationship between the public sector and civil society. Pierre saw it as a:

> "process in which local political institutions implement their programmes in concert with civil society actors, and within which these actors and interests gain (potential) influence over urban politics" (Pierre 1998 p5).

Governance concerns itself with an important element of the research, representing the integration of formal and informal rules. It refers to the analysis of the character of polity (or the pattern of rule) and is a still emerging phenomenon. It is indicative of a move from top-down government, where there are clearly defined tiers and an arm's length relationship to external influences, to a horizontal expansion of government, blurring the division between government and external influences. External influences are thus internalised or institutionalised or formalised to some extent in groupings or partnerships. The government role becomes one of partner and mediator (Kohler-Koch 1996 p371) focusing on the informal policy community and norms which link (to a greater or lesser extent) to the formal institutions. This move fits with the views of some researchers who believe that the informal networks, rather than the formal, hold most significance to policy making (Dowding 2000). Kohler-Koch believed that the ongoing transformation of governance affects the role of institutions; the rules of behaviour; the patterns of interaction; and the level of action (Kohler-Koch 1996 p371). Pierson (2000) saw problems for governance, identified by NI. These take the form of bias or the uneven playing field (mentioned previously) and institutionalised norms within the system which in their extreme produce institutional "lock-in" or inertia (Pierson 2000), similar

to Veblen's trained incapacities[6] (Veblen 1914 and 1919). Rhodes goes further to point out that this shift to governance takes place for the most part in a new unknown arena beyond traditional formal structures of government (Rhodes 1997).

Pierre (1992) distinguished four models of urban governance, he pointed out that they do not exist as discrete types in reality and some are more relevant to some sectors than others[7]. Of most relevance to the incorporation of sustainable development in planning was his model of managerial governance. This model combined management and democracy – which Keating (1991) identified as distinguishing the role of local government. Accordingly, there was a focus on managerial and organisational mechanisms (managerial governance) and democratic and participatory mechanisms (participatory governance) which are also accorded an important role in sustainable development. These two forms of governance are not mutually exclusive, but do not necessarily work together without tension. NI is capable of tracking the different uses of both types and identifying the factors which enable or constrain their usage, either singly or combined. It is therefore worthwhile discussing these two aspects further in relation to sustainable development in land use planning and pointing out where NI is able to promote understanding.

Managerial Governance

At a national level in the UK, managerial governance has taken a particular form, that of New Public Management (NPM). The move to NPM was prompted by problems with ineffective policy implementation, inefficient service delivery, citizen mistrust of authority and financial cutbacks. All led to increased pressures on local authorities to improve and prove their performance. The result has been greater visibility of NPM at the local level. Peters referred to NPM as "generic government" (Peters 1998) as it is based on management being a non sector specific task. This alone challenges the highly departmentalised formal structures behind local government working and assumes flexibility and capacity to change. NPM can emphasise a market

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[6] Burke attributed the phrase "trained incapacity" to Veblen; however, no one (including him) could locate the phrase in a Veblen text. Veblen in fact used it to refer to problematic tendencies in business.
[7] Pierre's four models of urban governance are managerial, corporatist, progrowth and welfare.

based approach to service delivery where there is competition between service providers. The intention is to encourage effectiveness and efficiency along with value for money. This is balanced by the primacy of consumer choice or demand, intended to represent greater public participation and empowerment. The professional nature of local government management can then be demonstrated through decisions validating consumer choice. This is intended to result in increased trust in local government. In practice, however this is not easily or independently achievable.

The move to governance is not without its problems: professional management services are often contracted in at expense and lacking the local knowledge which is sometimes crucial in determining successful local implementation; some service providers know better than others the local political climate and act accordingly to gain competitive advantage; elected officials sometimes do not operate at arms length and influence management decisions – this is seen in the density issue described later; and the public is rarely willing (because of historical mistrust) or able (lacking capacity) to articulate demands, though training is increasingly provided. The issues of accountability and political control are particularly problematic (Pierre and Peters 2000). To overcome these problems, NPM practice has focused on two areas; the development of institutions or building of institutional capacity via institutional learning, discussed next; and the development of individuals both internally to local government through training and the use of policy tools and instruments, and externally to build social capacity through empowerment and engagement training, discussed shortly. Pastille (2002) in its study of sustainable development indicators at the local level identified the changes that NPM requires internal to local government. These include learning management strategies (from the private sector); new communication styles focused on cross-departmental working and decentralised or horizontal steering; the shift of responsibility and resources to either the lower government level (following the principle of subsidiarity) or the upper government level (potentially resulting in a "hollowing out"); an output or customer focus; and greater participation by lower level administration often referred to as horizontal expansion. These changes are intended to result in 'listening', 'responsive', 'learning' institutions, willing to

adapt and make decisions in different ways, with more effective and long lasting results. The effect of governance may therefore have a significant impact on local government and the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy.

The move towards governance, and NPM in particular, therefore raises some interesting issues. Such transitional periods require flexibility and adaptability, not only from organisations but also from a range of individual and collective stakeholders. Jessop (1997, 2000) and Stoker (2000) both analysed the potential for failure in the governance model and, once the practicalities of such a transition are outlined, it is easy to see the extent of the challenges to be faced. The need to incorporate new strategies, new roles, extend the range of stakeholders involved and learn new modes of communicating along different chains of command all raise questions at both the institutional and individual levels. The institution is required to reshape its structure whilst the individual is required to redefine working practices and modes of operating. As a consequence the basis of decision making also shifts. All of this needs to be carefully managed and implemented over time. Governance describes aspects of the local government issue that the research is interested in exploring and reinforces the appropriateness of the NI approach.

Participatory Governance

Managerial governance, proposes a move to new and more participatory ways of monitoring, steering and coordinating policy, in which the informal dimensions of institutions can be embraced and included. Participatory governance focuses on extended public involvement as participation. Jessop (2000) distinguished governance as a reflexive rationality for organising collective action, the rationality being that both parties gain from the interaction. Public participation has been a traditional concern of the planning system since the Skeffington Report of 1968, and has generally consisted of providing information to the public and consulting on public reactions to this (at the bottom of Arnstein's (1969) ladder of public involvement). However, such traditional methods have been criticised for being 'one-way'; a case of presenting a decision and defending it (decide and defend), rather than engaging in a two-way, dialogue.

The move to governance has provided opportunities for opening up the policy making process to wider forms of mutually beneficial public participation, yet there is little guidance on the form such public participation activities should take, which may explain why public participation is embraced in the case study as it requires and therefore allows innovation and creativity. Such participatory opportunities are based on a new view of citizenship as rights-centred (or user-centred), as opposed to service delivery-centred (or provider-centred), and enhanced public participation techniques. The new view of a rights-centred basis for public participation is important as it is founded in arguments for democracy and has a wider remit than the legitimisation or transparency of a specific policy making process. It represents the emergence of new norms. It has potential to instill new values into the broader policy arena, aiming to reduce conflict, increase public trust in local government and provide crucial information for the local authority in terms of values, preferences and local knowledge, otherwise hard to glean. Public participation, primarily recognised for assisting with policy formulation, is encouraged in parallel to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery. This means a meaningful process of public participation from the early stages of policy formulation to the latter stages of policy delivery and beyond into the longer term, for new policy formulation. In other words, public participation proposes public involvement in making and implementing decisions (Hill 1994) signalling an attempted shift from representative democracy to participative democracy. Following current trends, Parry (1992) thus defined participation as:

> "taking part in the processes of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies ... [seeking] to shape the attitudes of decision makers to matters yet to be decided ... [or taking] action in protest against the outcome of some decision" (Parry 1992 p76).

NI recognises that different groups within society may have very different value systems and this may influence their access to a voice in the decision making process. The ability to engage depends on a range of variables (such as age, gender, ethnicity, education and socio-economic status). Critically, the belief that an individual stakeholder's actions can make a difference to policy making is necessary. Practically, this requires full and assisted access by the public to information and skills training to enable and empower the public to engage

effectively. This includes increased empowerment for public participation in decision making and improved civil society structures and networks. Alongside the managerial and operational changes that NPM requires, Pastille (2002) also identified the need for increased public participation linked to motivation, education, training and empowerment strategies. However, time continues to be a constant influence on public participation, particularly as improving the planning system is often equated with speeding up plan making and planning decisions. Increasing social capital in this way is a long, challenging task, but one which a successful shift to participatory governance demands. In addition to individual attributes, public participation is affected by the overall extent of social capital in the relevant community. This refers to the extent and quality of networks connecting individuals in reciprocal relationships. Where social capital exists, it can support a virtuous circle whereby public participation strengthens these networks, constituting more social capital, in turn further facilitating public involvement (Rydin and Pennington 2000).

A common thread throughout many of the emerging policy trends is the need by central Government for greater public involvement to ensure more effective policymaking. Within policy for sustainable development this is highlighted in *Local Agenda 21* (UNCED 1992) which called for increased public participation highlighting the need for local authorities to educate, mobilise and respond to the public (UNCED 1992 para28.1). In addition, *Local Agenda 21* also urged consultative processes to achieve consensus amongst local authorities globally and at national and regional administrative levels too. The public participation agenda is not a new one and has for many decades aimed to make public policy more locally responsive and locally relevant. It advocates greater public involvement at every stage of the policy making process, via transparent and fully inclusive decision making processes and empowerment for a wider management and ownership of policy outcomes. Effective public participation requires strong partnership and alliance building and a commitment to joined-up actions as the next step to joined-up thinking. Traditionally, public participation engages in issues of concern to local communities and these can be classified broadly as *quality of life* issues. Sustainable development incorporates the importance of locally appropriate decisions for improved *quality of life* and *Local*

Agenda 21 (UNCED 1992) advocated the use of public participation, indicating the importance of engaging with specific groups such as young people, business and women. At the European policy level especially, sustainable development is increasingly aiming to promote a culture of shared responsibility, and involving stakeholders in decision making processes is vital to this. Access to information and support to take part in processes leading to environmental justice (Aarhus Convention 1994) are also closely linked with effective public participation techniques.

Public participation intends to be open to all individuals and groups outside the formal processes of policy making, however, such individuals and groups do not form a cohesive group with shared values. This recognition has lead to an exploration of public participation in terms of consensus-building (Innes 1995), deliberative democracy (Jacobs 1997) and collaborative planning (Healey 2000) all of which seek to generate a generally accepted shared vision from the interaction of diverse stakeholders. Special interest capture and the involvement of the 'usual suspects' are common threats to public participation. However, the aim is that the totality of interests is systematically brought into the participatory process, which means that competing interests are gathered into collaborative partnerships to deliver mutual benefit over a longer period of time.

NI identifies new institutional forms that are starting to emerge as a result of, or in order to facilitate such policy trends. For example, to enable this collaborative approach at the local authority level in the UK, partnership working is the focus of policies such as *Local Strategic Partnership* (LSP) and *Community Strategy* (outlined in Chapter One). These policies encourage local government to develop a new relationship with local communities, based on listening and responding to citizens. The Government introduced LSPs with the key aim of improving the ways that services are planned now and thus setting out a vision for the future. The LSP premise was that:

> "good services get even better if they are well coordinated. Life can be improved in all areas if local people's ideas are brought in to influence things" (Sarker and West 2003 p12).

However, it also acknowledged that the LSP is the start of a lengthy process and that "communities need help to get involved" (Sarker and West 2003 p12). The interactions between different policy stakeholders are changing to involve a wider number of stakeholders in a more in-depth manner throughout the policy making process and although slow, this influence is having an effect. One element of this process of change is participation from stakeholders external to the traditional policy making process such as the community, business and other groups. Traditionally socially excluded groups are being provided with extra support to enable participation and build social capital. Although local authorities are given initial responsibility to ensure that LSP's are set up, this is because currently they have the most suitable resources to do the job. If successful, this might change in the future as local groups build their own capacity. Often referred to as 'a network of networks', the LSP brings together plans for all the local agencies with as much agreement as possible in the form of the *Community Strategy*.

A *Community Strategy* is required by every local authority and is a joint (Council wide) policy document setting out a common vision and corporate agenda for the local authority. Mirroring the new approaches in planning, the *Community Strategy* is prepared (through the LSP) in conjunction with a wide range of stakeholders including key public sector agencies, voluntary and community sectors. It represents a practical way of coordinating Council policies and monitoring progress towards achieving the many objectives contained within them. However, it is not only externally, with the community, that such capacity building is required, often institutional structures mean they are ill-equipped to respond effectively to the results of public participation. Longer lead-in times are required to traditional participation techniques, often thwarted by constraints involving short working timescales (particularly in planning), budgetary considerations and scepticism about resulting actions (Innes 1995). Institutional change is implicit in such collaborative approaches that need:

> "a new way of working for many public sector agencies." (Sarkar and West 2003 p3).

Institutional capacity building is the concept used to capture this need to be able to change. A second element is the development of capacity to handle this change within existing institutional structures. Whilst local planners are given little specific guidance on the form of public participation to undertake, they have a statutory duty to consider all representations made to them, to prepare a statement of who they consulted and how this was publicised and how representations were resolved. Having conducted participatory activities, they then have to manage the outputs of these activities, which require more time and resources. These participatory governance issues usually involve the resolution of inherited and long standing conflicts and so are particularly challenging. Public participation does not automatically result in better policy making as the level of knowledge in the public domain determines the policy solutions favoured. Lack of knowledge on sustainable development and the impacts on the environment of everyday behaviour make participatory activities in this area even more complex. Yet for lifestyle changes to be possible there needs to be knowledge of public attitudes and behaviour.

Conclusion: New Institutionalism and Sustainable Development

To summarise, there exists a huge range of complex and often contradictory literature on NI, with a notable absence of practical application. Yet NI remains an attractive theoretical framework for research on sustainable development, in particular at the local planning policy formulation level which is located within local government. Figure 5 below is a summary of the main points discussed in Chapter Two which has demonstrated that a NI framework provides a sound framework to encompass the case study realities.

Central
Government

Local
Government

Formal

Informal

Stable

Dynamic

Strategic - governed

Norm - governed

Formal rules and
networks expanded
to include informal
rules and networks,
norms and values

The potential for
change

The basis for
making decisions
and taking
action

Qualitative
Methodology
+
in depth
Case study
(London
Borough
of
Southwark)

Institutional Learning

Institutional Transformation

Incorporation of SD
in planning policy

Figure 5: The Research Case Study and Theoretical Framing

As Figure 5 above shows, the local arena of planning policy formulation is made up of a complex range of factors with potential to influence the entry of sustainable development in planning policy. These include local government response to top-down direction for the incorporation of sustainable development (normally in the statutory form or as policy guidance from central Government), but also bottom-up influences from the public that the local authority serves (normally as informal values and attitudes, but also as more or less organised protest, in particular through lobbying local Councillors and also through increasing opportunities for participatory governance). Planning policy

formulation takes place within a context of local government change identified as a move from government to an emerging governance paradigm. So, the research also benefits from supplementing the overarching nature of NI with concepts of governance, emerging at the local level in the form of both managerial and participatory governance. The interactions within and among these factors and the extent of their influence (positively or negatively) on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy formulation are complex and continually shifting. This requires the ability to remain in the constantly shifting middle ground.

Following Lowndes (1997, 2001) this thesis draws upon NI and tests its appropriateness for exploring the incorporation of sustainable development in local land use planning. NI provides a broad framework for the exploration and analysis of such complex and multiple dynamics and is capable of exploring a full range of factors. It offers a bridge, uniting conceptual dualities which are otherwise hard to join and which need a mechanism for juxtaposition, in order to analyse and fully explore the practical realities of policy making for sustainable development. NI allows the analysis of institutions according to three key dimensions of institutions: the formal and informal, stable and dynamic, strategic and norm-governed. Such a framework allows the multiple dynamic dimensions of institutions to be explored in the empirical case study. These can be seen in the formal and informal rules and networks, norms and values, institutional capacity for change and the interactions between these factors which shape decisions on appropriate behaviour. This provides the basis of a methodological framework for applying the theoretical ideas and drives the research to pose three key research questions discussed next in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER THREE:

A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Introduction

This thesis aims to explore how sustainable development is incorporated in the local planning policy formulation process for the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) in the London Borough of Southwark (LBS). How sustainable development becomes part of established local planning policy leads to an examination of the particular ways of thinking and ways of doing in the plan making process and the thesis proposes that ways of thinking and ways of doing are embodied in institutions. With institutions as a starting point, the theoretical framework of New Institutionalism (NI) allows an exploration beyond the focus of much research on the content of policies (Bruff and Wood 1995, Counsell 1998, Bruff 2000, Hales 2000). Instead, the research takes three key dimensions of institutions as a theoretical frame to allow an exploration of the informal side of institutions, potentially visible within the formal local planning making process itself. These may include the informal networks and relationships, norms, values and interests of various stakeholders; the influence of the emerging shift towards governance and; the interactions between and within these various elements. In applying the NI framework to the exploration of planning policy formulation within LBS, the use of a variety of qualitative data collection methods is required that will allow for the exploration of the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions. These are explored next.

Overview

This chapter sets out a methodological approach best suited to uncovering the influence of the three dimensions of institutions on the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy. The background informing the research is outlined and the process leading to the creation of the research questions is described. An in-depth case study approach was proposed by the collaborative nature of the research as part of an ESRC CASE[1] award studentship with LBS as the partner. The implications of the CASE award

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[1] CASE (Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering) was one response to the 1993 White Paper *Realising Our Potential* on policy relevant research. The ESRC CASE award for doctoral research is a collaboration between a

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studentship and the suitability of a single case study approach are discussed. The role of the researcher within the research process is also considered. The case study itself is then introduced and contextualised by comparing key social, economic and environmental indicators across other London boroughs and nationally. A brief overview is given of the regeneration projects which attempt to improve the low ranking of many of the indicators. A discussion of the selected data collection methods covers the content analysis of the UDP and other relevant documents, observation of relevant meetings and events which formed part of the plan making process, qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and data analysis. Full accounts of the findings produced by these data collection techniques are presented in subsequent Chapters Four to Chapter Seven that adopt a chronological narrative to tell the story of the policy formulation process for the LBS UDP. Chapter Eight then brings together the themes of the theoretical framing to provide an overall analysis of findings and to draw conclusions.

The literature explored in Chapter One on sustainable development, planning policy and the study of the policy making process failed to provide substantial methodological clarity. Of most use was the work of Hogwood and Gunn (1984) on the study of policy processes which raised some procedural issues taken into account in this chapter. The literature explored in Chapter Two on NI and governance also provided little detailed or appropriate information to assist with the design of the methodology. Baxter and Eyles (1997) noted a trend in the "scant mention of the principles of good qualitative work" in social geography literature, putting this down to space pressure in the case of journal papers (1997 p509). This chapter aims to provide a thorough discussion, using specific qualitative methodology literature to inform the design of the single case study approach and to address some of the criticisms levelled at both qualitative and single case study research. The thesis takes the view proffered by Crang at the start of the research process that:

> "we have moved from a period when papers were prefaced with legitimations of qualitative work to a time when we are seeing debates within qualitative methods over establishing orthodox approaches and standards. (Crang 2002 p647)

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university department and a non-academic organisation to enable the PhD holder to gain academic and industry skills to prepare for a career in both academic or non-academic areas.

Accordingly, in spite of its narrow focus (discussed shortly), the research has attempted to meet the standards for qualitative research which are discussed in this chapter.

Background

Bryman (2004) notes three features of qualitative research: an interpretivist epistemology, a constructionist ontological stance, and the inductive nature of theory and research. These are outlined here as they informed the way in which the research was designed and carried out. In an interpretivist epistemology:

> "the stress is on the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants." (Bryman,2004 p266).

This approach allowed the research to capture a view of social reality as constantly shifting and emerging (stable and yet dynamic, as discussed in Chapter Two). This relates to both interpretations of sustainable development and the factors influencing how it is incorporated in the plan making process.

Ontology is concerned with the nature of social entities and the constructionist stance asserts that these entities and their meanings (as well as the dimensions used by the researcher to discuss them) are in a continual process of formation, negotiation and revision by social actors. This implies that both sustainable development and the plan making process are social constructs (as discussed in Chapter Two). Similarly, Hogwood and Gunn (1984), in highlighting issues around the study of public policy, summarise that:

> "Any public policy is subjectively defined by an observer as being such and is usually perceived as comprising a series of patterns of related decisions to which many circumstances and persons, groups and organisational influences have contributed. The policy making process involves many sub-processes and may extend over a considerable period of time." (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p23).

The plan making process in LBS can therefore be seen as the arena of interaction in which such social actors construct meaning.

Concerning the relationship between theory and research, the qualitative approach embraces an inductive nature, which relies on the former being generated from the latter. Whilst Chapter Two has discussed the theoretical underpinnings of this study, it did not result in the testing of a theory, but rather the identification and discussion of NI as a key concept to inform and frame the research. The discussion on NI in this chapter links theory to methodology by following Blumer's (1954) approach: using a concept to provide a general sense of what the research might explore and how the concept might be used to uncover relevant factors for the generation of new theory. Although this approach can be criticised for being vague, the NI framework has not been applied to the area under study and the research questions aim to reveal something new through such an approach.

Research Questions

The overarching aim of the thesis was to find out how sustainable development is incorporated in planning policy. The specific research questions were formed based on the review of related literature on sustainable development in planning and on conducting research on policy presented in Chapter One and the review of the theoretical literature presented in Chapter Two. To summarise from Chapter One, an examination of the literature on planning and sustainable development revealed a focus on the content analysis of development plans and the resulting interpretations of sustainable development which appear in them. A dual research gap was identified aiming firstly to look at the plan making process behind the content of planning documents. Secondly, to do this in a way that enabled a view beyond the formal policy imperatives for sustainable development and the notion of policy cascade as a formal, standardised and, therefore, neutral influence. This meant exploring beyond the formal influences shaping the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. The brief review of policy studies literature in Chapter One highlighted some key procedural issues to be taken into account in this respect and informed the methodology.

To summarise from Chapter Two, this thesis started from the premise that the relationship between sustainable development and local planning policy is reflected not only in the content of development plans but also, and perhaps

more importantly, in the ways of thinking and the ways of doing in local planning policy. This thesis is predicated on the belief that ways of thinking and ways of doing are represented in institutions, and sets out to explore the influence institutions have on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. A way of narrowing the research on certain dimensions of the many features of institutions was required. Lowndes (1997) noted three main dimensions of institutions: formal and informal institutional rules; change and stability within institutions; and strategic and norm-governed action (Lowndes 1997 p180). Definitions of these were fully discussed in Chapter Two and have been summarised below (see Table 13). These dimensions provided a focus for exploring the ways of thinking and ways of doing in local planning policy and were used to form the research questions and subsequent methodological approaches employed in the thesis.

Although a hypothesis is not used in the strictest sense of the term - to test the relationship between two variables - it is used as an informed speculation, based on the literature. As stated previously, it takes the form that there is something beyond the formal policy imperatives for sustainable development that influences the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. This is predicated on the following (repeated in this chapter for ease of reference):

1)   Ways of thinking and ways of doing in the policy making process influence the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy.

2)   Ways of thinking and ways of doing are represented in institutions.

3)   Institutions can be defined by three main dimensions:
   • formal and informal,
   • stable and dynamic, and
   • strategic and norm-governed.

As a result, the research questions set out to discover why the particular approach to sustainable development has been adopted by asking the following:

1) How is sustainable development interpreted in the UDP and related documents and in the plan making process; and

2) How are both the plan making process and the interpretations of SD within it influenced by the three dimensions of institutions (the formal and informal, stable and dynamic, and strategic and norm-governed)

3) To what extent do the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions influence the incorporation of sustainable development.

The research adopted a qualitative approach using a single case study to exemplify how one institution incorporated sustainable development in the planning policy process and this is discussed shortly in detail. First, there is a discussion of the overarching context of the research in the form of the particular circumstances of the CASE award which led to the adoption of this methodological approach.

ESRC Case Award

This research was funded by an ESRC CASE Studentship for doctoral award, referred to from now on as the CASE award. This was based on collaboration between LBS and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). The CASE programme is based on Government-led demand for knowledge transfer and:

> "'policy relevant' research to facilitate governmental decision making about complex problems like global environmental change" (Demeritt and Lees 2005 p129).

Demeritt and Lees (2005) discussed the origins of CASE collaborations, noting that this studentship was one of only four made during 2000-2004 to the "golden triangle" universities of Oxford, Cambridge and the LSE. The majority of the awards (173 out of a total of 335) were for partnerships with public bodies which, for the most part, were local authorities, as in this instance. They also noted that 28 percent of all awards were classified as human geography,

demonstrating the "appeal of geographical research" to the collaborating partners. (Demeritt and Lees 2005 p134).

The result for the current research was a clearly delineated single case study focus on the LBS planning policy formulation process. This had several methodological implications, the greatest of which, the adoption of a single case study approach, could have been avoided by a comparative case study using another London borough or local authority outside London. However, the CASE award was between LSE and LBS and LBS did not feel it appropriate to risk losing the focus on their own activities by bringing another partner into the study. Their interest was in finding out the detail of their own plan making process. A survey of the plan making activities of other London boroughs[2] found that none were at the same stage as LBS. The five that were ahead and had either just approved a new UDP or were about to do so had not taken a major focus on sustainable development at that stage. They felt they were under no obligation to do so either from formal requirements or from pressures from local Councillors or local community. Although they were happy to share information with LBS and the researcher, they had a tight schedule of work to meet to complete the accompanying Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) and prepare for the conversion to the new Local Development Framework (LDF). This data supported LBS' view of itself as "breaking fresh ground" (Interview 2) in its approach to the plan making process. This focus was the major restriction of the CASE award. The CASE award allowed a closer relationship with the target of the research than might otherwise have been possible, because the research topic was mutually agreed in advance between the two institutions. The issue of criticality and the positionality of the researcher is discussed later in this chapter. The aim was to deliver high quality academic findings as well as useful input to inform policy. This interactive, policy-relevant research stance facilitated an in-depth and case-specific analysis of the structures, processes and values of the LBS, a potentially sensitive area for any partner organisation.

Macmillan and Scott (2003) were both in receipt of separate ESRC CASE awards when they wrote about other practical "dilemmas" of such collaborative

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[2] Conducted by the author during the course of the research

research. They concerned themselves with three key areas: ownership, access, and confidentiality, each of which will be discussed in turn. Whilst Macmillan and Scott, comparing their experiences, identified differing levels of ownership[3] around four different contributory factors[4], this research benefited from high levels of trust and credibility developed in previous collaborative projects between the same key individuals within the partnership institutions. This meant that issues of ownership were negotiated and agreed early on. In addition, one of the key attractions of the collaborative project for LBS was the demonstration of willingness for external scrutiny, as this was seen to contribute to transparency and public accountability. This had the effect of removing any potential for disagreement around the ownership awarded to the researcher at the start of the undertaking. However, this in itself may have been an example of the "politicisation of knowledge production" (Imrie 2004 p700), wherein the collaborative relationship itself served purposes other than those set out in the scope of the research (transparency for LBS rather than academic pursuits). In any case, it was on this basis that the researcher was able to outline how the research was to be conducted.

The collaborative partner agreed to a full range of methodological approaches including documentary analysis, observation and interviewing a range of stakeholders (discussed in respect to access below). They noted the dual benefit of providing essential case study material for the researcher and of demonstrating transparency for LBS. LBS also identified early on three key outputs based on this approach: the results of the content analysis (detailed in Chapter Six); sharing of interim findings on understandings of sustainable development within the PPRU (Planning Policy and Research Unit) to inform their approach and; a platform on which to take forward monitoring indicators on sustainable development. This platform was subsequently extended when the researcher was asked to draft and present a set of indicators to senior LBS managers.

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[3] "*de jure* ownership, which remains with the researcher as intellectual property, and *de facto* ownership, relating to the different claims that can be made over a project in practice." Macmillan and Scott (2003) p102.
[4] "the nature of the collaborating organisations; the personalities involved; how we as individual researchers are perceived; changes over time." (Macmillan and Scott 2003 p102).

The latter point leads to issues of access in such a collaborative research project. Macmillan and Scott (2003) distinguished between "facilitated" and "structured access" (Macmillan and Scott 2003 p103) and the danger of selection bias from the collaborative partner. In this research, such dangers were countered by the use of 'snowballing' where, to avoid excluding any relevant stakeholders or documents, the researcher asked each respondent to identify others of relevance. Respondents included residents, officers, elected members, businesses and developers in LBS as well as regional planning experts. Indeed, access was not always facilitated or structured by the collaborative partner, and some access had to be negotiated. The main examples of this were the meetings with the Planning Inspector and with local developers. These proved to be difficult to organise, perhaps because of the nature of the research topic – sustainable development – being seen as a new (and possibly burdensome) addition to existing expertise and focus. In the case of the Planning Inspector, the academic nature of the research supported access which was latterly granted. In the case of the developers, there was an additional concern over the sensitive nature of their relationship with the local planners as the collaborative partner; the academic nature of the research made no difference to them. This attitude may have demonstrated stakeholder perceptions about the research study or the researcher. The collaborative element of the research seemed to skew access in this respect.

Three interviews with developers were secured but in each case as the interview got underway the respondent declined to proceed. (While it is possible they had previously spoken with one another about this, they declined to comment on this matter also.) These respondents facilitated researcher attendance at a meeting of developers on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning. Over 100 delegates were hosted by a third party and addressed by senior government officials. However, no individual or developer organisation was willing to comment, furthermore all wished to remain anonymous. The meeting organiser refused to comment on the observation account which summarised the aim of the meeting as minimising the impact of sustainable development on development. In contrast, community groups were keen to engage and allow access for observation as they welcomed the Council embracing transparency in this way. In addition, the researcher's existing

profile in the local community from having previously worked on grass roots projects no doubt eased access. Yet this again may have been an example of where perceptions of either the research study or the researcher influenced access. This is discussed later in relation to the positionality of the researcher.

The issue of access links to Macmillan and Scott's (2003) point on confidentiality, within which they rightly point out that in collaborative projects "it's a small world" (interview 3) and most key stakeholders can make relatively accurate guesses as to who has said what if direct quotes are used. This does have a positive attribute of assisting in triangulation of data, as most respondents knew about the same key issues. Special attention has thus been taken to maintain the anonymity of respondents.

The CASE award did enable researcher integration in the plan making process itself, which permitted the effective use of the case study approach and allowed access to the:

> "subjective accounts that one generates by 'getting inside' situations and involving oneself in the everyday flow of life." (Gill 1997 p43).

However, for these very same reasons, the CASE award may have had implications for methodological clarity in the form of the positionality of the researcher and action research issues, where the researcher may have effected change in the process under study.

The timeline in Table 8 below traces the UDP process in LBS over a ten-year period and identifies the researcher's role or position in relation to the LBS UDP. This started before the study period when, as an employee of London South Bank University in Lambeth, the researcher conducted telephone interviews with every elected member of LBS on sustainable development and a specific local initiative[5]. Later the researcher became a local resident of LBS and worked first as a consultant to, and then as a project manager for, a local voluntary sector organisation, CRISP. This involved monthly contact with the LBS Environment team and less frequent contact with LBS planners.

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[5] Percy and Hands 2002

Subsequently, the researcher held a post as a local authority research officer (Sustainable Regeneration Policy Analyst), within a major regeneration project within LBS, the Elephant Links Partnership, which worked closely with the LBS planners. This was part of a collaborative EU-funded project (PASTILLE) between LBS and LSE[6]. At the same time, the researcher was an active local resident being consulted on the key local issues being fed into the UDP documents. The role of the researcher was as an observer from the start of the CASE award in 2002. However, at several stages early on in the study period the researcher was 'pulled into' the process under study.

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[6] Rydin et al 2003

- July 1995 LBS adopted UDP and started activities for LBS *Local Agenda 21 Action Plan*

1998 Researcher interviewed all LBS elected members on SD[7] initiative

1999 Researcher became LBS resident/worked in local voluntary sector on SD issues

- January 2000 LBS published UDP *Environmental Review* (environmental appraisal)

Researcher employed as LBS officer researching SD in decision making, PASTILLE [8]

- May 2001 *The draft Southwark Plan - Southwark UDP Review Key Issues Paper*

Researcher Chair of a local Tenants and Residents Association

- September 2001 *Southwark UDP Review Local Issues Paper* (Areas 1-6+all areas)

Researcher conducted observations (ESRC CASE award started October 2002)

- November 2002 *First draft UDP* placed on Deposit

Researcher conducted first content analysis of UDP/sustainability appraisal

- December 2002 29 draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) published

Researcher conducted interviews, acted as advisor to the UDP team on SD

- April 2003 - Researcher authored report on *Draft Monitoring Indicators for the UDP*

- May 2003 – Researcher presented officer consultation on UDP across all departments

- June 2003 - Report to Executive on UDP and SPG consultations

- June 2003 - Adoption of SPGs by Planning Committee/July 2003 by Executive

- August 2003 - Members Briefing for all Councillors by letter

- Autumn 2003 Summary of responses to the *Southwark Plan 2002* (First Deposit UDP)

- January 2004 *Second draft UDP* presented to Planning Committee for approval

Researcher conducted second content analysis, ended action research

- January 2004 *Forum for the Future Sustainability Appraisal of LBS UDP*

- February 2004 *Second draft UDP* presented to Executive Committee for approval

- March 2004 *Second draft UDP* presented to Council Assembly for approval

- April 2004 *Second draft UDP* placed on second stage deposit

- October 2004 Public Inquiry preparation and training started

- April – June 2005 Public Inquiry

- March 2006 Planning Inspector's report issued

- December 2006 research period ended

- January 24 2007 Executive Committee approved UDP. Secretary of State refused approval, requiring amendments.

- July 2007 Formal adoption of UDP

Table 8: Timeline to Unitary Development Plan in the London Borough of Southwark and Researcher's Position.

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[7] SD used for *sustainable development*
[8] Promoting Action for Sustainability Through Indicators at the Local Level in Europe funded under EU, FP5

The collaborative nature of the research placed the researcher in a position (within the field of study) where knowledge gathered could enter (via solutions or inputs) into the process being studied, otherwise known as action research. One of the tensions of the collaborative nature of the research was the desire of the collaborating partner (LBS) to benefit immediately from the collaboration and access ongoing results. The most notable examples of action research were when the content analysis of the November 2002 UDP was used by LBS as the official sustainability appraisal; and in April 2003, when the researcher was asked to draft and present to senior management a set of indicators, based on sustainable development, to monitor the UDP. From the researcher perspective, this served to impact upon the process under study and placed a pressure to deliver policy- relevant summaries. Acknowledgement of this was part of the nature of the complex reality of contemporary case study research.

The desire for the researcher to contribute expertise to the process under study was greater at the start of the UDP process as there was generally more opportunity for participation. As the process moved forward, the opportunities became fewer, yet the collaborative partner, LBS, remained confident that research process itself was useful to them:

> "not only to us, but to other local authorities who will recognise in us, similar issues in their own ways of going about things, and may benefit, as we hope to, from an independent review to point out things which we simply don't have the time to look at. At the very least, we demonstrate that we are open to such scrutiny and willing to be completely transparent in our processes" (Interview 3).

At the analysis stage in particular, the researcher paid special attention to her position within the research. Case study analysis can be open to misinterpretation where either the researcher does not possess enough knowledge to formulate valid assumptions about typical norms or patterns of action or where the researcher feels overly comfortable and may suffer from "structural nearsightedness" (Kelle 2001 p7). Researcher independence was critical, and the intensive nature of qualitative techniques which immersed the researcher in the object of study meant that a relationship of dependence may have been formed and the researcher may have lost sight of the relative objectivity of the original research focus. This was addressed and kept in check

by acknowledging the positionality and reflexivity of the researcher with the collaborating partner and through regular peer review with academics not familiar with the area of research. The real-time focus of the research, with its unexpected delays, also provided pockets of time for the researcher to distance herself from the case study. The original date for adoption of the UDP was expected in early 2006. The process experienced a total delay of about one year, mainly in the latter stages following the Public Inquiry. In fact, the UDP was adopted in the summer of 2007.

Qualitative Methods

The circumstances of the CASE award led to a qualitative single case study approach. In fact, research into the factors influencing the incorporation of sustainable development in the policy making process lends itself well to qualitative research in order to access the richness of reality. Hogwood and Gunn (1984) outlined that what is needed:

> "is the equivalent of a film which will allow us to study the unfolding over time of the complexities of the policy-making process." (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p19).

Indeed, qualitative techniques are better able to explore the intertwined levels of analysis closest to how the real world is operating. The adoption of a qualitative approach has produced practical results, showing the details of the micro level process and allowing a rich, complex understanding and explanation. The plan making process under study took place within highly interwoven, inter-related, flexible and contingent social structures. The use of qualitative research methods allowed the researcher to build a meaningful picture of such social processes. This involved looking at the social and political context and taking into account relations or interdependency with other objects in the case study (both at the level of observation and at the level of analysis). Qualitative techniques were able to observe patterns, mechanisms, profiles, processes, dynamics and developments. The advantages of a qualitative approach were demonstrated in its ability to get close to respondents and access the rich and complex, multi-dimensional texture of reality. In this way, the researcher gained understanding and insight which was sensitive to unexpected influences and allowed for clarification and deeper exploration through its interactive nature.

> "Qualitative methods therefore capture meaning, process and context" (Devine and Heath 1999 p138).

The research methods included observation of key events, such as meetings and the Public Inquiry, and interviews with key stakeholders (both internal to LBS and external) as well as the review of documentary materials. These are discussed in detail later, along with some of the major criticisms of qualitative research and how this thesis addressed these. First, a discussion of the single case study approach which the circumstances of the CASE award favoured.

The Case Study Approach

The case study approach was designed to generate an intensive examination of a single case. Importantly, the case study of the plan making process in LBS promised to provide a context which would allow the research questions to be answered. Even with a single case study focus, there were numerous layers of information to explore. Several key issues emerged and could be seen as cases within the case study as they were tracked over a period of time. This was made possible because of the longitudinal nature of the research following the plan making process over five years, with the same stakeholders being interviewed and observed several times during the research period.

The challenge of a single case study focus was that findings would not be generalisable or transferable across a wider population, these are discussed at the end of this chapter. However, the research gap identified the need for an in-depth case study which had not been presented before. This approach also offered potential for uncovering embedded assumptions which may have been overlooked otherwise. The approach allowed a narrow but deep exploration. The case study approach was considered to have particular strengths in responding to the research area, as it offered the greatest potential and ability for identifying the institutional dimensions, examining the various levels of interaction and capturing the complex detail of the local context. Particularly apt was Yin's description of a case study as:

> "an empirical inquiry that: investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context; when boundaries between phenomenon and

context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin 2003 p23).

The case study was deemed suitable for answering the 'how' and 'why' type questions posed by the research in a case study where the researcher had little control over behavioural events and where those events were of a contemporary focus. The LBS case study was an examination of an issue within a process – sustainable development within the UDP review – and so needed to incorporate a range of stakeholders, at different levels, with different historical and contextual backgrounds. There were rarely any clear-cut distinctions between these many layers in reality, so the case study approach allowed an in-depth exploration of embedded, habitual action. Context was important to the research from the outset as the object of study was situated within the context of local government from which it could not be divorced; in this way there was a reflexive and constantly dynamic relationship which the case study approach embraced.

The complexities of the 'micro situation' were real and were difficult to separate into standalone components, the use of the case study technique allowed observation which acknowledged this complexity:

> "A case study is a research strategy that can be qualified as holistic in nature, following an iterative-parallel way of preceding, looking at ... selected cases, observed in their natural context ... and aimed at description and explanation of complex and entangled group attributes, patterns, structures or processes" (Verschuren 2001).

The advantage of the case study approach to the research was the fact that the case study could be encompassed as a whole and thus allowed exploration of all aspects of the UDP preparation process at both formal and informal levels:

> "Case oriented studies, by their nature, are sensitive to complexity and ... highlight complexity, diversity and uniqueness" (Ragin and Becker 1992 pviii ix).

Many authors have conferred with Yin that the case study is able to deal with a full range of evidence including documents, interviews and observations and is especially versatile at tracing events over time (Yin 2003 p113-119). This creates access to a multi-dimensional, rich 'messy' reality over time. The case

study is able to recognise and encompass the 'messiness' of reality and was used to seek information on events beneath the surface that may often be overlooked, yet hold potentially valuable information.

The case study is usefully explored by reference to five parameters which make up all theoretical models (Bauer and Gaskell 2003): the level of analysis (the individual or group); the dependent and explanatory variables (which could not be separated in such a complex research area); the relevant universe of cases (or the context); and the time period. The orders of complexity can generally range from zero order complexity (where there are no relationships), to first order complexity (where there is a causal relationship within any of the parameters), to second to fourth order complexity (where there are interactions between two, three or four different parameters respectively). The LBS case study dealt with the saturated model of reality consisting of a long densely tangled chain of causation wherein concepts could not be reduced to a single indicator. The researcher looked at the object as a whole (not the whole object). In other words, the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP was explored by looking at a wide range of possible influences which may or may not have fed into this process. The single case study approach is open to several criticisms which are discussed at the end of this chapter along with how the research attempted to address this issue. None the less, the case study of LBS promised to provide an interesting platform for in-depth exploration.

Why the London Borough of Southwark?

LBS is of particular interest as the subject of empirical investigation as the characteristics of inner city areas and their resulting problems have been the focus of successive Government intervention and much research has been undertaken into the best way to tackle these problems (DETR 2000c). LBS exemplifies these characteristics, yet it has become apparent that it is not only high density urban areas which suffer from poor physical environments, high levels of unemployment and social deprivation. Other areas such as suburban housing estates on the outskirts of provincial towns, seaside resorts and rural areas suffer similar levels of deprivation. Whilst the overarching issues of inner cities (with their own specific local circumstances) are similar, the form that local

planning policies take in these different areas vary, but they all are required by Government to deliver sustainable communities and sustainable development. Therefore the specific circumstances of LBS can be seen to provide a lens through which to expand knowledge of how the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy takes place.

LBS promises particular interest for a number of reasons. Based on its high deprivation levels it has attracted Government funding for a range of regeneration projects with a focus on sustainable regeneration (outlined shortly). It has also successfully bid for and received EU funding for a range of sustainability initiatives and research projects, two of which focus on sustainable urban regeneration and were linked with the delivery of large regeneration projects. These are also outlined next. The research was particularly timely as LBS was about to start the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) making process as the research process started. In addition, LBS has a relatively well-established history of sustainable development activities, being one of the first UK local authorities to draw up a *Local Agenda 21 Plan*, this and other historical contextual features relating specifically to the plan making process are introduced in Chapter Four.

Introducing the Case Study – the London Borough of Southwark

The LBS is one of the thirty-two boroughs, which with the Corporation of the City of London, make up Greater London. Eleven inner London boroughs account for around 40 per cent of the capital's population and are distinguished by high population density levels – LBS has one of the highest in the capital – and specific social, economic and environmental characteristics (highlighted in Table 9 below). LBS is an inner London borough covering an area of approximately 29 square kilometres, centrally located on the south bank of the River Thames, immediately opposite the City of London (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Location of London Borough of Southwark in Greater London. Source: GLA

At the start of the twentieth century, nearly 600,000 residents lived in what is now LBS. This was followed by a period of long-term decline due to slum clearance, relocation of major industry and migration to the suburbs, resulting by the early eighties in a population of 212,000 (Pastille 2002). Since then, the overall population has risen by a rate above the national average, making LBS one of the fastest growing boroughs in the UK. Now with a population of just over 244,000 (2001 Census), LBS has one of the youngest and most ethnically diverse communities in the country with approximately 24 per cent of the population being from minority ethnic communities and over 100 languages spoken in the borough's schools. Figure 7 below shows some key features of the borough discussed shortly including: regeneration zones (in light blue) linked to key opportunity areas (in dark blue) and action areas (in pink); green spaces (in green); and key public transport nodes (rail and underground).

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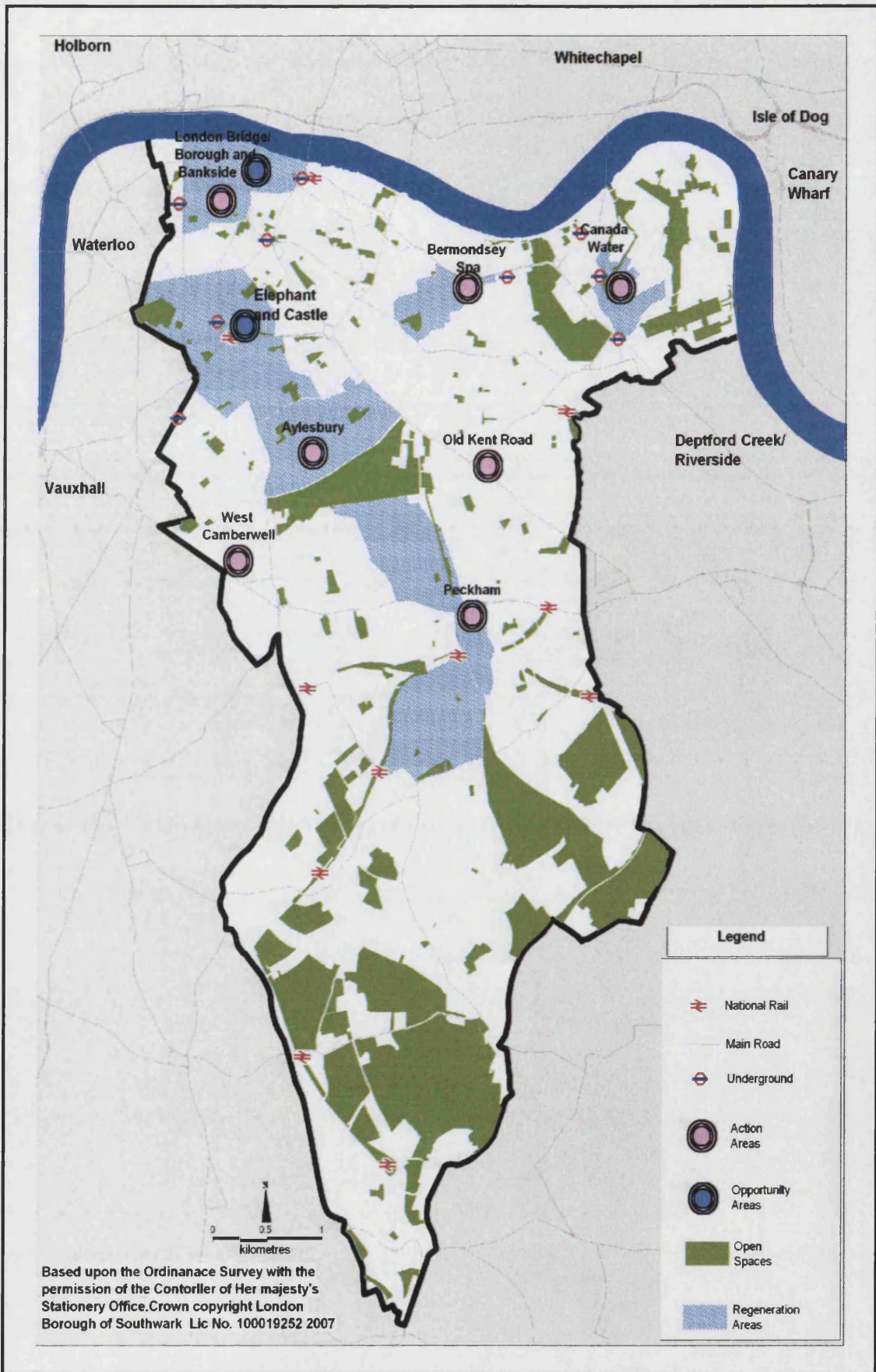
Figure 7: Map of the London Borough of Southwark. Source: LBS

Map labels: Holborn, Whitechapel, Isle of Dog, Canary Wharf, London Bridge/ Borough and Bankside, Waterloo, Canada Water, Bermondsey Spa, Elephant and Castle, Aylesbury, Old Kent Road, Deptford Creek/ Riverside, Vauxhall, West Camberwell, Peckham

Legend: National Rail, Main Road, Underground, Action Areas, Opportunity Areas, Open Spaces, Regeneration Areas

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0 0.5 1 kilometres

Contextualising the Case Study

It is necessary to set this research within the historical context of the recent development of the borough of Southwark by reference to the cross-cutting drivers and forces of economic, social, environmental and political change and their influence on the regeneration programmes and planning policy adopted in the borough. Recent development pressure on the borough of Southwark can be explained in part through the political and financial dynamics which are common to many inner city London boroughs. These pressures can be measured through indicators including those summarised in Table 9 below:

ECONOMIC	SOCIAL	ENVIRONMENTAL
Scale of the Economy	Resident Knowledge-workers[9]	Housing Affordability[10]
Productivity	Income levels	Industrial and Commercial growth
Economic Growth	Inequality	Local Amenities
Business Enterprise	Deprivation	
Residence-based Skills and Qualifications	Life expectancy	
Employment rate	Crime levels	

Table 9: Common Indicators Measuring Local Characteristics (based on the State of the London Boroughs Reports, Local Futures 2007)

The pressures that these indicators measure would also be recognised in other metropolitan inner city areas across the country; however they are modified by the specific local and historical context of LBS. The LBS context will be explored shortly based on these indicator sets and is intended to convey what is different about the borough economically, socially and politically and indeed the extent to which it is similar to other London boroughs and other local authorities. But before this it would be helpful to also briefly reflect on the wider political and economic factors in which the regeneration programmes and planning policy were set and the problems they had to address.

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[9] 'Higher end' occupations including managerial, professional and technical jobs.
[10] Ratio of workplace-based earnings to house prices.

The origins of the existing situation in LBS lie in the common practices of post war local authority management which aimed to give local authorities greater influence over and control of local housing and the perceived related economic benefits. At a political level, having control over property stock gave elected members a significant influence over their local electorate (through the provision of homes) and afforded local authorities an opportunity for the use of the housing stock to secure finance. New funds were used for politically salient projects and retained a major focus on the provision of additional housing stock and local facilities. Quantity was a key issue and the quality of such stock tended to be low, with little or no consideration for social and environmental sustainability in spite of some high profile schemes. The expanding revenue costs of maintaining low quality housing made this a dangerous, yet common practice for successive parties. As a result, by the seventies, a significant element of public sector borrowing was not controlled by the Government but by the local authorities. This was particularly the case in LBS where 45 per cent of the housing stock is still Council owned, rising to between 70 and 80 per cent in the worst wards as assessed in the Index of Multiple Deprivation[11].

The Conservative Government of 1979 addressed this issue and along with other major economic changes, passed and amended legislation (including the Local Government Finance and Planning Act 1980; and the Local Government Finance Act 1982) which limited the ability of local authorities to access finance on the open markets and stopped the creation of local authority housing provision in this way. However, with inflation high (18 percent in 1980) local authorities found it hard to service their debt, relying on rental income which was not always forthcoming. The legislation had the effect of reducing the ability of local authorities to pursue their own political agendas. Decision making was centralised as Government took control of finance away from local authorities. Local authorities like LBS were left with a significant housing stock but limited resources for their upkeep, this combined with their original low quality design and construction meant increasingly poor housing stock and related social and environmental problems through the eighties and nineties. In LBS, the condition of a number of key housing estates became critical with a lack of maintenance, facilities and the resulting social deprivation. These

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[11] 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).

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estates became known as "sink estates" and were increasingly only able to be offered to the most disadvantaged and homeless. In LBS estates of particular notoriety, were the Peckham Six Estates, and in part the Heygate (in Elephant and Castle) and the Aylesbury Estate in Walworth, just beyond.

The result of this historical context was that LBS was left with a large property portfolio of low quality housing, both generating and aggravating social deprivation; little money to address these issues; a rapidly changing demographic; restricted political power and control, irrespective of political affiliation; a location close to the city; the closure of traditional docks leaving swathes of empty land along the Thames, in common with Tower Hamlets and Lewisham and high unemployment rates contributing to social deprivation; and demand from developers for commercial space in close proximity to the City of London.

In recognition of the social deprivation and the need for regeneration, the Government launched various regeneration initiatives with differing outcomes (Ball 2004i & 2004ii), finally gathered together in the late eighties under the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB). LBS prioritised the need to attract central government funds for regeneration so this has been the key focus of the borough over the last few decades, regardless of political circumstances. This means that the methodologies and criteria of regeneration projects have influenced the development of the borough. As a result, the requirements of regeneration funding have therefore shaped the work and context of the local authority and very often feature financial management, project delivery to specified timeframes and public consultation activities.

Southwark's Place in London and in the UK

To contextualise LBS within London and the UK, an overview of key social, economic and environmental characteristics is given in Table 10 below. This information is based on the *State of the London Boroughs* reports (Local Futures 2007) commissioned to bring together existing data from national and local data sources to enable profiling at the borough level that can:

"analyse and benchmark performance and sustainable development at a borough level, set within a London and national context...[12]" (Local Futures 2007 p1).

The indicators in Table 10 below show LBS's ranking relative to the national and London average. The green boxes highlight where LBS is performing better than the national or London average, the red boxes where it is one of the worst performing authorities in the country or London.

Indicator	LBS in National ranking (of 408)[13]	LBS in London ranking (of 32[14])
ECONOMIC		
Scale of the Economy	19th	6th
Productivity (2004)	12th	8th
Economic Growth (1998-2005)	228th	14th
Employment in Knowledge Driven Sectors (2005)	17th	7th
Business Enterprise	2nd	2nd
Residence-based Skills & Qualifications	301st	22nd
Employment rate (2006)	396th	25th
SOCIAL		
Resident Knowledge-workers	119th	24th
Income levels	71st	17th
Inequality	226th	18th
Deprivation (2004)	17th of 354 areas[15]	6th
Life expectancy (2001)	293rd	25th
Crime levels (2006-2007)	32nd	7th
ENVIRONMENTAL		
Housing Affordability[16]	288th out of 376 districts	16th
Industrial and Commercial Property growth (1999-2006)	230th out of 354 areas	13th
Connectivity	15th	11th
Local Services (2004)	224th out of 354 areas	18th
Local Amenities	9th out of 354 areas	8th
Natural Environment	347th out of 354 areas	27th

Table 10: Indicators ranking LBS in relation to National and London average.
Source: State of the London Boroughs 2007.

Best Performing
Performing satisfactorily
Performing badly
Worst Performing

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[12] The reports were commissioned in 2007 by Capital Ambition to help shape new Local Area Agreements and are the main source of local information used in LBS currently.
[13] 1st is highest. 408 districts used in Local Futures survey. 354 areas in IMD.
[14] The City of London is excluded as its peculiar circumstances skew comparative results.
[15] 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).
[16] Ratio of workplace-based earnings to house prices.

Economic Characteristics

The physical location of LBS has a clear impact on the indicators, contributing to the good performance of the economic indicators but detracting from some of the environmental indicators. LBS sits in a unique location close to the City of London and the West End and the local economy benefits as a result with very high levels of productivity, knowledge-driven jobs and business enterprise. LBS consists of a mainly mixed development including industrial, commercial and housing land with 24 per cent parkland and open space, located mainly in the south (Southwark Council[17] 1996) and shown in the previous Figure 7. In the seventies and eighties traditional manufacturing and construction decreased in importance and large areas of land were allocated for housing redevelopment, mainly in the centre of the borough. However, new industries emerged; primarily electronics, warehousing, printing and vehicle trades. LBS now has a distinctive urban metropolitan economy with potential growth in the broadcasting, media, tourism, arts and entertainment sectors, as well as continuing growth in the established industries such as business services, education and training (Tyms 1999). In fact employment in the knowledge-driven sector accounted for 35.9 per cent of jobs (in 2005).

However, the local labour market is weak, with an employment rate below the EU Lisbon Strategy target of 70 per cent (63.8 per cent in 2006). This is due to low local skills levels, essentially meaning non-locals fill high-end jobs. Over a quarter of unemployed are classed as long-term unemployed (out of work for at least a year) and youth unemployment is higher than the national average. With a higher than average youth population and low skills and qualifications, this is a "worrying trend" (Interview 11) for the borough.

Prosperity in the borough, measured by income, appears relatively high, but this is due to the number of employed residents in professional or managerial jobs (resident knowledge workers) and is skewed by some very high salaries. The level of deprivation ranks LBS seventeenth in the country (having risen from ninth in 1999). This deprivation is accompanied by high levels of crime, low life expectancy and pockets of inequality. In fact, average life expectancy in LBS is

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[17] London Borough of Southwark documents do not use standardised referencing interchanging between Southwark Council and LBS, this thesis always uses LBS in the bibliography.

78.2 years whilst occurrences of obesity and mortality due to cancer and circulatory disease are above London and national averages. There are just under 115,000 homes in the borough, yet 45 per cent of properties are Council owned making LBS the Council with the largest proportion of Council housing of any borough in London. Housing affordability is low (salaries compared to house prices) and this is compromised further by the premium on property in the borough - average prices are 66.2 per cent higher than England and Wales - and the lack of good quality housing. This has resulted in the second highest share of rented households in London whilst a significant share of the capital's unfit dwelling stock is also located in LBS.

Environmental Characteristics

The environmental indicators in Table 10 show office property has increased significantly, consistent with the needs of the local knowledge-driven economy and connectivity and amenities are good. Indeed much regeneration work has focused around local amenities including libraries, cinemas, national heritage sites and listed buildings, boosting local identity and increasing tourism. Local identity is "a popular theme for LBS policies" (Interview 11) and indeed the content analysis of the UDP in Chapter Six mirrors this, showing a preference for maintaining and enhancing the distinctive character of the borough. Accompanying local inclusion projects have aimed to encourage local communities to make use of such amenities (the Tate Modern Community Film Club is one such example). Yet local education services are below-average with low GCSE outcomes. The good transport links facilitate the in-commuting of higher skilled non-locals, although resident workers benefit from shorter commuter journeys (mainly to the City and West End). LBS's connection to the City is crucial in its relatively good economic development but the connection brings downsides and the road networks also bring environmental problems in the form of high levels of congestion and air and noise pollution. LBS ranks one of the worst areas in the UK for natural environment so:

> "retaining those [residents] that can afford to go elsewhere is difficult."
> (Interview 11).

Social Characteristics

Of all the London boroughs, LBS is perhaps the one that displays the greatest spatial contrasts as Figure 8 below shows. It is interesting to compare these images with Figure 9 which maps out the Index of Multiple Deprivation in the borough. The spatial contrasts are reflected in similarly contrasting social differences. There is growing prosperity in the north of the borough, along the banks of the Thames which:

"enjoys some of the world's most prestigious real estate" (LBS 1995 p3).

There is established wealth and much public open space in the residential area in the south. However, in marked contrast to the growing wealth at the northern edge and the established prosperity in the south of the borough, tenants on post-war council housing estates in the centre of the borough, in Walworth and Peckham in particular, have seen economic decline and increasing levels of social deprivation. For example, of all households in LBS, 35 per cent have no adult in employment, but this rises to 41 per cent in Walworth (Census 2001). The central areas are also faced with significant problems due to relatively high levels of anti-social behaviour, traffic congestion and related air pollution (Pastille 2002). In fact, LBS suffers some of the worst air pollution in the UK and by the mid-nineties had participated in a European funded project on air pollution which contributed to the development of the *National Air Quality Strategy for the UK* (LBS 1998 p21).

The Tate Modern landmark and the Millennium Bridge on the northern edge.

A typical housing estate found in the centre of the borough.

A view of the typical green spaces found in the south of the borough.

Figure 8: Photos Exemplifying the North, Centre and South of the London Borough of Southwark. Source: LBS

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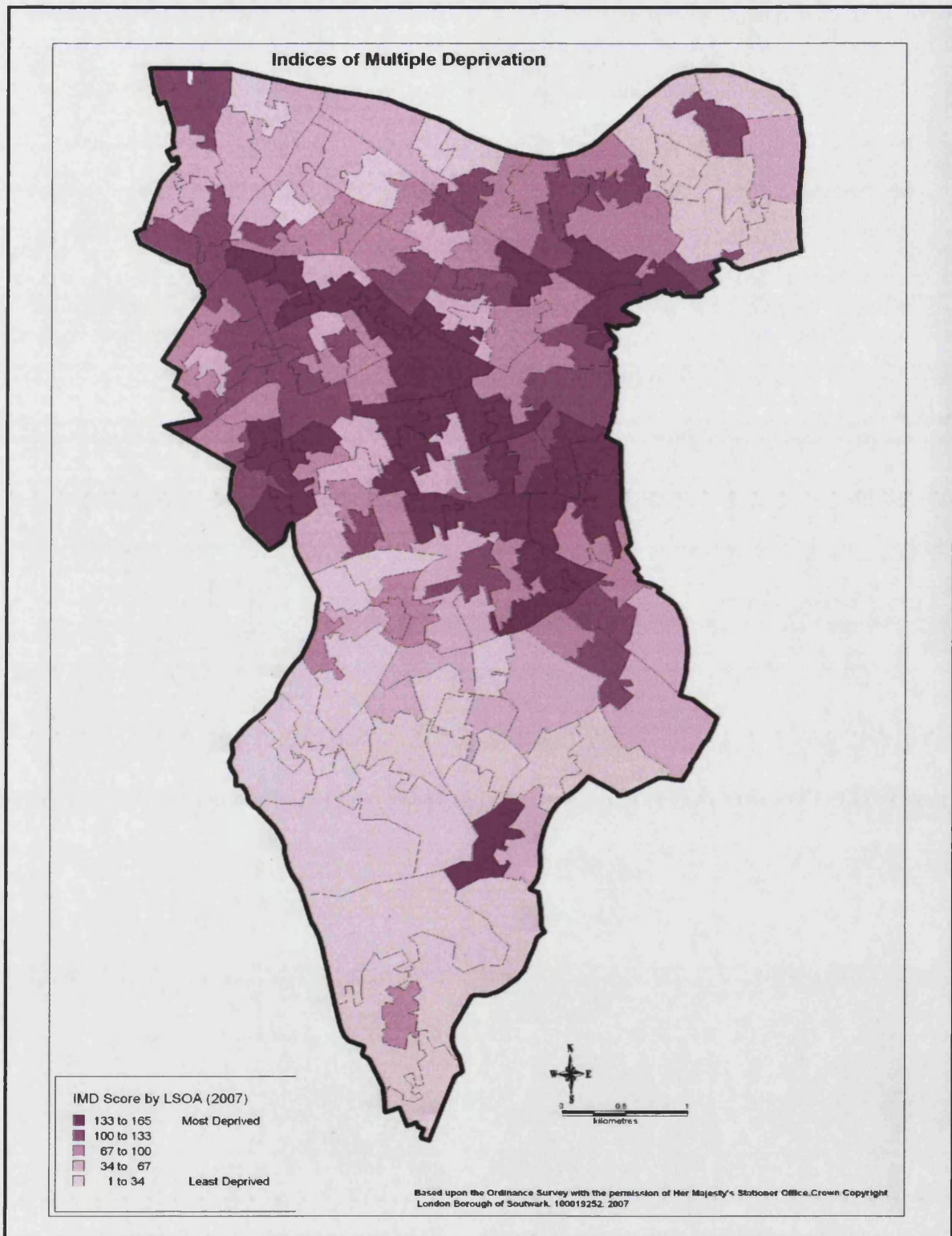
Figure 9: Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) in London Borough of Southwark.

Source: LBS

Overall LBS ranks nationally as the ninth[18] most deprived district in the UK, based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation[19] (having risen from seventeenth in a relatively short period, though this has not been directly attributed to any specific cause and in fact LBS has no evidence of mapping IMD and regeneration projects in the borough). However, this varies across the borough with the north and south being less deprived than the centre (Scott Wilson 2002 p11–12). In 2006, social and economic (but not environmental) forecasts for LBS in 2016[20] concluded that the existing patterns were set to continue:

> "The pattern that emerges is one of polarisation which has geographic and ethnic components" (LBS 2005f p1).

Beneath this pattern lie some interesting demographics which may well be shaped by regeneration projects in LBS as well as other initiatives to tackle the deprivation and disadvantage which is prevalent in the centre of the borough. Regeneration projects are discussed next.

Southwark and Regeneration Programmes

Based on the key indicators outlined above, LBS is listed as one of the 88 most deprived local authority areas in England, making it eligible for additional Government funding for neighbourhood renewal. The area has a considerable stock of council housing, amounting to 45 per cent of total housing in the borough, though this increases to almost 80 per cent in the central areas, such as Elephant and Castle and Peckham. This can be linked back to the 'predict and provide'[21] planning policies of the sixties onwards, and LBS is now left to 'monitor and manage'[22] the housing stock, much of which is in need of refurbishment and improvement. For these reasons LBS has successfully bid for several regeneration funds. Regeneration programmes supported by these funds include the Peckham Partnership (1995-2002); the Pool of London; Bankside (with the specific aim of extending the benefits of economic activity along the River, further into the borough); the Cross River Partnership; the Elephant Links Partnership; and the Aylesbury Plus (1998-2004, with a housing

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[18] Based on IMD average super output area scores.
[19] The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004 combines indicators on: employment; income; health deprivation and disability; education skills and training; housing; and access to services. Aggregate indicator scores are ranked on a ward basis. The highest deprivation levels are in the northwest and middle of the borough.
[20] Based upon population data from the Census of 2001.
[21] 'Predict and provide' was the traditional approach taken to housing provision.
[22] 'Plan, monitor and manage' is the new approach.

and community focus). There are two main stated aims of all regeneration in LBS. The first is to connect the borough to the rest of London, as it's proximity to the City and the West End offers great opportunity, currently largely untapped. This does, however, lead to a focus on the northern part of the borough along the Thames. This gives rise to the second aim, which is to draw the benefits of regeneration across the whole borough and to lessen the existing contrasts (Interview 18). Community representatives question if this approach actively reduces or in fact perpetuates disadvantage at the centre of the borough (Interview 23) and point to the fact that the regenerated areas attract new articulate residents whose voices rise above those most disadvantaged.

Some of the LBS regeneration projects which have involved major physical changes have been guided by Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs) prepared in parallel with the UDP process, but outside the research period. Many have focused on sustainable regeneration in response to funding requirements and priorities. Although outside the scope of this research (because SPGs were already formulated and the regeneration projects had little involvement in the UDP process), it is interesting to note how these projects have attempted to interpret sustainable development and how they attach a high importance to public participation in their processes. This has undoubtedly provided a significant influence on the plan making process and may go some way to explaining the focus of LBS on public participation and sustainable development. For example, the Peckham Partnership covered an area with 10,000 residents intending to deliver the strategic objectives set in 1995 which focused around training, jobs, estates improvements and safety with the aim of:

"enabling a sustainable community to develop." (LBS 1999d p33)

The regeneration projects have been instrumental in attracting match funding and urban regeneration has been a recurring focus of EU funded sustainable development projects. The LITMUS project, discussed as one of the contextual influences in Chapter Four, was a contribution to delivering strategic objectives for the Aylesbury Plus regeneration project, contributing to:

"Enhance the quality of life, health and capacity to contribute to regeneration of local people...." (LBS 1999e p3).

The EU funded PASTILLE project was based within the Elephant Links Partnership (ELP) contributing to a similar objective on quality of life through the use of sustainability indicators. The ELP is located within Borough and Bankside, later referred to as Local Area One for the UDP consultation and studied in Chapter Five, so it will be briefly explored next. In July 1999, the Government announced a £25 million investment programme for the 170 acres around the Elephant and Castle area, with the aim of attracting private investment now estimated to be worth £1.5 billion[23]. The ELP[24] was formed as a LBS led regeneration partnership of residents, voluntary and statutory agencies. It works to promote social regeneration - to the value of half the SRB allocation - alongside the major physical regeneration planned for the Elephant and Castle priority neighbourhood. The ELP runs three major programmes around empowerment; training; and enterprise:

- Elephant Angels, to help local people tackle any difficult issues in their lives, around employment, poverty and participation,
- Elephant Community Information Exchange (CIX), to improve IT based information services,
- and Business Extra, to help new businesses thrive.

The ELP is one of the largest regeneration projects in Europe and prides itself on having adopted a new approach to involving the local community in the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the area by including them on the board, on sub-groups and through an on-going range of public consultation events, as well as the above-mentioned projects. It included sustainable development early on in its stated objectives:

"To create: a sustainable, desirable commercial and residential environment; a new pedestrian focused integrated public transport

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[23] http://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk/regenerationprogramme/Introduction
[24] The ELP has a Board and an Appraisal Panel which assesses project ideas. It reports to the LBS Executive Committee as LBS is the Accountable Body for the SRB Programme. The London Development Agency (LDA) ensures that the conditions and obligations of the SRB grant award are met.

interchange; a new local enterprise culture; a community which is stable, balanced and cohesive and; opportunities for the most socially excluded people and households" (ELP 2000 p4).

The ELP and other regeneration projects form an important contextual basis for the UDP activities that follow, in particular with their emphasis on community involvement.

Local Political Change

Over recent years, LBS has experienced institutional change both in terms of managerial organisational arrangements and public participation. Having been a Labour stronghold for many years, LBS was lauded as an ideal New Labour Council and was quick to adopt new structures, to seek to 'modernise' itself and to prove (and improve) its effectiveness and efficiency. The 2002 local elections saw an upsurge in Liberal Democrat councillors but Labour retained the majority. In 2006 the Council became Liberal Democrat led. This happened during the closing period of the formal plan making process so the change in leadership in fact had little formal effect upon the UDP (as discussed in Chapter Five).

LBS adopted a Constitution in 2003, at the start of the research period, committing itself to:

> "clear, transparent and accountable decision making, which is inclusive and provides opportunity for community involvement, whilst ensuring effective and efficient use of resources" (LBS April 2003 p3).

After one hundred years of traditional committee-style government, LBS was one of the first local authorities to introduce a cabinet system consisting of a Council Assembly and an Executive as outlined below in Table 11.

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY		
64 Councillors decide the general direction of Council policy		
Planning Committee	**Overview and Scrutiny Committee**	**Licensing Committee**
	Monthly opportunity to review decisions	
	(also specialist sub committees)	
	Committees have representatives from all political parties	
	Head of Cabinet and Leader of Council	
	Deputy Leader and Executive members for:	
	Health and Social Care	
	Community Safety, Social Inclusion and Youth Resources	
	Communications and Performance	
	Housing	
	Education and Culture	
	Regeneration and Economic Development	
	Transport and Environment	
	Council Department Directors	
	eg: Director of Regeneration, Director of Elephant Links Partnership	
	Head of Service	
	eg: Head of Planning Policy and Research	
	and Officers	
	eg: Planning Policy Manager to operationalise decisions	
	Community Councils	
	For eight areas including Borough and Bankside	
	Allow public representation and feedback	

Table 11: London Borough of Southwark Organisational Arrangements

The Council Assembly now comprises all sixty-four elected Councillors who meet monthly, chaired by the Mayor of Southwark, to agree overall policy and strategy. There are three permanent committees: the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews and if necessary recalls (within five days) all decisions, whilst the separate Planning and Licensing Committees deal with planning and licensing issues respectively. In addition, temporary sub committees can be established to deal with specific issues as they arise. The Executive comprises ten Councillors from the majority party and is headed by the leader of the Council and his deputy. There are eight portfolios held by the remaining Executive members. Much like central Government Cabinet, there is a Shadow Executive from the opposition parties. However, unlike the Government's Cabinet meetings, LBS meetings are open to the public (who can arrange to ask questions) and the opposition leaders (who may speak but not vote). The stated role of the Cabinet is to "translate the wishes of the community into action; lead community planning; draw up the spending priorities, annual budget and performance plan for agreement by the Council Assembly; prepare policy, plans and proposals to form an overall policy framework for consultation and

approval by the Council Assembly; and build coalitions and partnerships with all sectors of the community, business, the voluntary sector and other public agencies" (LBS 2003). The establishment of eight Community Councils meeting on a monthly basis (one of which is discussed in detail in Chapter Five) is intended to ensure that the opinions of local people are readily fed into the decision-making process.

Responsibility for the formulation of planning policy in the borough now lies with the Planning Policy and Research Unit (PPRU), politically led by the portfolio holder for Regeneration and Economic Development and managed by the Director of Regeneration.

The Unitary Development Plan in the London Borough of Southwark

The empirical object of the research is the formulation of the development plan in the London Borough of Southwark (LBS). Within such a metropolitan borough, the development plan, during the period of the research, took the form of a Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The planning policy formulation process for the new UDP took place prior to planning reforms. Whilst the latter are mentioned in this thesis, they did not strongly influence the process being studied which was conducted under the former regulations.

Research on the UDP in LBS - known locally as the Southwark Plan (LBS July 2002, Nov 2002 and March 2004) - was timely as the existing UDP (LBS 1995) was undergoing review. The thesis focused on a six-year period of active planning policy formulation, from 2000-2006 (already outlined in Table 8 in relation to the researcher's position). The timeline below traces the UDP process and the various activities in LBS over a ten-year period, from the adoption of the current UDP in 1995 to present. It started in 2000 with the review of the existing UDP (adopted in July 1995) and followed the planning policy formulation process leading up to and including a Public Inquiry in 2005 and the adoption of a new UDP in Summer 2007. This provided a wealth of relevant material for analysis, extracted during the planning policy formulation process.

- July 1995 LBS adopts UDP
- April and October 1997, February 1998, February and October 1999 LBS adopts various Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)
- January 2000 LBS publishes draft *Environmental Review* of 1995 UDP
- May 2001 *The Southwark Plan: New Directions for Southwark; inviting your views on how land is used and developed.*
- May 2001 *Southwark UDP Review Key Issues Paper*
- September 2001 *Southwark UDP Review Local Issues Paper* (Areas 1-6 and All Areas)
- July 2002 *Sustainability Appraisal of Third Working Draft UDP* by CRISP (led by researcher)
- November 2002 *First Draft UDP* - statutory consultation requirements
- December 2002 *Sustainability Appraisal of First Draft UDP* by CRISP (led by researcher)
- December 2002 29 draft SPGs published (see Appendix 1) - statutory consultation
- January 2004 *Sustainability Appraisal of UDP* by Forum for the Future
- April 2004 *Second draft UDP* - statutory consultation
- June 2004 *Sustainability Appraisal of UDP* by Forum for the Future
- April to June 2005 Public Inquiry
- March 2006 Planning Inspector's Report
- July 2007 Formal adoption of UDP

Table 12: The Timeline for the Unitary Development Plan for the London Borough of Southwark.

Linking the New Institutionalist Framework and Research Methodology

As discussed in Chapter One, sustainable development is open to multiple interpretations, but is in essence a new policy goal in the process of being introduced into the well-established local government arena of land use planning. This process may require or result in new ways of thinking and ways of doing. Chapter Two sets out the theoretical underpinning of the research based upon New Institutionalism (NI) which is able to capture the factors and complex interactions of the local planning policy formulation process. In practical terms, this may involve the exploration of new or existing norms informing interpretations of sustainable development, and other decisions, such as new rules, and structures or areas where there is resistance to new ways of thinking and new ways of doing. The 'how and why' behind these complex

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interactions are often buried deep within the institution. NI was identified as a theory capable of allowing the opportunity to explore the full context of such action, which may comprise different levels from individual and collective stakeholders, to the institutional level and beyond to national and European policy influences, as well as encompassing both the formal and informal structures and processes within the institution. The use of NI as a theoretical frame for the research supports this approach and allows the research to make generalisations relevant to the macro level, based on rich information found at the specific micro level.

Three key dimensions of institutions were identified in the NI literature as providing a potentially useful frame for the research. This follows Blumers' use of concepts as common features of the social world that may be significant and provide:

"categories for the organisation of ideas and observations."
(Bulmer 1984 p43).

The specification of dimensions of a concept allows some measurement of the concept and to validate their use, they must be clearly defined. The dimensions of institutions discussed in Chapter Two were the: formal and informal, stable and dynamic, strategic and norm-governed. Whilst these are divided for the sake of clarity, in reality they more often merge into each other and, as Chapter Two discussed, have an interdependent and reflexive nature. The dimensions of institutions, defined fully in Chapter Two, equally informed the research questions, the choice of data collection methods and their application to the case study. Their definitions for the purposes of this research are summarised below (and in Table 13) then further applied to the case study.

The formal dimensions of institutions relate to the consciously-produced agreed rules which describe collective interests. Though they are fairly quick to change, normally these rules provide regularity or stability in an institution. The formal dimension is usually found in written documents such as legislation, procedures and minutes, and in the context of local governance can be seen in written directions for managerial and participatory governance. The informal dimensions of institutions relate to the rules which are unconsciously created

yet recognised by the collective; they mirror shared cultural norms and values (and, as such, they are norm-governed). These rules are constantly but very gradually shifting and are susceptible to new trends. The informal dimensions of institutions are normally less visible. Found in habitual action, they may be manifested in working practices, values and interests. The informal can be seen in the context of local governance in the actual managerial networks and participation events as people experience new approaches.

Stability is supported by both the formal rules and procedures described above, and also the informal shared norms and values and the way all of these are communicated to others. It is not only found in these dimensions, but also in training, education and communications. The dynamic dimension of institutions refers to the potential for change visible in review, evaluation and institutional learning as well as in training, education and communications.

The strategic dimensions of institutions are generally based on decisions which maximise efficiency and can therefore be found in the more formal dimensions. Equally, the norm-governed dimensions of institutions are influenced by interactions and context and can be seen in social networks and meetings.

Dimensions of Institutions	Definitions used in this Research
Formal	• Describe collective interests • Provide regularity and precedent • Govern behavior • Produced consciously • Can be changed fairly quickly • Legitimacy in institutional learning • Agreed (like contracts) • Visible (usually written)
Informal	• Mirror collective interests, cultural norms and values • May support, contradict or undermine the formal • Influence behaviour • Created unconsciously and become embedded • Change gradually dependent on institutional disposition • Susceptible to new ideas/trends/learning by doing • Recognised/shared by a group • Less visible (part of habitual action)
Stable	• Sustained by trust in informal shared values, support and reproduction • Recurring patterns of behaviour (institutional lock-in at worse) • Momentary stabilisations or settlements
Dynamic	• Fed by lessons from learning by doing/institutional learning, to challenge and shift • In state of constant change or flux (depending on institutional disposition) • Constant opportunities for change
Strategic behaviour	• Based on maximising gains, efficiency, functionality, instrumentality, usefulness • Decisions influenced by institutions • Institutions fixed/deliberately created • Strategic behaviour drives institutional change
Norm-governed behaviour	• Influenced by interactions and context (social networks/ societal/cultural references) • Decisions influenced by social learning • Institutions sustained by embedding informal norms • Norms and values impact institutional change

Table 13: Theoretical Framing Defined: Definitions of the Dimensions of Institutions

These definitions were not shared with any of the stakeholders in the case study but were used to generate the data collection methods and design the interview questions. The intention was to enable the researcher to identify the extent to which the respondents distinguished the dimensions of institutions in relation to their work on the UDP. This avoided imposing the researcher-derived definitions upon the stakeholders in the UDP process.

Research Methods

To link the theoretical framing to appropriate data collection methods, the multiple dynamics of the empirical arena were also taken into account and drew on Gill's (1997) view that:

> "There is no one best method, but many methods contingent on the issue being studied regardless of epistemological biases" (Gill 1997 p58).

The research was therefore operationalised using a range of qualitative research methods which intended to allow for:

> "tracing multiple interactions among many individuals, many groups and many organisations" (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p20)

which may have contributed to the plan making process, including those external to traditional government. As the plan making process occurred over a number of years, an iterative-parallel research strategy (as opposed to a linear-serial one) was adopted, following Mason (1997) and Yin (2003). Accordingly, the researcher carried out different research activities that allowed a continuous dynamic where the various stages of the research project were continuously revisited, reshaped and reassessed as more information was discovered. The timeline for the UDP (see Table 8) supported this iterative-parallel process and allowed the researcher to identify significant discrete periods of activity in the preparation process. These have been used to structure the chronological narrative adopted to present the findings.

Although these data collection methods were treated separately, they were bound together by complex interwoven relationships which brought the research questions into an ordered process. In this way, data was collected in different ways in order to allow triangulation of findings. The data collection methods are summarised in Table 14 below, showing how the research questions link to the theoretical framing and empirical evidence, indicating the intended outcome of the data collection process.

The research methodology followed good practice by first using stimulus-free methods of data collection. The initial stage of the empirical work focused on the policy aspect and the mainly formal influences of the related policy documents. The policy documents recording the review and preparation of the UDP in LBS offered the potential to reap high quality time-series data. Next, coverage of sustainable development in the emerging UDP document was assessed to identify different interpretations of sustainable development as well as the strength and quality of its incorporation into the UDP. This involved looking at the formal procedural aspects of the preparation of the UDP within the formal setting of local government. Documentary analysis was mainly able to acknowledge the impact of the formal dimension of institutions upon decisions about the incorporation of sustainable development.

Next, observation clarified how these tasks were undertaken in reality, which stakeholders were included or excluded, and how active they were in the event being observed. Observation was used to delve deeper and identify the range of different informal factors that may also have been influencing this process. Observation of both verbal and non-verbal communications allowed insight into the value-laden nature of these events and hinted at the norms behind them. The researcher remained aware of the value-laden nature of her own position in the application of the data collection methods, in particular during the observation phase.

Interviews then provided a platform to focus on the individual stakeholders' interpretation of sustainable development, their views on how processes were performed and what norms and values they believed influenced different people at different stages in the process. As well as key stakeholders within the plan

making process, those external to the process were also identified to "provide alternative voices" (Bryman 2004 p187). Strategic sampling to gain answers to the research questions (as opposed to pre-structured random sampling) became part of the process. A well- known example of strategic sampling, 'snowballing', was used when the stakeholders being interviewed recommended further relevant stakeholders to be interviewed. As a result, stakeholders came from different locations in the Borough and represented various categories (and sometimes more than one category, such as local residents, LBS officers or community groups). They were often interviewed at different times in the study period. Nonetheless, the elite nature of the participants cannot be denied and was due to the issue-based nature of the research. This meant that knowledge of the issue (sustainable development in the plan making process), rather than representation of the community, shaped the constitution of the research participants. Here it is interesting to note that whilst most people are aware of the issues of sustainable development, few are well versed with the specialised language or 'jargon'. The term *sustainable development* itself is generally not recognised or well defined, this is one of the core areas explored in the thesis. Knowledge was therefore based on the issues of sustainable development rather than the terms used. Though it may be argued that there is an alignment between representation and knowledge, or even representation and articulation of knowledge, the research attempted to include a wide range of stakeholders.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS	1. HOW IS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTERPRETED IN THE LBS UDP/RELATED DOCUMENTS AND IN THE PLAN MAKNG PROCESS?					
	2. HOW ARE THESE INTERPRETATIONS INFLUENCED BY THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF INSTITUTIONS?					
	3. TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE INFORMAL, DYNAMIC AND NORM-GOVERNED DIMENSIONS OF INSTITUTIONS INFLUENCE THE INCORPORATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?					
DIMENSIONS OF INSTITUTIONS	FORMAL	INFORMAL	STABLE	DYNAMIC	STRATEGIC	NORM GOVERNED
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE	-legislation/regulations -strategies/policies -guidance documents - decision making procedures -committee minutes/actions -hierarchies/organigrammes -roles/job descriptions -professional memberships -managerial tools -participatory activities -local political context	-routines -customs/traditions -conventions -interest/issue group -identities -beliefs/values -norms -working practices -participation events	-shared values -regularity and precedent -procedures -training/education/ communications	-review/evaluation -improvements -new activities/ -processes/people/ -training/education/ communications	-rules -priorities -impact of non conformance -political decisions	-broad social context -networks/events -participation events -examples of social learning
MAIN RESEARCH METHOD	DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	OBSERVATION	INTERVIEWS	INTERVIEWS	DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	OBSERVATION
INTENDED OUTCOME	Coverage, strength and quality of SD in UDP	Factors shaping incorporation SD in UDP	Understanding, knowledge and interpretations of SD and plan making process	Capacity for learning and change	Basis for decisions in plan making process	Basis for decisions in plan making process and contextual influences
ADDITIONAL RESEARCH METHODS	INTERVIEWS OBSERVATION	INTERVIEWS DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	OBSERVATION DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	OBSERVATION DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS	INTERVIEWS OBSERVATION	INTERVIEWS DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

Table 14: Linking Research Questions to Empirical Evidence to Research Methods and Intended Outcomes

As the previous Table 14 shows, Research Question 1 on interpretations of sustainable development was explored through documentary analysis of the policy itself and supporting documents and committee papers, interactions observed between different stakeholders and interviews. Similarly, Research Question 2 and 3 on the plan making process was explored through the analysis of documentary materials, observation of different phases in the process and by whom and how they were undertaken and interviews with key stakeholders involved in the process at different times or in relation to different local issues.

The use of documentary analysis was considered suitable for finding out how the formal and strategic dimensions of institutions influenced the incorporation of sustainable development and the plan making process. This focused both on the UDP itself and supporting documents and committee minutes. Observations then allowed a focus on the interactions of key stakeholders and key events to begin to identify the influence of the informal and norm-governed dimensions of institutions. The researcher remained particularly aware of the influence of norms on her own interpretations during observations. Interviews with key stakeholders were intended to reveal information on all three dimensions of institutions, in particular the stable and dynamic dimensions.

Triangulation was a key aspect of the research and so secondary data collection methods were also used. In this way, the formal and strategic dimensions of institutions visible in documentation were also explored by interviews asking direct questions, for example, on stakeholder understanding and contribution to the plan making process. Observation to identify norms and informal dimensions was followed by interviews asking direct questions on these dimensions. The results of interviews asking about the stable and dynamic dimensions of institutions were then followed by observation to find examples of this in practice. The iterative-parallel research strategy allowed the different dimensions of institutions under investigation to be explored at various stages of the plan making process. This chapter now moves on to discuss how the research methods were applied to the case study setting.

Applying the Research Methods to the Case Study

The research explores the setting and context of activity and behaviour for the incorporation of sustainable development within the UDP in LBS. The aim was to provide a more complete description of such a process and identify how the different dimensions of institutions influence this process. In introducing sustainable development, Chapter One showed definitions of the concept are broad and open to multiple interpretations. This is reflected in policy documents which often cover the guiding principles or the concept of sustainable development as a whole, often in the overarching strategy. However, for the most part they fail to address concisely what steps and actions need to be taken in order to achieve sustainable development.

Documentary Analysis

Documentary analysis took the form of four key areas. Firstly many documents were identified to give contextual and historical background to the case study. Such documentation represented the formal dimension of institutions so analysis focused less on identifying the different dimensions of institutions and more on the resulting incorporation of sustainable development in the formal documentation. Secondly, documents on the policy making process and the related documentation kept by LBS, local community groups and developers were also reviewed. Where clarification was required, the relevant report authors or organisation contacts were asked to provide additional information. Thirdly, documentary materials from meeting minutes and public communications materials as well as development briefs and publicity materials were also accessed. Finally, and the main focus of documentary analysis, was the UDP itself and this formed the starting point for the research and was subject to a full content analysis.

Content Analysis

The content analysis was conducted to familiarise the researcher with the focus of the research and to create a benchmark of the incorporation of sustainable development within the UDP. The institutionalised style of writing for such policy documentation and the fact that multiple authors contributed to different sections over different timeframes was acknowledged from the outset, but the real methodological focus was on how to conduct this assessment. A review of

existing practices for the assessment of sustainability content analysis identified sustainability appraisal, developed as a policy tool to take into account the integrated nature of sustainable development. It signaled an improvement in assessment practice, a move to a more integrated assessment, which had previously focused predominantly on the socio-economic aspects of sustainable development (Fischer, 2000).

However, sustainability appraisal is still an emerging methodology and there is currently a split methodology for it which can take either an inclusive or an incremental approach. An inclusive approach has been favoured by practitioners mainly because it is less demanding of resources, but there is the danger of oversimplifying the complexity of the integrated nature of sustainable development (Carter, Wood and Baker 2003 p284). The incremental approach requires more careful consideration of the complex and numerous chains of cause and effect between environmental, economic and social factors which may allow a more balanced consideration. The Government has favoured an inclusive approach in its guidance document (DETR 1999b). However, considering the environmental, economic and social factors within the same framework has allowed trade-offs to be made which maintain the dominance of the economic over the environmental, therefore allowing:

> "the sacrifice of natural capital in return for commensurate increases in economic and social capital." (Smith and Sheate 2001 p67).

In fact, the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (2002) noted that sustainability appraisal practice in the UK was in need of strengthening in environmental terms to meet the requirements of the SEA Directive (CEC 2001/42/EC) which came into force in July 2006 and is discussed in Chapter Seven. George (2001) levied criticism toward Government guidance on sustainability appraisal (DETR 1999b, ODPM 2003 and 2004) which avoided specifying the need to adopt a strict and defined sustainability appraisal approach. This may have been reasonable in light of the fact that the approach was and is still evolving at a rapid pace. Ravetz (2000a and 2000b), investigating sustainability appraisal for cities and regions, also highlighted the progress that it represented towards integrated appraisal. However, he realistically pointed out that a definitive approach to sustainability appraisal was

not possible, not least due to the contested nature and multiple interpretations of what it was trying to measure – sustainable development. This being the case, a definitive approach has not been the key aim of sustainability appraisal. Rather, it has been presented as a way of encouraging decision makers to discuss and potentially reconcile environmental, economic and social aspects of key decisions. This has allowed a sustainable development 'mindset' to come into existence commonly based on a transparent, fully accessible and inclusive process.

As with any new approach there are criticisms of sustainability appraisal. The greatest challenge has been to take an integrated approach. In an attempt to clarify this approach Eggenberger and Partidario (2000) developed a framework to assist the integration of environmental, social and economic issues in spatial planning. Similarly, Devuyst (2000) incorporated the wide range of impacts requiring appraisal for sustainable development into a framework. Lee and Kirkpatrick (2000) noted that:

> "the need for closer integration between environmental assessment and economic and social appraisal is widely recognised" (Lee and Kirkpatrick 2000 p1).

The integrated approach has been commonly undertaken through breaking down the concept of sustainable development (already subject to interpretation) into a selected number of clear objectives (subject to interpretation) which can then be systematically applied (subject to interpretation) to assess the extent of coverage (subject to interpretation) of sustainable development in the policy document. Further to this, it is possible to make an assessment of the extent of coverage in terms of quality or strength (subject to interpretation). A key methodological issue for this approach has been the many and unavoidable instances of interpretation that enter the process. They have been presented in this paragraph to represent the way they were considered at each stage of the research process which resulted in breaking the flow of activities but ensuring that the researcher remained fully aware of the potential impact of such interpretations.

To minimise these methodological issues, this thesis selected sustainable development objectives (SDOs) already in existence. The detail of the content analysis methodology is discussed in Chapter Six along with the findings. Whilst being open to interpretation at various stages, the exercise was useful as the findings allowed a benchmark of the extent of coverage, and the strength or quality of sustainable development in the formal policy. This provided an access to assessing the influence of the other dimensions of institutions (the informal, stable, dynamic, strategic and norm-governed) which may have influenced the level of understanding of sustainable development and the extent to which it was incorporated in planning policy. It specifically reflected the actions and decisions of those responsible for the policy. The factors behind these findings were then further explored by interviews with stakeholders and cross-referenced with observation and assessment of the processes governing the preparation of the policy document. These complementary data collection methods are discussed next.

Participant Observation

The method of participant observation:

> "entails the relatively prolonged immersion of the observer in a social setting in which he or she seeks to observe the behaviour of members of that setting ... and to elicit the meanings they attribute to their environment and behaviour." (Bryman 2004 p267).

The researcher actively participated in some aspects of the process under observation, such as when the researcher was asked to draft and present to senior management a set of sustainable development indicators to monitor the UDP. However, for the majority of the time, the researcher was a non-participant or passive observer, in particular during observation of the formal planning inquiry and in LBS committee meetings when this was required. This said, the researcher was aware that there is always the possibility that the presence alone of the researcher can impose new meaning.

Participant observation[25] of the case study allowed identification of the formal and informal interactions, rules and networks present in the planning policy formulation process. Carrying out this method involved the researcher

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[25] First used in anthropology to study other cultures.

becoming immersed in the social setting of the research in the LBS and observing key stakeholders in their usual environment, going about their activities. Initially, the researcher was able to spend a week shadowing different members of the Planning Policy and Research Unit (PPRU). Shadowing has been used as a research technique[26] to access the experience of participants, but is a clearly visible technique which was not appropriate to use beyond an initial familiarisation period in this case study. Other stakeholders, such as developers and community groups, were not amenable to shadowing. This introductory period did provide a helpful orientation to the plan making process and the key stakeholders involved. This was followed by interviews, where appropriate, and access to relevant documents. Participant observation increased access to the field of research and to the key stakeholders in the field. However, focus was maintained on the research-relevant aspects of the situation being observed and extensive field notes were taken during initial shadowing and ongoing observations of key stakeholders and their interactions and meetings (Lofland and Lofland 1995 p12).

Access for participant observation was simplified, because of the collaborative nature of the research due to the CASE award. Normally access to such closed settings as the local authority arena would involve extensive planning, justification and networking, but this work had already taken place in setting up the CASE award. In addition, ongoing access was made easy because of the senior management support for the research and the clear statement from senior management that officers were expected to participate and to freely discuss the reality of their situation and to be confident in the anonymity of their contributions. The main aim of the participant observation was to access the 'insider view', and thus experience and understand the meaning and interaction within the specific contemporary event. Effective participant observation, as with most qualitative techniques, was dependent on the researcher performing a role to establish and to maintain relationships with stakeholders in the field. The researcher was asked to assist with some specific tasks in the plan making process and this contributed to making access smooth and her presence accepted. At the same time, the researcher attempted to remain aware of her own positionality and its influence on the research, as her personal experience

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[26] Capote (1972) shadowed black female cleaners; Sclavi (1989) shadowed Italian high school students in the school setting; Mintzberg (1979) shadowed top managers.

of the local authority gave a baseline knowledge of the institution, an understanding of the culture of how things get done and the pressures to which officers may have been subject. Having worked in another department of the local authority, the researcher was perceived by those being observed as "one of us", or "safe" (interview 11). This may also have influenced perceptions of the developers and local community in other ways which limited access for the research.

An ongoing and continuous process of interpreting and understanding (or theorising) the subject field of research, the practices within it and the stakeholders involved, allowed constant revisit and redefinition of the process of enquiry. The researcher maintained a focus on the research questions and benefited from the overt nature of her role in the case study setting, always being introduced as a researcher and only spending limited periods of time fully immersed in the case study setting. This enabled the researcher to view the particular within the everyday and to have a critical perspective. The trap of 'going native', in other words, of the researcher adopting unquestioningly the viewpoints of stakeholders within the field, was avoided because of the researcher's firm interpretation of sustainable development. As with all qualitative techniques, the researcher was aware of the potential impact of her presence which was dual in the two extremes: as the cause of a disturbance to those under observation, distracting them from their business or influencing their behaviour when observed; and as the potential for providing new knowledge, demonstrated by requests from various meetings observed to produce reports for LBS (some of which were undertaken), or support local community campaigns (which were declined).

Uwe Flick (1999) identified three phases of participant observation that the research adopted. The first was descriptive observation, or the orientation phase, whereby the researcher made herself aware of the arena of action and the roles of the stakeholders within that. This phase was carried out early on in the research process, starting October 2003, based upon documentary analysis from the ample recording of all meetings by LBS in the form of minutes accessible to the public, and preliminary interviews with key UDP team members. The second phase was focused observation, which involved the

research-relevant processes and meetings. These were identified in collaboration with the Manager of LBS Planning Policy and followed by 'snowballing', whereby future observation opportunities were identified during initial observation events. A schedule of meetings for observation was drawn up (Table 15 below) which included observation of regular meetings and events as well as special public participation events and consultation meetings with the local community. Observation of relevant meetings in LBS started in January 2004.

Council Assembly
Member Development Briefings
Executive meetings
Planning Committee
Regeneration and Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee   Environment and Community Support Scrutiny Sub-Committee
ELP Community Partnership Board
Internal preparatory meetings
Public participation events and consultation meetings
Borough and Bankside Community Council
Community group meetings
Developers briefing on sustainable development and planning

Table 15: The focus of observation

The third phase was that of selective observation, whereby the researcher aimed to find further evidence for specific issues identified in the earlier phases or in interviews or documents. An example of this was the observation of public meetings to discuss specific issues or area-based contentions, such as the urban density requirements in Canada Water. The observation aimed to be diachronic and oriented at the processes which promised to reveal answers to the research questions on the influence of the different dimensions of institutions.

The actual conduct of participant observation involved the researcher writing notes during some observations and audio recording others, where permission was granted, and writing up observation notes soon after. The formal nature of most of the events observed allowed this to happen easily. The less formal observation events, such as the public consultation events, were written up as

soon as they finished, but again, it was still acceptable to be seen to be taking notes, as other participants were doing the same for non-research purposes. Accounts of observations were then sent for verification to the relevant key person, for example the meeting convenor, or head of the community group observed. All were agreed as valid accounts of the event observed. The only exception was the observation of the meeting of developers on sustainable development and planning. The researcher was given access but was asked not to quote any of the comments of the delegates or organisers. The organisers declined to comment on the observation account and requested not to be named. The written accounts of observations were then analysed to identify the influence of the different dimensions of institutions. Each dimension was allocated a colour and then close reading of the transcriptions allowed identification of the various dimensions within each one. All observations were cross-referenced with each other. Based on this analysis, one-page summaries were used to triangulate data from observations with those from interviews, (which were analysed on the same basis, described below) or documentary analysis (described above).

Qualitative Interviewing

Interviews allowed access to stakeholder interpretations of sustainable development and their perceptions of the factors which influenced the decisions on how it was incorporated in planning policy. A growing body of literature on qualitative interviewing (Arksey and Knight 1999, Hughs 1999, Cochrane 1998) has defined the interview in various ways: as a speech event (Mischler 1986); or as a social interaction focused on questioning and listening on the part of the researcher and answering on the part of the respondent (Kvale 1996); or as a guided conversation (Lofland and Lofland 1995 p59). It is summed up as an encounter between people of different social situations, with different agendas and varying personal characteristics. As with all qualitative techniques it is dependent on the researcher establishing and maintaining a rapport. Again, the researcher took into account the potential impact of her presence. A number of respondents tried to please, saying what they thought the researcher would like to hear. Some deliberately embellished the truth to give a more favourable view. Others gave clearly well-rehearsed accounts to impress. Similarly, Hogwood and Gunn (1984) acknowledged that observed behaviour and stated

intentions in interviews can be difficult to reconcile for a number of reasons, including inaccurate representation of motives, forgotten intentions, or 'coping' behaviour in response to events. Hogwood and Gunn also pointed to policy processes as having intended and unforeseen outcomes, some of which are given meaning or purpose retrospectively (Hogwood and Gunn 1984 p20). These different ways of responding to interview allowed the researcher to gain insight into the day- to- day roles of the respondents.

Contemporary interviewing now has a technical dimension in the form of the use of audiotape, an imperative according to Lofland and Lofland (1995 p86- 87), as it assists researcher independence. All forty-six interviews were taped and transcribed, and written accounts were passed to respondents for their verification, which was granted in all cases. (Reactions to this process were noted at the start of this chapter.) Three interviews did not contain enough data to be useful to the analysis; these were interviews with three separate developers who had agreed to respond in an interview but reconsidered their participation and withdrew once the interview had commenced. (Access to interview respondents was discussed at the start of this chapter). The researcher manually coded the data as follows: each dimension of an institution was colour coded and then identified within each interview by close reading of the transcriptions and from notes taken during the interview. In addition, recurring mention of specific events or issues were also colour coded. All interviews were cross-referenced with the other interviews manually. Based on this analysis, one page summaries were used to triangulate data from interviews with data from observation or documentary analysis, which were analysed on the same basis. Recurring issues became evident early on and the major ones formed the basis of the cases within the case study, such as the density issue and the checklist for developers. These cases benefited from data collected from all data collecting methods, giving a full and rich account of the issues from a wide range of stakeholder perspectives.

A brief self- introduction and overview of the research area was sent out in advance to interview respondents when requesting a time to meet (see Appendix 3). In addition, a set of interview questions was also sent out (Appendix 4, discussed shortly). Following Elwood and Martin (2000), the

location of the interview was taken into account for how it may affect the interview. The interviews were always held in a location convenient for the respondent and in a location where disturbances from others or from phones was minimised. This was usually the place of work of the respondent, or in the case of community group members and local residents, in the venue of and sometimes just before or after a local meeting. The researcher dressed in smart casual clothes which fitted in with the surroundings.

Within the qualitative interview, Goffman (1981) identified four 'strips', or sections of dialogue, on four different footings. The first strip was the greetings and introductions section, identified as particularly important for creating a positive first impression. It was here that Beaverstock and Boardwell's (2000) issue of commonality was seen in practice, when respondents often asked the researcher direct questions about her links to the case study. They identified in varying ways with the researcher's response which was always to say she was conducting independent research for doctoral studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science, was a local resident, and had worked as an officer in LBS and with a local charity[27]. During the first strip of the interview, respondents were reminded of the aim of the research and the confidentiality of all responses. Respondents were given the option of distinguishing their comments for use as named quotes, anonymous quotes, off record comments not to be quoted, personal views, professional views or other. They were then asked permission to tape the interview, given an overview of how the interview would proceed, and asked to verify timings and agreement to proceed.

The second strip was the interview itself, though perhaps the most important aspect of this was the advance preparation time. The interview questions were intended to answer the research questions, derived from the theoretical literature on NI which appeared to be able to access the factors beyond the formal policy imperative for sustainable development. From the reading of the NI literature (discussed in Chapter Two), it became apparent that a number of important elements of institutions would need to be considered in the research. The theoretical framing therefore adopted a focus on the three dimensions of institutions identified by Lowndes (1997) as the formal and informal, the stable

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[27] This may have affected access to local developers but was not given as a reason for non-access.

and dynamic and the strategic and norm-governed. Definitions of these for the purposes of the research were summarised above (see Table 13). Definitions were not shared with respondents instead, the researcher aimed to discover how respondents applied the different dimensions or were impacted by them in the planning policy process. This approach relied on the interview questions which were designed with this objective in mind. When applying the three dimensions to the case study, the researcher identified examples of where they may be likely to be found in the policy process (see Table 13 and Table 14) and distinguished the main and secondary data collection methods to elucidate such information. The interview questions were written with the intention of accessing detailed information on the three dimensions of institutions, in particular information on the dynamic and norm-governed dimensions, and their influence on both the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP (Research Question 1) and their influence on the plan making process (Research Question 2 and 3).

The initial set of interview questions were piloted on the Manager of the PPRU and then, based on his responses, were refined and piloted again with a community group leader. A discussion with these two stakeholders and the researcher, outlining the research questions and the theoretical framing, led to the final set of interview questions. It was essential that the interview clearly reflected the researcher's needs, allowing the research questions to be answered within the theoretical framing. To assist in this, most authors recommended the use of an interview guide for the researcher to steer conversation (Bryman 1988 p66). This is recorded in Table 16 below and gives examples of key questions relating to the three dimensions of institutions.

The full list of questions (Appendix 4) was presented to interview respondents so it is absent of the theoretical framing. It has been presented to apply the approach discussed above in relation to different "strips" of an interview (Goffman 1981) and is detailed next.

Dimensions of Institutions	Examples of Interview Questions
Formal	What is your position? What is your professional training in planning and in SD?
	Have there been formal changes affecting local government and how have they impacted on the UDP process?
	Tell me about the guidance documents and procedures for the UDP. How are these translated into practice?
	What other tools are there to ensure SD enters the UDP?
Informal	Would you say you were a supporter of business as usual, weak, strong or ideal SD? What has shaped your stance?
	What norms, values and beliefs do different stakeholders have? How do these influence the incorporation of SD in the UDP?
	What influence do working routines, practices, customs or traditions have on the UDP or the incorporation of SD in the UDP?
	What interest or issue based groups are involved in the UDP process, why and how?
	What informal networks and relationships influence the incorporation of SD in the UDP?
	What factors support, contradict or undermine the policy guidance to include SD in the UDP?
	Have any gradual or informal changes taken place in local government and how have they impacted on the UDP process?
Stable	Would you say there are any shared values regarding the UDP or the incorporation of SD in the UDP? Can you describe these?
	Which groups share the same values? Where do they not share the same values and what is the result of this?
	How stable is the local government arena in LBS, how does this compare to elsewhere?
	Tell me about levels of trust in the UDP process, is this viewed differently by different groups?
	Who are the key stakeholders in the UDP process, how is this similar or different to previous planning processes?
Dynamic	Have there been any reviews or evaluations leading to improvements in local government, local planning policy or SD?
	What new activities, processes, people, training, education or communications influence the incorporation of SD in the UDP?
	Can you identify any new ideas, trends or examples of learning by doing in the UDP process?
	Can you give any examples of institutional learning where existing ways of doing things have been challenged or changed?
	To what extent are there opportunities for change or doing things differently? Can you give examples?
Strategic Behaviour	What is the rationale for decision making on the UDP and the incorporation of SD in the UDP? Is this supportive of SD?
	Where does the rationale come from and who supports, questions or opposes it?
	What impact do political decisions have on the UDP process and the incorporation of SD in the UDP?
	What is the impact of non-conformance with LBS goals and with national government goals for SD? Do they coincide or collide?
	What priorities does LBS have for SD?
Norm-governed Behaviour	Are there any broader social contextual factors influencing the incorporation of SD in the UDP?
	Who is involved in the UDP consultation events? What is the capacity of the various stakeholders to engage in the UDP process? What support or constraints are there to engagement?
	What networks are there in LBS related to SD?
	How do norms influence decision making on the UDP and the incorporation of SD in the UDP? Are norms supportive of SD?
	Are there examples of norms and values that have impacted the UDP process or brought any changes?

Table16: Dimensions of Institutions and Examples of Interview Questions

The interview started off by asking personal factual questions about occupation, length in role, education and training. This type of question relies on the respondent's memory and telling the truth. Respondents were then asked questions about knowledge of sustainable development and the plan making process to identify interpretations which may inform or be used in the subsequent discussion. Next, the questions specifically addressed the respondent's role within the plan making process, differing slightly on whether that respondent was internal or external to LBS. These questions are known as informant factual questions (Bryman 2004 p151) and required respondents to answer questions on ways of working. These questions relied on the respondent's memory of past events although, given the public role of the case study, the researcher was able to verify most accounts in documentary materials (made publicly available via meeting minutes or communications materials).

Importantly, open ended questions were used to encourage the interviewee to talk freely and at length, in their own words, and so reveal some of the values and beliefs informing their role in the case study. The disadvantage of this approach was that some respondents spoke at length without necessarily providing any more information than those who were more succinct due possibly to their deeper understanding of the issues, or their seniority, which meant their time was more limited. Throughout, the researcher checked and remained cognisant of her own values and interpretations. Probing was used, where appropriate, to encourage the respondent to elaborate on what was being said (Fielding 1993 p140). Key characteristics of the interviews were that they were open and flexible:

> "allowing the informants to elaborate on their values and attitudes and account for their behaviour" (Devine and Heath 1999 p136).

Observation of the researcher, the respondent and the setting of the interview was noted in relation to the material collected. The third strip was after the interview – signified by the switching off of the tape recorder. Kvale (1996 p128) recommended a debriefing in this period, pointing out that more interesting information might be exposed because of the 'off the record' feel. The literature highlighted how interviews hold the researcher and the

respondent together but do not represent a normal social situation, as the respondent is prompted to talk at length during the interview, guided by the researcher and the topic guide document. At the end, the respondent becomes an individual again and there is a return to normal conversation, each person taking it in equal length turns to speak. The status of the individual is returned and standpoints and agendas shift.

The final strip was the leave taking, when the researcher or the respondent stood up and left. In their study of senior officials in local government, Miller and Dingwall (1997) noted that respondents rushed off after the interview, either because of the pressure of other commitments, or because they were accustomed to being interviewed for the media. It was important not to neglect this final phase of the interview period as leaving a good impression was essential to guaranteeing a revisit for further data collection or clarification of issues.

The use of qualitative, semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to avoid imposing definitions or structures by asking respondents to report in their own terms, to give their own perspective, to tell their own story. Through the reflexive and flexible process of qualitative interviewing, the researcher was able to interact with the respondents. Beyond the initial personal factual interview questions, there was no set order to the discussion and the conversation flowed according to the interviewee, the order in which things were discussed also revealing the interviewee's perspective. The researcher was able to probe respondent views, to explore their subjective experiences and their understanding of the meaning and significance they attached to those experiences, to determine how and why and to what extent they participated and what they thought of the outcomes. In other words, qualitative interviewing permitted 'thick description'. As with all interview material, the researcher relied on the memory and perceptions of the interviewees when recounting historical events, though these were cross-referenced with documentary materials where they existed.

As perceptions influence notions (and vice versa), the literature recommended that these two forms of knowing should be approached as two separate but

linked research areas. This was addressed by asking two distinct types of questions. Some questions were designed to explore conceptions and others to elicit information on perceptions and experiences. This approach also facilitated the orientation of the researcher to the field of enquiry, providing contextual details and familiarisation with the specific idioms allowing the research to place the respondent within:

> "the context of his/her own individual biography and wider social setting" (Devine and Heath 1999 p138).

A list of potential respondents was identified from documentary analysis and meetings with the Manager of the Planning Policy Research Unit (PPRU), presented in Table 17 below.

Council Officers	Council Members
Environment Regeneration Economic Development Development Control Transport Air Quality Housing Education Community Development Elephant Links Head of Strategy Local Strategic Partnership Community Strategy	Executive Member, Regeneration and Economic Development (Liberal Democrat) Executive Member, Environment and Transport Shadow Labour counterpart Leader of Council (Liberal Democrat) Deputy Leader (Liberal Democrat) Planning Committee members (including Liberal Democrats, Labour and Conservative)
Planning Policy and Research Team Director Manager Head Officers for Environment , Education, Housing, Transport, GIS	
Stakeholders outside LBS (identified through objections received)	
Private sector including local developers and objectors	
Community groups (Areas 1 and 6)	
GLA Planning Executive	
Planning Aid for London	
GoL (constant LBS contact over review process until recent handover)	
London Sustainable Development Commission	
Forum for the Future	
Neighbouring boroughs planning officers	
ODPM/DTLR representative	
RTPI	
Planning Officers Society	
Sustainability Appraisal Consultants	
The Planning Inspectorate	

Table 17: Interview Schedule

Interviews started from the heart of the UDP team and expanded outwards to the officers and Members in LBS; local residents community groups, businesses, developers; and regional and national stakeholders. They began in

November 2002 and continued until 2007, though the majority were conducted during 2004 when the final draft UDP was being created. Some key respondents were interviewed several times during the research period. Although snowballing was used early on in the research to ensure a broad range of stakeholders were interviewed, purposeful sampling was later adopted. This allowed interviews to focus on "information- rich cases" which allowed the most detailed information to be gathered in response to the research questions.

Group interviews allowed participants to frame their own questions and concepts around the topic guide and to pursue these in their own terms and vocabulary, in dialogue with one another as part of a social network, rather than in a dialogue dominated by or oriented towards the researcher. Group membership was a fundamental aspect of how social stakeholders situated themselves within the case study, and was the platform on which social roles, norms and values were learned and maintained. This technique therefore gave an important insight into key aspects of participation (as socially constructed), and reflected the dynamic nature of participation more generally. This dynamic nature was not captured by one-to-one interviews. Group interviews allowed the processes of argumentation, consensus-building and dissent to be observed and explored. However, views expressed in this context were different from those expressed elsewhere because of the group dynamic. This method was used prior to one-to-one interviews as researcher familiarisation and a way of contextualising individuals within the wider group and assessing relationships therein. Preliminary meetings with the UDP team took the form of group interviews, allowing the researcher to become familiar with the arena of research, the different roles and responsibilities within the team and the means of communication within the team.

All interviews were identified clearly as part of the CASE award research and this being based on collaboration with LBS, issues of confidentiality did not arise, though anonymity was respected except in cases where attribution was specifically requested. This was particularly the case when speaking to Councillors who were keen to make statements attributable to them and be seen to be participating in research which they felt confirmed their

accountability. This also indicated their responses were in line with party politics and this may have prevented a more frank discussion of the issues.

Data Analysis and Findings

The analysis of results allowed the identification of the influence of the three dimensions of institutions on the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP. In practical terms, this involved the analysis, cross-comparison and triangulation of the findings from the different data collection methods described above. The key aim of the analysis was to link the data to the theory to exemplify the ways in which sustainable development is either supported or constrained by the dimensions of institutions. A secondary aim was to assess the policy implications from the findings. The results of the content analysis are summarised and presented in Chapter Six to demonstrate interpretations of sustainable development in planning policy. The observations were used to understand the planning policy process. When compared with interviews the intentions and impact of different stakeholders were identifiable. Interview quotes and examples from observations were selected to be presented in the findings when they provided evidence of the influence of the dimensions of institutions or when they exemplified one of the recurring themes within the case study (such as the density issue).

Selecting the theoretical framework for interpreting findings and identifying the theoretical implications of the data was essential for generalisation at the analytic level and focused on the three dimensions of institutions. The units of analysis formed the basis upon which research material was analysed and transformed into conclusions. For example, LBS was the research unit, and the UDP, other strategic documents and the planning process itself were the observation units. However, at the empirical level, there was no difference between research unit and observation unit. A theory at one level of analysis would be incomplete without theories at the other levels. An individual level theory would be incomplete until it told how the different dimensions of institutions influenced the identities and number of stakeholders, why they pursued which choices, how the institutional arena evolved, why rules changed and how this determined the macro outcome, and where both the micro and macro theories were located in the historical-structural context. The case study

was able to handle the whole range of analytical levels. There were no variables as the case study researcher looked at the case, and the processes, structures and patterns within the case as a whole. This was a major consideration and Yin (2003 p111) pointed to the benefits of the case study which was able "to maintain the unitary nature of the observed object".

Yin also pointed out that the case study method has been seen as "a weak sibling among social science methods" (Yin 2003 pxiii). In response to criticisms advanced at the case study and the ability to generalise therefrom, Yin (2003 p153) set out explanation-building as a data analysis technique where an initial theoretical statement is prepared. When exploring the incorporation of sustainable development in land use planning policy, the research hypothesised that there is something beyond the formal policy statements on sustainable development which shaped the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. Yin's explanatory case study can therefore be used to establish causal relationships and the instrumental use of the case study to demonstrate the general. This approach is widely supported: "If the aim of comparative social inquiry is to achieve valid generalisations...." (Ragin and Becker 1992), the case study can, and should, be used in a "consciously theoretical manner in testing and elaborating theory." (Peters 1998 p148). Another strong proponent of the case study approach, Stake (1995), distinguished between explanation and understanding. He stated that understanding does not require a direct causal link to be identified. He proposed analysis of case study data by taking a generalisation as a starting point, and testing it via the case study in order to refine the generalisation on the basis of the case study findings. In this way, the particular demonstrates the general and promotes understanding. Whichever approach is adopted, the key characteristic of a good generalisation is that it summarises a complex case in a simple manner without overlooking substantial aspects. This is the intention of the following four findings chapters, Chapters Four to Chapter Seven, which lay out a realistic representation of the case study findings in a chronological narrative, and discuss the key themes of the theoretical framing in the form of the three dimensions of institutions. Finally, Chapter Eight refines the starting point and specifies the 'something' beyond the formal policy process that was seen to influence the incorporation of sustainable development in the

policy making process in LBS. It refines the theoretical framing and proposes a new framing which may be helpful in the field of study and could be applied to other cases.

Baxter and Eyles (1997) also supported the use of a multi-method analysis to cast light on the research questions. However, they also highlighted the need for the researcher to be aware of whose voice is heard in the selection of quotes and accounts from observations. Echoing Bryman (1988) and Silverman (1993) they raised concerns over the:

> "anecdotal nature and assumed representativeness of such accounts."
> (Baxter and Eyles 1997 p508).

Equally, the researcher was careful to remember that: the respondent's account was self-reported and relied upon their very personal and often political views (Hughes 1999); and were based on the assumption that they were representative of their community; and revealed knowledge pertinent to the research questions (Cochrane 1998). The interpretations of the information gathered from interview were therefore carefully cross-referenced and drew heavily on practices to ensure rigour (described below). The researcher remained conscious of the reflexive nature of both the research process and the analysis of findings (Bennett 2000) and of the "situated production of knowledge" (Crang 2002).

The research adopted many practices which enhanced the rigour of data analysis including: the use of standardised interview guides, repeat interviews with key stakeholders and verification of transcripts; familiarisation, shadowing and observation; sensitivity to the power relations involved between researcher and the range of case study stakeholders; immersion in the case study over a period of time; discussions of the formulation and implementation of data collection methods and the framework for theoretical analysis; researcher reflection and reflexivity; discussion of initial findings with key community and LBS contacts to ensure the links the researcher identified made sense to those involved in the field of research. These methods for demonstrating rigour are discussed next as a way of addressing the criticisms and challenges of findings from both the qualitative and single case study approach adopted.

Challenges to the Qualitative Methodology

The methodology described above is open to several criticisms, the main two being the lack of rigour in qualitative research and the lack of generalisability of single case study findings. The research has attempted to address these criticisms and incorporate mechanisms to minimise their impact on the research findings as discussed next.

The need to impose a rigorous process to qualitative research has been expounded by many authors (LeCompte and Goetz 1982, Kirk and Miller 1986, Denzin and Lincoln 1994, 2000). Mason (1996 p21) argued for "quality, rigour and wider potential of research". Baxter and Eyles (1997) identified the need for "academic integrity, responsibility, honesty, self-reflection, believability and worthiness of attention". In particular, Lincoln and Guba (1981) looked at qualitative rigour in terms of authenticity and trustworthiness. They distinguished four areas to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility (of findings); dependability (application to other times); confirmability (by other researchers) and transferability (to other settings). These four areas are endorsed by many authors investigating methodological rigour and were addressed in the research and are discussed next.

Credibility was addressed in the research by following good practice for qualitative researching, some of which is identified and discussed in this chapter. This included designing-in respondent validation, whereby relevant stakeholders in the research process were asked to corroborate the researcher's account of the interview, observation or documentary materials. This process was assisted by the CASE award as the partner organisation, LBS, wanted to ensure that the respondent's views were correctly recorded and that the researcher's findings were based upon accurate accounts and understanding of observations and documentary materials. This scope was expanded to include all stakeholders interviewed or observed in the plan making process to lend credibility to the findings and demonstrate fairness (another criteria for rigour discussed below). For the most part, respondents confirmed the researcher's accounts. Occasionally, respondents disagreed with the account. This was particularly the case with written accounts of the interviews. For example, with questions on sustainable development,

respondents sometimes wanted to correct or improve their first responses, as they felt their knowledge was being assessed and they wanted to do better. This was an example of the research acting to change the circumstances (or knowledge) of the respondent. In some cases it was clear that the respondent had gained knowledge, or at least the ability to express this knowledge, between the interview and the verification of the researcher's account (which in fact had been an almost verbatim transcript drawn from notes and tape recordings). This is discussed below in terms of catalytic or tactical authenticity.

In addition, as key aspects of the research were written up, some clearly defined elements were presented to groups within LBS, such as the public participation process, or the public inquiry. Those respondents involved in the research agreed with the account presented. Finally, a draft of the full research findings was presented for input to the lead representative of the CASE award partner. As someone who had been involved in previous collaborative research projects, the lead representative was able to engage with the findings and understand the broader theoretical and methodological discussions, although he chose to indicate that he had only commented on those chapters containing direct mention of his institution and its practices.

Another common technique to improve credibility is triangulation. In spite of but acknowledging Winchester's (1999) concerns that any complementarity between different data collection methods may be more of an illusion than a reality this was used in two ways. Firstly, the more common use of adopting more than one method to explore different sources of data for the same phenomenon was used in the content analysis of the planning document and the interviews with those officers responsible for writing the document. This allowed an assessment of the content of the document followed by discussions to understand the intentions behind the content. Similarly, interviews with stakeholders on their role and knowledge were followed by observation of them in their roles at public and internal meetings. Secondly, following Denzin's (1970) broader use of triangulation, the research also benefited from multiple researchers when the content analysis was explained by the researcher, then replicated by two peers. This also responded to best practice for confirmability (mentioned below).

Dependability involved the keeping of research records which could be audited by other researchers and repeated at a later date, this included a journal of the research process. Although records of the research process were maintained, they were not examined by research peers. The opportunity that the CASE award partner offered to use the content analysis findings to produce a sustainability appraisal did, however, open this part of the research method up to research peers who were briefed on the method adopted, given the appropriate documentation and proved able to replicate it. They found almost no discrepancy between the researcher's findings and their own. Confirmability is also recommended to be confirmed by an auditor but the research did not design this into the process beyond feedback from supervisors and the CASE award partner lead representative.

Later, Guba and Lincoln (1994) also identified five further criteria for authenticity which were also addressed in the research design: fairness; ontological authenticity; educative authenticity; catalytic authenticity; and tactical authenticity. These focused on the practical outcomes of research, though Bryman (2004) reviewed their use as minimal:

> "thought provoking but ... not ... influential, and their emphasis on the wider impact of research is controversial" (Bryman 2004 p276).

In fact, the nature of the CASE award lent a greater emphasis to the practical outcomes of the research and this was discussed earlier in relation to action research. In addition, Hammersley (1992) offered an alternative criteria to assess the quality of qualitative research, that of relevance of the research to the field or to the literature in the field. He included in his assessment, a practitioner focus on the benefit of the research findings, though he acknowledged that benefit is likely to be defined differently by the researcher and the practitioner. In the case of LBS, one of the key benefits of the CASE award was that it supported claims of transparency and a willingness to be scrutinised. Beyond this there were some direct benefits which fitted well with the research findings as they were being written up, in particular the content analysis discussed in Chapter Six as well as the unforeseen support given by the researcher to creating more effective public consultation events, providing ontological authenticity.

Fairness was a key part of the CASE award as the representative of the partner organisation in LBS was keen to ensure that the viewpoints of LBS employees were represented as intended, without misunderstanding. The approach was therefore adopted of checking the researcher's summary of interviews with the respondent. This was then extended to all stakeholders interviewed. In addition, LBS staff were asked by the senior management to be helpful and honest in their responses, and reassured of the confidential nature of the interview between the respondent and the researcher.

In respect of the various forms of authenticity, the research engaged with these to varying degrees on a planned or retrospective basis. Ontological authenticity intended to assist the stakeholders of the research community to better understand their environment. The research was able to assist with this in a very defined way by presenting findings to other section heads and developing and presenting a draft set of indicators to monitor the sustainability content of the UDP. This was a definite and intended outcome of the research and a valuable one for the CASE award partner. Educative authenticity refers to enabling better understanding of different actors in the research environment. This was not the intention of the research but can be seen to have happened in a couple of instances, most notably when planning officers were recorded as experimenting with more effective consultation and the research findings confirmed the "them and us" attitude of the local community and the fact that all LBS officers were considered able to help in all matters relating to LBS services from waste and graffiti to household repairs. Although officers felt this was the case, the research findings confirmed this and led them to adapt their public participation procedures within the team. The change in procedures was an example of tactical authenticity which Guba and Lincoln (1994) defined as when research empowers stakeholders to take steps to engage in action. The adapted procedures clearly emanated from the officers being studied who started public participation events by taking a list of all the concerns local residents had which were not related to the UDP and passing these on to relevant colleagues.

Catalytic authenticity describes how the research acts as an impetus for the stakeholders to engage in action to change their circumstances. An example was where respondents were asked to validate the accounts of their interviews and disagreed with their initial responses on a definition of sustainable development, wanting to correct or improve their first response. This could have been because they forgot to say something they knew already, or wanted to express it more eloquently out of the interview situation, but may equally have been an example of the research process clarifying their knowledge or prompting them to review and discuss their response with colleagues and therefore gather additional knowledge.

Finally, the critical issue of the generalisability of the research findings relates to Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criterion of transferability to other settings and Mason's (1996) wider potential of the research. This is acknowledged as a key limitation of qualitative research in general and of the single case study in particular. This research, following Geertz (1973), has provided "thick description" to detail the deep richness of the single case study and has attempted to be mindful of Lofland and Lofland's warning to avoid "descriptive excess" (1995 p164). It has attempted to follow Hammersley's (1992) call for qualitative research to provide accurate representation of the complexities of the field of study and adequate evidence to support descriptions, explanations and theory. The starting point that the institutional setting of the case study is key to understanding the incorporation of sustainable development within the plan making process, somewhat justified the approach. Although the complexity of the planning process favoured a chronological narrative to clarify the repetition of different phases at different stages in the process, the focus on the analytical framework is intended to draw out the key findings in the chronological process.

In addition, Chapter Four opens by giving an historical and contextual account of LBS in relation to other London boroughs and other local authorities in England. It draws out what is particular to LBS and notably different with regard to the economic, social and political context. This allowed the researcher to demonstrate the potential generalisability of findings to other similar inner city settings.

Conclusion

This chapter has explained how the theoretical framing has informed the research questions, the methodological approach and the design for its operationalisation in the case study and the subsequent analysis of findings. The case study was introduced and presented with the use of a selection of comparative key economic, social and environmental indicators. This allowed the LBS to be set within the context of both the other London boroughs and of the other UK local authorities. The spatial and contextual details of LBS and it's political history were examined. LBS promises particular interest as it has attracted Government funding for a range of regeneration projects with a focus on sustainable regeneration and these are also outlined. This chapter has also highlighted the benefits and disadvantages of the collaborative nature of the research as part of an ESRC CASE[28] award. It has discussed the challenges of the qualitative approach and of the single case study, establishing as much as possible a rigorous approach as set out by the methodology literature.

Full accounts of the findings produced by these data collection techniques are presented in subsequent Chapters Four to Chapter Seven that adopt a chronological narrative to tell the story of the policy formulation process for the LBS UDP. Chapter Four gives the recent historical and political context which forms the backdrop to the planning policy formulation process within LBS. The existing 1995 UDP and activities on sustainable development are highlighted. Chapter Five focuses on the public participation aspects of the UDP and contrasts two policy making processes: that of the UDP and that of the *Community Strategy*. Chapter Six assesses how sustainable development is incorporated in the first and second drafts of the UDP in terms of coverage, strength and quality, according to a matrix of sustainable development objectives. It also highlights the use of one of the policy tools proposed to implement sustainable development in the form of the sustainability appraisal of the UDP. Chapter Seven presents the Public Inquiry and the Planning Inspector's recommendations. Two key issues arose in the Public Inquiry: the issue of density highlighted the tensions between local quality of life aspirations and broader sustainable development principles. The Sustainability Checklist

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[28] CASE (Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering) was one response to the 1993 White Paper *Realising Our Potential* on policy relevant research. The ESRC CASE award for doctoral research is a collaboration between a university department and a non-academic organisation to enable the PhD holder to gain academic and industry skills to prepare for a career in both academic or non-academic areas.

for Developers demonstrated the challenge of balancing local creativity and innovation with broader sustainable development principles. Finally, in Chapter Eight, the research findings are drawn together in discussions to respond to the original research questions. Conclusions are drawn about the role of the three key dimensions of institutions in how LBS has interpreted sustainable development and incorporated it in both the UDP and the planning policy formulation process.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR THE PLAN MAKING PROCESS IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

Introduction

Presentation of Findings

The following four chapters present the findings of the research. For ease of reference the research rationale and research questions are re-presented next. The overarching aim of the thesis was to find out how sustainable development is incorporated in planning policy. An examination of the literature on planning and sustainable development revealed a focus on the content analysis of development plans and the resulting interpretations of sustainable development which appear in them. A dual research gap was identified firstly to look at the plan making process behind the content of planning documents. Secondly, to do this in a way that enabled a view beyond the formal policy imperatives for sustainable development and the notion of policy cascade as a formal, standardised and, therefore, neutral influence. This meant exploring beyond the informal influences shaping the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy.

The thesis started from the premise that the relationship between sustainable development and local planning policy is reflected not only in the content of development plans but also, and perhaps more importantly, in the ways of thinking and ways of doing in local planning policy formulation. The thesis is predicated on the belief that ways of thinking and ways of doing are represented in institutions. A way of narrowing the research on certain dimensions of the many features of institutions was found in Lowndes' three main dimensions of institutions: formal and informal institutional rules; change and stability within institutions; and strategic and norm-governed action (Lowndes 1997 p180). Whilst these dimensions gave a framework for exploring the ways of thinking and ways of doing in local planning policy their representation as dualisms is not real and so discussions in this and the following three findings chapters highlight the three dimensions but discuss them fluidly as they are found in reality.

The research hypothesised that there is something beyond the formal policy imperatives for sustainable development that influences the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. As a result, the research questions set out to discover why the particular approach to sustainable development has been adopted by asking the following:

1) How is sustainable development interpreted in the UDP and related documents and in the plan making process?

2) How are both the plan making process and the interpretations of SD within it influenced by the three dimensions of institutions (the formal and informal, stable and dynamic, and strategic and norm-governed)?

3) To what extent do the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions influence the incorporation of sustainable development?

The findings of the qualitative research in response to the first two research questions are presented in the body of the following four chapters. Based on these findings, the final research question is addressed in the conclusions and discussed further in Chapter Eight. Information was gathered from documentary analysis, observation and interviews, as described in the preceding chapter. Interviews are referenced according to the interview number allocated to safeguard anonymity. The complex reality of the formal planning policy process is such that a chronological narrative has been adopted. This is clarified by the banner at the start of relevant sections allowing the reader to locate themselves in the planning policy formulation process for LBS in relation to the findings. Findings are presented as a series of discussions on the plan making process which draw out the influence of the dimensions of institutions, highlighting those which recur or have an obvious influence. This is followed by a discussion of the interpretation of sustainable development in the policy document itself. Issues which particularly demonstrate the interplay of the dimensions of institutions on the incorporation of sustainable development are presented in some detail. Through these discussions, following the

chronological development of the planning policy process, the influence of the different dimensions of institutions can be seen to emerge or be restricted at different stages in the process.

| July 1995 UDP | April 2000 Env. Review | May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult. | Nov 2002 First draft UDP | March 2004 Second draft UDP | 2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry | April - June 2005 Public Inquiry | March 2006 Inspectors Report | Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted |
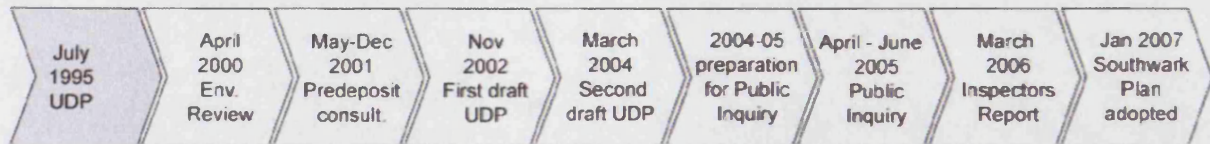
The policy formulation process for the new UDP started in 2001 but was influenced by the history of the existing UDP and the existing activities relating to sustainable development in LBS. These are discussed in Chapter Four to provide the historical context for the new UDP. Work on the new UDP started in 2001 and focused on public consultation based upon key and local issues to clarify the broad strategy of the plan and local objectives. It served as an information-giving exercise that explained to others the necessity for compliance with regional and national planning objectives. This phase of pre-deposit consultation is explored in Chapter Five. This resulted in the *First Draft UDP* for deposit in November 2002 at the start of the research period, accompanied by twenty-nine Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents, of which the *Sustainability SPG* is explored in Chapter Six. Also in this chapter is an assessment of the interpretations of sustainable development in the UDP at various stages of the plan making process. Objections to the first deposit documents were assessed and negotiation took place with objectors to produce the second stage deposit. The evolution of the first and second stage deposits is also explored in Chapter Six. The subsequent consultation process involved making formal changes to the plan, before it reached Public Inquiry. The final deposit was the basis of the eight-week public inquiry where an independent Planning Inspector, appointed from the Planning Inspectorate, considered over 3,000 written objections and over 2,000 verbal objections. This process and the objections when they pertain specifically to sustainable development are explored in Chapter Seven along with the Planning Inspector's report containing his recommendations. The research concludes at this point and the adoption of the final LBS UDP was expected in Summer 2007. Table 18 below outlines the planning policy formulation process

in LBS and explains the key documents and where they are discussed in this thesis.

Date	Document	Notes
July 1995	1995 UDP adopted *Chapter 4*	Setting out planning policy for LBS over next 10 years to 2005
April 2000	Environmental Appraisal *Chapter 4*	Document analysing the 1995 plan: identifies its environmental effects.
May-December 2001	Pre-deposit consultation *Chapter 5*	Key Issues Paper, May-August 2001 Document suggesting future directions for the use and development of land in Southwark. Local Issues Papers, September-Dec 2001 6 area documents created following consultation on key issues. (Borough and Bankside Area observed)
Research period commences November 2002	First draft deposit of the Southwark Plan *Chapter 6*	Document prepared taking into account national and regional guidance and local views from pre-deposit consultation
March 2004 (New Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act comes into force)	Second draft deposit of the Southwark Plan *Chapter 6*	Document prepared following consultation on the first draft Southwark Plan.
October 2004	Pre-inquiry changes	Document prepared following consultation on the second draft Southwark Plan.
February 2005	Final changes *Chapter 7*	Document prepared following consultation on the Pre-inquiry changes
April-June 2005	Public Inquiry *Chapter 7*	Objections not resolved through consultation are heard at Public Inquiry.
March 2006	Inspector's Report *Chapter 7*	Planning Inspector's report with recommendations for final modifications.
Research Period Ends Summer 2007	Formal adoption of the Southwark Plan	After considering the Planning Inspector's report and with approval of Secretary of State, adoption of new UDP.

Table 18: Chronological Order of Policy Formulation Process for the UDP in the London Borough of Southwark

Chapter Overview

This chapter now uses the retrospective views of interview respondents and relevant documents to explore the contextual historical processes and associated ways of thinking and ways of doing leading up to the start of work on the new UDP. A brief overview of the political history in relation to planning is followed by an exploration of the development of policy relating to sustainable development in the form of *Local Agenda 21* (LA21). The LA21 process also

involved the short-lived existence of the Environmental Development and Education Unit (EDEU) and the rather unique work on EU funded projects LITMUS and PASTILLE on sustainability indicators for urban regeneration. Public participation emerged as a key focus of these activities. Different interpretations of sustainable development in key documents are highlighted. The creation of LBS's twelve corporate strategies is discussed as the process had an impact on both planning and sustainable development related work. The preparations for the planning policy formulation process took the form of the review of the existing 1995 UDP which is explored at the end of this chapter.

The Policy Making Process

1990-1995 Drafting and Adopting the 1995 Unitary Development Plan

July 1995 UDP	April 2000 Env. Review	May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult.	Nov 2002 First draft UDP	March 2004 Second draft UDP	2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry	April - June 2005 Public Inquiry	March 2006 Inspectors Report	Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted
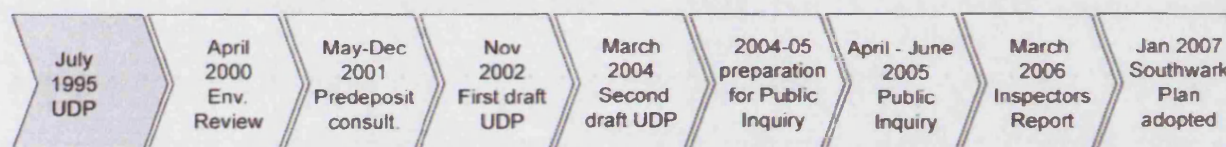
Formal Policy Influences

The existing LBS UDP was adopted in 1995 and the policy formulation process for the new UDP started as a review of the existing document. This took the form of an environmental appraisal, conducted in 2000 producing a document entitled *The Environmental Review,* important to the new UDP as it formed the context for the main work of writing the new UDP. The existing LBS UDP was written in the early nineties at the same time as international preparations were under way for the Rio Earth Summit of 1992. This launched *Agenda 21*, with the intention of putting sustainable development as a high priority area for national and local governments through *Local Agenda 21* (LA21). However, the slightly earlier 1990 *White Paper on the Environment: This Common Inheritance* (DoE 1990) focused on the environmental-economic win-win scenario which this thesis assessed as a treadmill interpretation of sustainable development. In the nineties regional planning guidance took the form of *Strategic Guidance for London, RPG3* (Secretary of State 1989) and echoed the emphasis on the economy meaning that local policy formulation was obliged to do the same.

Political Context

In the early nineties, LBS was a Labour stronghold. Less than ten per cent of local wards were Conservative. There were no Liberal wards, though Simon Hughes was already a Liberal MP after winning the 1986 by-election. Memories of the working docks along the Thames on the northern edge of the borough were still fresh in the minds of LBS residents, many of whom (sometimes whole families) had relied on this form of work for decades. In a Labour led LBS, 'local jobs for local people' was the priority and a major influence of the time, represented by a vocal participatory vehicle in the form of the North Southwark Community Development Group. In a collaborative and, from both Council and community group accounts, highly successful participatory effort, the North Southwark Development Plan was created to represent these views. The vision was of local jobs, access to good quality family housing with private gardens and more public open space for leisure.

Yet there was pressure from the development industry, supported by central Government, to build office developments along the Thames. Considered irrelevant to local people, who were qualified for manual work and were seeking industrial jobs on factory and warehouse developments, LBS always opposed office developments, though in many cases this was a futile cause (Interviews 3, 22, 28):

> "Supported by a Conservative central Government, developers would win on appeal leading to a feeling of powerlessness by the Council and frustration from local residents" (Interview 3).

The London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) was given statutory responsibility for the development for the northern edge of the borough. The LDDC vision settled upon the idea of expanding into LBS the wealth of the City by creating office developments on the north of the Thames. Crucially the LDDC strategy focused on physical development:

> "... in retrospect ... it lacked a social programme to engage and train local people so that they could benefit from the new jobs created" (Interviews 11, 13, 22, 28).

LBS's existing planning strategy, the North Southwark Development Plan, considered to be responsive to local needs was simply not compatible with the LDDC vision. This tension between local needs and the external focus of development from either developers or central (and now regional) Government is a recurring theme in the case study. The Council, in particular those who had seen the failings of the North Southwark Development Plan in the futile attempts to stand up against the development industry and Government:

> "...basically had to accept that it [LBS] was not allowed to pursue it [the plan]" (Interview 3).

This provided an important influence in the approach to writing the 1995 UDP:

> "The LBS view was that they were not really able to shape as they wanted to, a policy for the use and development of their land. So, they wanted a simple, straightforward plan on the one hand to give powers to secure refusals on the things that the Council did not want and on the other hand to guarantee quality in whatever development was unavoidable. Many retreated to the view that the UDP's main function would be as a tool to guarantee quality in unavoidable development" (Interview 3).

In contrast, and considered a planning triumph at the time, were the Cherry Gardens and Park Street developments. In response to the North Southwark Development Plan vision, the Labour led Council was:

> "supportive of the ideology of what's good enough for middle class suburbia is good enough for inner city London working people..." (Interview 3).

They therefore approved suburban-type developments featuring low storey housing with front and back gardens. Located along the Thames, this land had key developmental potential. This left a legacy revisited in later density objections to the new UDP (in Chapter Seven).

Equally well remembered, though with some bitterness, was the 'infamous' gated community off Dulwich Common, Hambledon Place. The proposal for fifteen large detached houses in a gated community was opposed by the Labour-led Council who held the view that gated communities may improve quality of life for a small number of residents inside but may make it worse for

the majority outside. In spite of local opposition, the development was allowed, accompanied by media rumours that Margaret Thatcher was buying or (more controversially) being gifted a house in the new development which became briefly known as the "Thatcher Estate":

> "The media attention and links to the PM, the Labour led Council's 'political arch enemy' made this planning defeat particularly galling and a bitter taste has stayed with us ever since" (Interview 3).

In the case study, it is clear to see signs of conflict and mistrust between the local community, planning officers and political leaders alike. Planning activities were led by two Councillors with the role of chair and vice chair on the Planning and Regeneration Committee; one worked in local government and the other was an architect. Described as "professional insiders" (Interview 3, 22) because of their professional knowledge of the planning system and their role as local Councillors, these men:

> "decided everything and had strong community oriented politics ..." (Interview 3).

Whilst the strong focus on the local community was considered to be a source of pride for both local politicians and local officers, it also created ongoing and enduring tensions when local voices were considered to be ignored or misrepresented. Tension, mistrust and frustration built up in the different relationships, in particular in respect to the interface LBS provided with central Government. The local community, at their kindest, considered the local authority to be:

> "at best ineffective and powerless ... more often seen as selling out, disloyal to the local community, not listening and basically two-faced urging our views on then doing the opposite when speaking with external parties, be they developers or Government" (Interview 23).

The relationship between the local and national tiers of government remained a site of ongoing tensions. This relationship is traced in subsequent chapters later on in the plan making process and is highly visible in the density issue, compounded by the creation of a regional tier of government. It was not only the relationship between the local authority and the local community that

experienced this tension, as local community members questioned the interests of their own representatives too.

Institutional Arrangements and Actors

Organisational structure was also indicative of the emphasis on increasing and expanding economic prosperity with planning functions based in the Regeneration and Economic Development Division. The Division had, over a number of years, subsumed the functions of a previously separate Economic Development Unit. The drafting of the 1995 UDP started at the same time as a new Director of Regeneration and Environment was appointed. The job title is interesting as:

> 'regeneration' was considered to include 'economic development' but 'environment' needed a home so was added to the activities of that Division, which made perfect sense." (Interview 4).

Fred Manson had worked with LBS since 1986 as Borough Architect and had represented the Council on regeneration programmes and London wide projects (more recently including the Tate Modern and the Millennium Bridge). He kept a business like approach to sustainable development referring to market demand and supply in much of his comment on sustainable development. This was partly based on the belief in the potential of LBS to take advantage of and influence international markets, which was demonstrated in the late nineties when LBS purchased the largest fleet of sustainable vehicles and supporting infrastructure in the UK. Commenting on this, he stated:

> "We must all realise that Southwark, like any local authority is a small fish in a big pond and this places limits on what we might be able to achieve if the markets do not allow it" (LBS 1999d p8).

The impact of such personal approaches, priorities and opinions is a key feature of the LBS plan making process and represents the informal dimension of the institution.

The Planning Team Leader had worked for four years in LBS and had recently completed an MA in Urban Design. In the early nineties in LBS, planning activities were based on the concept of generic planning which meant that all

officers worked on the whole range of planning issues including development control and policy formulation:

"It was considered the new thing of the moment to work in that way" (Interview 3).

There were project teams or working parties that cut across departmental and divisional boundaries:

"although Council policies were very fragmented" (Interview 4).

The Regeneration and Economic Development Division gradually underwent reorganisation away from generic planning where everyone was active in all aspects of planning, to reinstating specialist functions by 1996. In particular, a clear distinction was made between development control and planning policy.

At the same time as the 1995 UDP was adopted, the Council's Chief Executive turned his attention to streamlining the wide range of policies existing across LBS that were commonly considered to be fragmented (Interviews 4,5,6,7,8,9). The aim was to reduce the number of policies by unifying them and ensuring their close coordination amongst all the divisions of the local authority. Work began in 1995 and spanned the next several years, on the creation of twelve corporate strategies for LBS: community involvement; housing; crime and disorder; leisure; economic development; regeneration; education and lifelong learning; social care; environment; social inclusion; health; and transport[1]. Initial work was undertaken by the various Council divisions, sometimes with rivalry but always with many hours of discussions, to identify how to respond to the existing lack of coordination. The resulting strategies went through the contemporary committee style decision making process.

Within the Regeneration and Economic Development division a Planning Policy and Research Unit (PPRU) was formed, led by the Planning Team Leader and pulling together a team of existing officers. Their remit was to work on a range of planning related functions, including the corporate strategies on regeneration

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[1] This was later reflected in the revised constitution for LBS implemented in 2003, with these more or less unchanged areas being led by an Executive member of the new Cabinet (see Chapter 3, Table 11).

and on economic development and the UDP requirements for the early millennium. Commenting retrospectively on cross-departmental coordination in relation to the corporate strategies at this time, planning officers felt they understood very well the need for cross-departmental coordination. They were seeking new ways of engaging with other departments and improving communications about the significance of the UDP to all areas of the Council's work. They felt they spent a lot of time:

"banging on about the UDP through existing communication channels with no impact whatsoever ... how can you want to provide more school places if you haven't allocated the land to build the school in the UDP!...." (Interview 6).

However, planning officers considered activities to be the start of:

"a very long journey ... [as fellow officers were] only mildly aware of the existence of the UDP..." (Interview 4).

In parallel to the creation of the corporate strategies and the formation of the PPRU, the Environmental Development and Education Unit (EDEU) was created in 1996 to meet the Government's requirement for a LA21. It employed five newly recruited officers charged with writing the corporate strategies on environment and transport but with the main task of coordinating LA21 and environmental strategies, conducting outreach work (or public participation), and promoting waste minimisation and recycling. A home needed to be found for the Unit and its selection also indicated understanding of sustainable development at that time. Regeneration was the 'obvious' choice because of the:

"obvious links with the physical environment – waste was already within our remit - and the use of the term sustainable in regeneration projects and LA21." (Interview 26).

The two senior managers held degrees in Natural Sciences and Town Planning; and Geography and Environmental Technology respectively. A further two members of the team were studying for Masters in Environmental Management the fifth team member had a particular interest in recycling. Between them they brought a vast range of expertise and experience on sustainable development to their work.

Perhaps the most significant influence of the LA21 on the UDP was the somewhat ironic coincidence of the launch of *Essence*, in December 1999, with the closure of the EDEU. The official discourse described the decision for closure as a mainstreaming of sustainable development into decision making processes and local politics. Indeed, the majority of officers from the department were relocated in other Council operations. Significantly for the UDP, one of the managers and an officer (formerly responsible for writing *Essence*) were transferred to the PPRU. This gave an interesting context for the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP from 1999 onwards, discussed shortly. The influence of these chance occurrences can be traced in subsequent stages of the UDP policy formulation process. The previous involvement of some officers in sustainability initiatives meant that some members of the team were knowledgeable in sustainable development, though this involvement did not take any formal link to the review process about to start which took an environmental focus. Officers noted that at the time:

> "planning had expanded to fill up these borderline things we were involved in. Regeneration, social policy and sustainable development were all now starting to be seen as mainstream planning" (Interview 11).

At the time it was considered to be "fortuitous" if a new member of the team possessed knowledge or experience in sustainable development fields as they were able to boost that side of the work, but it was not a high consideration and had never been a requirement or desired prerequisite for employment.

From 2000 onwards, all those involved in the UDP had received some formal training as town planners and all lead officers had a minimum of five years working for LBS. Generally, officers had received little or no education or training on sustainable development, though with the transfer of three staff from the EDEU this area was boosted. In addition, these staff brought with them experience of involvement in EU funded projects (used as examples of best practice) and therefore a sense of being at the cutting edge and contributing to policy development on sustainable development at a strategic level. A noticeable feature of the PPRU was the presence of many temporary staff brought in for discrete pieces of work, this approach was an example of the strategic imperative for action to demonstrate compliance and avoid sanctions

of not meeting delivery timeframes. Unfortunately, it had the effect, much like the EDEU of creating a silo of expertise on sustainable development and constraining longevity and potential reach across LBS. Some of these temporary staff were Antipodean workers, which also contributed to the short term aspect of their input as they often chose to stay in post for relatively short periods before moving on (a year on average). Interviews showed that this mix of officers brought with it a rich diversity of global experience and, in the majority of cases, a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable development and the impact of urban planning. However, it required strong leadership and management skills to bring new officers on board and ensure continuity. At the start of the review process there was little visible acknowledgement of the opportunity for linking sustainable development knowledge and experience to the new UDP.

When a member of staff left as the review process was about to launch an agency officer was brought in to conduct the review, which was seen as a discrete piece of work accepted and expected to contribute to:

"a more independent and transparent basis for review" (Interview 4).

For the officer involved, the exercise also contributed as an assignment for qualification for a Masters in Urban Planning with London South Bank University where it has since become a key taught component of the Masters course. It is worth noting that the review therefore also benefited from the input of the course supervisor and knowledge of academic debate in the field, though no formal mention of this is made in the documentation.

These processes and the resulting documents are now explored in turn.

LA21 and Joined-up Thinking

The corporate *Environment Policy* covered the areas of operations, infrastructure, resource management, partnerships and education, along with an *Environment Statement* (not available to the research and no longer used in LBS). It drew together a raft of policy development that had taken place but had not been coordinated before. These included:

> "water management, energy management, integrated transport, waste management, biodiversity, education for sustainability and community governance. All have a common theme, the need to ensure the implementation of the principles of sustainable development.......The Environment Strategy is the 'glue' holding all these policies together recognising quite clearly the social, economic, as well as environmental consequences of particular policy objectives and programmes" (LBS 1998a p6).

In 1998, the Prime Minister officially asked all local authorities to produce an action plan for sustainable development *Local Agenda 21* (LA21). Subsequently, sustainable development appeared stated as an underlying principle in the production of the twelve corporate key strategies. Commenting towards the end of the process of creating the corporate strategies, officers from EDEU claimed:

> "The overarching objective of all of these [corporate strategies] is to secure sustainable regeneration in Southwark, making it a place where people want to live, work and visit. All the strategies refer to sustainable development" (LBS 1999a p9).

LBS appeared to be going against the trend as most LA21 projects were not linked to corporate strategic plans. The LA21 process in LBS was well resourced at this time and supported by senior management. LBS were bucking the trend in this respect, as generally the LA21 process was under resourced in the UK and activities were sidelined:

> "the 'poor relation' in local authority structures..." (Hams and Christie 1998).

In fact, a public statement on the strategic process in LBS leading to the development of the *LA21 Action Plan* showed that the corporate strategies would constitute the *LA21 Action Plan* for Southwark. EDEU officers reinforced

this joined-up approach when they indicated that the process of LA21 consultation would also involve consulting on the sustainable development content of the corporate strategies. Whilst this approach was indicative of the joined-up thinking that sustainable development required at the local authority level, it was not clear if other officers working on the corporate strategies shared the view of EDEU officers that the overarching objective was sustainable development. Each division seemed to take its own approach to the corporate strategies. Perhaps as a result of this reality, later EDEU documents referred to a weaker role for sustainable development. Rather than an overarching objective it became:

"one of the concepts at the heart of all the strategies..." (LBS 1999c p7).

During early 1999, as part of the LA21 process, the EDEU undertook a review of all of the LBS corporate strategies:

> "identifying the key aims, objectives and actions in all the strategies, a review supporting sustainable development principles. This identified a whole range of actions including: promoting sustainable development of resources that impact on health and wellbeing; developing effective partnerships to encourage recycling; a sustainable approach to travel; to promoting health through housing; reducing noise and anti-social behaviour nuisance; and developing sustainable tourism" (LBS 1999a p7).

In the absence of resources, these actions stood little chance of becoming a reality but their incorporation as part of the LA21 process provided a sound review for future work on both the UDP and later on the *Community Strategy*.

The review process of the UDP was noted in the draft LA21 as an action to fulfil the objective on neighbourhood regeneration:

> "The Council will secure resources to support sustainable regeneration through the improvement of roads, parks, open spaces and facilities for waste management. The Council will carry out a full review of the Unitary Development Plan" (LBS 1999e p36-37).

Many of the actions in the draft LA21 referred to the UDP directly or to land use planning indirectly. For example, the designation of land for

biodiversity/development (p8/37); securing biodiversity/energy efficiency in new developments or refurbishments by including specific policies in the UDP (p8/25); provision and design of parks and urban spaces (p9); water conservation and management fully addressed in the UDP (p14); requirement of new development and land use proposals to be accompanied by 'Green Travel Plans' (p38). It was evident that officers of EDEU had worked closely with officers of the PPRU during this process to their mutual benefit.

Institutional Arrangements for LA21

The partners invited to contribute to the LA21 process were brought together in the creation of the LBS led Sustainable Southwark Partnership (SSP), representing public, private and voluntary sectors as indicated in Table 19 below. This was an attempt to formalise existing informal relationships and networks. The membership was interesting as it resembled the thinking behind the *Local Strategic Partnerships* (LSP) which became formalised in Government policy several years later. This may have been an example of creativity at the local level being picked up and formalised before being mainstreamed through Government policy. Membership was broader than that of the existing Southwark Environmental Forum (SEF) which had for a number of years provided a voice for those members of the LBS community representing environmental issues. SEF was not considered appropriate to be expanded to take on a broader membership and was slightly suspicious of the process, but felt:

> "overlooked and somewhat sidelined, although very willing to be part of a process which may listen to our views more readily than before." (Interview 19).

| London Borough of Southwark |
| LSL Health Authority |
| Environment Agency |
| English Nature |
| English Heritage |
| South Bank University |
| Transport for London |
| Thames Water |
| ABS Consulting |
| Tate Modern |
| Bankside Business Partnership |
| Southwark Action for Voluntary Organisations |
| Southwark Energy Agency |
| Elephant Links Partnership |
| Forum for the Future |
| Southwark Chamber of Commerce |
| London Development Agency |
| Aylesbury Plus Community Forum |
| Greater London Authority |
| Environment Agency |
| Southwark Housing Association Group |

Table 19: Members of the Sustainable Southwark Partnership launched 1999

The group was to provide "strategic leadership" and Associate Membership was available to other groups beyond the twenty-three core members. The aim of the group was to:

> "make policy recommendations ... provide a focus for funding applications to national and European programmes ... [provide] a forum for sharing best practice and experience ... ensure that all the major representative organisations incorporate sustainable development within their services and operations through an integrated and coordinate approach..." (LBS 2000 p28).

In reality, it seemed that the establishment of the SSP was little more than a public relations activity as it had a short lifespan with the knowledge that the EDEU was to close on completion of the LA21, as its creation had been based on demonstrating compliance to Government calls for an LA21. Any intentions for its survival beyond the existence of the EDEU were not evident. This created tensions with those local community groups and individuals who knew of its short-lived potential and feared the focus on SSP would undermine the SEF just as it had the potential to become an important feature of policy making for sustainable development and contribute its expertise which had previously not found an outlet in formal policy making.

The launch of the *LA21 Action Plan – Essence*, took place in December 1999 and was attended by over 100 local people, including representatives of many local community and voluntary sector groups working on sustainable development. However, decisions on human resourcing within LBS (the closure of EDEU outlined above) threatened the good will and potential of this group, who had taken an active role in the consultation process. It left them without support or official status as the SSP was disbanded and SEF once again became the voice for environmental issues, but lost the majority of representatives from other areas. This could be seen as an example of joined-up thinking going too quickly for local circumstances. The SSP was ready to contribute to a range of LBS policies but without leadership within the local authority and with the completion of LA21 there was no more for it to do. Several years later the LSP was to subsequently pick up members of the SSP (but the SEF found it hard to become a member of this group as discussed in Chapter Five).

Public Participation for Sustainable Development

From 1996, work started on the *LA21 Action Plan* and in the autumn of that year the first of the pubic involvement activities took place. The first Sustainable Southwark Conference welcomed 170 delegates representing local residents, community groups, businesses, and educational establishments. The conference was established as part of the:

> "community consultation and participation strategy for LA21 ... to initiate the process of informing and raising awareness amongst the whole community in LBS on LA21 and key issues relating to sustainable development" (LBS Spring 1999 p5).

The first *Southwark Environmental Information Handbook* was launched at the conference. Commissioned by the Council to a local charity CRISP[2], the handbook contained details of the activities of over 80 organisations in LBS and was intended as a contribution to public participation through building capacity between the different groups and raising their profile and accessibility in the local community.

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[2] CRISP was set up as Community Recycling in Southwark Project in 1993 but soon expanded beyond Southwark and Recycling, keeping a focus on the local benefits of sustainable development. The researcher worked with CRISP.

The Southwark Environment Forum (SEF) was also promoted as a focus of the conference for community groups working in sustainable development. The idea was to bring existing groups together under the SEF umbrella to facilitate relationships with the local authority and between members, making a more effective and powerful collaborative body. Individuals and new organisations were also able to join the group, which met every other month at Council offices and was chaired by the portfolio holder for the environment. The then Director of Regeneration, Fred Manson, stressed the importance of:

> "responding to the community in a positive and genuine way....by accepting realities and listening to a range of people including individuals, local groups and businesses ... on a pitch that is of most relevance and appropriateness..." (LBS Spring 1999 p28).

Labour Councillor Nick Dolezal (chair of the newly established Southwark Energy Agency) opened the conference jointly with his Liberal Democrat counterpart, Councillor Donnachadh McCarthy, a keen environmentalist. This politically collaborative welcome was indicative of the good level of understanding of sustainable development by both men, although both admitted to different political interpretations of how to make it a reality. Labour Councillor Jeremy Fraser, summed up both the national and local government's anxiety at having to respond to the Rio Summit, when he was quoted as having:

> "praised the Government for signing up to Local Agenda 21 ... although he added that he felt they had misunderstood [the enormity of] what this involved ..." and that "... the Council, which certainly did not have all the answers, would attempt to lead by example by showing people ways of achieving more sustainable ways of living" (LBS Spring 1999 p6).

Keynote speaker, Chris Church, a leading figure in UK local sustainability, summarised the work ahead of LBS on sustainable development pointing out the opportunities for participation and linking with other local government areas of responsibility and action, including regeneration and local land use planning:

> "It can ... be a challenge to short-termism, and can give us new perspective on where we live and work, and it is an opportunity to develop a process that can provide an important supportive framework for the narrower concerns of a Unitary Development Plan. It can provide ideas and inspiration for work regenerating our communities. Most importantly, it can offer a process by which the ideas and experience of

those local communities can be developed and put to use" (LBS Spring 1999 p21).

His clear reference to the UDP was the first public acknowledgement the research found in LBS of the link between sustainable development and local planning policy. However, this statement made an important and lasting impression on both the key planning officers and EDEU officers, whose roles are traced in later stages of the planning policy formulation process.

The new Labour Government had advocated more transparency and inclusion in decision making processes (Blair 1998). Running in parallel with this was the requirement to draft the *Community Strategy*:

> "Similar aims and objectives were drawn from the key strategies ... through this approach the Community Plan and Local Agenda 21 Action Plan have become closely integrated" (LBS 1998 p6).

In the autumn of 1998, the EDEU started a LA21 public participation drive that took the form of borough-wide consultation exercises using postcard responses. The aim was to identify key environmental concerns on a geographic and thematic basis. The postcards were launched at the second Sustainable Southwark Conference along with a booklet reviewing over fifty sustainability activities in the borough between 1996 and 1998. These included formal Council actions such as the Regeneration Statement promoting sustainable development, but also Council-led initiatives such as: LBS having the first fleet of LPG vehicles in the UK; being one of five UK local authorities with ISO 14001; launching the Southwark Energy Agency (now Sustainable Energy Agency) as a model for reducing energy waste; installing one of the UK's largest combined heat and power generators on a housing estate; monitoring air pollution and contributing to the *National Air Quality Act for the UK*; conducting a thermographic aerial survey showing energy efficiency in buildings across the borough. It also brought together projects established by local community groups which LBS supported, including an innovative recycling and composting service for high-rise dwellings; a new door-to-door paper recycling project for 125 houses (now operating commercially across London); and a network of local voluntary sector groups concerned with waste minimisation (now the London Community Recycling Network). The booklet was intended to

respond to the upsurge of interest in sustainable development expressed by Councillor Nick Dolezal:

> "People are looking for new ways of thinking and new ways of doing things to protect the planet for future generations" (LBS 1998a Intro).

In fact, it demonstrated a keen understanding of sustainable development and evidence of a link to planning policy to support the reshaping of the spatial arrangements of traditional areas of local authority work. Responses to the borough-wide postcard consultation (2,000 from a distribution of 100,000) reinforced this link to planning and showed that the main issues of concern for local people were transportation, regeneration, recycling and pollution. Information collected from the postcards was used to feed into three activities outlined in more detail below: the drafting, over the next year, of the LA21 document, known as Essence; workshops for local people to develop meaningful indicators to monitor sustainable development, started in spring 1999; and an immediate initiative to encourage and financially support local community groups to participate in sustainability projects (SSMI, discussed later).

As part of the 1999 Sustainable Southwark Conference, the PPRU convened two workshops on the physical environment that focused on empowering people to use communal spaces and on neighbourhood regeneration indicating that truly sustainable regeneration involved partnership between LBS and local stakeholders. This was interesting to local community and businesses alike, as it indicated a social element to sustainable development and was another instance of attempts to build and empower the local community.

Keynote speaker, Howard Stapleford of TV science programme Tomorrow's World, quoted some of the projects undertaken in LBS, concluding that:

> "LBS has shown that it is a leader in sustainable development over recent years ... at the forefront of local authorities in progressing sustainable development" (Southwark Council 1999d p6).

At the fourth Sustainable Southwark Conference in November 1999, the draft LA21 was made available to over 200 businesses in LBS, 500 community

groups and 50,000 individuals, as well as umbrella organisations, key Council officers and councillors. The fourth Sustainable Southwark Conference also ran a workshop on the review of the UDP and the role indicators may have in measuring sustainable development in land use policy. This was suggested as a transparent way to monitor the UDP. It clearly reflected the speeches made at the first Sustainable Southwark Conference which linked LA21 to land use planning. LA21 required a coordinated approach to raise awareness of and plan delivery of the proposals contained within it and the PPRU, at the start of the UDP review process, were able to piggy-back off substantial public participation efforts to use the action points noted in the resulting LA21 document.

The high-profile nature of the public participation events linked to the positive marketing image of sustainable development activities won the support of key local Councillors and senior LBS managers. The events made sustainable development politically attractive providing positive media opportunities in the years before the local election of 1998. There was no evidence of what had prompted this approach, but subsequently it became obvious that these events provided a platform for the senior officers involved to launch successful careers in the field of sustainable development, which resulted in them being head hunted to more senior positions with other local authorities which LBS did little to counter.

Local Politics and Sustainable Development

A new initiative for sustainable development was developed with local Councillors. It was designed to appeal to their political priority of delivering local benefit to their electors. It was an immediate means of addressing local concerns on transport, pollution and waste, or the environment more broadly. Introduced in Autumn 1998, it took the form of a member-led Sustainable Southwark Members Initiative (SSMI) run by the EDEU. It enabled members (hereafter referred to as 'local Councillors') to sponsor projects within their wards that demonstrated sustainable development. Community groups could apply to the fund to make visible, positive, sustainable difference in their locality. In having local Councillors assess the community applications the intention was to make the local Councillors and the local community more aware of

sustainable development. It also appealed to local Councillors who could demonstrate why the local electorate should vote for them. The initiative proved very popular with applicants and local Councillors alike, resulting in over 100 small projects in the course of two years ranging from establishing organic vegetable gardens to community composting schemes to energy efficiency training. The SSMI was demonstrably able to build capacity amongst local community groups in terms of empowering local community groups to participate and in delivering visible, useful projects in the local community.

However, telephone interviews with all local Councillors about sustainable development and the SSMI in 1998 (conducted by the author as part of a previous research project[3]), showed that just three years after the publication of the 1995 UDP and in spite of public events on sustainable development and the awareness raising brought about by the SSMI, there was:

> "a lack of familiarity with the term sustainable development itself ... in spite of a good familiarity with the practical manifestations of the terms ... [as evidenced with the projects themselves]" (Percy and Hands 2002 p279-297).

The shifting political context was evident as Liberal Democrats started taking control of former Labour wards and Liberal Democrat Councillors showed a higher level of awareness and understanding of sustainable development, compared to their Labour counterparts or Conservative minority (Percy and Hands 2002). Labour still held the majority but the age of the local Councillors was lower: the new Leader of Council, Niall Duffy, was the youngest local authority leader in London since taking up his post in May 1997 and this was matched by many new young faces in the Liberal Democrat ranks. Since May 1998, the Liberal Democrat Environment spokesperson, Caroline Pidgeon, the youngest female LBS Councillor, had been lending weight to the role of public participation to bring about sustainable development. Speaking at the third Sustainable Southwark Conference, she said:

> "Open structures are required for the Council to work in partnership with residents.... There needs to be a clear understanding that local communities have a role to play in making LBS a more sustainable place

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[3] The author was working as Research Assistant to Professor Bob Evans at London South Bank University investigating interpretations of sustainable development and the impact of the SSMI in LBS.

to live in. ...the Council must be transparent in the way it presents itself and be able to communicate effectively to all citizens and communities" (LBS 1999d p5).

Innovation - EU Support to Deliver Sustainable Regeneration

The postcard responses to the LA21 consultation were later used to identify suitable locations for more in-depth LA21 consultation in the form of sustainability workshops, started in Spring 1999. These were run by LITMUS (Local Indicators To Measure Urban Sustainability), an LBS and European Commission (LIFE) two- year funded project. This ran from 1998-2000 with a remit to "help local people measure how successful the regeneration of their neighbourhood has been" (Sommer 2000). The project undertook twenty-seven community involvement activities spanning different degrees of public involvement, from information to delegation of authority. These degrees of public involvement allowed the public different roles, as shown in Table 20 below. Indeed, public involvement in the plan making process is traced in subsequent chapters as planning officers embraced participation in the plan making process. For the most part, this took the form of consultation, but there were also some striking examples of public participation.

Degree of public involvement	Role accorded to public
Information	Passive role – receiving information
Consultation	Passive role – providing ideas and opinions
Participation	More active role – formulating options together but no authority to make decisions
Partnership	Active role – acting together and sharing decisions and risks
Delegation of authority	Active role – full authority to make decisions

Table 20 Degrees of Public Involvement Summarised in LITMUS, taken from South Lanarkshire Council (1998) and Glasson et al (1994) based on Arnstein (1969).

LITMUS empowered the local community to select quality of life themes and issues and set up task teams consisting of local people. The task teams developed local indicators and used them to monitor local issues. LITMUS aimed to empower local people to develop ways of measuring issues that they identified as being important to their quality of life. The project used a range of participatory techniques including video diaries, a volunteer training programme, focus groups and school activities. It provided an important participatory

experience in sustainable development that influenced the start of the UDP consultations so merits further discussion.

The PPRU was interested in the LITMUS project for a number of reasons. Firstly, its focus on monitoring coincided with the recognition that monitoring was an issue which would need to be incorporated in the new UDP (yet what form that would take was uncertain). Next, the PPRU included research within its remit but often did not have the luxury of time and resources to conduct extensive or in-depth research, yet LITMUS was funded by the EU with a clear research question and methodology to which the PPRU could contribute. Finally, the case study areas were regeneration projects and the PPRU was responsible for writing regeneration and economic development strategy which those projects were being supported to achieve. The European funded LITMUS project, with the closure of the EDEU half way through its project span, became one of the various functions of the PPRU, along with the future PASTILLE project (introduced below). This had the effect of further concentrating the sustainable development expertise and therefore diluting its mainstreaming potential.

LITMUS consulted 1,800 people and 55 organisations in the target areas. However, the project's:

> "monitoring and evaluation identified eight barriers which inhibited active participation [in sustainable development and] ... are endemic to ... public participation exercises more generally" (Sommer 2000 p489-490).

These covered problems with a range of issues including: understanding sustainable development; familiarity with the participation process (including negative previous participation experiences); credibility and trust; control over process; proximity (of benefits) in time; certainty of benefits; distribution of costs and benefits (costs are usually individual and benefits shared); and structure of benefits (desire for visible immediate benefits). These issues are not particular to LBS and occur regularly when undertaking participation activities. However, their identification in LBS was a key factor influencing officer learning. The participatory aspect of LITMUS was accredited with several positive outcomes of the project which included the creation of:

"social capital in the two areas [Aylesbury Plus and Peckham Partnership]. It has given people hope, increased confidence, raised their awareness about changes in their area, brought people together, and helped them to make contacts with other people and organisations.... The social capital generated by the LITMUS process, such as information, networks, trust and capacity, has been much more important in monitoring and guiding regeneration programmes...." (Rydin and Sommer 2000 p3).

It was also found that the sustainability indicators developed by the project were, in themselves not useful for monitoring and guiding regeneration programmes. This was due to several factors including:

"The set up of LITMUS outside of the management structure of the regeneration programmes, the timing of indicator development [not allowing timely integration into the planning process], and the low score of many LITMUS indicators against important management criteria...." (Rydin and Sommer 2000 p3).

Following the LITMUS project, a second two year European Union funded project, PASTILLE (2000-2002), was planned in order to investigate how indicators for sustainable development entered the decision making process. It was also located within the PPRU, with a case study focus on another regeneration area – the Elephant and Castle. The involvement in the LITMUS project signalled the start of a formal function for the PPRU in European research into sustainable development, taking a particular focus on sustainability indicators. The remit of the PPRU had expanded from regeneration, economic development and UDP issues to include an action research element in the form of collaboration with research projects and a focus on sustainable development and monitoring. This undoubtedly influenced the incorporation of sustainable development in the plan making process. Seen as spearheading sustainable development activities in LBS, both EU funded projects promoted the use of monitoring tools and public participation and undoubtedly this influenced the start of the UDP review process.

Interpreting Sustainable Development in Planning Policy

It was within the broad context of policy making outlined above that the 1995 UDP was written. We now turn to look at the resulting document in detail and

interpretations of sustainable development therein. Adopted on 19 July 1995, the UDP was 212 pages long. The four-page introduction on the scope and purpose of the document stated early on that the UDP was intended to:

> "contribute to strategies for sustainable development" (LBS 1995 section 0.3).

The 1995 UDP uses the glossary at the back of the documents to define "sustainable development/sustainability" (the terms are used interchangeably in the document):

> "Terms for which there are no clear accepted definitions but that encompass the general concept of caring for our environment and taking care what we do today to ensure that future generations can enjoy the same or better quality of life. In planning terms a sustainable development is one which in its location, design, construction and use makes best use of natural resources, with minimal effect on the environment" (LBS 1995 p209).

Whilst this definition acknowledged the difficulty of defining sustainable development, it did make clear the futurity element of the term. However, following national trends for using the term *quality of life*, after the publication of *Better Quality of Life for UK 1994*, there was no more specific definition. This allowed only a treadmill interpretation of sustainable development. Whilst the first sentence gave a general feel for sustainable development, the second sentence was an attempt to translate this term into local planning practice and this in itself was a useful step. However, the definition remained very broad though indicative of the popular Brundtland definition (WCED 1987), as one planning officer remembered:

> "The phrase 'sustainable development' was coined at the Stockholm Conference and was being bandied around at the time of the Rio Summit when we first started thinking about the new UDP and we [the PPRU] understood it and said that's what we do, lets put it in [the UDP]..." (Interview 4).

Yet, in spite of the clearly stated intention of the document to contribute to sustainable development, the term was not mentioned throughout the rest of the 1995 document nor was it linked to any of the specific policies or SPGs. The first chapter was the main focus of the 1995 UDP, on Regeneration and

responded to Government policies for expanding economic prosperity. In fact, other than the reference to the term sustainable development in the UDP, little work was undertaken on sustainable development until later.

Nonetheless, the general aims of the 1995 UDP focused on traditional planning issues that could be said to relate to sustainable development but that did not use the term as such. Of twelve main aims, three related most closely to sustainable development. The first flagged up the commonly acknowledged lack of and need for coordinated LBS policies:

> "to use the development planning system in conjunction with other council strategies to help to regenerate and revitalise *economic, social and environmental* conditions in Southwark" (LBS 1995 aim1).

The second neglected to specify minimising environmental impact to the favour of social and economic impact:

> *"to minimise the adverse social and economic impact* of development in the borough to protect and improve safety and security for those who live and work in Southwark" (LBS 1995 aim2).

The third gave the impression that the environment was for extra benefit having met basic needs (in the form of social and economic needs):

> *"to protect and enhance the environment* for public health enjoyment and education and for the benefit of nature conservation and to enhance ecological value" (LBS1995 aim12).

These three aims equated to 25 per cent of the UDP and together they did encompass the three pillars of sustainable development – the economic, social and environmental. However, the document offered nothing new to further sustainable development as planning officers of the time reflected:

> "we put it [sustainable development] in without any thought as to what it meant in practice or how to do it, we were just interested in good planning, so we interpreted it as quality ... though I don't think we actually defined that specifically....." (Interview 4).

The first chapter focused on regeneration in keeping with the LBS focus on this. The second chapter however, was dedicated to the environment and included a focus on environmental quality, though this phrase remained undefined. This

was entirely responsive to the local context described previously and in particular to the desire to produce a tool to ensure 'quality' for whatever development was unavoidable:

> "The feeling was that if LBS had to have office blocks and commercial properties, they could at least ensure 'good quality' attractive landscape and good architecture" (Interview 3).

This was termed as urban planning and design and was seen as a retreat from planning policy to development control. Fear of crime was a very important local issue and safety and security in urban planning and design was *en vogue*. Accordingly, the first policy in the *Environmental Quality* section (with wounds still fresh from the Thatcher Estate episode) was to:

> "prevent the creation of secure enclaves..." (LBS 1995 U1.1).

Within the *Environment Chapter* there was brief reference to environmental assessments but there were no further details. The UDP's impacts on the environment and monitoring and evaluation of these were not built into the 1995 UDP as one officer readily admitted:

> "Although policies were intended to achieve certain things, if asked we would have to say we don't know and have not attempted to find out and don't know how we would go about it" (Interview 30).

To summarise, there was very little evidence of sustainable development being explicit in the 1995 UDP and as such, sustainable development cannot be said to have influenced LBS planning policy at this stage. Regular references to 'quality' (as in quality of life, quality environment, quality development) were not defined and as planning officers readily admitted there were no monitoring mechanisms in place to track the impact of the UDP.

Interpreting Sustainable Development in Local Agenda 21 (Essence)

In the one page Foreword, *Essence* defined sustainable development according to national Government priorities for economic prosperity, describing it as:

> "about securing a better quality of life for everyone and for future generations ... creating sustainable wealth and higher living standards ...

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protecting and enhancing the environment - a damaged environment holds back economic growth and quality of life. Sustainable development is equally concerned with making sure that these economic and environmental benefits are available to everyone..." (LBS 2000 p2).

The emphasis on equity was understandable in a borough experiencing high levels of social exclusion and the key message of LA21 was summarised in the following statement:

"Strong local democracy, economic opportunity and environmental benefits must be for everyone and belong to all" (LBS 2000 p2).

However, public participation was highlighted many times in the Foreword, referring to activities undertaken in the drafting of LA21:

"Many people who live and work in Southwark are already involved. Our action plan is informed by your views" (LBS 2000 p2).

The potential of the participation process was also highlighted and seen in terms relating to the Labour Government's *Modernisation Agenda* as the potential for:

"revitalising local democracy. Its real strengths lie in bringing people together" (LBS 2000 p2).

Equally, acknowledgement of the main barriers to public participation was referred to with the aspiration to undertake these activities but:

"not consultation for consultations sake but making sure that local opinions and views inform our policies and the way forward" (LBS 2000 p2).

This point was reiterated and the tone set for the consultation of the UDP which stated that:

"more importantly arguably than the consultation is ensuring that informed local opinions are reflected within the policy making process and resultant actions" (LBS 2000 p2).

Essence identified four key themes: social progress; protection of environment; management of resources; and sustainable wealth. Under them, objectives

were set with a series of key issues identified from the consultation process and associated with each objective were:

> "the main partners who will play a key role in achieving the objective" (LBS 2000 p7).

However, the main partners had been brought together under the auspices of the SSP which was then disbanded. There were no structures in place to deliver any of the objectives of the LA21 and no-one was made responsible for its delivery, in spite of the claim of mainstreaming sustainable development when EDEU was also disbanded.

Essence identified ways of measuring progress through indicators and proposed a collective set of indicators with the aim of developing a specific set of targets:

> "representing milestones on the journey towards sustainable development" (LBS 2000 p21).

The *LA21 Action Plan – Essence* (LBS 2000) certainly provided an important influence for the incorporation of sustainable development in the new UDP, but this was not through any formal dimension but through the informal contribution of the individuals involved, who took up posts working on the UDP. *Essence* was also named as the vehicle for delivering the environmental aspect of the emerging *Community Strategy*, outlined in Chapter Five, yet although it was referred to in this way, no formal structures were put in place, there was no handover and without the presence of any officers no informal influences were available. *Essence* flagged up the review of the UDP as the first step in incorporating sustainable development in the new UDP and this led to the review taking the form of an *Environmental Review*, discussed next. This was attributed to the close working relationship between EDEU and PPRU, and could be an example of the potential of institutional design for effective policy making. Whilst it was unintended in this instance (with the EDEU being formed as a parallel unit and found a home within the Regeneration and Economic Development Division) it demonstrates how the placing of sustainable

development activities influences those organisational arrangements in closest proximity, both formally and as this thesis is finding informally.

Planning Policy Formulation Process – The Start of the Formal Process

July 1995 UDP	April 2000 Env. Review	May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult.	Nov 2002 First draft UDP	March 2004 Second draft UDP	2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry	April - June 2005 Public Inquiry	March 2006 Inspectors Report	Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted
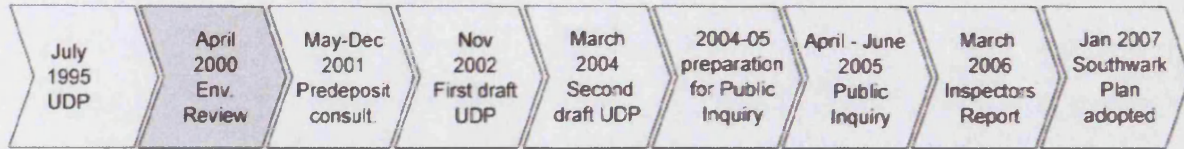
Against the contextual backdrop described above, the start of the new millennium heralded the Government-recommended period to review the UDP. One of the functions of the PPRU was the UDP, so the review fell to the team where it was seen as:

> "another bureaucratic procedure ... somewhat removed from the real business of the day..." (Interview 3).

The driver for the *Environmental Review* was clearly the range of formal procedures specifically designed to encourage greater emphasis on environmental issues and sustainable development within the planning system. Of most importance was PPG 12, requiring the use of environmental appraisal at all stages in the formulation of development plans. This stemmed from the *EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment* (CEC 2001) and was a good example of how formal EU policy impacted local government administration. Accordingly, the PPRU started the review process. The intention of the review process was to give the local planning authority a tool to:

> "consider whether the policies and/or proposals in the plan have proved useful in either encouraging development where it was sought or in preventing development in areas where it was not appropriate" (ODPM 2001 para22).

The form of the *Environmental Review* was based on guidance laid down by the Government in its *Good Practice Guide to Environmental Appraisal* (DoE1993). It assessed the impact of the UPD against indicators. The good practice guide recommended fifteen general criteria relating to environmental impacts in three areas: global sustainability, natural resources and local environmental quality of life. Using these as a basis, the *Environmental Review* of the UDP added local concerns, identified by LITMUS (discussed earlier in this chapter), to create

eighteen environmental appraisal key criteria, including land allocation and use. These key eighteen criteria were then broken down into indicators of positive impact, creating sixty-six indicators in total. There were eleven global, fourteen natural and forty-one local criteria against which the UDP was assessed. The assessment itself was made according to seven classifications, of which three were positive, three were negative and one failed to detect a relationship (LBS 2000a). The results are discussed briefly below. Whilst the Environmental Review of the UDP concentrated on the environmental aspects of sustainable development as per the guidance of this time, it also clearly stated the intention for this to be part of an ongoing process of formulating the UDP and the first stage in a full sustainability appraisal. Sustainability appraisal is revisited when later on in the policy formulation process, the UDP undergoes sustainability appraisal. There was evidence that LBS officers were well aware of potential future developments in the field.

Interpreting Sustainable Development in the *Environmental Review*

The *Environmental Review* document was described by planning officers as "analysing the 1995 plan" and the result was that it "identifies its environmental effects". This was achieved by means of an environmental appraisal which started off by confirming the status in 2000 that sustainability had now become a central issue for the UDP in line with central Government guidance, especially in the form of revised PPGs, discussed in Chapter One. It also reiterated the use of the Brundtland definition as the basis for policy making:

> "Southwark Council is now embracing sustainability as a critical issue that needs to be given higher priority in the revised UDP. This means that the new plan will be more capable of ensuring a better quality of life for everyone now and for generations to come" (LBS 2000a p2)

The results of the *Environmental Review* were negative for all but one of the indicators:

> "It is clear that the existing UDP does not provide for the full implications of its policies on the environment to be considered" (LBS 2000a p16).

The only policy identified as positive and supporting sustainable development was the act of environmental review itself. The findings concluded that:

"The process has shown the limitations resulting from having objectives and policies which are not capable of being accurately monitored" (LBS 2000a p16).

Recommendations to resolve these findings were given in the form of continuing environmental appraisal to make explicit the implicit or tenuous environmental impacts of policies and through the use of indicators. Sustainability indicators were discussed as tools for managing the implementation of targets and continuously assessing progress. LBS's stated intention was to develop environmental, economic and social indicators to monitor the environmental, economic and social impacts of the UDP and ensure sustainable development. The *Environmental Review* concluded that the existing 1995 UDP was weak in terms of sustainable development. This was similar to the findings of other research at the time on environmental appraisal of planning policy (Therivel 1998 p55). There was no evidence of a reaction to this negative review, possibly reinforcing the lack of connection between sustainable development and planning policy at this time and the need for formal Government guidance of planning policy for its contribution to sustainable development.

Public Consultation on the Environmental Review

Upon completion of the *Environmental Review* a leaflet was produced in February 2000, and a response form provided to start the process of public consultation on the new UDP. Information was sent to those listed on a database held by PPRU. However, these participatory activities stood in stark contrast to the LA21 participatory activities described earlier. The recommendation was that the response form should be read and completed in conjunction with the report of the *Environmental Review* (30 pages) and appendices (300 pages), the existing UDP (200 pages) and SPGs (most over 100 pages per document). Copies of these documents were available from the Council offices or online. This immediately made the task a lot more onerous and discriminated against those people who did not have internet access or were unable or unwilling to go to the Council offices. Whilst the public consultation process followed guidance to the letter, the reality of the situation was that no one beyond the 'usual suspects', in this case those already with an interest in planning or a vested interest, were likely to respond. In fact, 200

responses were received from local community groups, businesses and local residents, who were later seen to be the key contributors to the consultation process of the new UDP (discussed in Chapter Five onwards). It was on the basis of this highly formal and onerous process in 2000 that public participation for the rest of the UDP process was based resulting in the adoption of the UDP in 2007. No attempt was made to make the process more accessible to the local community, to speak to people about the impact of planning policy on their every day lives, to continue to interact with the local community contacts made during the EU funded projects, or to link with other community involvement activities carried out by officers charged with the corporate strategies. Whilst planning officers wanted their colleagues to engage with the planning aspects of the corporate strategies they did not see any opportunity to engage with them in the review process. Whilst the process made no attempt to be representative of the 230,000 population living in LBS, it did meet the statutory requirements. A reflexive element of the research appeared here when the CASE contact reviewed the researcher's initial findings and took on board the contrast with previous participatory activities. Subsequently, public consultation for the Key Issues Papers (KIP) was made less onerous and more accessible to the general public. The planning officers joined with existing local community meetings and events and ensured documentation remained concise, easy to understand and widely available (this is discussed in more detail in Chapter Five).

Conclusion

Chapter Four has introduced how the findings to the research questions are to be presented in the following four chapters and outlined the stages of the formal plan making process under investigation. It highlighted the formal influence of planning and sustainable development legislation on local activities and set out the historical political context surrounding planning policy decisions in LBS. This identified clear tensions at a number of levels in particular between local and central Government and between LBS and the local community.

The historical institutional arrangements for the plan making process were introduced along with the range of key actors, who remained a continued presence throughout the plan making process. The LA21 process was the

focus for the first sustainable development activities in the borough and involved the short-lived existence of the Environmental Development and Education Unit (EDEU) and the rather unique work on the EU funded projects LITMUS and PASTILLE on sustainability indicators for urban regeneration. These activities and some of the key actors were mainstreamed into the plan making process. Public participation emerged as a key focus of these activities.

Different interpretations of sustainable development in key documents are highlighted. The preparations for the planning policy formulation process took the form of the review of the existing 1995 UDP which was explored at the end of this chapter.

What was most notable when reviewing the activity which formed the immediate historical context for activities on the creation of a new UDP process was how LBS, and planning officers in particular, possessed a good understanding of sustainable development (in the period between 1995 to 2000). This was most apparent in the policy making process and to a lesser extent in the policy documents themselves. Within the policy making process, participatory activities and joined-up thinking demonstrated a clear understanding of sustainable development. The strong knowledge of sustainable development was evidenced in the wide range of LA21 activities including the semi-formal positive participatory vehicle of the SEF (chaired by an Executive member and serviced by LBS officers). Joined-up thinking and doing in the form of cross-departmental coordination was indicated by the placement of sustainable development as an underlying principle of the corporate strategies and the emerging *Community Strategy.* In particular, key stakeholders started to emerge who had a good understanding of the term and its application in the local authority arena. However, this remained in the informal arena for the most part and was not reflected in the policy documents of the time showing that the potential of the knowledge and understanding was not translated into policy.

This strong understanding of sustainable development might be an example of the influence of the formal guidance from central Government, but that being the case, it would be expected to continue. However, as later chapters conclude, evidence of a joined-up approach disappears and although

participatory activities continue they do not take a focus on sustainable development in the same way. This might alternatively be described as the intuitive nature of officers to initially recognise and relate to sustainable development in a broad brush way. What is clear is that this good understanding resulted in aspirations to include sustainable development in planning policy; make it a key focus of public participation events; and include other departments of the Council in a joined-up approach. However, the resulting documentation, demonstrated difficulties in how to interpret and communicate the new terminology and design support structures for implementation. The personal attributes of key officers including their background, training and education led to shared values within this group. The influence of these personal attributes are clearly reflected in the subsequent reviews of the interpretations of sustainable development, pointing to a key role for planning officers beyond the formal scope for action. This is similar to Lipsky's (1980) representation of street-level bureaucracy, where those charged with implementing policy play an important role in how the policy is translated into action.

By its own admission, the local authority experienced difficulties in cross-departmental coordination. Whilst the corporate strategies were developed as a way of addressing this, there was little focus within them on sustainable development beyond the promising reference to sustainable development as an underlying principle, never backed up in the rest of the detail of the various strategies. This meant that the hub of knowledge on sustainable development within LBS was not spread to a wider range of stakeholders across the local authority. This missed opportunity meant sustainable development remained marginalised in specific organisational structures or 'silos' (Evans 2005). The hub became the PPRU supported by a couple of other key officers with specific responsibilities for environmental issues such as air pollution, parks and transport planning. The political leadership comprised part of this hub but only a minority of one or two key councillors found refuge in the hub, and whilst active and successful, the understanding of sustainable development did not spread beyond. This was contrary to LBS attempts to mainstream sustainable development by focusing its experts in planning (following the closure of EDEU)

and may have been less to do with understanding of sustainable development than to do with understanding of the role of planning across the local authority.

Whilst it was clear that the central Government sustainable development agenda was being embraced with some enthusiasm, the constraints imposed by local formal and informal circumstances may have started taking effect. Public participatory exercises showed a focus on *quality of life* and issues such as crime and safety remained high priorities both politically and for the local electorate. There was a difficulty in understanding the term *sustainable development* at the community level, perhaps based on a lack of officer knowledge on how to communicate this effectively and in meaningful terms. There was also therefore a limitation as to who became involved in LA21 and related activities. Indeed, the 'usual suspects' scenario may have contributed to the success of projects like the SSMI. The subsequent stages of the plan making process are traced in the following chapters, but the activities described in this chapter formed the foundation for and were highly influential in future public participation and sustainable development activities.

The historical contextual review discussed in this chapter, showed a range of factors which may have influenced the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP. These included: national, regional and local formal policy influences; the local political context; organisational arrangements and cross-departmental coordination; participatory opportunities and activities; the use of managerial policy tools and instruments. The most striking feature of the historical context was the informal influence of key formal stakeholders – the planning officers themselves. This included their backgrounds, knowledge and experiences as well as their norms and shared values. Neither they nor their managers appeared aware of the potential significance of their personal influence on the formal plan making process. However, the high-profile participatory activities of the LA21 process and the accompanying EU funded projects demonstrated a key concern with both political popularity in terms of the local Councillors and professional advancement in terms of the LBS officers.

All these factors are interrelated and recurring themes can be seen, which are drawn together and discussed later in Chapter Eight. The next chapter also

traces the influence of these issues as they impact on the plan making process, in particular in relation to the participatory activities related to the drafting of the UDP.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE UDP PLAN MAKING PROCESS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Introduction

This chapter explores interpretations of sustainable development in the policy formulation process of the UDP in its initial phases between 2001 and 2002. The public participation aspects of the UDP process itself started with the pre-deposit consultation. This took the form of a series of public involvement exercises to produce papers on key and local issues to inform the drafting of the UDP. The pre-deposit consultation started in 2001 and took place in two phases. The first phase focused on the creation of a borough wide *Key Issues Paper*, and the second on the production of six *Local Issues Papers* which expanded upon the key issues, specifying local circumstances. These are discussed separately below with particular emphasis on the incorporation of sustainable development both within and as a result of public involvement activities. Within LBS, the public participation aspects of the UDP process were heavily influenced by the emerging LBS *Community Strategy* in 2000 and 2001 and, later in 2002, by the formation of the *Local Strategic Partnership* (LSP), both of which are explored below. The ongoing activities of the Southwark Environment Forum (SEF) are traced in relation to the LSP in LBS.

| July 1995 UDP | April 2000 Env. Review | May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult. | Nov 2002 First draft UDP | March 2004 Second draft UDP | 2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry | April - June 2005 Public Inquiry | March 2006 Inspectors Report | Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted |
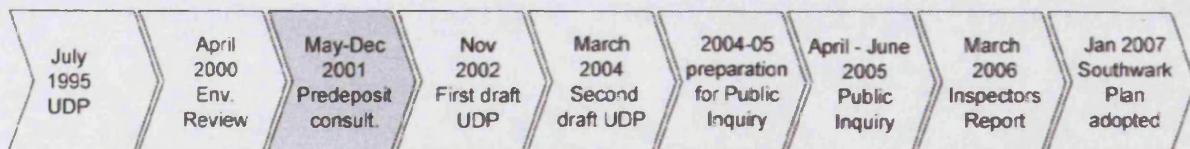
Contrasting Two Policy Making Processes to Deliver Sustainable Development: The Community Strategy and the new UDP

The *Local Government Act* 2000 empowered local authorities to:

> "do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the social, economic and environmental well being of their area" (ODPM 2000).

Section Four of the *Local Government Act* indicated the mandatory obligation of the local authority to produce a *Community Strategy* to deliver the *Local Government Act* and contribute to sustainable development in the UK. Guidance was produced on how to create a *Community Strategy*, and with the emphasis on community involvement, the Community Development Forum and

Urban Forum created their own guide for voluntary and community groups, outlining that the *Community Strategy*:

> "covers what sort of services, activities and support are needed; addresses deprivation and neighbourhood renewal ... explains what is already provided and ... how well this meets local need; makes links between services ... organises services better to avoid overlaps; promotes local people's involvement in planning services and improving the areas where they live; involves private companies and voluntary groups; makes plans for the future..." (Sarkar and West 2003 p6).

The LBS *Community Strategy* priorities were being developed and were launched at the same time as the *Environmental Review* of the existing UDP was published in early 2000, yet there was no evidence of official linkage between the two events. The launch of the priorities signalled the start of community involvement in the drafting of the *Community Strategy* and mainly because of the importance attached to community involvement, as well as the remit to deliver sustainable development, planning officers ensured they were involved in the process. The *Community Strategy* priorities were developed:

> "on the basis of what residents, partners, voluntary and community groups have told us" (LBS 2001i p3).

However, these priorities were very closely linked to the UK Government sustainable development objectives (though this was not pointed out in the document) and aimed for Southwark to provide: stable and inclusive communities; a safe place to live and work; better education for all; a quality environment; a thriving and sustainable economy; and a healthy and caring Borough.

These areas from the *Community Strategy* were taken by planning officers to form the basis for the consultation documents on the UDP (discussed later). This was due to the fact that the planning team were proactive in linking to other activities in LBS which were intended to contribute to sustainable development. There was less evidence of the reflexivity or success of this joined-up approach in the form of other departments of the local authority acknowledging the relevance of the UDP plan making process to their activities. Indeed, planning officers had to be persistent in contacting and ensuring responses from other LBS departments in relation to the UDP. They found the traditional silo

approach to policy making to be prevalent and a barrier to the joined-up thinking they were being asked to put into practice:

> "Its difficult to get through to other officers the relevance and importance of the UDP, where are they going to build their new schools if there is no land allocated, how are people going to get to new jobs if there is not space for new transport infrastructure, how are zones going to be allocated if they don't tell us what the land use implications of new health facilities are." (Interview 7)

In fact, the first drafts of the *Community Strategy* made little reference to the UDP. As the process continued this increased due to the persistence of planning officers and is discussed later as an example of the informal influence of planning officers on the UDP. The information on the *Community Strategy* community involvement process outlined a set of *Southwark Values* underpinning the formation of the *Community Strategy*. Although these promised to reveal the norms influencing the policy making process, they were in fact a reflection of some of the formal requirements. They were written by LBS officers producing the *Community Strategy* but their exact source could not be ascertained for the research and there was no documentation recording their origins and no-one was able to identify where they came from. They were headed by sustainability, but none of them were defined further or mentioned in any other sections of the strategy:

> "Southwark Values. Underpinning this strategy is a set of values. These will guide and influence the priorities, actions and targets that we set, and shape the whole community planning process. We will work with partners to promote these values across the borough and once agreed, translate them into a set of practical standards: Sustainability; Equality; Fairness; Quality; Value for money; Community Involvement." (LBS 2001i p4).

Tracing the *Community Strategy* subsequently, no evidence of the practical standards was found in later revisions and by 2005 the *Southwark Values* section of the *Community Strategy* was absent, leaving one to surmise that they had not been agreed by partners. No evidence was found for this decision and officers could not recall any particular issues concluding that in the re-drafting process they had been removed.

In early 2001 the PPRU started work on producing the *Key Issues Paper* (at the same time other officers in LBS were developing the *Community Strategy*). The consultation documents on the UDP, explained that the *Southwark Plan*:

> "will be used by the Council as one of its main tools for achieving the objectives of Southwark's Community Strategy which sets out the vision and priorities for the borough for the next four years. The Southwark Plan will be developing the land use and planning aspects of the Community Strategy which cover all the priorities that residents, community groups, the Council and businesses chose during the consultation last year" (LBS May 2001 p4).

This demonstrated the joined-up approach Government had desired in setting out guidance for the *Community Strategy*. This approach sat well with the planning officers, following their work on the LBS corporate strategies and their desire to communicate the role of planning with other departments.

In May 2001, the *Key Issues Paper "New directions in Southwark: inviting your views on how land is used and developed"* was published. The document was sent to households and comprised thirty-six pages, of which two were a feedback form. In addition, A4 leaflets were produced, summarising the importance of public consultation and participation and signposting the report. This was a much simpler exercise than the *Environmental Review*, discussed in Chapter Four, having learnt in some ways from that process. It provided in a concise format all that the public needed to participate in the consultation. Over 300 written responses were received. These were classified as objections. LBS made innovative use of a geographic information system to track objections and ensure effective communication with those responding. Both LBS and local community groups considered this participatory approach to be a simple and easily-communicated one which:

> "allowed the possibility of participation in planning policy to all members of the local community ... though some were better able than others to engage..." (Interview 22).

However, it was not made clear in the consultation papers that the opportunity to comment on the UDP would be limited to those making objections on the pre-deposit phase of the plan making process. The consultation papers flagged up

the lengthy process of plan making but did not make it clear that although the process was expected to run for several years, participation in it was limited to those who contributed at this early stage. Many members of the community stated that they thought they could join in the process and comment on later versions of the UDP policy documents, when in fact the latest stage to become involved in the process was November 2002 with comments on the *First Draft UDP*. This applied to anyone wishing to input to the consultation process, including local Councillors. In fact, the 2002 local elections saw Labour retain their stronghold but by 2006 the Council became Liberal Democrat led, yet the new Executive and local Councillors were no more able to input to the plan making process than the local community (though of course their work involved decision making on the process so in this respect they were able to input).

By the time the *Key Issues Paper* and *Local Issues Papers* were being drawn up for the pre-deposit UDP consultation phase, the first Community Strategy was ready and released in early 2001. It aimed to:

> "make a real difference to the quality of life in the borough in the long term ... to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the area; to involve residents and local groups in planning the future of the borough; to influence service patterns to better reflect long term needs of the community; and to improve coordination of services with partners" (LBS 2001i p1).

The *Community Strategy* referenced the other strategies and plans of the Council including the:

> "review of the UDP and development control process, [that] ensures that the land use proposal supports more sustainable development" (LBS 2001i p24).

The sustainability content of the *Community Strategy* at this time was very low and the participatory aspects considered paramount, following Government guidance and the local focus of LBS to gain regeneration funding and demonstrate community involvement. The focus on community involvement seemed to be a backlash from harsh criticisms regularly publicised in the local media[1] of LBS not listening to the community with respect to regeneration

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[1] Numerous articles in the Southwark News and South London Press.

projects. The *Community Strategy* process stimulated little cross-departmental coordination from the view of the planning officers. A process of inter-departmental meetings initiated by the *Community Strategy* officers was useful in stating the main concerns of the planning officers and exchanging baseline information on how the local community engaged in the consultation process. However, the key aim of those events was to allocate work to develop a set of corporate strategies (discussed next). There was little formal opportunity for the exchange of information or a coordinated approach to public consultation, contributing to the participation fatigue experienced by the local community (as articulated by a local community representative Interview 15).

The Local Strategic Partnership

In parallel, another aspect of the *Community Strategy* was progressing during this time and is explored here as its impact on the UDP was evident. The Government introduced LSPs as a better system for planning local services, bringing the work of all existing partnerships together into a network of networks to create one overall strategy – the *Community Strategy*. An accredited LSP would qualify to apply to Government for Neighbourhood Renewal Funds to improve the quality of life of people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The Government set targets for Southwark to focus on crime, education, employment, health, and housing. National targets included two on the environment:

> "to improve the air quality in the most deprived areas to meet the Government's Air Quality objectives; and to increase by 2003 the recycling and composting of household waste as set out in the Government's Waste Strategy" (ODPM 2001).

The LBS *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy* produced *Local Area Plans*, based on the same areas as the *Local Issues Papers*, developed as part of the UDP formulation process. These *Local Area Plans*, based on historical localities were formalised in the UDP policy process and then adopted at a corporate level for LBS, this was interesting to note within an institution so highly departmentalised. Local authorities were given initial responsibility for setting up the LSPs as they were considered to have the most suitable resources. Much of the LSP's work was focused at the local area level or on specific

themes like health or crime. There was also therefore potential for sustainability in the LSP, though it competed with established economic interests. The main relevance of the LSP in Southwark was the emphasis on community involvement, whether that was through voluntary and community sector groups or individual community participants. The expectation was that:

"community participation will increase over time, both in helping to draw up the strategy and in delivering the results" (Sarkar and West 2003 p7).

This was supported by the fact that there were regular updates of the strategy and unlike the UDP process, people could become involved at any stage in the process. As the LSP Guide summarised:

"it's never too late to get involved" (Sarkar and West 2003 p7).

Part of the LSP role was to take actions to improve representation in decision making ongoingly. The Local Government Association provided advice on how to do this and the LSP Guide (2003) outlined that:

"The idea is to have a partnership and a plan which ... builds on existing groups ... involves residents in deciding the sort of community they want to live in ... helps improve public services by better planning between public sector agencies ... helps community and voluntary groups with their work ... makes sure all groups can have a say and takes particular care to ensure that ... law and guidance ... are taken into account" (Sarkar and West 2003 p5).

The LSP produced the *Local Area Plans* for the *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*, to be reviewed on an annual basis. However, within the *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy,* change was equated solely with regeneration and regeneration was focused primarily on economic growth and prosperity. The LSP was a new body that brought together the main statutory agencies with community representatives (the police, health authority, faith groups, the Council, businesses, education establishments and representative bodies of local voluntary organisations). In producing the *Local Area Plans*, the LSP aimed to: set out evidence about local needs; identify existing services/activities meeting those needs; identify what more could be done to

improve the quality of life of local people; design an action plan that can be achieved within the next two years; and set targets to measure future success.

The Partnership in Action Conference in early 2001 was attended by key Southwark stakeholders in the LSP. Formed in 2001, the LSP in Southwark (otherwise known as the Southwark Alliance) was established to provide a forum through which agencies could work together to meet local needs and prioritise and integrate local plans. This included the implementation of the *Community Strategy*. The overall aim was to reduce deprivation and promote community involvement and cohesion (LBS 2001). A small project team took the formation of the LSP forward and the hope was that the future Southwark LSP would be able to:

> "break out of the committee culture of the past and begin to start working together in new innovative ways to deliver real change" (LBS 2001h p1).

Some of these innovative ways were of particular relevance to the UDP process, for instance:

> "sharing development/changes to major services at an early stage of the decision making process ... valuing new ideas, embracing change and attempting to challenge traditional methods and practices ... sharing budget and capital investment proposals at an early stage" (LBS 2001h p1).

Discussions with planning officers revealed frustration around the sometimes missed joined-up thinking when planning gain issues were discussed. In addition, the provision of induction for LSP members was promising as a tool for bringing about greater understanding of major strategic issues, of which sustainable development was a key one. Yet it was notable that sustainable development was absent from the specific aims of the LSP which followed a treadmill or at best weak interpretation of sustainable development.

The work of the Southwark Alliance was divided into three main strands: people outcomes; place outcomes; and delivery outcomes. People outcomes included improving individual life chances – individuals achieving economic well being, educational potential and accessing health, safety, cultural and leisure

opportunities – in other words becoming active citizens. Place outcomes included making the borough a better place for people: housing quality and quantity. It also included the aim to "become more sustainable, encourage and promote the waste minimisation strategy" (LBS/SEF point 1.4 July 2006). Membership of the Southwark Alliance is outlined in Table 21 below and the absence of environmental or sustainable development oriented organisations is evident.

Local authority: 4 places - leader, Chief Executive and two other Councillors
Business community: 2 places
Health: 2 places
MPA and Borough Police: 2 places
Young Southwark: 1 place each: Head Teacher, Southwark College, Jobcentre Plus, London South Bank University, SOUHAG
Voluntary Sector: 5 places
Resident members: 8 places
Environment Forum: 1 place to be elected still at July 2006

Table 21: Membership of the Southwark Alliance, Launched 2001

Before the SEF could join the LSP it was necessary that it be recognised as a formal partnership body (as opposed to the voluntary body it was established as). All organisations and members of the public continued to be welcome to attend meetings but voting rights were limited to one representative of each recognised body. All members were listed. This did not have to be the same person at each meeting allowing greater flexibility. One representative of SEF would be elected to the Southwark Alliance board – yet the process was long and time consuming.

A year later in February 2002, the LBS LSP was accredited and approved the second *Community Strategy* covering the period 2002-2004. The links with the range of LBS key strategies and plans were made more apparent in the *Community Strategy* 2002-2004:

"Several key strategies and plans form the delivery mechanisms for the Strategy. For example, the UDP (or Southwark Plan) is the land use planning delivery arm for the Community Strategy...." (LBS 2001i p3).

The UDP was also explained in a separate section of the *Community Strategy* along with the shift to a Local Development Framework. It stated that:

> "Authorities will be required to recognise the role of development policy in meeting wider community objectives as set out in the Community Strategy. Southwark has already adopted this approach in establishing its next UDP" (LBS 2001i p7).

Interpreting Sustainable Development in the Community Strategy and Local Strategic Partnership, 2001

A crucial aspect to explore in terms of the *Community Strategy* and LSP was the interpretation of sustainable development. Previous work on sustainable development in other departments in particular in Regeneration had taken a focus on *quality of life* to describe some aspects of sustainable development. The *Community Strategy* introduced the term *liveability*. *Liveability* was not clearly defined but took a customer centred view in relation to service delivery. Unsurprisingly it did not sit well for the most part with sustainable development that goes beyond purely environmental issues to take an holistic approach to social, economic and, crucially, futurity and equity issues. This gradual but ongoing watering down of the term *sustainable development* at the national level was also in evidence at the local level.

Interpretations of sustainable development were hampered by the ambiguity of the term and lack of understanding. To encompass environmental, social and economic together was challenge enough but to add into that the new concept of futurity was complex. Perhaps due to a desire to create a balance between the expert-led approach (of using knowledge of the impact of actions on the environment) and the integration of the term in practice of local government the futurity element was left to one side. *Quality of life* became seen as a more useful term by officers, in particular to encompass and give importance to the environmental and social aspects. However, whilst the use of this term proved useful to begin with there were dormant dangers present in using it to refer to the full extent of sustainable development. This was especially the case in respect of the politicisation of local government and the focus on short-term wins to ensure voting support. Ward councillors and local politicians relied

heavily on the 'here and now' wins. This focus on *quality of life* for the here and now became termed as *liveability*:

> "Liveability is defined as what you experience on leaving your front door, the effect or perception of your environment when doing every day things like going to work, to the shops" (LBS/SEF point1.3 July 2006).

However, for many this was not a move in support of sustainable development:

> "Alarm bells are ringing on reading liveability which is not sustainability and often contradicts sustainable development. Liveability is named as one of the benefits of the LSP" (Interview 18).

Such new terminology had several implications for sustainable development in LBS. The existing groups had a strong focus on economic regeneration and relatively little understanding or prioritisation for sustainable development. Empowering more residents to take part in planning and decision making processes without providing education on sustainable development relied on existing knowledge of sustainable development. Joined-up thinking was not in evidence as the LSP made no reference to the UDP or planning policy. Yet *liveability* was a vote winner as LBS residents perceived the environment to be a key priority (MORI 2000). Of those who said that the environment was important, the key issues were improving street cleaning, reducing pollution and improving air quality.

Interpreting Sustainable Development in the UDP, 2001

There was no specific mention of sustainable development in the *Key Issues Paper*, although there was a discussion of the importance of planning for:

> "Quality of life for people today and in the future." (LBS May 2001 p7).

A section entitled *'A Quality Environment'* covered issues of pollution, including air, noise, waste, contaminated land and energy; and open space and heritage, including buildings and landmarks. The Foreword to the document talked about the:

> "challenge to try and balance all the needs of everyone and look after the environment too" (LBS May 2001p4).

The PPRU took a decision not to use the term *sustainable development*, because it was considered to be:

"confusing to the public" (Interview 4).

It was clear that at this time officers were uncertain of how to proceed and were making decisions that Government policy failed to clarify for them on how to communicate sustainable development. However, towards the end of the document, entitled *'The Technical Bit'* (LBS May 2001 p12), there was an explanation of sustainability under the heading *'What has planning got to do with sustainability'* and this is reproduced below:

> "The planning system and development plans in particular can make a major contribution to the achievement of the Government and Southwark's objectives for sustainable development. They are the basis of the infrastructure and design for local areas and can shape their development and some of their service provision for the future" (LBS May 2001 p33).

However, with no prior explanation or definition of sustainability, this failed to communicate usefully to those with little or no knowledge of sustainable development, simply indicating the reasons for such a focus. No link was made between the earlier references to *quality of life*, the future, balancing the needs of everyone and looking after the environment. In fact, although the *'The Technical Bit'* was explained, the driver behind this appeared to be solely for reasons of transparency and accountability than through a commitment to raise awareness of sustainable development, although this could have been a dual role of the explanation.

Along the same lines of transparency and accountability, *'The Technical Bit'* was also used to express the intention of the PPRU to develop the *Key Issues Paper* as a full sustainability appraisal to include local people. This was communicated under the title *'Why a key issues paper as a sustainability appraisal'*:

"The Key Issues Paper is developing the environmental appraisal that was produced last year to include social and economic issues. It is Southwark's alternative approach to the sustainability appraisal required by the Government. Southwark Council thinks that to update the planning policies and issues from the past UDP takes a retrospective view and that it is more useful to be forward looking and to develop a framework that can be used to develop planning policy and the UDP issues in the future. The discussion is aimed to reach a wide audience and to relate to local people and engage them in the process" (LBS May 2001 p12).

Again, although this communicated the actions of the PPRU, it did not explain what a sustainability appraisal comprised and it referred to an alternative approach demonstrating the view of planning officers that the Government approach was not adequate for their needs. This in spite of continuing work by the EU to develop a European Directive and by Government to prepare for national transposition. The *Key Issues Paper* continued under the heading *'What is in the Key Issues Paper'* to explain:

"The Key Issues Paper covers the stages that the Government suggests should be used for producing a sustainability appraisal. Firstly, the plan was scoped to ensure that the full range of policies relevant to sustainable development, local and planning issues have been taken into account. Then the major issues were identified. There are not any nationally agreed set of sustainability objectives for assessing the impact of UDPs. This Southwark approach is based on the Government's sustainable development strategy, the Southwark Local Agenda 21 strategy and the community plan, which are all based on the following four broad objectives set by national Government: maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment; social progress, which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; and prudent use of natural resource" (LBS May 2001 p34).

The four objectives set by national government were discussed in Chapter One. They were reflected in sections of the *Key Issues Paper* and formed the basis of the *Community Strategy* objectives. However, it was evident that planning officers felt constrained by the central Government treadmill or weak approach to sustainable development and were developing solutions to this perceived problem as the document went on to emphasise that:

"it is the linkages which are important and the ways that they are prioritised and conflicts dealt with that is the real crux of achieving sustainability within Southwark" (LBS May 2001 p35).

This was supported by Planning Policy Guidance 12, which emphasised how progress towards sustainable development could only be made if the various objectives were considered in a holistic way (LBS May 2001 p35).

The statement from LBS that there were not 'any nationally agreed set of sustainability objectives for assessing the UDP' indicated the feeling of "going it alone", "leading the way", "pioneering" and "a lack of guidance" also reflected in the interviews (Interviews 3, 4, & 6). Although LBS officers liaised with other local authorities, the time pressure to follow the plan making process meant that they rarely gathered enough information from other local authority experiences to make a contribution to their own work. However, their main source of guidance from Government was considered to be too generic and not reassuring enough to enable them to have confidence in their approach. Furthermore, there was no way they felt they could communicate this and therefore receive the support they wanted. They decided to develop a solution to ensure sustainable development as an outcome of the UDP, but the form this would take was still not clear. On the one hand, sustainability appraisal of the plan making process was planned, but whilst the SEA Directive was still under development the PPRU were also looking for something with which to supplement this. We revisit this in Chapter Six when their main solution takes the shape of a Sustainability Checklist for Developers.

Meanwhile, as the public participation exercises continued, so understanding of sustainable development continued to reflect the confusion around the ambiguous nature of the term and its distance, as officers saw it, from the reality of planning. Officers started to counter this confusion with ways of making the term meaningful to a wider range of people and distinguishing between the elements of sustainable development which were easier for others to understand:

"It's [sustainable development] an acquired terminology and that's what we found interesting talking to people during consultation. Most people

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are not interested in sustainable development. People think you are talking about Greenpeace. Saying that there are more efficient and cheaper means of heating a home interests people but it is not the same discussion as Japanese whaling. Sustainable development hasn't been adequately mainstreamed ... it has to become slightly more ordinary" (Interview 11).

To address the confusion, new examples that fitted people's reality were used in conversations. Although for the most part this still placed the economic imperative as the central factor, the acknowledgement of this as a driving force in decisions around engaging with sustainable development was seen to be the source of potential for opening up a new forum for discussion and engagement:

> "When we said to people you can reduce heating bills by 60%, they were interested and if that is the tag that catches peoples attention, that's fine ... we have to deal with people and give them something that makes sense to them. Why does the average Joe in the street need to understand all that other stuff [the broader dimensions of sustainable development]?" (Interview 11).

However, there was a feeling of discomfort at keeping information from 'Joe or Jane Public' (Interview 13). All officers mentioned a concern about social engineering, of not providing all the details relevant for a full discussion. Respondents felt that this was what happened in other areas of public participation and that it would be merely a marketing tool to allow others to engage in a meaningful (to them) conversation which would go on to explore the breadth and depth of sustainable development:

> "Even if people's initial catch is a cost saving, it would be helpful for them to understand that there is a whole raft of initiatives ... each one of us has an individual obligation [to sustainable development] which we must acknowledge" (Interview 13).

The communication of sustainable development in the first consultation papers for the UDP was weak, but the communication of the role of the UDP and the public consultation and participation opportunities was strong, and the participatory opportunities themselves were numerous. These included not only the standard ways of contacting the planning officers (by phone, visit, letter, email), but also news features in the borough magazine, Southwark Life, distributed quarterly to every household in Southwark, full access to all

documents via the website (a very positive step since LBS had not previously provided such information online), a *Southwark Plan* mailing list and specific events. Events included the Area Forums, school visits through the Southwark Education Business Alliance and a half-day community conference ('Future Southwark'). Special calls for new residents, businesses and organisations working in partnership with the local authority on different projects were made for their input to the public involvement process.

Later as the *Local Issues Papers* were developed, little progress was made on the incorporation of sustainable development. In the *Area One Local Issues Papers* and the *All Areas Local Issues Papers*, the only explicit reference to sustainable development was found once more in the glossary of terms where the entry was for sustainability/sustainable development which was defined as:

> "actions that can be shown to protect or improve the quality of life for everyone in the community today and in the future" (LBS 2001g p4).

The incorporation of sustainable development in the pre-deposit consultation process was minimal and skirted around the difficulties of communicating the term, preferring instead to reduce sustainable development to an implied *quality of life*. The opportunity for giving information on sustainable development was not seized, though information was widely disseminated with a range of stakeholders on the role of planning and the UDP formulation process.

Participatory Governance in the UDP Process

Based on the responses to the *Key Issues Paper* (LBS May 2001), six *Local Issues Papers* were drawn up (LBS 2001a-f). The research takes a focus on the *Area One Plan for Borough, the Bankside and Elephant and Castle* (LBS 2001a), where the observations of the community involvement process were conducted. The community groups were sent a copy of the *Local Issues Paper*, but there were no recommendations of activities for the community group to undertake upon having received the *Local Issues Paper*. The groups under observation discussed the newly received *Local Issues Paper* without prompting.

A positive step to ensure the engagement of local people in the process was outreach work with community groups. The public participation process involved officers attending community group meetings. Observation of these meetings (in one area of the borough) showed two key elements necessary to acknowledge in order for effective public participation but absent from any formal records or recommendations on how to conduct the public participation process. These were, on the one hand, the importance of existing or recent public participation exercises and, on the other hand, the importance of existing attitudes and relationships to the Council. The local context for public participation, particularly in the areas observed, was that of a series of major regeneration projects, each one spanning many years but each one involving extensive community consultation over a substantial period of time. These were outlined in Chapter Three and included the Peckham Partnership SRB, the Elephant and Castle SRB and the Aylesbury NDC. The resulting 'consultation fatigue' and disillusionment with consultation, as views expressed resulted in little or no visible action as a direct result, influenced future public involvement activities with the community. This had a negative impact on any subsequent efforts, yet remained largely unacknowledged by planning officers when interacting with community groups.

Community groups generally showed an initial confusion over the importance and relevance of planning amongst participants. However, the consultation document formed a sound launch pad from which the officer was able to start discussions. The officer input was crucial and effective in explaining clearly how planning and planning decisions related to everyday quality of life for everybody. Officer knowledge of how to engage the community was learnt 'on the job' and was shared in informal briefings between officers on how the different community groups were able to engage. This best practice was not formalised, yet contributed to the successful participation of large numbers of the respondents. 'Soft' knowledge such as this is pervasive throughout the whole UDP process. While it was observable in the formal policy documents it was rarely identifiable and instead contributed to the informal pool of knowledge and understanding of the officers involved.

Discussions with community groups were often "lively". A first barrier for the officer to overcome was the regular tendency of community groups to bring up unresolved or ongoing issues regarding housing-specific issues (like repairs, maintenance and amenity facilities). This was based on a 'them versus us' outlook. The officers were perceived as 'the Council' and the community members, as tenants or residents, had an existing relation with 'the Council'. Rather than see the current exercise a new opportunity to contribute, the community members assumed it was an extension of the already existing relationship. Once officers were able to make clear the situation, people were better able to engage in the debate effectively. A successful way of supporting engagement was the acknowledgement of the housing-specific issues by noting them down and a promise to pass these on to the appropriate Council officers. This was not recorded formally as a prerequisite to engagement but was observably more effective in engaging individuals.

Officers arranged to visit existing community groups at already arranged meetings and received a high level of input from these groups because of this direct contact. Officers were able to give a short introduction of themselves and their role at the council. The face-to-face contact was important for gaining the listening of the audience. They had to make a clear distinction between the everyday concerns of the people they were speaking to (including maintenance and repairs of homes) and the role of the planning system as the focus of the meeting. Yet they also had to indicate how the planning system had a direct impact on the lives of the residents of Southwark and how their input was valuable. This initial meeting was followed up by a letter giving a written summary of the views expressed by the community group. Later on those views were represented in the *Key Issues Papers* and copies were sent to the community groups.

Observation of one such community group (a tenants and residents association) over the consultation period showed how important it was for them to be visited on home ground and have their daily concerns acknowledged. The visit to their existing meeting acknowledged them as a group and affirmed their importance and value to the Council. Perhaps because of this, some officers were sometimes asked to sit through other group business before taking the floor.

Although this was an extra time demand on officers, they were patient and realised that their presence would lead to high quality public participation results, where policies could be formulated together and therefore be more effective, according to Glasson et al's (1994) degrees of public involvement.

Often, or in order to specify the focus of the public participation event, it was necessary for officers to first listen to group members talk about issues outside of their planning focus. Some officers tried to move on too quickly from these issues, which meant that the group was left feeling unheard and therefore not able to move beyond these concerns to the separate issue of planning. Other officers were able to quickly acknowledge and empathise with the concerns expressed, before giving the contact details of the Council officer, who would be able to help with these issues or, more effectively still, making a note of them and promising to pass this information on. This simple preparation allowed the group to move on to the wider planning issue. Many members of the community group appeared to consider all Council officers to be homogenous and therefore responsible for the same issues that they had previously raised with the Council.

It became apparent during the public involvement interactions that community groups were considered similarly homogenous by the Council, yet as many views were held as there were members. Where members of the community group were able to take on the different views and amalgamate them under a general commitment (rather than specific outcomes), this allowed the group to form a consensus. Officers seemed less comfortable in facilitating this effort and were less effective in developing this capacity. As a result, in groups where there was not a community member, able to unite the different views of the individual members of the group, those views remained scattered. Without a general agreed commitment from the group, views were less effectively incorporated in the consultation process.

As each community group session came to a close, absent community group members were given the opportunity to send written comments over the following two-week period. The officer promised to send the text of all the comments received in the next month. This happened as promised, and in most

cases in time for the next meeting of the community group. Some groups therefore made this an agenda item, and this stimulated a review of the text and discussion of the issues raised – a second consideration of the issues around the UDP, but without the presence of the officer. Although the officer sending out the text of the comments invited additional comments, whether and how these were conducted relied on the proactivity of the group rather than a formal recommendation of the visiting officer. In the community groups observed, no further comments were submitted to the officer, leading to the conclusion that community groups were satisfied that their views had been well recorded.

Observation of the community group when they received the *Local Issues Paper* showed that the members valued the fast and visible acknowledgement of their comments. The group spent the majority of the meeting (two of the three hours) reading the whole document and recognising comments which the group had made in the text. It gave them a sense of pride and importance mixed with excitement and astonishment that their voices had appeared to have been documented and could make a difference. They also started to "wonder" if the rest of the document had been written in a similar way and became interested in seeing if they were able to identify some other comments and (if only for fun) try to allocate names to people they knew who may have said such things. This was demonstrable of a new relationship of trust between themselves and the officers who had established contact and of their sense of ownership of some elements of the document. However, whilst the public participation exercise created a positive relationship, this needed to be nurtured and maintained in time with short-term visible acknowledgement of this relationship. Having satisfied the requirement for consultation, the community groups remained on the mailing list for information and updates on the UDP but the potential for capacity building was lost as planning officers turned to drafting the UDP and the planning policy formulation process moved away from consultation exercises. The joined-up approach of the corporate strategies was not applied to the successful participatory activities and there was no link made between the community groups and the LBS community development officers who could have ensured continued good relations. The community groups were left feeling once again that they had been abandoned and were left disillusioned, assuming they would only be called upon again when they were

needed to suit the Council. This recurring problem is discussed further in Chapter Eight.

Assessing Public Consultation on the UDP 2001-2002

The *Local Issues Papers* gave details of the whole process undertaken as the pre-deposit consultation exercise and outlined issues which were not specifically area based. These included a range of issues which were related strongly to sustainable development such as: better public transport, more pedestrian and cycling facilities, car restrictions or car free zones, more mixed use, more affordable key worker housing, waste saving and recycling, open space, energy saving/renewable energy and more or better community facilities. These sorts of issues were identified by the public in the consultation process and fitted with other research findings showing that whilst there was ambiguity around the term sustainable development and its understanding by the public, there was a definite recognition by local people, of these activities as contributing to sustainable development.

The emphasis on community engagement was strong in LBS and the Planning Policy Research Unit officers commissioned an independent evaluation of the pre-deposit consultation to:

> "identify key issues and attitudes of Southwark residents as part of the consultation process required by the review and formulation of the new Southwark UDP" (CRISP 2002 p2).

This took the form of a survey consisting of 300 door to door interviews of residents chosen at random from the six local neighbourhood areas. The borough wide results and those for Area One (Borough and Bankside) were very similar. They identifed the same mix of issues including community safety, affordable housing, better public transport, open spaces, community facilities, pollution, more jobs and parking. The public attitude was positive with 46 per cent wanting to be kept up to date with the UDP consultation process. This could have been based on the successful public participation relationships officers had built as well as a concern for changes to the local area.

Conclusion

Chapter Five has highlighted the participatory aspects of the early stages of the policy formulation process most prominent in its initial phases of pre-deposit consultation. Public involvement is a key aspect of sustainable development so its treatment is of particular interest to the research in addition to the fact that it is a key aspect of local authority and planning activity more broadly. Observation of officer interactions with the local community revealed the extensive influence of norms and values on the formal requirements for public involvement. Undocumented practices were clearly based on informal factors which would not have been visible to the researcher from documentary materials or verbal accounts. The impact of limited understandings of sustainable development restricted the effectiveness of some public participation. However, where officers provided awareness-raising and other educational materials not accounted for in formal guidance, discussions were more productive. The incorporation of sustainable development progressed well with officers taking an active role in engaging the local community. On the whole the issues identified at the local and borough-wide level were not only relevant to local people but were also demonstrative of a sometimes intuitive understanding of sustainable development. Having gained the trust of the local community and established a new positive rapport, the formal planning policy process was to move to other issues and there were no plans to hand over the newly found local capacity to be nurtured for the future. The hard work of some of the planning officers was to be lost. The activities to respond to the formal requirement to deliver the *Community Strategy* and the formation of the LSP contrasted starkly with the ongoing efforts of the Southwark Environment Forum and member bodies to be heard in the plan making process. Officers seemed confident that they were incorporating sustainable development in the planning policy formulation process. At the same time, local community groups benefited from participatory activities but the organised groups representing sustainable development felt they were "left out in the cold" (Interview 18), having lost the Sustainable Southwark Partnership (SSP) and not having the capacity to enter the formalised LSP process. With no way of representing their views as a group this left them in a vulnerable position.

Public participation and cross-departmental coordination activities continued to have an important influence on the planning policy formulation process for the new UDP in LBS. This was partly due to the formal influence of Government policy as local authorities were charged to draw up a *Community Strategy*, bringing together the activities of the local authority under one strategic plan and implying cross-sectoral coordination. Government identified both the Community Strategy and LSP as vehicles for ensuring that local authorities took a joined-up or cross-departmental approach, created broad and meaningful community engagement and delivered sustainable development. Understanding of sustainable development continued to evolve in the Planning Policy and Research Unit (PPRU) but although it was one of Government's stated intentions that the *Community Strategy* contribute to sustainable development, this did not as readily translate to reality. The *Community Strategy* interpretation of sustainable development led to a slightly different focus on service delivery, citizen satisfaction and *quality of life*. The research suggests that this created a juxtaposition between *liveability* and *sustainability* which is explored in the context of LBS and reflected the now familiar differences in weak and strong interpretations of sustainable development.

The formal influence of central Government policy is clear to see in the shape of two quite distinct statutory requirements: a relatively well-established planning requirement for the UDP and; in parallel, another newer and essentially regeneration-led requirement for the *Community Strategy* (including the *Local Strategic Partnership*). These two separate but parallel formal policy requirements influenced both the planning policy process and the incorporation of sustainable development. Indeed, both policy requirements had some similarities: they both had a strategic basis, aimed at maximising the efficiency and functionality of specific policy fields; they aimed to deliver improved performance in key economic, social and environmental indicators strategically set by central Government; they were both required to deliver sustainable development; they were both therefore drivers of institutional change. These parallel formal policy requirements are summarised in Table 22 below.

Formal Requirements Central Government	Formal Policy Responses from Local Government		
	Regeneration (outside research period)	Planning	Community Strategy
Deliver Sustainable Development	*Quality of Life*	*Sustainable Development*	*Liveability*
Demonstrate Community Involvement	Area based consultation events	Borough wide consultation events	Borough wide consultation events
Provide Monitoring	Eg: Annual Monitoring	Eg: Annual Monitoring Report	Eg: Best Value
Economic, Social and Environmental Performance Indicators			

Table 22: Traditional Local Authority View of Delivering Sustainable Development

What is of most interest in the case study findings is how this capacity for change was played out very differently in the two policy processes. This leads to the confirmation that there is something beyond the formal which influences the planning policy process. In a similar way to Lipsky's (1980) street level bureaucrats, the role of LBS planning officers appeared to be crucial to the different approaches adopted.

Both the UDP and the *Community Strategy* required LBS to show evidence of community involvement in the policy making process to gain Government approval. The formal requirement for community involvement represented the gradual formalisation of the contributions of the local community in the policy making process. Officers had traditionally viewed the local community as external stakeholders (part of the informal dimension of institutions), this formal requirement brought them fully into the process as formal stakeholders. Yet again, there were many differences between the operationalisation of this requirement between the two policy processes. The role of LBS planning officers again appeared crucial to the different approaches adopted, demonstrating the informal influence and shared norms based on societal, cultural and other contextual references.

Equally, although conducted on a completely separate parallel basis, both policy making processes encountered the same constraining influences of the informal local historical dimensions when undertaking community involvement events. These included: recurring difficulties from previous encounters; confusion over the point of the contemporary activity; lack of understanding of the broader strategic basis for policy; and lack of knowledge of the concepts involved, in particular with the terminology *sustainable development*. Interpretations of sustainable development were particularly interesting: they were either diluted, simplified or translated (like *quality of life* or *liveability*) which had a resulting impact on the delivery of sustainable development; or they were ignored and gradually disappeared (like the *Southwark Values* in the *Community Strategy*). This lack of understanding of sustainable development appeared a key factor in the 'silo' approach to community involvement and the absence of joined-up activity within LBS. This had a major impact on the effectiveness of community involvement activities, often referred to in the case study as "consultation fatigue". This was sometimes seen to be due to the local political influence on community involvement and related interpretations of sustainable development. Consultation was sometimes used to pursue or support local agendas which were re-presented as delivering sustainable development. This led to a distortion of sustainable development with selective reference to certain elements of it which fitted with existing or planned actions.

Although the UDP and *Community Strategy* could be considered to be manifestations of the formal, stable and strategic dimensions of institutions, they both involved new ways of thinking and ways of doing so could equally be seen to represent the dynamic dimension. How these new ways of thinking and ways of doing were put into practice in the existing context was influenced by the norm-governed basis for that context. Because the requirement for change was a formal requirement, the local stakeholders and context were required to be dynamic and change. They also therefore had to engage with the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions, adopting methods based on these dimensions to ensure community involvement.

Despite the objective of both policies to deliver a joined-up approach to policy making, the case study showed that in fact the reality in LBS was of a range of

initiatives to deliver sustainable regeneration and little cross-coordination. These remained segregated into spatial regeneration, planning and social activities. They competed for the views of the local community and this led to confusion, differing agendas, consultation fatigue and a tick box approach to the requirement.

Whilst sustainable development formed a central focus for both the UDP and *Community Strategy*, the concept of sustainable development was interpreted in different ways by different officers meaning that it was not able to be communicated to the local community. Whilst this lack of understanding and engagement with sustainable development may well have been influenced by the conflict of sustainable development with local political agendas, the research highlighted that in fact understanding was very minimal outside the PPRU.

The thesis argues that understanding of sustainable development is essential amongst both local authority officers and elected Councillors. This is not to be confused with agreement with sustainable development. Many elected Councillors disagreed with the implications that sustainable development may have, yet they were unable to give a definition of the term or engage in a broader discussion of why the concept had entered international or national policy agendas. They disagreed with the formal requirement of the UDP to deliver sustainable development and glossed over its presence as a key factor in regeneration. They were vociferous in opposing higher density levels. Yet, the research noted that where understanding of sustainable development was highest, was where public participation was most effective and where managerial tools were being deployed effectively.

CHAPTER SIX:
INTERPRETATIONS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the incorporation of sustainable development within the UDP at various stages of the plan making process. The LBS approach to this is outlined here. An important influence is the use of sustainability appraisal both in the formulation of the UDP, as required by national legislation and Planning Policy Guidance, and in the submission of planning applications. LBS conducted the former approach well and embraced the latter approach and invested resources in developing a Sustainability Checklist for Developers. Yet the *Sustainability Supplementary Planning Guidance* (SPG) which would provide the detail of these approaches was not yet completed. This chapter presents the results of detailed exploration of the UDP using content analysis, this is also supplemented by the results of observation and interviews to present an analysis of the incorporation of sustainable development within the LBS UDP.

Taking the results of the pre-deposit consultation exercises discussed in Chapter Five, working drafts of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) were produced for internal review and discussion in the London Borough of Southwark (LBS). This signalled the start of the use of managerial policy tools, in the form of sustainability appraisal, to demonstrate the incorporation of sustainable development in the policy documents. The UDP timetable now turned away from public involvement to the work of drafting and redrafting the UDP document by officers of the Planning Policy Research Unit (PPRU). This resulted in a *First Draft UDP* published in November 2002. A series of public consultation exercises with the local community as well as inter-departmental meetings with other LBS officers, led up to the submission of formal objections with a strict timetable for response. This then signalled the start of further discussions to resolve the objections. A *Final Draft UDP* was published in March 2004.

Formal Influences on Sustainability Appraisal of the UDP

To comply with national, regional and local objectives for planning and sustainable development policy, sustainability appraisal was included in the plan making process. At the national level, an integrated appraisal system in support of sustainable development was identified as one of the key actions or commitments of *'A better quality of life a strategy for sustainable development in the UK'* (DETR 1999 para 5.27). PPG 12 required the use of environmental appraisal for development plans. This stemmed from the *EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment* (CEC 2001) and was a good example of how EU policy impacts not only on spatial planning in Europe (Roberts 1996) but also on local government administration of the land use planning system. PPG 12 recommended the use of outside bodies in the environmental appraisal process to assist validation (DETR 1997). Government guidance on *Environmental Appraisal of Development Plans* (DoE 1993) highlighted the need for and process of carrying out appraisals of development plans. The updated PPG 12 of 2001 stated that the development plan should be subject to environmental appraisal (para 4.6) and drawn up to take environmental considerations comprehensively and consistently into account (para 4.4). It added that sustainability appraisals should not be limited to environmental concerns alone, as the same methodologies can be developed to assess economic and social issues (para 4.16).

However, sustainability appraisal was an emerging activity and it was not until later in 2002 that the first *'Guide to sustainability appraisal'* was produced (TCPA/ENTEC 2002). It contained guidelines on undertaking sustainability appraisal of planning documents and was designed to be applied to appraisal of plans, strategies and proposals. At the same time, the *London Plan* was being drawn up at the regional level and was required to undergo a full sustainability appraisal. It was with this background that the LBS UDP was undergoing sustainability appraisal and in fact LBS adopted the same tried and tested methodology.

An added benefit of sustainability appraisal for LBS was to encourage and act as a check on a coordinated or joined-up approach:

"the sustainability appraisal of the UDP also enables any conflicts between policies to be identified and to ascertain how these can be resolved. This ensures that all policies within the UDP are seeking to achieve sustainable development through a unified and consistent approach" (LBS 2005 para 3.6).

Early working drafts of the UDP flagged up sustainability appraisal as a way of ensuring:

"that all of the objectives and policies in the plan are compatible with one another and are working towards a coordinated approach to sustainability" (LBS July 2002 p1).

Subsequent drafts kept this emphasis though sustainability appraisal itself is applied in two different ways: sustainability appraisal of the UDP planning policy documents including Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs); and sustainability appraisal of development applications received by the local authority. These two applications are now outlined and their emphasis in the UDP explored.

One way of achieving sustainable development that was incorporated into the UDP was the use of sustainability appraisal of the UDP and its SPGs. The intention being that this:

"ensures that it is a development control / planning framework that incorporates sustainability principles" (LBS 2005 para 3. 4).

The methodology and results of the sustainability appraisals of the UDP (LBS 2005b) are discussed below revealing the extent to which sustainability appraisal influenced the incorporation of sustainable development in the LBS planning policy documents.

Informal Influences and the Sustainability Appraisal of Development Proposals

LBS planning officers developed a Sustainability Checklist for Developers, based on best practice in other London boroughs and on an emerging sustainability checklist being produced by the Mayor of London (2006). There was no formal basis to the work and officers were motivated and inspired to

engage in the creation of a managerial tool to ensure sustainable development in the borough. Their intention was to facilitate and improve appraisals of development applications received by the local authority and so to ensure development which was sustainable. Planning policy officers had identified a crucial gap in the implementation of the UDP when development control officers advised on planning applications with no formal mechanism for ensuring development was sustainable as stated in the UDP. The Sustainability Checklist for Developers was an attempt to fill this gap:

"by putting in place a framework for decision-making that balances the requirements to improve the quality of life of people who live in work in and visit the borough" (LBS Nov 2002 point 1.7).

Sustainability appraisal of development proposals (planning applications) was given as a way of achieving sustainable development in the UDP (LBS Nov 2002 part 1 para 13.2) and was further explained in the *Sustainability Topic Paper*, though this was prepared in response to questions raised by objectors over the formal requirement for such a sustainability appraisal of development proposals (discussed in Chapter Seven). The *Sustainability Topic Paper* stated that :

"the requirement of sustainability appraisals for certain planning applications [will] ensure that developments in the Borough are also achieving sustainability objectives. Generally this will include applications for major development and proposals for development in sensitive locations" (LBS 2005 para 3. 4).

The Sustainability Checklist for Developers was based on the Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) used to evaluate the UDP (discussed next). This produced a set of questions for potential developers to answer which covered the overall and detailed objectives of the UDP. The document was refined into a one-page questionnaire, but the accompanying explanatory notes were added to the detail of the *Sustainability SPG*. The Sustainability Checklist for Developers demonstrated the explicit role of the informal dimension of the work of local planning officers. Its interest to the research though must be underlined. The content of the Checklist is not the focus of discussions here, as its most significant impact is to be found in the informal rationale for its creation by the PPRU. This is explored in relation to the objections it received (from both

supporters and opponents), its treatment by the LBS Executive and the way it was viewed by the Planning Inspector at the Public Inquiry and later the Secretary of State. This is discussed in Chapter Seven and the Sustainability Checklist for Developers itself is attached at Appendix 5.

Conducting the Sustainability Appraisal of the LBS UDP

Whilst the UDP document itself was continuously evolving, the researcher selected three key points in the policy formulation process at which it would be possible to take a snapshot and assess the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP. As Chapter One, showed, definitions of sustainable development are broad and open to multiple interpretations and this is reflected in policy documents. This means that they often cover the guiding principles, or the concept of sustainable development as a whole, but for the most part fail to simply say what steps need to be taken in order to achieve sustainable development. The challenge of multiple interpretations of sustainable development is reflected in the dominance of content analysis of planning policy in the literature. These studies provide a benchmark for the inclusion of the term in policy documents and often an assessment of the extent to which sustainable development is explained. An important starting point for the research was therefore to gather data to create, in the first instance, a benchmark of the incorporation of sustainable development within the LBS UDP. The content analysis took the form of a sustainability appraisal but, for the sake of clarity, it will continue to be referred to as 'content analysis' because part of the policy formulation process included official sustainability appraisals of each stage of the process. The results of these official sustainability appraisals are also discussed in this chapter and the methodology is supported as the researcher's findings from content analysis coincide with the official sustainability appraisals.

The first of the three windows for content analysis was in July 2002 when the *Third Working Draft of the UDP* was considered by LBS to be ready for a sustainability appraisal and close to a first draft for deposit and public consultation and participation. Due to the collaborative nature of the research under the CASE studentship, the researcher was invited to perform a content analysis that would also count as the official sustainability appraisal of the *Third*

Working Draft. The work was to be undertaken by a team, led by the researcher with two other members from a local charity, CRISP. CRISP is a well-established voluntary sector organisation promoting the benefits of sustainable development and was regularly used by LBS to conduct independent evaluations of local authority procedures. This meant that the content analysis and the sustainability appraisal were one and the same. This is important to the research for three main reasons: firstly, the impact of the first content analysis/sustainability appraisal may be traced at later stages, giving an extra dimension to understanding the policy formulation process; secondly, there is a major implication for the research in terms of action research which means that the researcher influenced the process being studied, this methodological issue is discussed fully in Chapter Three; and thirdly, the content analysis/sustainability appraisal gained objectivity from being conducted by a three-person team, led by the researcher. The methodology adopted for the content analysis/sustainability appraisal is discussed below. The results gave a snapshot indication of the organisational capacity of LBS to incorporate sustainable development.

The second window for content analysis was on the *First Draft UDP* in November 2002 where the recommendations of the first sustainability appraisal/content analysis could be seen to have been included. The third window for content analysis was when the *Final Draft UDP* was published in March 2004. This was conducted by the researcher alone, for pure research purposes, using the same methodology. However, three months later, in June 2004, an official sustainability appraisal of the document was conducted by Forum for the Future, also using the same methodology. The results of both are identical. This is probably due to the design of the sustainability appraisal which clearly defines and therefore limits the extent of the assessment and demonstrates the starting point of the thesis – that content analysis alone is not sufficient to understand the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. The responses to the results of the content analysis of the July 2002 *Third Working Draft*, the November 2002 *First Draft UDP* and the 2004 *Final Draft UDP* revealed the extent to which LBS responded to different pressures to enhance or restrict the incorporation of sustainable development in the policy document.

Methodological Note for Sustainability Appraisal

Methodologically speaking, content analysis of the planning policy document was an ideal entry point into the case study as it provided opportunity for researcher (and now reader) familiarisation with the area of study. The aim of the content analysis of the UDP was to identify and assess to what extent the UDP incorporated sustainable development. The first step was to summarise the large document. This was done by mapping out the different sections with their titles and subtitles, the relevant objectives and the detailed policies. An example of the mapping exercise for the 2002 *First Draft UDP* is attached at Appendix 6. The content analysis itself started by assessing coverage of sustainable development in the document against key sustainable development criteria. Having identified coverage, it then went on to make an assessment of the strength and quality of sustainable development in the UDP, by looking at how sustainable development was explained and communicated. This gave an indication of the general level of understanding of sustainable development within LBS, and specifically within the team responsible for the policy formulation process. The content analysis was conducted in a systematic manner and repeated for each of the two windows into the policy formulation process. Whilst the first combined content analysis/sustainability appraisal was conducted as part of a team, the parameters were well defined and there was no major discrepancy between the findings of the three-person team. The content analysis provided the basis for uncovering the factors influencing the incorporation of sustainable development in the policy formulation process.

The content analysis of the LBS UDP was broken down into three areas based on the structure of the policy document itself. The first area and main focus was on the core document made up of Part One outlining the guiding principles or overall strategy of the UDP and Part Two specifying the explicit policies and outlining the steps that needed to be taken in order to achieve the overall strategy. The policy document also referred to Part Three of the UDP which consisted of twenty-nine Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents with detailed guidance on implementing the objectives and policies of the UPD. However, these were being produced behind the UDP timetable and unfortunately were not available to the research. The *Sustainability SPG*, because of its direct relevance to the research is explored in Chapter Seven but

only became available at the very end of the research period, so did not bear influence on the process under study.

The first step in the content analysis/sustainability appraisal was to identify a set of parameters to measure the UDP policy against. As we have seen in Chapter One, there can be a multitude of interpretations of sustainable development. For the purposes of the sustainability appraisal – the LBS interpretation of sustainable development was summarised by officers of the PPRU as follows and the emphasis on balance, participation and information was notable:

> "[Sustainable development is] based on the following key principles:
> - development is sustainable when it balances the needs of the environment, economy and society;
> - people should have meaningful opportunities to participate in important decisions that effect their quality of life, their ability to participate in wealth creation and the quality of their environment;
> - decisions need to be based on clear criteria as to what contributes to sustainability and on information as to the effects of developments on the economy, society and the environment" (CRISP/LBS 2002 p2).

In the same way as there can be a multitude of interpretations of sustainable development, this can then lead to a multitude of criteria for measuring the sustainability content of planning policy. The researcher chose to use existing criteria rather than devising a new set based on the researcher's own interpretation of sustainable development. The Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) used were drawn together by Forum for the Future based on a wide range of literature on sustainable development. The SDOs were used to assess the GLA *London Plan* in June 2002 and compared favourably to similar academic studies to assess sustainable development coverage in planning policy at the national and European levels (Spectra 2002, PASTILLE 2002, ECI 2002). They also related closely to practical guidance on how to conduct a sustainability appraisal of planning policy (ODPM 2002). The concept of sustainable development as a whole was broken down into thirty-three SDOs set out in Table 23 below. The UDP was read with direct reference to the SDOs and identified which of the UDP policies related to the SDOs by mapping them onto each other. The content analysis detailed in Appendix 7 identified which of the UDP policies related to which of the thirty-three SDOs. This was calculated by counting the total number of UDP policies relating to each SDO.

The overall analysis is presented in Figure 10 below and shows the emphasis of the UDP on key SDOs discussed shortly in this chapter.

	Forum for the Future Sustainable Development Objectives
1	Focus development at locations with current or planned good public transport links, spare capacity, and easy access by walking or cycling
2	Reduce car dependency by improving transport choice
3	Encourage mixed use development, with provision of key local services, and amenity
4	Ensure more efficient use of natural resources, especially soil, mineral aggregates, water and energy
5	Protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats, and create new wildlife habitats
6	Maximise benefits of regeneration schemes for local people
7	Actively promote new clean technologies e.g. in sectors including the environmental economy, renewable energy and pollution control
8	Develop sustainable tourism industry
9	Ensure inward investment projects are sustainable
10	Improve river and canal ecological and amenity qualities, and seek more sustainable uses thereof
11	Protect, maintain, restore and enhance existing open spaces, create new open spaces, and ensure access to open spaces and wider public realm is maintained
12	Improve health, reduce health inequalities, and promote healthy living
13	Reduce crime and fear of crime
14	Ensure access to good quality affordable housing for all
15	Ensure, where possible, new development occurs on derelict, vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings, and that land is remediated as appropriate
16	Encourage communication between different local communities, in order to improve understanding of differing needs and concerns
17	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and plan for further reductions to meet or exceed national climate change targets
18	Improve air quality
19	Reduce amount of waste requiring final disposal through waste minimisation, and increase proportion of waste reused, recycled, composted and recovered
20	Minimise ambient noise using best practice
21	Substantially increase proportion of energy purchased and generated from renewable and sustainable resources
22	Promote investment in and use of sustainable rail and water freight transport
23	Create a climate for investment, with a modern employment structure based on a combination of indigenous growth and inward investment
24	Promote high quality urban design in conjunction with sustainable construction principles and techniques
25	Tackle poverty and social exclusion in areas of particular need
26	Maintain and enhance the quality, integrity and distinctive character of the area
27	Maintain and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets of the area
28	Avoid development that will impact on areas at high risk from flooding
29	Increase tree cover as appropriate and ensure active and sustainable management of existing woodland
30	Improve the image of the borough as part of an exemplary sustainable city
31	Actively challenge discrimination against all marginalised groups
32	Ensure equal opportunities to employment and occupation
33	Respect people and value their contribution to society

*Table 23: Forum for the Future 33 Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs)*
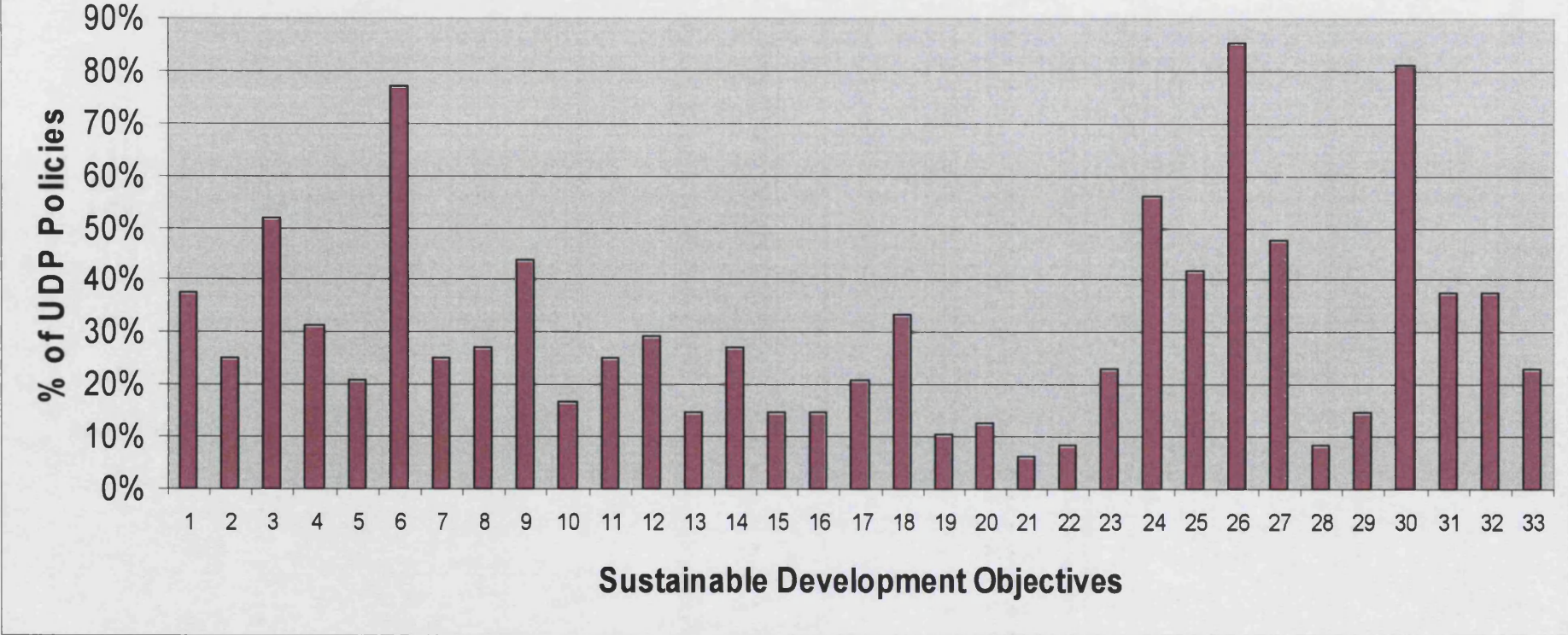
Figure 10: Number of UDP Policies Referring to Sustainable Development Objectives

Having identified which aspects of the UDP mapped onto the SDOs, an assessment of the strength and quality of policy coverage of the SDOs was conducted. The four-point scale the researcher developed to assess strength and quality is shown in Table 24 below.

Strength and Quality	Assessment in documents
0	Unacceptable and/or seriously threatens SDOs
1 (Low)	Does not comply with SDOs
2 (Adequate)	Complies with SDOs as covered by general statements
3 (High)	Complies with SDOs and provides detailed evidence and added value

Table 24: Four Point Strength and Quality Scale for Assessment of Policy Coverage of Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) in the LBS UDP.

The researcher decided when some part of the documentation encapsulated more than one SDO in the matrix, which meant that not only the explicit but also the implicit sustainable development content was counted. For example, for the researcher, protecting open space counted as biodiversity, but could also count as quality of life. The assessment was entirely dependent on the researcher's knowledge and understanding of sustainable development. Whilst this was useful to explore the circumstances of the local PPRU and assess coverage of sustainable development, it was not counted favourably in the research analysis as effective communication or steps for achieving sustainable development for those people accessing the UDP to guide local development. In fact, one of the recommendations was to make explicit the underlying knowledge of sustainable development for the majority of UDP readers who may not have expert knowledge of the term or concept.

The use of the SDOs in this way allowed quantitative results to be produced. Each policy was scored, allowing a Sustainable Development Index (SDI) to be derived for each of the policies in the UDP. By aggregating the scores of each of the policies it was possible to derive a SDI for each of the UDP sections, and by aggregating the scores from each of the sections it was possible to derive a SDI for the UDP as a whole.

Interpretations of Sustainable Development in the Third Working Draft UDP July 2002

The *Third Working Draft UDP* formed the basis of internal consultation within LBS with a view to finalising a *First Draft UDP* (subsequently published in November 2002). As such, the objectives and policies contained in the UDP at this stage were not taken to represent the official views or intentions of LBS. It was noteworthy that the LBS started sustainability appraisal at such an early stage in the policy formulation process and this was indicative of their stated commitment that the UDP document contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the borough. It was particularly useful for the research to start content analysis at this internal consultation stage to highlight the influence of the planning officers and LBS in the incorporation of sustainable development in the latter versions of the policy document. However, the researcher also noted that the use of the word 'consultation', whilst allowing other divisions internal to LBS the opportunity to feed into the UDP process, indicated a passive engagement (Arnstein 1969) and did not encourage a more active role in formulating policies for the UDP together. This was in contrast to a lot of the participatory activities with groups external to LBS where the focus was on participation to formulate policies together (Glasson et al 1994). At later stages the incorporation of sustainable development was influenced by a wider range of people as more feedback was gathered and local Councillors became involved, contributing their politically influenced views. The first content analysis/sustainability appraisal was an iterative process, meaning that as the researcher shared findings with planning officers, changes were made to the working document, which evolved gradually to form the *First Draft UDP* by November 2002. The first combined content analysis/sustainability appraisal is discussed in some detail next, but the subsequent two content analysis exercises focused on the changes only.

In July 2002, at the internal consultation stage, the UDP document consisted of 38 pages, made up of three sections. Part One, was an introduction to and overview of the UDP, Part Two specified eleven objectives to be delivered through 59 policies. Part Three was in the form of some very early draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which could not be explored because they were not completed within the research period.

Part One of the *First Draft UDP* 2002 was the LBS overall planning strategy, expressed in terms of objectives for development. It highlighted both internal and external influences on planning. Internal influences included other LBS strategies; in particular, the *Community Strategy*. External influences included the *London Spatial Development Strategy* (the *London Plan*) and central government policies (including PPGs). It also indicated significant physical features affecting development such as LBS's regeneration programmes. The UDP included a key diagram, which was described as a "graphical expression" of the LBS strategy for development and use of land. The key diagram incorporated a number of areas and features identified in other existing plans and strategies. These included special policy areas, opportunity areas, town centres, preferred industrial locations, open space, Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), transport infrastructure and other areas with major development potential.

Of most relevance to the research was the prominence of paragraphs on sustainable development: three-quarters of a page, positioned immediately after the half-page of introductory paragraphs. This prominence at the start of the document was significant. Sustainable development was not bolted on; it was given as the foundation and context to the whole document. It stated:

> "Affecting this whole process is the need to make sure that the change which takes place improves peoples living and working conditions without harming the quality of life of future generations. This is called sustainable development, and a great deal of work is being done to make clear what we mean by it and how we can hope to achieve it" (LBS July 2002 p1).

The UDP then interpreted sustainable development by noting certain key principles:

> "development is sustainable, when it balances the needs of the environment economy and society; people should have meaningful opportunities to participate in important decisions that affect their quality of life, their ability to participate in wealth creation and the quality of their environment; decisions need to be based on clear criteria as to what contributes to sustainability, and on information as to the effects of development on the economy, society and the environment" (LBS July 2002 p1).

Finally, in this section on sustainable development, sustainability appraisal was introduced as a way of ensuring compatibility and coordination between all the UDP objectives and polices. Sustainability appraisal was also indicated as appropriate to be applied to SPGs. Reference was given to the *Sustainability SPG* but it did not reach draft form until much later in the process and was not ready for the Public Inquiry, the Inspector's comments on this are discussed in Chapter Seven.

As Figure 10 above shows, there were six (of 33) SDOs in the upper two quartiles (scoring 50 percent or more) summarised in Table 25 below. These six SDOs are briefly discussed next, in descending order.

	Upper quartiles	
% of UDP policies relating to SDOs	100 – 75%	74 – 50%
No of SDOs covered by UDP policies	3 SDOs	3 SDOs
	6 SDOs	

Table 25: Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) Scoring 50% or More (top six)

A high 89 percent of the UDP policies related to 'maintaining and enhancing the quality, integrity and distinctive character of the area' (SDO 26). With such a broad or vague objective, researcher subjectivity was increased and it was therefore not surprising that such a high proportion of the UDP policies related to this SDO. Close behind, 85 percent of the UDP policies related to 'improving the image of the borough as part of an exemplary sustainable city' (SDO 30). The image of the borough is particularly important for the LBS, both in terms of the people living in the borough and those who may choose to visit, work, study or shop in it. Direct reference to London as an exemplary sustainable city reflected the team's concern to make linkages to London regional policies and to embrace a range of different stakeholders in the borough through community involvement activities to engage with residents, workers, students, tourists and businesses. Also high up the scale, 80 percent of the UDP policies related to 'maximising benefits of regeneration schemes for local people' (SDO 6). With so much regeneration underway in the borough, the LBS had been determined for some time, that the benefits of regeneration flow directly to local people and they had strict outputs in place to meet in this respect. As rhetoric at least, this was a well-developed concept, featuring in many LBS documents and policies.

In the second quartile, but still scoring over 50 percent, 59 percent of the UDP policies related to 'promoting high quality urban design in conjunction with sustainable construction principles and techniques' (SDO 24). This objective held great potential for sustainable development in the borough for several reasons. Firstly, the amount of regeneration in LBS meant that there was an existing undertaking to redesign parts of the urban landscape which would require construction in the near future. Secondly, design and construction were acknowledged as having a large impact on the sustainable development of a city. With 59 percent of the UDP policies relating to this SDO, there was potential for the incorporation of sustainable development at several stages in the development process from planning to construction. This was reinforced by the creation of a Sustainability Checklist for Developers, discussed later.

A total of 54 percent of the UDP policies related to 'encouraging mixed-use development, with provision of key local services, and amenity' (SDO 3). In view of the borough's regeneration activities, there was a pre-existing emphasis on mixed use and local service provision.

Finally, 50 percent of the UDP policies related to 'maintaining and enhancing the historic environment and cultural assets of the area' (SDO 27). There was an increasing emphasis on the historic and cultural aspects of the LBS, following the successful redevelopment of the South Bank, including the popular tourist attractions of the Tate Modern, Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and Vinopolis, for example.

Whilst the UDP scored highly against these six SDOs they were the broad encompassing ones and the UDP scored low in relation to the remaining and majority 27 SDOs. Half of these received a very low score, being represented in less than 25 percent of the UDP policies as Table 26 below shows.

	Lower quartiles	
% of UDP policies relating to SDOs	49 – 25%	24 – 1%
No of SDOs covered by UDP policies	14 SDOs	13 SDOs
	27 SDOs (82%)	

Table 26: Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs) Scoring Less Than 50% (bottom 27)

The lowest scorings (below 25 percent) included key issues for sustainable development such as: protecting and enhancing biodiversity; reducing greenhouse gas emissions and reaching climate change targets; increasing use of derelict land; reducing waste; and increasing renewable and sustainable energy. It is interesting to note how these scores remained low in the final UDP sustainability appraisal in spite of changing attitudes to climate change and the central importance of these SDOs to achieving sustainable development. It is also surprising, as these SDOs in particular have clear links to land use in the borough and would be expected to perform well if sustainable development were a central focus of the planning policy formulation process. This contradicts research in the field which finds the planning system well equipped to deliver these aspects of sustainable development (Bruff and Wood 1995, Bruff 2000). However, the low scoring of these SDOs could be explained by the fact that these areas only require one specific policy to enable their delivery, rather than ongoing mention. For example, to deliver the SDO on renewable and sustainable energy the UDP requires that all developments provide at least ten percent renewable energy. This SDO needs no further coverage to be achieved.

Strength and quality were then assessed. The summary in Table 27 is based on the evaluation of each of the 48 policies. The full analysis for each of the five sections of the UDP is detailed in Appendix 8, and the range of scores was from 2.0 to 2.9. The scores of each of the policies in each of the five sections of the UDP gave a Sustainable Development Index (SDI) for each of the sections. The aggregate scores from each of the sections gave a SDI for the UDP as a whole. The overall evaluation of the UDP was 2.4,out of a possible 4.0.

	Sustainable Development Index
London Borough of Southwark UDP (Third working draft July 2002)	**2.4 as a whole**
Section One: Tackling Poverty and Wealth Creation	2.5
Section 2: Life Chances	2.6
Section 3: Clean and Green	2.2
Section 4: Housing	2.4
Section 5: Transport	2.4

Table 27: Sustainable Development Index for UDP

The evaluation of the new UDP (LBS July 2002) in terms of the principles of sustainable development demonstrated that the UDP supported SDOs through its individual policies, sections and as a whole, but it also revealed consistent weaknesses. Having been highlighted, these were intended to be addressed in later drafts of the UDP. The UDP policies were basically sound in terms of the principles of the SDOs, however the sustainability appraisals highlighted the need for more detailed support and guidance through the SPGs to ensure that the policies fully complied with the SDOs, provided detailed evidence and ensured added value. Unfortunately, the drafting of the SPGs was on a timetable behind the UDP as the Planning Inspector and Secretary of State were to comment several times. This delay therefore weakened the incorporation of sustainable development as well as raising issues of process and transparency. This is further explored in Chapter Seven and Chapter Eight.

Interpretations of Sustainable Development in the First Draft UDP, November 2002

July 1995 UDP	April 2000 Env. Review	May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult.	Nov 2002 First draft UDP	March 2004 Second draft UDP	2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry	April - June 2005 Public Inquiry	March 2006 Inspectors Report	Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted
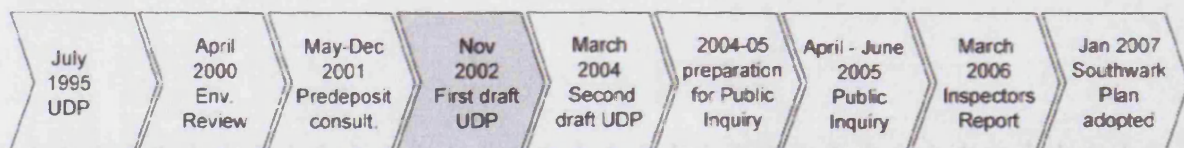
The results of the detailed content analysis of the *Third Working Draft* were presented to LBS and used to inform revisions to the UDP resulting in the *First Draft UDP* which by this time had expanded to consist of 88 pages. The main changes between the two documents related mainly to enhanced communication and more precise phraseology. The main changes as they related to sustainable development are discussed here. Part One of the UDP remained the LBS overall planning strategy, expressed in terms of objectives for development and whereas the focus had been fully on sustainable development, this was now joined by other influences. Although this reflected the reality of the situation it also weakened the incorporation of sustainable development:

> "the strategic direction for the Southwark Plan ... is guided by a number of important factors. These include sustainability principles, external influences, achieving Southwark Council's corporate objectives and implementation of planning legislation" (LBS July 2002 point1 .6).

Section Eight on *Implementing the Plan* also made direct reference to sustainable development, flagging up that:

> "sustainability criteria will be used to guide and evaluate these action plans...." (LBS Nov 2002 p23).

Part Two of the UDP changed the most as during the first sustainability appraisal it became obvious that some of the policies were repetitive. Equally, the local authority wanted to reduce the number of policies in order to make the document more accessible to a wider range of people. This was particularly the case in Section Three entitled *Clean and Green,* where a total of eleven policies were dropped or incorporated more concisely in to other policies. Two policies were also dropped from Section Five on *Transport.* Overall the number of key objectives rose from eleven to twelve and the number of policies dropped from 59 to a more concisely worded 46 policies.

Interpretations of Sustainable Development in the Final Draft for Deposit UDP, March 2004

July 1995 UDP	April 2000 Env. Review	May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult.	Nov 2002 First draft UDP	March 2004 Second draft UDP	2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry	April - June 2005 Public Inquiry	March 2006 Inspectors Report	Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted
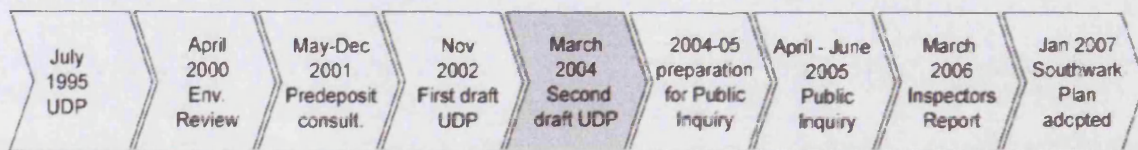
The second assessment of the policy document was in March 2004 when the UDP was accepted as the final draft for deposit to be submitted to Public Inquiry. As such, the objectives and policies contained in the UDP were now taken to represent the views and intentions of LBS. There were many different activities involved in moving from the *Third Working Draft* of July 2002 to the *Final Draft UDP* of March 2004. These included continuing communications with those individuals and groups who had made objections to the first version. The local authority was required to produce a summary accounting for the main changes to the evolving UDP, these covered issues like energy and transport and resulted in strengthening sustainable development by specifying policies. The aspects relating to sustainable development overall are explored here. At this final stage, the 'sustainability objectives' were renamed the 'strategic objectives', intended as a positive instance of mainstreaming of sustainable development. The fact that the UDP sustainability appraisal was presented as

the framework for other policies and planning agreements was more evident. The UDP appeared clear on the joined-up approach it expected and the required links with the *Community Strategy* and *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*.

The quantitative results of the sustainability appraisals of the *First Draft UDP* (LBS Nov 2002) and *Final Draft UDP* (LBS March 2004) deposit drafts were compared for each of the 33 SDOs and ten were found to have marginally decreased. These ten SDOs formed the focus of a further assessment by Forum for the Future. The aim was:

> "to assess whether this was as a result of modifications that had been made to the plan. If this was the case ... to make suggestions for how the policies could be improved to ensure maximum consideration of Sustainable Development Objectives" (Forum for the Future 2004 p1).

The nature of the policy formulation process meant that a like for like comparison of the two documents was impossible as they varied considerably with many changes to the final set of policies. As a result the aggregated score for each SDO was made up of a different number of total scores for the 2002 and 2004 appraisal. It was therefore necessary to look at the individual policy scores for each SDO showing a lower score. Forum for the Future investigated any individual policy score of less than one or not in compliance and made recommendations to secure a score higher than one to mitigate the overall decrease in the SDOs.

Of the ten SDOs which showed a decrease, five had no individual policy score of less than two, indicating that although the overall average decreased marginally, each individual policy complied with the SDOs as covered by the general statements. The remaining five SDOs showing a decrease also had individual policy scores of one and so were explored further. Two of these related to new policies not included in the first assessment of the 2002 draft deposit. Policy 3.11 on *Quality in Design* was amended to emphasise sustainable design as per Forum for the Future's recommendations. They also suggested that:

"This could include a requirement for developers to design buildings that not only produce high amenity environments but which will operate in the most efficient and therefore sustainable way possible" (Forum for the Future 2004 p2).

This recommendation influenced officer activity around the Sustainability Checklist for Developers and was seen as further justification for its existence. Policy 3.2 on tall buildings was amended to require developers to incorporate renewable energy generation into the building.

Two existing policies had dropped by one point in scoring. This was put down to subjectivity and amendments made to clarify the intention of the policies to support sustainable development. Finally, the fifth policy showing a decrease was an excellent example of how sustainability appraisal achieved a coordinated and joined-up approach. This concerned policy 5.7 on *Parking standards for the mobility impaired*. In terms of private car use, the policy was not considered to be truly sustainable, but in terms of social access issues clearly it was. When the original provision was combined with a policy on enabling and extending access for disabled people to public transport, a more consistent and coordinated approach to sustainable development emerged.

Conclusion

The content analysis of the LBS UDP showed that explicit awareness of sustainable development was present and specific statements were made in the form of the policies in the UDP. This matched Marshall's (1992) classification of the environmental sustainability content of London's UDPs. However, the quality of attention varied according to different issues (Bruff and Wood 1995, Bruff 2000). This may have been due to the fact that certain issues were better accommodated than others by the planning system. In the case of LBS, green space was explicitly stated as important for sustainable development and was linked to specific policies within the UDP to protect and enhance green space, however biodiversity was not considered to be strongly supported by the UDP. This reflected Bruff and Woods' (1995) findings that the built environment was more easily accommodated in terms of overall incorporation of sustainable development.

However, planning officers saw the need to support the practical implementation of the UDP and this was not included in the formal policy guidance. Planning officers therefore took action based on their own understanding and experience to develop links to mechanisms to ensure sustainable development moved beyond policy to action. This took the form of the development of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. Whilst LBS officers demonstrated innovation, activity for the creation of such a checklist took place in the informal dimension of institutional activity and did not contribute to the inclusion of sustainable development in the UDP.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
FORMAL ADOPTION OF THE UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Introduction and Overview

Following the adoption of the *Final Draft UDP* (LBS March 2004) by the Executive of the London Borough of Southwark (LBS), preparations started for its submission to Public Inquiry to be held a year later, in April 2005. This process represented the most formalised activities of the planning policy process. There were three main stages to the Public Inquiry: the period leading up to the Public Inquiry; the Public Inquiry itself, along with those objections of most relevance to sustainable development; and the period after the Public Inquiry, including the Planning Inspector's report and recommendations from the Secretary of State. This chapter begins by examining the preparations for the Public Inquiry of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) by various stakeholders.

The start of this process coincided with the launch of the first LBS *Sustainability Policy* for the period 2004-2009, a new addition to the LBS corporate strategies. As part of the preparations for Public Inquiry, the *Sustainability Supplementary Planning Guidance* (SPG) was written and both documents are discussed below. Despite the activities undertaken in LBS on developing sustainability indicators linked to EU funded projects and the initial interest in developing sustainability indicators to monitor the UDP (described earlier in Chapter Four), work in this area paused. The full attention of planning officers turned instead to responding to the objections to the UDP within the formal timeframes and making relevant changes. In addition to responding to objections and making pre-inquiry and final changes, preparation for the Public Inquiry also comprised external training for planning officers and the provision of workshops to assist members of the public representing their objections.

As part of the preparations for Public Inquiry, a *Sustainability Topic Paper* was written by planning officers bringing together the background of sustainable development in LBS and the approach adopted for its incorporation in the UDP. The content of the *Sustainability Topic Paper* is discussed here. It is notable that,

had this paper been developed earlier on in the plan making process, it could have been an excellent way of explaining sustainable development to a wide range of stakeholders involved in the UDP process. It therefore represents an example of learning by doing and the influence of planning officers to instigate practical support for the incorporation of sustainable development and extend their knowledge to a wider audience. However, its usefulness was limited by its late appearance. The main focus of both the *Sustainability SPG* and the *Sustainability Topic Paper* was the incorporation of sustainable development through the use of a Sustainability Checklist for Developers which, despite several acknowledged weaknesses, became the key focus for sustainable development at this time. The fact that the Checklist was not a formal requirement of the UDP process was not an issue, it was deemed to be necessary to achieve the desired outcome of the UDP. This is an example of the officers extending their remit on policy making to policy implementation.

The Public Inquiry itself is discussed and three key objections are explored because they provide examples of where the informal dimension of activities impacted on the formal requirements to incorporate sustainable development in the UDP. Firstly, the sustainability appraisal of the plan making process was questioned at Public Inquiry and allowed the researcher the opportunity to further explore the response of planning officers to formal requirements to mainstream sustainable development. In this instance the planning officers were able to retrospectively demonstrate they had met formal requirements. Secondly, density became a controversial issue, and gave the researcher a lens to examine the relationships between the regional and local formal requirements for sustainable development and the conflict with the ward level political and local community priorities. This provided an opportunity to explore differing interpretations of sustainable development and the related participatory aspects of the plan making process. This issue was of historical significance and first raised in the contextual discussion in Chapter Four. Thirdly, the Sustainability Checklist for Developers provided an arena to explore the major informal dimensions of planning officer influence on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. These included the interplay between international, European, national, regional

and local interpretations of sustainable development; the limitations of existing legislation for the implementation of sustainable development and the time required to produce new legislation or guidance to support implementation; the potential of the local level to be creative and innovative; and the different interpretations accorded to sustainable development by different stakeholders, which could also be termed as discretion.

The research concluded at this point and the LBS UDP, also known as the *Southwark Plan*, was due for adoption in 2007.

Interpreting Sustainable Development in the First London Borough of Southwark Sustainability Policy, 2004 to 2009

At around the same time as the *Final Draft UDP* was adopted by the Executive, so was the first LBS *Sustainability Policy* for the period 2004-2009. It was written by the Sustainability Manager, in the Environment and Leisure department with input from the Southwark Environment Forum, invited to comment on and shape early drafts, as a way of including local community groups interested in the environment. This was in keeping with the LBS emphasis on public participation. Although officers in the Planning Policy Research Unit (PPRU) and those in Environment and Leisure knew each other, the *Sustainability Policy* was seen as being the exclusive remit of the Sustainability Manager. The *Sustainability Policy* outlined the borough's:

> "long-term objectives to promote sustainable development and commits the Council to continuously improving the sustainability of its services and working practices" (LBS 2004 p1 para 3).

Environmental management practices received particular attention in the document as ways to:

> "assess all new policies, activities and practices for their effects on the environment and in cases of doubt to apply the precautionary principle" (LBS 2004 p2).

Although no specific environmental management practices were listed, it is

interesting to note that the assessment approach reflected in the statement above for the *Sustainability Policy* was reflective of both the sustainability appraisal of the plan making process and the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. In fact, the *Sustainability Policy* went on to make direct reference to the UDP and the Sustainability Checklist for Developers that was described as requiring:

> "applicants requesting planning permission for major developments to demonstrate that proposals will not have an adverse impact on the established pattern of development, traffic conditions or the environment generally" (LBS 2004 p14).

This was clearly evidence of the prevalence of new formal managerial tools and instruments for sustainable development. At the same time it also indicated effective cross-departmental communication and joined-up thinking at the policy making stage, which was the main intention of the corporate strategies. However, this statement merely indicated that the UDP complied with the *Sustainability Policy* and raised a question about whether the LBS considered 'the established pattern of development' to be sustainable and therefore to be protected from adverse impact, rather than improved.

The *Sustainability Policy* included a wide range of sustainability issues such as transport, energy, water, air quality and noise, but particularly highlighted the land use aspects of sustainable development through the emphasis on reusing vacant, derelict or contaminated land. The Policy also referred to sustainable development and the built environment stating the intention:

> "To promote and improve development in the Borough so as to protect and enhance the quality of life and improve economic and social opportunities in line with the objectives of sustainability" (LBS 2004 p14).

However, some members of the Southwark Environment Forum felt that the promotion of development in LBS would not protect and enhance quality of life and that there was a need to directly reference the development zones established in the UDP and make the connection with the UDP more overt. This was an example in which sustainable development was bolted onto existing aims for regeneration,

giving a weak interpretation of sustainable development. Overall the *Sustainability Policy* was positive, flagging up not only the commitment of the local authority to take action in this area by publishing such a strategy, but also indicating a joined-up approach not identified in previous corporate strategies. This may have been a result of the consultation process with the Southwark Environment Forum, the sound history of sustainable development in the LBS, or the experience and expertise of the officers involved. The UDP process may well have contributed to raising awareness of sustainable development amongst a wider range of officers (in particular those involved in writing the *Sustainability Policy*) as well as local Councillors.

On the other hand, community members of the Southwark Environment Forum, still denied participation in the *Local Strategic Partnership* (LSP), saw the *Sustainability Policy* as their opportunity to create a document guiding the sustainable development of the borough, in spite of:

> "disappointment in the missed opportunity that the UDP offered to incorporate sustainable development in a meaningful way, which would mean more trees and open spaces and less gentrification, crowding and money going to developers" (Interview 29).

The *Sustainability Policy* was seen as a way of:

> "plugging the gaps that the UDP had left." (Interview 18).

It was hoped that it would provide authority to the Southwark Environment Forum so that:

> "the voices concerned with the environment would not be overridden by other competing interests" (Interview 18).

This was a direct reference to the LBS LSP where the Southwark Environment Forum had struggled to become a member since its establishment. Membership was expected to be approved in 2007 after a series of setbacks which frustrated members and provided further evidence of the low priority attached to the

environment, in particular by business groups who were the key voices in the LSP.

Sustainability Indicators

Members of the Southwark Environment Forum considered sustainability indicators to be one of the 'gaps in need of plugging' after the UDP failed to continue its work in this area. In fact, the UDP plan making process had not returned to sustainability indicators since the *Key Issues Paper* consultation document of May 2001 that had proposed a list of performance indicators referred to as 'measuring statements' to be used as indicators to monitor progress.

> "These can establish the degree to which a policy is responsible for change ... some indicators will be influenced by factors other than land use planning such as market forces or social and economic policies but may highlight impractical issues which need to be monitored and addressed." (LBS May 2001 p35).

The indicators themselves were not unusual and covered things like the amount of waste produced, recycled and composted, the amount and quality of open space. The later drafts of the UDP stated the intention to develop a set of ten strategic indicators based on clear criteria related to the UDP. These would be simple and useful to summarise the social, environmental and economic impact of the planning policies and monitor and track progress towards "a sustainable future". However, this intention was not achieved as the pressure of time and lack of resources meant officers had to turn their full attention to the considerable exercise of drafting and redrafting the UDP. They were also aware that the planning reforms were introducing statutory annual monitoring mechanisms for the new Local Development Framework (LDF). In fact it transpired that the new LDF monitoring indicators did not refer to sustainable development and LBS planning officers chose to shape the statutory basis with a slant on participation rather than sustainable development, perhaps reflective of the historical emphasis on participation. The absence of work on sustainability indicators may also have pointed to the low understanding of the need for monitoring on sustainable development in the UDP by local Councillors and senior management in spite of involvement in previous LITMUS and PASTILLE projects. The cutting edge lead

which the local authority had established through its participation in the European funded LITMUS and PASTILLE projects on sustainability indicators was not carried any further into the plan making process. The knowledge and experience of officers was not utilised at this stage, at least due to time pressures in delivering statutory obligations. Officers understood the reasons for this but other stakeholders active in sustainable development (such as members of the Southwark Environmental Forum) did not.

Having experience in the field of sustainability indicators, the researcher was asked to produce a report on the creation of appropriate monitoring indicators for the UDP. Although the report did not form part of the official UDP documentation, it was used as a working paper to inform the officers working on the UDP and represented their first attempts at implementing a monitoring system for the UDP based on sustainability. The proposed indicators related to the LA21 indicators that were never reported upon because these were still felt to be relevant to the focus of activities in the UDP. However, no further work was undertaken in this area during the research period and planning officers instead turned their attention to responding to the objections to the UDP. In fact, in response to the upcoming new statutory requirements for annual monitoring of the LDF, work on this was scheduled to start once the Southwark Plan was adopted.

Support to Engage in the Formal Adoption of the UDP
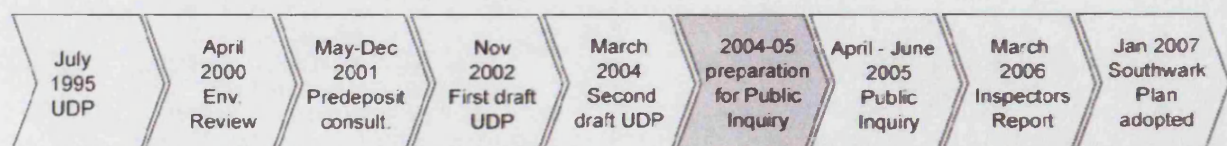
The pre-inquiry changes and final changes took the results of the continuing consultation process and responded to as many of the objections as possible. The public consultation process had already raised 1,281 objections originating from around 200 organisations and individuals during the 2001 *First Draft UDP* consultation, and a total of 1,844 objections from the 2004 second deposit consultation. The objections were recorded and tracked on a Geographic Information System (GIS) allowing detailed manipulation and geographical

referencing on borough maps. This effective use of the GIS eased the complex process of providing an accurate monitoring system. Pre-inquiry changes successfully enabled the resolution and reduction of the total number of outstanding objections, resulting in only 280 objections remaining for discussion at Public Inquiry. There were no significant objections relating to sustainable development, though support for the Sustainability Checklist for Developers was noted from the Southwark Environmental Forum.

Public Inquiry training was provided for planning officers in November 2005 and formed the basis for research observation. The three-day course was designed to train participants in the preparation of evidence for Public Inquiry; understanding the roles, relationships and processes; the presentation of evidence; and handling cross-examination, re-examination and Planning Inspector's questions. Officers were expected to prepare evidence beforehand and undergo formal cross-examination in front of a Planning Inspector, followed by a review of performance. This was intended to:

> "provide a vivid learning experience regarding both the evidence presented and the performance of being an expert witness. In addition by focusing on particular Southwark issues, the course can have the extra benefit of being a dry run for the real thing" (UWE 2005).

The course was delivered by a Planning Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate for England and Wales based at the University of the West of England (UWE). Clearly, the key focus of the training was not sustainable development, but planning officers selected the Sustainability Checklist for Developers as one of the areas on which they prepared evidence in advance and the officer responsible presented this document as part of the training. The planning officers were confident that they knew the details of the UDP and were prepared to answer questions to defend the specific policies and provide any background information required. This was particularly the case with the Sustainability Checklist for Developers which planning officers argued was an innovative response to the Government's requirement for sustainable development and pre-empted the Government's establishment of such a policy instrument for use by development

control.

Workshops were also held for local community organisations and individuals wishing to make a personal representation at the Public Inquiry. These workshops were provided by the Willowbrook Centre who noted that many of those making objections:

"had a long history of community involvement, even you might say community activism..." (Interview 24)

and were using the Public Inquiry to make their voices heard as a continuing part of the democratic process, in many instances, having been frustrated by prior attempts to interact with the local authority. Nonetheless, the Willowbrook Centre also remarked that many of those facing:

"the most pressing issues in the local community are completely unaware of the UDP and its relevance to their lives, they find out too late, then get frustrated that there is little opportunity to have their voice heard. There is a lot of frustration." (Interview 22)

It was notable to the researcher that those attending the workshops were indeed frustrated and sometimes resentful of LBS. Whilst much of the frustration was the result of many different issues, there was a tendency by the local community representatives to bring historical issues and issues with tenuous links to the UDP to the discussion. This was reflective of the "them and us" tendency that grouped all aspects of LBS work together and was met with an assumed generic local community opinion, when in fact there was great diversity and difference of opinion. From the community perspective this was based on: long-seated conflicts and hostility around Council and community relations; a belief that LBS was neither following national and regional guidance correctly nor representing local needs to national and regional levels, and that LBS was:

"letting irrelevant legislation damage local ability to meet needs." (Interview 19).

Of course, the legislation governing the plan making process was not irrelevant but

this sentiment indicated a deeply seated, on-going and complex issue of the responsiveness of formal policy to support local needs. This was reflected in the views of the local community, but also at a different level which perhaps only the research was able to observe, in the actions of local planning officers which extended beyond the scope of formal requirements. This is discussed in relation to the Checklist and density issue shortly.

The Public Inquiry training was considered by participants to be good for their preparations, although they were not altogether sure that it would have been worth the time as they doubted that they would be successful. There was a mix of defiance and frustration as participants felt that they were:

> "constantly battling against the system ... [and] just hoping the Inspector will be able to stand up against the Council" (Interview 24).

Again, these sentiments reflected a lack of knowledge of the role of the Planning Inspector to ensure LBS was delivering central Government policy and of the planning officers whose work for the most part was focused entirely on delivering central Government policy. This attitude was in marked contrast to the combination of optimistic, defensive, if slightly nervous atmosphere amongst the planning officers. The feeling of optimism was explained:

> "because of the sheer volumes of work and innovative approaches which individual officers were able to contribute, such as the use of the GIS system to track objections, the extensive community participation events and the novel approach to incorporating sustainable development through the Checklist" (Interview 31).

However, it was also clear that officers were nervous because of the formal interaction to come with the Planning Inspector and the format of the official formal review, open to the public. Three of the planning officers had contributed to previous plan making processes but none of the rest of the team had ever been involved or been called to give evidence at a Public Inquiry before.

Sustainability Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

The UDP was supported by 29 SPGs, but the timetable for writing these had slipped and they were being prepared in the period leading up to the Public Inquiry. To clarify the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP, the LBS drew up a *Sustainability SPG* that focused predominantly on the use of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers (discussed in Chapter Six and below). PPG 12 (ODPM 2001) gave guidance on the role of the SPG which was to provide:

> "details of the mechanism for delivering [the policies of the UDP] ... or detailed ... guidance" (ODPM 2001 paras 3.15-3.18),

but emphasised that the policies of the UDP should provide the framework and importantly include main development control issues, likely to determine whether planning permission is granted. The *Sustainability SPG* was not made available on deposit, nor was it examined at the Public Inquiry, which focused on dealing with objections to the UDP rather than its supporting documents.

Although the third aim of the UDP was sustainable development, the *Sustainability SPG* was not mentioned or referenced in the UDP. The adoption of the *Sustainability SPG* by LBS Executive, an elected body, was stated as being a legitimate process, yet it escaped the scrutiny of the Planning Inspector and commentary from the Secretary of State, as both pointed out at various stages in the plan making process. The Secretary of State's comments on the 2002 UDP recognised that the new planning legislation:

> "inevitably meant that a considerable amount of important material has for now had to be relegated to the separate SPGs" (Secretary of State 2003).

but raised concerns that the SPGs referred to by the Secretary of State as "informal guidance":

> "cannot legally be part of [the Plan] (1990 Act 12[2])... . None of the material in an SPG can have the force of Section 54A ... [and the SPGs] have been produced on a timetable running just behind the UDP ... not simultaneously ... [meaning that] large amounts of important material are

not contained within the Plan and ... [are] not ... subjected to the formal consultation process and a Public Inquiry" (Secretary of State 2003).

The full implications of the way the *Sustainability SPG* was developed behind the UDP timetable (and all the other SPGs in fact) included the inevitable weakening of sustainable development. The SPG is explored next, in spite of its late timetabling and the fact that it neither underwent a sustainability appraisal nor was it presented to the Public Inquiry.

Interpreting Sustainable Development in the Sustainability SPG

The *Sustainability SPG* had as a primary aim to provide further guidance on:

> "sustainability for developers, the community and planning applicants to ensure that all developments are of a very high quality, meeting sustainability objectives" (LBS 2005g para 1.1).

The *Sustainability SPG* referred to the sustainability objectives of the UDP (LBS 2005g para 1.2) but underlined that it did not intend to:

> "restrict development, but rather to ensure that only high quality development which contributes towards improving Southwark as a place to live, work and visit are encouraged" (LBS 2005g p2).

However, the *Sustainability SPG* took as its core focus for the implementation of sustainable development in LBS, a Sustainability Checklist for Developers, justifying the use of such a tool by referring to national and regional policy guidance on the same:

> "Through ensuring that all developers implement these requirements, this SPG aims to raise awareness of sustainability principles as part of the planning process by requiring a Sustainability Impact Assessment. This is to enable more informed decision making which demonstrates how developments make a positive contribution to the local and wider area." (LBS 2005g p2).

The *Sustainability SPG* covered the general background for and then went into the specific detail of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. Chapter Six noted

some of the specifics of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers both in terms of what it covered and how it was to be implemented, but the focus of the discussion in this chapter is the basis for taking this action, as is further explored in the account of the Public Inquiry. What is most notable is LBS continued to refer to a Sustainability Checklist for Developers as they did not feel that the European legislation for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was effective in making lasting changes for sustainable development in LBS. PPRU officers claimed that the SEA dealt with large projects and overlooked the opportunities for the majority of smaller developments which the LBS Sustainability Checklist for Developers was intended to address. Unfortunately, the focus on the Checklist in the *Sustainability SPG* meant that no other sustainable development issues were addressed. Everything relating to sustainable development in the SPG was therefore linked to the innovative but informal Checklist.

Sustainability Topic Paper for Guidance in Public Inquiry

A *Sustainability Topic Paper* was written for use at the Public Inquiry. The *Sustainability Topic Paper* was one of the supporting documents that the Planning Inspector was able to refer to. However, because it was written solely for use in the Public Inquiry, its usefulness to support the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy was limited. In fact, the *Sustainability Topic Paper* could have gone much further to support the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP had it been drawn up earlier in the process. In terms of content, it could have been used to demonstrate how sustainable development can be incorporated in the UDP, by giving practical examples and very specific guidance relating to the local level. In terms of process, the *Sustainability Topic Paper* could have been useful as an informational tool, communicating about sustainable development and indeed the role of planning earlier on in the process. The *Sustainability Topic Paper* was intended as a defensive tool to justify the existing incorporation of sustainable development into the UDP and as such, limited itself to a basic two-fold purpose, to:

> "set out the context of sustainability appraisals in Southwark, and the rationale behind the sustainable development strategy ... set out in the

Southwark Plan" (LBS 2005 p3 para 1.1).

The *Sustainability Topic Paper* set out details of the national, regional and local policies governing sustainability appraisal and sustainable development more broadly. The importance of top-down formal legislation was very clear in the *Sustainability Topic Paper*. It gathered together all references to the need to incorporate sustainable development in planning policy which was not only essential for planning officers of the local authority in order for them to do their job in terms of compliance, but was also useful for communicating to fellow officers in other departments, the general public and those wishing to approach the local authority on planning matters. This breakdown of formal legislation explained and informed the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP earlier on, but was only recorded formally in the *Sustainability Topic Paper* in preparation for the Public Inquiry. The research examined these policy imperatives in Chapter One and this in itself assisted planning officers to prepare the *Sustainability Topic Paper* which was used to justify the incorporation of sustainable development as the:

"core of its [Southwark's] vision for the borough" (LBS 2005 p14 para 3.1).

The justification was aimed at two main levels. The topic paper justified the planning team's focus on sustainable development to others within the LBS, and it also served to justify LBS's actions to those externally, in particular local developers, who would question the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP. Observation of LBS committee meetings in the period just before, during and after the Public Inquiry, revealed regular reference to the *Sustainability Topic Paper* by planning officers when questions were raised concerning the focus of the UDP on sustainable development. One has the impression that the PPRU officers felt the need to justify and demonstrate their reasons for incorporating sustainable development and that they perhaps lacked the full support of those Councillors around them. This may have been due in most part to a lack of understanding by Councillors on sustainable development.

The *Sustainability Topic Paper* focused on three main areas of sustainable development in the plan making process. The first defined sustainable development and highlighted links to the LBS *Community Strategy* and then outlined how the UDP incorporated sustainable development. At the local level it referred to the LBS *Sustainability Policy* 2004-2009 and the *Community Strategy* which had as its overarching goal sustainable development:

> "ensuring through the Southwark Plan that land use proposals support more sustainable development" (LBS 2005 p12).

The *Sustainability Topic Paper* specified where the UDP incorporated sustainable development highlighting Strategic Policy 11:

> "to protect and improve amenity and environmental quality and encourage sustainable development" (LBS 2005 part 2).

but mainly quoting from Part 1 of the UDP which stated the overall aim of the UDP:

> "to have high environmental quality that is attractive, sustainable and performs well on environmental measures" (LBS part1, para 1. 1) "and ... to achieve sustainability" (LBS 2005 part1).

The document defined sustainable development as:

> "sustainable development that meets the needs of people from all cultures and the economy whilst improving the environment" (LBS 2005 para 5.2).

The inclusion of the wording "all cultures" was an interesting addition to standard definitions of sustainable development; it reflected the local circumstances and the sensitivity of officers to these circumstances. It was an attempt to bring the social, and in particular equity aspect, of sustainable development to the local level circumstances. However, it was to have unexpected but not serious repercussions at the Public Inquiry where equality related statements were closely scrutinised by the local community.

The second area of sustainable development that the *Sustainability Topic Paper* focused on was the requirement to conduct a sustainability appraisal of the plan making process for the UDP. This was discussed in Chapter Six. Finally, a substantial section of the *Sustainability Topic Paper* focused on the role of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, also discussed in Chapter Six.

The Public Inquiry Process

July 1995 UDP	April 2000 Env. Review	May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult.	Nov 2002 First draft UDP	March 2004 Second draft UDP	2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry	April - June 2005 Public Inquiry	March 2006 Inspectors Report	Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted
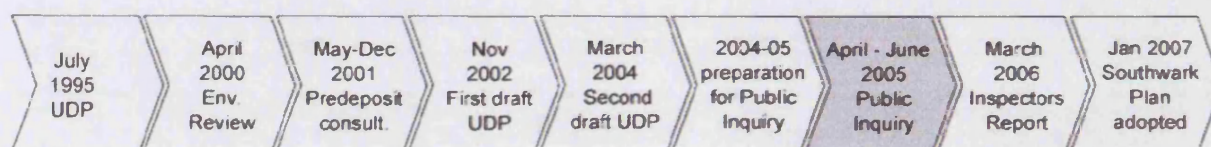
The Public Inquiry was the formal procedure (within the formal policy making process) that took place between April and June of 2005. It allowed anyone who had not withdrawn an objection to the UDP within the statutory periods to make written representations or personally appear to present oral evidence in front of the Planning Inspector. The Planning Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, was charged to consider objections with:

"impartiality, openness and fairness" (ODPM 1999 p19).

The Planning Inspector undertaking the LBS UDP Public Inquiry reflected that his:

"role in the Southwark Plan was to consider all duly made objections and report my recommendations to the LBS, which was mainly that there were no modifications to be made as I was satisfied with what they had produced" (Interview 46).

Objections were heard in the standard three stages: the objector's submission, the authority's response and the objector's final right of reply (ODPM 1999 p20). Whilst many of the objections of the Public Inquiry focused on issues relating to the implementation of sustainable development such as the specifics of energy efficiency, air quality, noise and water requirements, the detail of these areas is not the focus of the research. These were uncontroversial issues as they were all linked to formal regulatory requirements. It is notable that in dealing with these issues, the objectors, the Planning Inspector and the local authority alike made

reference to relevant formal legislation and regulations, interpreting the facts to support their varying viewpoints. These particular issues were more clearly defined and less open to interpretation than sustainable development per se, so in the majority of cases the final recommendation of the Planning Inspector was supportive of sustainable development, finding a clear basis in legislation. The Planning Inspector's interpretation was the final decision. In some cases the objections were in the form of calls to go beyond the existing requirements for a stronger one. An example of this was the requirement for new developments to provide ten percent of their energy from renewable sources. Objectors representing developers were not able to argue against such clear cut formal requirements. Objectors representing environmental groups wanted the threshold raised. Officers were not surprised to be faced with objections and felt pleased to be backed up by formal legislation, some of which was very recent. There was a feeling that they were pioneering and creative but also operating within clear statutory boundaries. They knew that the objection process itself would represent a learning process for some of the objectors, and were confident of the Planning Inspector making a favourable decision.

"Traffic restraints, renewable energy, water and resource conversation all got through okay as they are now all part of national planning policy" (Interview 37).

There were three key objections relating specifically to sustainable development and these are discussed next. One was the Sustainability Checklist for Developers where officers believed they had demonstrated a pioneering and creative approach. This objection was an example of a stakeholder group, the land developers, objecting to the local authority for interpreting sustainable development beyond the existing formal legislative and regulatory framework requirements. Local community groups stated their support but recognised that the work of officers extended beyond statutory requirements.

The second objection related to the sustainability appraisal of the plan making process. It was an example of another stakeholder group, the local community, objecting to the local authority for interpreting sustainable development in a way

that did not meet emerging legislative requirements. Some objectors in this group believed that the planning officers were genuinely attempting to make sustainable development a key focus of the new UDP and could not understand why the officers had decided to shy away from being one of the first local authorities to respond to the new requirements for sustainability appraisal, focusing instead on the Sustainability Checklist for Developers which had no legal underpinning.

The third objection was around the issue of density where the objectors consisted of local community groups, backed up by their local Councillors. They were appeased by members of the Executive early on to avoid local political unrest and disruption. The issue was referred forward for the comments of the Planning Inspector and Secretary of State (this, despite local Councillors knowing that appeasing the local community went against regional and central Government guidance on density). This issue was not resolved at Public Inquiry or following the Planning Inspector's recommendations in his report, so it is discussed at the end of this chapter.

Sustainability Checklist for Developers

First, we turn to the objections to Policy 3.3 on sustainability appraisal that refers to the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. This received 26 objections in total, two-thirds of which were from developers, as Table 28 below shows. (These were the same developers who chose not to engage in the research and declined interviews.) The majority were objections against the Sustainability Checklist for Developers in principle, though one or two developers objected to the lack of detail whilst supporting the attempt it made to require the delivery of sustainable development in projects requesting planning permission.

First Deposit	Southwark Green Party
	Berkeley Group Plc and St James Group Plc
	Bellway Homes Ltd
	George Wimpey Central London
	St George (South London) Ltd
	Fairview New Homes Ltd
	Barton Willmore
	Harmsworth Quays Printing Ltd
	Galliard Homes
	Government Office for London
	Southwark Friends of the Earth
	Sainsbury's Supermarket Ltd
	Southwark Green Party
	Southwark Green Party
	Bankside Business Partnership, c/o Better Bankside
	Dulwich Society Wildlife Committee
Second Deposit	Dulwich Society Wildlife Committee
	VenaGlass Limited
	Bellway Homes Ltd
	Workspace Group plc
	London Town Plc
	St George (South London) Ltd
	Laing Homes South East Thames
	BT Plc
	Fairview New Homes Ltd
Final Changes	Environment Agency

Table 28: Objectors to Policy 3.3 on the Sustainability Checklist for Developers

The remainder (around one-third) were from the local community and environmental groups, yet these objections were also relating to a lack of clarity and practical support on how to implement the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. The Planning Inspector considered whether the requirements of the Policy were:

"unduly onerous and unreasonable and whether they are based on any legislative or statutory requirements" (LBS 2005c para 2.3.2).

In response to concerns raised by both the Secretary of State and the sustainability appraisals of the UDP itself, the Planning Inspector's summary of the key concerns remained the same, despite considerable changes to the Sustainability Checklist for Developers from the First Deposit UDP to the Second Deposit UDP.

"the requirement for sustainability appraisal to be submitted for every application

- is unreasonable and onerous (particularly for small developments);
- is not based upon any statutory or legislative requirement;
- duplicates the requirements of other regulations in particular the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulations;
- explanatory details should not be relegated to SPG but should be stated in the Plan for proper testing;
- the threshold for 'major development' is unjustified and should be increased; and
- to state that *development with a material adverse impact on sustainability will be refused* is unjustifiable and meaningless" (LBS 2005c para 2.3.40).

Planning officers had failed to respond adequately to the concerns, some of which had been raised at earlier stages of the plan making process. Although officers had added a threshold level so that the Sustainability Checklist for Developers did not apply to all planning permissions, this had clearly been a compromise and had not satisfied the concern. The Planning Inspector commented on the innovative move to design a Sustainability Checklist for Developers saying that the:

"EA approach is similar and is now standard practice, with relevant guidance available" (Interview 46).

The Planning Inspector considered the objections and the local authority response. The LBS interpretation of national and regional policy and guidance on sustainable development in planning policy was that a Sustainability Checklist for Developers was required, although they did acknowledge that:

"Whilst there is no legislation that specifically requires sustainability appraisals of development proposals, the need for development to be sustainable is advocated through national government policy and guidance ... as well as the London Plan. This makes it essential that our LPAs require sustainability appraisals of certain major developments to ensure that development under their jurisdiction is sustainable" (LBS 2005 para 3.7).

Note how the statement above was expanded to comment on what Local Planning Authorities (and not just the LBS) required in order to respond to the task set by

formal legislation of delivering sustainable development. Officers were well aware that the Sustainability Checklist for Developers was an example of the LBS going beyond the formal requirements of existing legislation. However, this act also revealed the concerns of officers for the limitations of formal policy in really delivering sustainable development. LBS argued that the Sustainability Checklist for Developers was:

> "necessary to ensure that decisions made about planning applications are fully informed of the likely impact of proposals and any mitigation measures" (LBS 2005 para 3.7).

The Planning Inspector concluded that the Sustainability Checklist for Developers should be completely deleted as there was no legal basis for it, adding:

> "We simply cannot put a burden on developers over and above what legislation allows" (Interview 46).

Planning officers were disappointed, commenting:

> "The Inspector decided that our policy to require a sustainability appraisal by developers was not acceptable, so he's [the Inspector] kicked that out. The whole thing is open to a little bit of interpretation along the way ... we interpreted the policy guidance as sustainability appraisal, he [the Inspector] said it was going beyond legal requirements and was too onerous and vague and would lead to problems because of that" (Interview 37).

When asked if this decision threatened the opportunity for the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP, the Planning Inspector pointed to the fact that LBS planning officers had responded in an appropriate way to the Government's guidance to make sustainable development:

> "the foundation of the whole plan, mainstreamed throughout it, fundamental to the whole UDP" (Interview 46).

Whilst this was praise indeed for the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP, it also had a perverse effect of forming the basis for the Planning Inspector's decision to delete the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, as

planning applications are determined through the primacy of the development plan system and the LBS planning officers had clearly grasped that:

> "Sustainable development has to come through the general planning process which includes the preparation of development plans. Sustainable development forms the basis of the LBS UDP ... and therefore ... there is no need to rely on a single, one-off policy to ensure sustainable development" (Interview 46).

Referring to sustainable development being clearly the overall foundation of the LBS UDP and his decision to delete the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, the Planning Inspector remarked that:

> "It is not a problem as the Checklist is there by another means. Any planning application is considered in the light of all relevant policies in the development plan" (Interview 37).

Planning officers clearly realised the same, stating that:

> "Some of his [the Planning Inspector's] decisions mean we are not going to be able to do what we want to do but it doesn't mean that the UDP is not sustainable" (Interview 36).

However, officers recommended that the LBS Executive appeal against the Planning Inspector's decision and keep the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. They argued that in reality there was a need for officers in development control to be provided with a formal process for ensuring a planning application meet sustainable development criteria and this was overlooked in Government guidance. However, they still failed to address the implications of implementing the Sustainability Checklist for Developers which, if it were to become an operational reality, would require officer training and some form of informational support to developers. Although intended to be self-explanatory, the provision of such support would enable the successful operation of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers and may well fall to the development control officers in any case, who without appropriate buy-in, would see this as additional work. With the benefit of hindsight, would LBS have put all of their sustainability eggs in the same

Sustainability Checklist basket? Planning officers believed that in spite of the imperfections of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, without it, the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP was weakened.

In discussions, planning officers acknowledged that different stakeholders held different interpretations of sustainable development, but they pointed to both the European evolution of sustainability appraisal and the regional role model represented by the use of a similar checklist by the GLA. In addition, planning officers had spoken with their counterparts in the London Borough of Ealing where a Sustainability Checklist for planning applications had been accepted as part of the new UDP for that borough. This group of supporters of the Checklist clearly shared common values. Indeed many London boroughs at a similar stage in developing their new UDPs were introducing similar tools. The Checklist issue represented innovation and learning amongst a group of officers and could be seen as an example of the emergence of a new informal institution (Mantzavinos 2003). In fact, planning officers predicted that the Sustainability Checklist for Developers model would eventually become a statutory requirement - part of the formal institutional arrangements. In defying the Planning Inspector's recommendation, they were fully supported by the local green groups, including the Southwark Environment Forum, yet community group members may not have been clear that there was no legal basis for their actions. Some elements of the 'sustainable development hub' wondered if their considerable efforts and time in this area were not a strategic diversion away from the critical issue of conducting a full EIA of the UDP. This may have been unlikely, but the fact that they were fighting a battle which they were unlikely to win, may have impacted LBS's relationships with their sustainable development stakeholders.

Even at the time of finalising this thesis, LBS officers were still working on the Sustainability Checklist for Developers and updating the SPGs to Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) under the planning reforms. The new *Sustainability SPD* stated that:

"The Council requires a sustainability assessment to be submitted with all development applications proposing 10 or more dwellings, or 1000 square metres or more of floorspace" (LBS 2007 p3).

Officers acknowledged the drawbacks of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers but indicated its success in raising awareness of sustainability considerations. They noted its weaknesses as not providing targets against which developers can benchmark their proposals, not allowing for sustainability of proposals to be "scored", and not enabling an overall assessment of the proposal or an analysis of the balance between social, economic and environmental issues. Whilst this may have been the case, these weaknesses are about the content of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, whereas both the Planning Inspector and Secretary of State held concerns over its very presence.

Sustainability Appraisal (SEA) of the Final Draft UDP

Turning to the second objection relating to the formal European legislative requirement for a full Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the development plan, some sharp contrasts arise compared to the discussion above. Objectors requested greater explanation as to why a full EIA was not conducted. At the same time as the Public Inquiry got underway, the LBS Executive had agreed the recommendations of planning officers and had resolved that a full EIA was not required because sustainability appraisal had been conducted at all stages of the plan making process (LBS 2005a). The public was duly informed of this decision following standard procedures (on 18 April 2004). The Planning Inspector agreed with the local authority response that the UDP had given sufficient detail on the process for sustainability appraisal and had followed statutory requirements from relevant documentation on sustainability appraisal. In addition, the local authority had followed the recommended protocol for public transparency in publicising the decision. This meant that although the new European legislation required a full EIA for development plans not adopted before July 2005, both the timing (at the end of the plan making process rather than the start) and the fact that sustainability appraisal had been conducted throughout the plan making process (discussed in Chapter Six) allowed the local authority the discretion to choose not to do so. In spite of the declarations of planning officers to make the new UDP

truly sustainable and the evidence that a full EIA would provide in this respect, officers decided against this course of action.

This decision raised several questions: whilst LBS had acted within legal requirements, would they have been better off working more closely within the limits of formal legislation by conducting a full EIA ahead of scheduled policy and in preparation for future requirements? Had the UDP process undergone a full EIA, would it have raised more awareness of sustainable development? Or would it have allowed fuller incorporation of sustainable development in the plan making process? In particular, would EIA have been more effective for sustainable development than the focus on a Sustainability Checklist for Developers which fell beyond the scope of formal legislation and where success was based on the discretion of the Planning Inspector alone? Would officers have gained more for sustainable development through an EIA? Studies show that a full EIA is used in planning to enable integrated decision making (Smith and Sheate, 2001) and may therefore have been able to achieve the aims of the LBS *Sustainability Policy* for the "consideration and reconciliation of environmental, economic and social concerns" (LBS 2004). However, EIA is also known to have little impact on decision making processes when it occurs too late to influence decision making timetables, as would have been the case with the LBS EIA, particularly considering its tendency to highlight problem areas but not to make sufficient recommendations for solving these problems (Counsell and Haughton 2001 and 2002).

Interpreting Sustainable Development in the Public Inquiry

The researcher conducted an interview with the Planning Inspector before the end of the research period but after both the publication of the Planning Inspector's Report and the response from the local authority. Having spent 21 years as Principal Inspector, experience was cited as the key factor in his understanding of sustainable development throughout the Public Inquiry process. The Planning Inspector regarded sustainable development as:

"now being a fundamental part and foundation of any development plan and must be reflected in its policies and proposals. The development plan is now an amplification of the whole concept of sustainable development" (Interview 46).

When asked what this looked like in reality, the Planning Inspector outlined that he:

"would expect to see things like giving priority to using previously developed land, land use planning and transport planning to reduce dependence on the private car use and encouraging the use of public transport and walking" (Interview 46).

The Planning Inspector was also keen to ensure high levels of public participation in the Public Inquiry and allow the local authority to proceed to adoption of the new UDP in the best form possible for the future development of LBS.

It was clear that the Planning Inspector knew the legislative boundaries within which he operated and was careful to keep focused on these. Accordingly, he had little need to understand or comment upon that which was outside the boundaries of his role. He imagined that the time invested in activities which were clearly outside the formal legislative requirements may well have been better spent in ensuring all aspects of the formal process were as far ahead as possible – he intimated that the SPGs would have benefited from additional time. He demonstrated a view that implementing existing legislation to the highest standard was what he was looking for. He declined to comment on the perceived need officers saw for a more robust set of tools to ensure the UDP achieved the intentions it set out. He indicated that new planning legislation responded to such needs. Within the parameters set for his role, the Planning Inspector was able to act as he was required, in an impartial way and do his job to a high standard. This was in contrast to the planning officers who demonstrated a strong desire to question formal legislation and improve on it at the local level, but never felt the need to engage with the higher tiers of Government to communicate this desire or provide leadership for it. This indicated a near-sighted view of the future implementation of planning policy, clearly it would not be workable to have each Local Planning Authority operating its own local tools to support sustainable

development.

Public Participation in the Public Inquiry

The Public Inquiry process was intended to be easily accessible to members of the public wishing to present evidence. Those individuals appearing before the Planning Inspector said that their training with the Willowbrook Centre had been useful, though several felt they were well used to and skilled in presenting such arguments as they regularly took a spokesperson role for the local community. The Planning Inspector himself wanted to ensure the fullest public participation, and planning officers commented that he made it clear that:

> "one of the first things he wanted to do was to achieve consensus, he wanted to know why can't we do what the objector is asking us to do? In some senses he does very much want as many of those who took the trouble to participate in the Public Inquiry to receive satisfaction" (Interview 40).

Individual members of the public appearing in front of the Planning Inspector felt that the process was well explained and that planning officers, whilst 'serious' or 'official', were also 'friendly and welcoming'. However, they felt intimidated by the presence of other stakeholder groups, in particular the developers who were:

> "suited and booted, they looked like lawyers to me and they all stood around together, chatting with the planning officers in a very familiar manner ... we couldn't afford lawyers to represent our views" (Interview 33).

The presence of these business stakeholder groups coloured the way planning officers were viewed and prompted feelings of insecurity, in spite of the effective support provision for the local community. Officers acknowledged that there was a risk to sustainable development, in particular from the strong voice of the local developers, all of whom had expert legal counsel and expert witnesses and were opposed to many of the policies supporting sustainable development.

The Planning Inspector's Report

| July 1995 UDP | April 2000 Env. Review | May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult. | Nov 2002 First draft UDP | March 2004 Second draft UDP | 2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry | April - June 2005 Public Inquiry | March 2006 Inspectors Report | Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted |
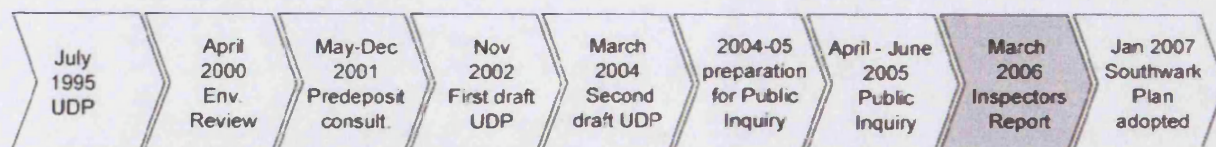
Published in March 2006, the Planning Inspector's report contained his conclusions and recommendations, with his reasoning for each. The LBS made the report publicly available and planning officers considered what action to take on each of the recommendations. They made recommendations to the Executive asking them to agree the modifications to the plan. These modifications also underwent a sustainability appraisal carried out by the PPRU manager that showed no negative impact. However, not all of the Planning Inspector's recommendations were to be agreed. There were nine outstanding issues:

> "We have won some and lost some, some we have lost we might still challenge if we can demonstrate that the Inspector has not taken fully into account all the matters" (Interview 36).

Of these nine issues, two are discussed below because of their implications for sustainable development. Both represented continuing battles, one over the issue of density, the second over the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. Both gave a lens to examine the relationship between the regional, local and ward level. The density issue in particular highlighted the participatory aspects of the plan making process. The Sustainability Checklist for Developers revealed the interplay between different time frames for policy development, the potential for creativity and innovation at the local level; and discretion over interpretations of sustainable development.

Sustainable Development and Density

The new UDP revised the boundary zones for density within the borough to meet Government guidance as shown in Figure 11 below. However, the pressure for urban growth was a continuing area of conflict and struck a significant chord in the Rotherhithe/Canada Water area. The UDP density zones covered high density, urban density and suburban density. Having historically been classified as
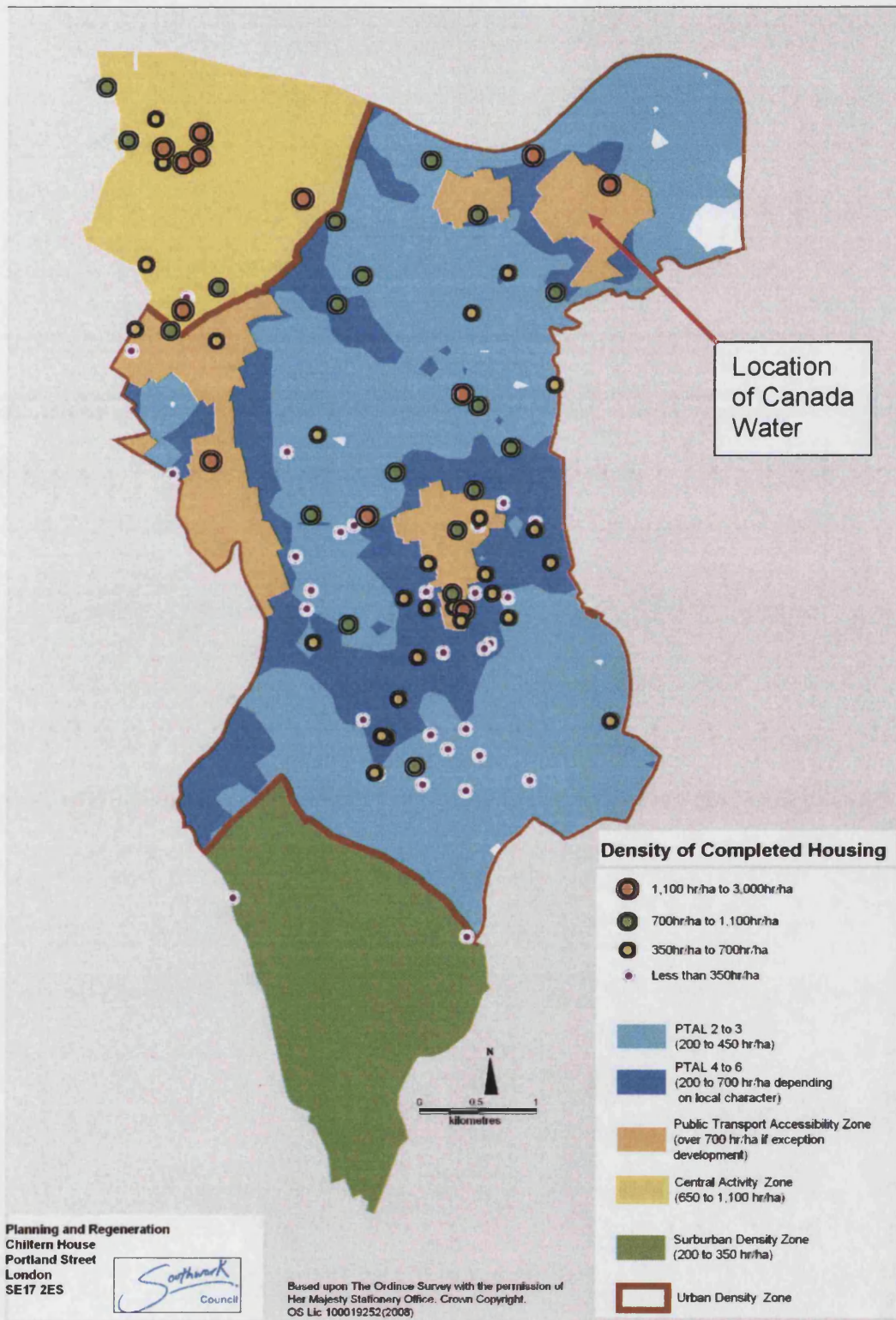
Figure 11: Density of Completed Housing in London Borough of Southwark. Source: LBS

suburban, Canada Water was now allocated a high density zoning in the UDP plan making process, as it met national and regional criteria for development potential with good infrastructure and transport links.   The local community protested vociferously and worked closely with local Councillors to oppose this new zoning and the development they thought was sure to follow. Whilst the local community wanted to safeguard their area, planning officers saw this as:

> "a classic example of NIMBY[1]ism and whatever the decision, it will result in considerable impact on the sustainable development of London as a whole. Public understanding of these issues is severely limited" (Interview 40).

Giving political support to what the local community wanted was undoubtedly a vote winner, yet it also raised questions about understanding of sustainable development amongst local Councillors. The local Councillors placed the member of the Executive with responsibility for the UDP under increasing pressure to take into account the concerns of local people and their desire to maintain a suburban zoning.   Planning officers made it clear in their recommendations to the LBS Executive that the zoning issue was not merely a local issue but would have implications for the borough as a whole in meeting housing needs and on London too.   They pointed out that demands for suburban zoning in this central London location contravened both national and regional guidance on density. They flagged up the GLA *Guide on Residential Urban Density* showing examples of different density levels.   This guide also demonstrated the potential advantages of higher urban density levels.   However, local Councillors responded by saying:

> "The London Plan means high density and that is not what local people want. Mayor Livingstone has attacked the Liberal Democrat Councils in Southwark many times and this is just another example.   It is not in the name of sustainable development it is in the name of politics" (Interview 8).

The political pressures lead the LBS Executive to agree to the area remaining suburban, knowing that it contravened regional and national planning guidance and effectively postponing the issue for future debate. Officers commented that:

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[1] Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY)

"Political decisions had clearly been taken prior to our official meeting 'behind closed doors', possibly so that its not the local Councillors that look like the baddies in the matter, but the regional and national level ... which does not give a clear message to the electorate and is not in fact in their best interests long term" (Interview 36).

Officer advice on urban density and sustainable development was noted but not applied, the Executive chose to postpone debate until the Public Inquiry where it was hoped the Planning Inspector would take a decision. This approach avoided controversy at the local level, removing the burden from the Executive, but resulting in vilifying the national and regional density allocations. It is an example of the drawback of politicising sustainable development, as short-term re-election strategies often run counter to the long term goal of sustainable development.

Planning officers saw the density issue as a missed opportunity to resolve conflict through communication by expanding understanding of sustainable development amongst both the local community and local Councillors. They were aware of:

"Public suspicions of the Council and officers because they don't trust the delivery of our promises" (Interview 11).

Planning officers felt there had been no opportunity to address the lack of knowledge about the broader implications of local strategies, and wondered:

"do they [the local community and local Councillors] understand and disagree – is it really a case of NIMBYism, or do people not understand and oppose any change regardless. If objectors can perceive the problem that is one thing but if they actually do not know what it means, just that it is something different and they do not want change ... that's another thing. Increased density could provide better services but local people equate more people with more problems not better services" (Interview 31).

Planning officers wanted the opportunity to present the policy, with full explanations and perhaps the:

"use of different terminology, a different approach or treatment, with explanations" (Interview 30).

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They wanted to understand objector knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, understanding of sustainable development, why they took action and how they convinced local Councillors of their argument, outside the need for re-election:

> "Would a compromise, balance or flexible mix be appropriate? We are open to negotiation, deliberation, and opportunities for discussion" (Interview 31).

But the issue was presented as a black and white one, with no room for dialogue:

> "Some groups do trust us and do listen and enter into dialogue with us, but most remain in their entrenched positions unwilling to enter into discussions, this is mainly due to an original lack of understanding and negative past experience" (Interview22).

Officers realised that they were responsible for setting this context and admitted to learning a lesson from this, but time pressures meant it was unlikely that they could have done anything differently. They understood that the new approach they now outlined required a willingness and capacity to learn and to trust which was no longer present as was more often the case:

> "And the Plan demonstrates that we are continuing to fight for what we believe is best for residents. We have strong views on how much of the borough should remain 'suburban' rather than getting re-classified as more densely developed 'urban' areas, and we have stood firm despite great pressure from the Mayor of London. We are confident that the Secretary of State will support our views when the UDP gets final approval" (Councillor Richard Thomas, Executive member for Regeneration).

In March 2007, the Secretary of State directed LBS not to adopt the *Southwark Plan* unless the policy on density zones for Rotherhithe, East Dulwich, Nunhead and Herne Hill be modified to urban designation (rather than suburban). The direction stated that development in Public Transport Accessibility zones:

> "may exceed 700 hr/h if the development provides .... a significant contribution to environmental improvements in the area particularly relating to public transport, cycle, pedestrian movement, safety and security and public realm improvements" (Secretary of State 2007).

This would allow the borough to meet its housing needs. The LBS responded by introducing a medium density range, including the need to relate density ranges to location, setting and public transport accessibility.

Following the Public Inquiry

July 1995 UDP	April 2000 Env. Review	May-Dec 2001 Predeposit consult.	Nov 2002 First draft UDP	March 2004 Second draft UDP	2004-05 preparation for Public Inquiry	April - June 2005 Public Inquiry	March 2006 Inspectors Report	Jan 2007 Southwark Plan adopted
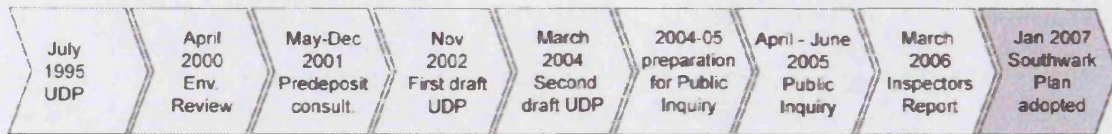
The research concluded at this point. Apart from the ongoing wrangling over the outstanding nine issues at the time of writing, planning officers were satisfied that they had achieved their goals of producing a plan for the sustainable development of the borough. However, sustainable development played a big role in the two most important issues of urban density and the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. Nonetheless, the Planning Inspector stated that:

> "Overall, in the London Borough of Southwark Public Inquiry, I was well satisfied that it was a sustainable plan and wrote my report to that effect" (Interview 46).

LBS officially recognised the contribution of the UDP to sustainable development and public participation in their press releases and public statements:

> "Southwark's ambitious vision for sustainable development ... welcomed by the Council ... . The Plan has been drafted in painstaking detail over the last seven years, including long periods of consultation with residents, the GLA and other agencies" (LBS Jan 2007).

The Executive Member for Regeneration commented that:

> "The Southwark Plan is one of the most important tools that the Council has .... It's about developing growth ... more specifically, this growth must be sustainable - ensuring that the environment and quality of life do not suffer, but are protected and improved along the way. Our community also has a responsibility to do something about climate change and the use of transport and energy that are its main causes" (Councillor Richard Thomas, Executive member for Regeneration).

LBS announced its intention to adopt the UDP in July 2007. In the meantime, planning officers tracked the new Local Development Framework requirements and started preparations for the transition to this system. Although the original intention was always to merge sustainability indicators with the annual UDP monitoring, officers felt that the absence of sustainable development content in these was disappointing. Their attitude can be contributed to their previous personal involvement, experience and exposure to sustainability indicators in the LITMUS and PASTILLE projects and their commitment to sustainable development. However, there were no plans to supplement the annual monitoring indicators in this respect. This decision was coloured by their experience with the Sustainability Checklist for Developers into which they put considerable time and effort beyond the formal requirements and still awaited confirmation that they would be allowed to use it. The difficulty was in justifying officer time to deliver something which is not a statutory requirement even though it is intended to improve the effectiveness of the delivery of sustainable development which is a statutory requirement. There remained a continuing emphasis on public participation. Indicators to measure satisfaction with the participatory aspects of the plan making process were added to the national annual monitoring indicators for the UDP. The implications of a continued public participation focus when the public remain uneducated about many of they key issues and motivated by short term local quality of life gain are discussed in Chapter Eight.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes the story of the planning policy formulation process for the UDP in LBS. It has examined LBS efforts to bring sustainable development to the fore of decision making in the form of the first *Sustainability Policy*, yet activities did not become mainstreamed and remained confined to key staff and areas of work. The preparations for the UDP Public Inquiry included the *Sustainability SPG* but the timing of this document limited its capacity to contribute in any way. On the other hand, the *Sustainability Topic Paper* was well read and well received. It could perhaps have been made available earlier in the process or even be used again in future to communicate the rationale for pursuing sustainable development. Disappointingly, after a strong start, sustainability indicators did not appear again

and there are no plans for these to play a role in the future of the UDP.

The Public Inquiry itself provided three key and controversial objections related to the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP. Firstly, the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, which LBS would not abandon in spite of the Planning Inspector and Secretary of State's directions. It represented the creative and innovative approach of local planning officers who felt they receive limited support from existing legislation for the implementation of sustainable development and a lack of responsiveness from Government to provide the additional support they requested. Secondly, the sustainability appraisal of the plan making process was questioned at Public Inquiry, yet officers had followed procedures. Even if they had identified the early opportunity to implement a full sustainability appraisal, the guidelines and methodology had not been decided at the national level. By the time it became a statutory obligation (in July 2005) it was not helpful to the late stage of the process. The objection itself, whilst in keeping with a strong interpretation of sustainable development, showed a limited understanding of the flagship managerial policy instrument of sustainability appraisal which requires a long lead time. Finally, the density issue exemplified the Not in My Back Yard (NIMBY) attitude not only of local residents, but also of local Councillors who were unwilling to jeopardise their votes and in the view of the research were also unaware of or in disagreement with the reality of spatial planning for sustainable development.

Chapter Eight now brings together the findings presented in these four case study chapters to discuss how the dimensions of institutions contribute to the interpretations and incorporation of sustainable development in the planning policy formulation process.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
REFLECTIONS ON THE INCORPORATION OF SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLAN MAKING PROCESS

Introduction and Overview

This chapter draws the research findings presented in the previous chapters into discussions to respond to the research questions focused around the three selected dimensions of institutions: the formal and informal; the stable and dynamic; and the strategic and norm-governed. The participatory and managerial aspects of the case study are also identified. This paints a rich picture of how the informal, the dynamic and the norm-governed dimensions of institutions influence the incorporation of sustainable development in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for the London Borough of Southwark (LBS). These informal dimensions of institutions are often overlooked in the literature and the research proposes that acknowledging the powerful impact of the informal, norm-governed and dynamic dimensions of institutions gives a more complete description of how sustainable development is or is not incorporated into planning policy. This is crucial, as the key findings of the research show that the informal dimensions of institutions can become formalised over time, and such formalisation leads to incremental changes, resulting in institutional evolution. Therefore knowing the informal dimensions of institutions allows the possibility of effective institutional design and transformation for sustainable development.

The first research question set out to discover what the interpretation of sustainable development was in the planning policy documents and in the planning policy formulation process itself. The overall findings of the research identified two main interpretations of sustainable development in LBS. The most predominant related to the espousal of a weak interpretation of sustainable development. This was evident in a compliance approach to the incorporation of sustainable development in the planning policy formulation process, where the formal, strategic and stable dimensions of institutions were more evident. In contrast, where the informal, norm-governed and dynamic dimensions of institutions were more visible, this was related to a creative or entrepreneurial approach to the incorporation of sustainable development and

the espousal of a strong interpretation of sustainable development. These two interpretations are discussed in detail.

The second research question explored how the plan making process was influenced by the three dimensions of institutions. The research proposes the need for institutions to identify their 'institutional disposition'. This is made up of both the formal and informal, the stable and the dynamic; and the strategic and norm-governed basis of decisions. Whilst the formal, strategic and stable dimensions of institutions are evident and familiar, little is generally known or acknowledged about the informal, norm-governed and dynamic dimensions of institutions which was the focus of the third research question in particular. The research concludes that knowledge of these informal dimensions may be a prerequisite for intentional institutional transformation in support of sustainable development. The research suggests that intentional institutional transformation is a significant part of the paradigm shift that so many academics and commentators state is necessary for the concept of sustainable development to be implemented. Institutional evolution is seen to be taking place in LBS but the research suggests that it is based in the informal dimensions of the institution and that this is too slow, too uncertain and too random for the urgency of sustainable development. As understanding of sustainable development increases so does the tension between existing ways of thinking and ways of doing and the need for institutional transformation. In LBS this meant that new ways of thinking and new ways of doing were rejected in the formal process and therefore were channelled into informal activities. At worse this could be seen as a misuse of resources. More importantly what it points to is a failure of the formal dimension of policy making to engage in institutional learning and direct the time and energy of its staff into strengthening its policies and procedures. Whilst it may not be the case that all staff are able and willing to engage in this level of policy development, those that are do not find an outlet for their skills in the formal processes of planning to benefit the institution.

Institutional learning in the policy formulation of the development plan required not only technical capacities for content, review, formulation and monitoring but also additional capacities, the most challenging of which appeared to be inter-

departmental or joint coordination and action. The UDP was supposed to interlink with other Council policies to support their spatial dimension. As such, there was the need for interdepartmental coordination and joint action at content, review, formulation, implementation and monitoring stages. Ideally, the UDP could have acted as a vehicle to assist the achievement of other policy objectives, for instance the allocation of land for schools, retail, housing and transport. In turn, other policies could have supported spatial development as outlined in the UDP. This was challenged by historical departmentalism as well as contemporary differing timescales for different areas of policy (the UDP worked on a ten-year cycle and the other Council policies ranged from annual to every five years). Although local authorities were charged with ensuring these cross-departmental linkages, in practice, the capacity for doing so was limited. For the most part, the Planning Policy Research Unit (PPRU) in LBS remained separate from the other Council departments with only a few formal mechanisms for exchanging information or regularly taking joint action.

The research concludes that the value of exploring the informal, norm-governed and dynamic dimensions of institutions lies in the clarification it provides about the constraining and enabling factors for the incorporation of sustainable development. This allows a greater understanding of reality and of the possibility of designing institutional learning and transformation. This is flagged up for further research.

Research Summary

To summarise the preceding chapters, Chapter One outlined the rationale for researching how sustainable development was incorporated in local planning policy formulation. The relatively new concept of sustainable development and its 'contested' nature has resulted in many different interpretations of the term and these were explored in policy statements on sustainable development according to Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretation. The research focused on four key aspects of the ladder: civil society, seen in participatory governance; the role of institutions; policy and sectoral integration and policy instruments and tools seen in managerial governance. The UK local government response to the new policy goal of sustainable development was tracked from *Local Agenda 21* (LA21) Action Plans in the early 1990s to the *Community Strategy* and *Local*

Strategic Partnership (LSP) of the early millennium. The land use planning system and the development plan itself have been identified by Government as vehicles for delivering sustainable development. Accordingly, Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) documents were reviewed for their input to this process. The policy imperative for sustainable development conflicted with existing ways of thinking and ways of doing in the case study, identified in the outer circle of Figure 12 below. This conflict increased the tendency to use a weak interpretation of sustainable development to make it fit within existing policy.
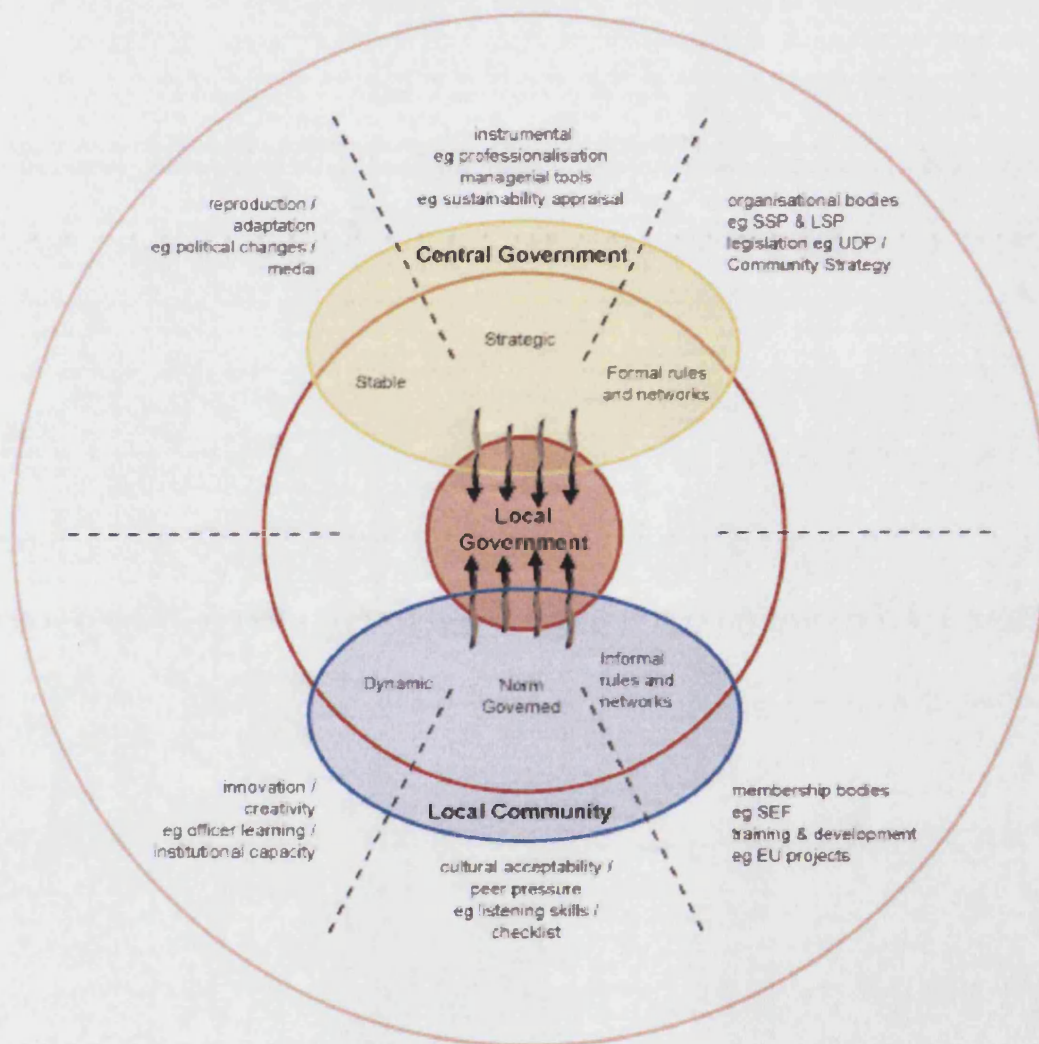
Figure 12: Dimensions of Institutions and Ways of Thinking and Ways of Doing in LBS

Chapter Two identified the importance of looking at the 'ways of thinking and ways of doing' within local planning policy formulation and using New Institutionalism (NI) took as a focus three key dimensions of institutions: the formal and informal, the strategic and norm-governed and the stable and dynamic (seen in the inner circle in Figure 12 above). The NI framework

allowed the range of activities in the case study to be explored fully which included the pressures from both central Government, usually felt in the formal dimensions of institutions as well as the pressures from the local community, usually experienced through the informal dimensions of institutions.

Methodologies suited to the case study were identified in Chapter Three in the form of interviews, observations and documentary content analysis. It is the findings of these methodologies which are discussed next in relation to the three dimensions of institutions. Chapter Four to Chapter Seven took a chronological narrative approach and told the story of the local planning policy formulation process in LBS. This started with the Environmental Review in 2000 around the same time as a flurry of work on sustainable development discussed in Chapter Four. It continued through the public participation phases of the UDP outlined in Chapter Five to the drafting of the UDP and sustainability appraisal explored in Chapter Six. Finally, in Chapter Seven the Public Inquiry and Planning Inspector's Report was discussed along with two key issues, those of density and the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. Discussions follow on the overarching themes present in the case study from which the conclusions and recommendations are drawn. The research findings are summarised and discussed below starting with a discussion of the influence of the formal dimensions of institutions grouped together with the strategic dimension and relevant managerial aspects of the LBS case study. This is followed by a discussion on the influence of the informal dimensions of institutions grouped with norm-governed basis for decisions. The role of the participatory aspects of the LBS case study follows and these discussions allow an assessment of the influence of the stable and dynamic as found in the LBS case study.

The Influence of the Formal, the Strategic and Managerial Governance on the Plan Making Process

The formal organisational structures and planning procedures formed a major part of the strategic basis for action on sustainable development. They also covered the influence of managerial governance in the shape of new formal management tools. The research identified the influence of formal, top-down policy and guidance, as well as formal procedures and routines. From the starting point of the research, the impact on LBS of formal legislation for

sustainable development was clear and this created a strategic imperative for action to demonstrate compliance and avoid sanctions. Chapter Four highlighted the formal organisational arrangements and the formal procedures in place at the start of the review process of the existing UDP. Later observations of the formal meetings revealed the approach to the formal procedures that ensured compliance with formal statutory requirements. It traced how LBS formed a new department the Environmental Development and Education Unit (EDEU), to ensure compliance with national legislation on sustainable development. The team was charged with the delivery of the LBS *LA21 Action Plan*, known as *Essence,* and worked on environmental issues more broadly, but was disbanded on achieving the launch of *Essence* in 1999. The creation of a new and separate team of experts with specific responsibility for the new policy goal of sustainable development meant that knowledge and expertise was departmentalised in a discrete and time-limited section of the local authority. Officers were charged with responding to formal statutory requirements. In addition, the EDEU organised a series of high-profile events with celebrity speakers. It was this high-profile, positive marketing image of the sustainable development activities that received the greatest formal response from the local authority, as the activities painted those involved (Councillors and officers), and the local authority more generally, in a very positive and proactive light. There was no formal directive for this approach though, but the events made sustainable development politically attractive and salient for local Councillors, promoting them in a positive media light along with the planning officers responsible.

The *LA21 Action Plan* provided the official hub or focus for action on sustainable development and was made up of a committed and knowledgeable team of officers in the EDEU. It created a formal LA21 stakeholder group, the Sustainable Southwark Partnership (SSP) to fulfil the participatory requirements of the work. The SSP pulled together the mainly informal individuals and groups with an interest in sustainable development and was welcomed and embraced by all partners. However, it was a victim of the closure of the EDEU and this created bitterness amongst some of the partners who felt they had been used and patronised. The disbanding of the EDEU was formally referred to as mainstreaming of sustainable development across the LBS and two key

officers indeed joined another Council department - the Planning Policy and Research Unit (PPRU) charged with the UDP. However, the *Essence* sustainability indicators were never reported upon and were not incorporated into the UDP plan making process. There were no formal objectives or monitoring mechanisms put in place for mainstreaming sustainable development and future events can only be recorded by reference to the informal discussed shortly. This episode demonstrated the limited understanding of sustainable development by the senior management and local Councillors. They decided the creation and remit of the EDEU on the basis of compliance alone and stemmed the potential of the EDEU officers to bring about lasting change for sustainable development.

In line with planning guidance to incorporate sustainable development, the PPRU undertook an Environmental Review of the existing UDP. A new officer was allocated the task in a discrete package of temporary work, echoing the compliance approach outlined above. It was interesting to note the absence of reaction to the damning, if not unexpected, results of the Environmental Review of the 1995 Unitary Development reviewed in Chapter Four. The results were harsh, showing that only one aspect of the 1995 UDP, the Environmental Review itself, assisted the local authority to respond to sustainable development. This absence of a reaction may have been due to the lack of formal knowledge (by the majority of officers and Councillors alike) within the local authority on the implications of sustainable development for the future of local government. It also indicated an absence of Government guidance on appropriate monitoring and evaluation of planning policy for the delivery of sustainable development. This lack of knowledge was backed up by findings from interviews with local Councillors at the time who had a low understanding and gave no or low priority to sustainable development. It was also reflected in the departmentalised, time-limited approach to sustainable development, contradictory to the definition of the term and the spirit of sustainable development.

The formal activities on sustainable development at the start of the plan making process were considered to be:

"fairly uncontroversial, officers were following government guidance, the local authority was showing compliance, local councillors were made aware of the necessity for action and were not unsupportive" (Interview 30).

Nonetheless, this 'trophy' or 'tick box' approach' to sustainable development risked a contradictory and short-term approach to sustainable development particularly visible in the participatory aspects of the plan making process. Formal government guidance for public participation was very much embraced by LBS. The reasons are not entirely clear but probably owe much to the regeneration projects which had for a number of years required community involvement activities. Chapter Five traced the sometimes difficult historical background of conflicting Council and community relations. High-profile national media stories of the failings of the local authority may have contributed to this conflict[1]. However, whilst the official approach to public participation resulted in an ongoing flurry of events, surveys and meetings with the local community, this indicated an attachment to demonstrating the number of activities rather than securing high-quality participation with meaningful results. It was not uncommon that inadequate feedback or follow-up to these public participation activities contributed to participation fatigue. The time pressures of the various activities in the plan making process for the UDP (and the parallel but separate participation events for the drafting of the *Community Strategy*), meant that officers were often following the letter rather than the spirit of public participation. These pressures encouraged a 'tick box' approach to participation. However this was tempered by the informal culture amongst the planning officers who wanted effective and meaningful dialogue, as their experience was improved and the results more satisfying. This is discussed later under participatory governance as an example of formal guidance being improved on the basis of norms and values. Unfortunately, the imperative to meet formal participatory requirements resulted in missed opportunities to link with other departments working with local communities and building capacity for long-term public participation.

Throughout the various drafts of the planning policy formulation process detailed in Chapter Six, compliance with formal procedures for plan making was

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[1] The death of Damilola Taylor in Peckham, for example.

a key influence. This included the plan being in compliance with national and regional legislation. With the introduction of a regional tier of government, the *London Plan* was seen as a helpful tool in supporting the incorporation of sustainable development and was welcomed. The Mayor's sustainable development policies were highly regarded because of the respect accorded their content and their authors, who had consulted widely with planning (and other local authority) officers. Planning officers felt that the formal regional policies reflected reality (the reality of planning officers) and had taken on board officer ideas as a result of the meaningful participation events. It was felt that the *London Plan* had been written by people who had a good understanding of sustainable development and of the need for change, and who were not bound by existing restrictions. Officer comments in this respect were reflective of local community comments on what they wanted to see as a result of public participation on the UDP. This raised an important issue about the effectiveness of public participation discussed under the informal dimensions next.

The most overtly formal and visible aspect of the plan making process was undoubtedly the Public Inquiry, outlined in Chapter Seven. Attention to this formal aspect started well in advance during the preparation phase and extended to the Planning Inspector's Report and reactions to it several months later. The necessity for the planning officers to respond to formal external scrutiny at Public Inquiry meant that they had to be trained and prepared and therefore they undertook an intensive week-long workshop. They underwent a learning experience similar to that of some members of the local community in learning how to engage in the plan making process at earlier stages. However, the comparison was not formally made, and the opportunity to identify with such feelings to improve similar learning experiences was overlooked.

Throughout the plan making process the formal requirement for transparency and public participation was reflected in the use of the website to post the latest versions of the UDP. This facility evolved from being non-existent at the start of the research, to hosting a fully comprehensive and up-to-the-minute account of the plan making process. The selection of a management tool in the form of a Geographic Information System (GIS) was also not based on formal

requirements and was reflective of the experience and knowledge of individuals in the PPRU. Every objection and resulting interaction was recorded and tracked. The technology enhanced participatory governance by recording objections and presenting information clearly, allowing the public to easily track the process.

The impact of distinctive New Public Management (NPM) instruments was seen in the introduction of managerial governance tools such as sustainability appraisal and sustainability indicators. When they were initially developed, this placed LBS at the head of the field with a handful of other European local authorities testing and developing sustainability indicators. The *London Plan* also placed formal requirements for managerial tools, in particular influencing the Sustainability Checklist for Developers created by officers and the ongoing sustainability appraisals. For the most part however, managerial tools did not have sustainable development as a focus. This resulted in a continuing emphasis on the process of public participation, rather than contributing to the incorporation of sustainable development.

The Influence of the Informal, Norms and Participatory Governance on the Plan Making Process

The case study findings demonstrated that the formal factors influencing the planning policy process stimulated expected and intended responses as outlined above. However, there were also unintended responses that had an impact on the incorporation of sustainable development and led to a host of activities beyond the formal. These informal aspects were more generally based on norm-governed action and participatory activities. The response to formal imperatives for action was coloured by the informal rules and networks, routines, and practices present in the local authority. Individual council officers were therefore active players in the power relations shaping the incorporation of sustainable development, both in an active way – for example by developing the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, but also in a passive way – for example when officers from other departments followed public consultation guidance to the letter, knowing that the results would be limited.

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The informal approach and attitudes to implementing formal policy differed significantly between central policy and regional policy. The former was seen as somewhat limiting, onerous and missing the possibility of feedback or influence in the future. On the other hand, regional policy was considered to be reflective of the values and reality of officers. It provided support to them in communicating sometimes controversial issues and allowed for creativity and the opportunity for dialogue. The density issue was one such example, involving severe political differences. The density policy was undesirable at the local level (high density), but was required for sustainable development and was validated by regional guidance. This provided support to planning officers. Whereas locally, local Councillors supported the popular option (low density) and ignored officer advice. Central Government policy also supported high density, but it was not considered to be as useful to officers as the support of the regional policy, nor did local Councillors seem to be aware of it, whereas they disagreed strongly with the regional policy. Another example was the development by the Mayor's office of a Sustainability Checklist for Developers (GLA 2005) which influenced LBS planning officers to develop their own Sustainability Checklist for Developers in the absence of central Government guidance. Yet, when such guidance did finally emerge, central Government transposition of the EU requirement for SEA was seen as long-awaited, disappointing in strength and introducing more bureaucratic procedures for planning officers than potential to alter development patterns to a more sustainable standard. This led officers to feel insufficiently supported by Government and to rely on their own capacity to create "a meaningful response" (Interview 5) to the formal requirements – the Sustainability Checklist for Developers being the key channel of this innovation.

In a similar way, officers recognised that following formal guidance on public participation was more than a 'tick box' exercise and they made attempts to make the activities meaningful to the local community. Officers were able to see that by not fully engaging with community assumptions, public participation events were less effective. In spite of being constrained by formal requirements (in the shape of time and resources) officers based their work on their own values; they were also creative and innovative in engaging with the local community. This was a positive example of where norms and values impacted

formal guidance.   Learning from this informal aspect of the case study could greatly improve future public participation if the lesson is shared and formalised.

Whilst it was clear that the formal dominated activities, its often restrictive impact on the informal was also evident.   This was particularly striking in the participatory efforts specifically around sustainable development, where the loose groupings of environmentalists and other groups working in this area were gathered together under the auspices of the formal Sustainable Southwark Partnership (SSP) and engaged in activities to contribute to the LA21 *Action Plan*.   However, the SSP was disbanded almost as soon as it was officially launched in 1999.   Some members of the SSP knew the date of the closure of the EDEU and the disbanding of the SSP at the launch evening, and expressed their discontent at this situation.   The closure had the effect of forcing members of the SSP to retreat once more to either the status of informal network or to join the semi-formal Southwark Environment Forum (SEF).   It was the subject of much conflict, disappointment and derision in the local authority.   Those who joined the SEF faced a long journey to re-establish formal links with the local authority, and it was only in late 2006 that the Southwark Environment Forum finalised its constitution and became a member of the LSP.   Although it was a latecomer to the LSP table, three years after its establishment the SEF are now finally part of a formal dialogue on sustainable development.   Somewhat ironically, after so much time without a sustainability focus, the LSP launched their Sustainability Sub-group at the same time, and SEF members were also planning to contribute to this.   Informal sustainable development networks, such as the local community groups and activist residents viewed the sustainable development efforts of planning officers with some hope but in many cases this was accompanied by resignation and frustration: for so long, so many opportunities had been missed and so many mistakes had been made.   This focus on the historical and the upset that had been engendered by poor past relations was a heavy influence on contemporary events.

Amongst planning officers, sustainable development was not only seen as a challenging aspect of their work, but also as the opportunity for expanding career paths.   The professionalisation of sustainable development was exemplified by the 'head-hunting' and career advancement of several of the

pioneering officers in the early days of sustainable development activities in LBS. This followed high-profile marketing or awareness-raising for sustainable development that put LBS in the spotlight. This was an example of how the informal was also strategic – the informal professionalisation of sustainable development equally served instrumental and strategic ends and therefore provided career development. In the absence of any collective acknowledgement for working in a new policy field, and in the face of accompanying frustrations, officers turned to a personal and strategic basis for job satisfaction. This explained the focus on high-profile events which provided an awareness-raising tool, a popular catch for local buy-in (in particular from Councillors), and for personal reputation and career progression.

A major factor in the plan making process was the role of the planning officers and their norms which influenced their actions in response to the formal requirements of their role. Whilst these clearly varied from individual to individual, there were overarching characteristics. The majority of the officers were young and had therefore studied an element of sustainable development in their formal education. They were keen to undertake continuing professional development courses (through the RTPI) or accredited part-time academic studies, which gradually came to include sustainable development. Another distinguishing factor was the mobility of many staff, predominantly from New Zealand and Australia, who were employed on a contract basis. This contributed to the understanding of sustainable development, as many of the overseas officers had a keen connection to the living world and wanted the built environment to have minimal impact on it. Ironically, many of these officers travelled widely in Europe and annually to their home countries, incurring a huge negative impact in terms of carbon emissions. This fact did not go uncommented on by some local environmental groups. It was also notable that whilst many officers were heavily involved in ensuring wide public participation in the plan making process, they were not active members of organisations in their own local community. Perhaps this reflected their temporary status in the UK, however membership of community organisations generally has dropped substantially in the UK over the last 40 years.

The researcher also became part of the informal networks of the planning team and local community alike. This was evident when the researcher was invited by LBS to contribute to the plan making process at several stages by conducting a sustainability appraisal, reporting on sustainability indicators, and making recommendations to improve participatory actions after observations. In the same way, local community groups asked the researcher for assistance in interpreting the existing UDP and how it would support sustainable development to argue their case in two instances: one for the safeguarding of play facilities selected for decant housing (which was unsuccessful); and the other, which was successful, to safeguard the river boat community near Tower Bridge. The local community groups saw formal credibility in the informal association with a researcher. The methodological implications of this meant that the researcher influenced the case study but it allowed the building of rapport and access to in-depth observation. In addition, it was a clear signal that there was a lack of support for capacity building in this area. Both the local authority and the local community required support to understand the sustainable development aspects of the plan making process and this was not readily available in the absence of the researcher. This was a key issue, as without access to this support, understanding of sustainable development was limited.

Chapter Seven discussed the final stages of the plan making process highlighting how it responded to detailed formal requirements. Even at this very formal stage of the plan making process, the informal networks were in evidence. Overall the informal sustainable development networks were pleased with the incorporation of sustainable development in the plan:

> "Although it is still far from where we want and need to be, it is a huge improvement on the 1995 UDP in a local authority where very little has changed until recently [referring to the Lib Dem 2003 takeover]" (Interview 40).

The Role of Participatory Governance in the Plan Making Process

Because of the emphasis on participation in LBS and in the plan making process, the theme of participatory governance is discussed in some detail. The reason for such a focus on participation in LBS was not easily distinguished as there were no formal requirements for such an intensive focus. The informal

norms and values of the local officers allowed for a strong interpretation of public participation requirements and there was acceptance of this throughout the local authority. This is another example of how the institutional disposition was revealed. However, it is clear that all political parties relied heavily on their local communities for support and that the local media were particularly interested in this aspect of local authority/local community relations. In addition, with much regeneration funding being drawn into the area, the local authority had conducted many public participation exercises. The emphasis on public participation can therefore be said to be a very strong norm within the culture of LBS. The degree of public involvement has been referred to throughout this thesis as participation, according to Glasson et al's (1994) classification (outlined in Chapter Four). LBS not only provided information to local residents (the lowest degree of public involvement) but allowed the opportunity for ideas and opinions to be received; Glasson et al (1994) refer to this as consultation. However, LBS took a more active role and encouraged the local community to work with them to formulate opinions together and this is referred to as *participation*. Public participation was evident from the first public involvement activities of the LA21 process.

The early focus of LBS on LA21 which emphasised the need for public participation and the dedicated team to work on this in EDEU influenced the participatory activities of the plan making process. It set a good grounding for future work and two of the officers involved in the LA21 activities were later transferred to work on the UDP and brought this experience with them. In addition, the involvement of planning officers in the EU funded LITMUS and PASTILLE projects provided extra funded staff dedicated to running public participation events on urban sustainability issues. This was accompanied by buy-in from senior managers to work in this area, because of the fully-funded additional staffing provision. Officers also experienced the positive effects of effective public participation and enjoyed their interactions with the local community, forming valuable networks.

The formal participatory requirements of the UDP plan making process could be clearly distinguished by two separate phases. The first phase lasted a year at the start of the plan making process in 2001, and consisted of dedicated

outreach work, awareness raising, discussion and dialogue. This was discussed in Chapter Five and there were significant informal outcomes of this process. Of particular interest was the officer learning observed by the researcher to allow effective and mutually satisfactory participation, heavily influenced by individual norms and values and going beyond the formal requirements. This involved planning officers establishing a rapport with the community group by introducing themselves and their role in the Council. This was then expanded to introduce the role of planning in the lives of these people and groups. Explaining or clarifying the role of planning allowed community groups and individuals to contribute to the UDP. The research noted that the first phase of participation activities made use of many informal practices (described below) and was fully inclusive and open to all. Stakeholders were members of the local community and were supported according to their needs to understand the discussions, the impact of the UDP on their lives and how they were able to shape the UDP. Their contributions were received by whatever method they chose, be it over a conversation at a local community meeting, by phone, in person at Council offices, or by written means.

The second phase started after the launch of the first draft for deposit UDP in 2002 and was in direct response to objections to it. This continued for the remainder of the plan making process. In contrast, the second phase was a formalised process with little flexibility and whilst support to object was made available, the stakeholder group in this phase was almost totally made up of 'the usual suspects' or those with knowledge, confidence or resources to access the formal system of objection. The 'uneven playing field' came into effect in this case. Whilst some members of this stakeholder group did of course represent the views of wider networks of local community members, others did not appear to do so. This is a danger of the informal dimension and could be resolved by using formal checks and controls, in this case, to ensure the involvement of people beyond the usual suspects through capacity building and engagement exercises.

The emphasis of the formal plan making process turned from public participation to responding to objections, so there were few staff resources to continue the good rapport built with the local communities. This meant that

despite having built an effective rapport over a period of time, pressure of work forced officers to revert to following formal guidance to the letter. Unfortunately the lack of internal coordination and understanding of the role of the UDP (existing or potential) meant that this gap was not filled. However, if the community development team at LBS had, for instance, been involved in the UDP process, then the focus on UDP public participation could then have usefully moved to a more local focus. This would have been an example of joined-up thinking and doing, of cross-sectoral coordination, of acknowledging the experiences of officers (voiced in the LITMUS project) which found that negative past experiences of public involvement coloured future interactions. Had this happened, the hard-earned positive rapport would have continued in discussions over new issues with new departments and a new policy focus. As it was, members of the local community groups observed felt they had done their bit in contributing, were very pleased to see their views represented in the published documents but were left not knowing what would happen next. On their own they lacked the capacity to follow up on the UDP, which then became like so many other interactions with the local authority officers:

> "after a great start [public participation activities] fizzled out as a disappointing encounter ... disconnected to their real lives and the development of the borough" (Interview 35 local community group leader).

The public participation initiatives observed relied on traditional and known practices but the team also developed new approaches which consciously or otherwise empowered the participation of local residents, described in Chapter Five. Indeed, the LITMUS project concluded that local people know best the solutions to their problems and at the very least a sense of ownership is required for solutions to succeed. However, borough-wide and local participatory activities were dependent very much on the informal links with the local authority and the history of relations, some dating back many years. New scandals also had an impact on the participatory activities, such as local media[2] attention surrounding claims of racism or corruption.

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[2] Various articles relating to various claims involving different people and different circumstances but a recurring theme none-the-less in the Southwark News and South London Press.

Chapter Four highlighted many activities around sustainable development which were considered to be peripheral activities, such as involvement in the EU funded LITMUS and PASTILLE projects. The reasons for such involvement were not clear but seemed to depend upon the proactivity of a single officer in LBS with the role of European Officer and the attraction of match funding for regeneration projects. Whilst not part of essential business and not required by any statutory basis, the projects meant planning officers were motivated and alert to finding ways to effectively incorporate sustainable development in planning policy. They also benefited from being part of a network of like-minded pioneering officers tackling sustainable development at the local level and experiencing similar barriers in spite of different geographic locations.

This informal dimension could have been formalised through acknowledging the value and contribution of individuals beyond key business but there was no evidence of this in the case study. By taking a proactive role and linking directly with EU policy, planning officers shared local best practice because they were motivated by seeing a broader picture for their local activities. They were aware that in sharing local best practice they could contribute to a European process. Equally they were able to see similarities in spite of the very different geographical settings of other European colleagues. This was an important factor in continuing their informal activities within LBS. They were also able to relay back to their peers, the latest developments at the EU level which increasingly reflected their contributions. This direct contact at the EU level jumped the traditional policy cascade and presented both benefits and frustrations for sustainable development. This also reinforced the focus on the Sustainability Checklist for Developers as EU policy was slowly put in place then took time to transpose to the UK level, where in fact Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was interpreted as a sustainability appraisal.

The focus of the EDEU on high-profile events could be attributed to both the politicalisation of sustainable development as a vote winner for local Councillors and the professionalisation of sustainable development as a career development tool for officers. In addition, officers demonstrated a high degree of individual and group motivation, continuing to work on sustainable development in the face of little buy-in from senior management, limited

understanding and a lack of engagement beyond their hub. Officers who had expertise and a high level of awareness of the impact of decisions going against sustainable development were placed in a difficult position; their expert guidance was not listened to.

There were several instances of instrumental interests being served during informal aspects of the plan making process. This was first identified amongst the planning officers, where work on incorporating sustainable development was seen as a learning process with potential for career advancement. To some extent this was also visible in the way that officers cast a past agenda onto the local community during public participation exercises, basing policies on past data and surveys which gave the feeling of a fixed view of what the local community wanted, simplifying the task. However, this was hard to overcome as time pressures limited the extent of public participation and quantitative data from surveys was more compelling than anecdotal qualitative examples of local community views. What was more surprising was the absence of any attempt to educate the local community. Education was time dependent of course, but increasing understanding and empowering participation would have resulted in more meaningful policies. Officers expressed a need to educate and empower but this was based on their values rather than any formal or strategic basis and they commented on the absence of this need from any formal policy and the difficulty of feeding this back up the policy cascade in a timely fashion to make a difference operationally.

In a similar way, views on the education of the public on sustainable development reflected officer values. It was apparent that officers were uncertain about being able to educate; it was not a formal directive, though informally it was felt to be necessary. It was also a topic of heated debate as officers were reluctant to educate on sustainable development. They saw it as:

> "Imposing a new world view, having to admit that old one was flawed and we didn't see it [the negative impact] ... we did that too ... now you have to trust us on this one" (Interview 11).

They felt personally to blame for not being able to highlight earlier the problems of past planning decisions and this prevented them from being able to move on

and start to engage others in a discussion about sustainable development. This was exacerbated as they felt that the same thing was happening in the current plan making process, where officer advice was not heeded and not acted upon. Norms and values were also reflected in the evolving reference to sustainable development as *quality of life* and then as *liveability*. But these norms and values related to existing norms and values, what is sometimes referred to as the "inherited condition of modernity" (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994). This meant that the focus was on politically popular, short-term *quality of life* aspirations. Officers also indicated that they felt that the local community were being treated as political consumers with a huge range of choices and limited information on the true impacts.

The possibility for LBS to move to a stronger degree of public involvement in the form of a partnership approach (Glasson et al 1994) for shared decision making was seen as requiring new skills and structures, both institutionally and at the local community level. The need for education was readily identified by officers in particular on a broad range of sustainable development issues as well as how to access participatory opportunities. However, supplying this education was thought to be beyond the scope of their duties (and sometimes their abilities). They did not know whose role it should be and pointed to mainstream education and community development officers as potential providers, yet these officers are not formally trained in sustainable development or planning, so the perceived gap was not easily filled.

The Role of Stability and Change in the Plan Making Process

For the purposes of the research, as outlined in Chapter Two, stability in an institution can be said to equate to an absence of change; in contrast, a dynamic institution can be said to be a changing institution. An institution's capacity for learning and change is a crucial factor when incorporating the new policy goal of sustainable development into established planning policy (Evans et al 2005). It is commonly understood that change takes place in three ways: as an evolutionary process, as a result of an accident or by intention (Lowndes 2001 p1959). The research points to the need for more study on the role of intentional change through institutional design for sustainable development (Alexander 2004) and the case of LBS provides evidence for this assertion.

Whilst certain individuals involved in the plan making process took an 'on the fence' approach, the majority were open to actively learning and pushing ahead with creative responses to the challenge of sustainable development. These planning officers can be referred to as change agents (Osborne and Gaebler 1992), champions or wilful individuals (DEFRA).

The personal or individual championing of certain activities was based on individual norms and values and sometimes was undertaken despite strategic or instrumental gain in doing otherwise. Examples of this were the high-profile events of early sustainable development activities, the public participation skills developed to form the Key Issues Paper and Local Issues Papers and the focus on the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. In particular, planning officers demonstrated their capacity for learning when they honed their listening skills for the public participation events and acknowledged local community concerns based upon a 'them and us' view. They naturally adopted an approach that allowed the local community to express themselves and be listened to. Officers then had to take on the additional duty of following up and ensuring appropriate officers contacted the local community, because this was crucial to building up trust and securing effective ongoing relationships. However, this effort paid off. Having been listened to, the local community felt their concerns had been acknowledged and they then were able to move to focus on the new subject of the UDP with their full attention.

The evolving drafts of the UDP in Chapter Six were also proof of the capacity for learning within the team as the majority of the objections were withdrawn before the Public Inquiry. This involved focused and sometimes lengthy discussions to reach consensus on objections. However, the Sustainability Checklist for Developers, discussed in Chapter Seven and later in this chapter, perhaps revealed that the constraints the formal requirements placed on officers sometimes limited their ability to be dynamic and bring about change to the desired or hoped-for extent.

Interpretations of Sustainable Development in the Planning Documents

Turning to the first research question on how sustainable development was interpreted in the LBS UDP, it is clear that the formal policy imperatives and

guidance to incorporate sustainable development stimulated different responses at different stages in the planning policy formulation process in LBS. The research proposes that initially there was a problem focus as shown in Figure 13, as sustainable development did not sit easily with the existing demand-led growth mentality of the planning field and the economic regeneration focus of LBS. However, formal guidance required compliance. The next step and the task allocated to LBS planning officers was to demonstrate such compliance. Senior managers and the Executive members of LBS took a focus on demonstrating compliance as their key priority.

This engendered a 'tick box' approach: activities to deliver the detail of the guidance rather than comply with the spirit of sustainable development. This approach was often accompanied by a focus on quantitative evidence, such as the number of policies contributing to sustainable development, or the number of public participation events. In demonstrating compliance, interpretations of sustainable development in the UDP itself became a crucial factor as the new policy goal of sustainable development was interpreted to fit existing structures and local priorities (discussed in detail below). These activities were all in the realm of the strategic basis for action which had a long history in LBS. In order to respond to formal requirements for LA21, a new department had been created. However, because it was set up in the same way as other LBS departments, it became a 'silo' for compliance purposes and it had no impact upon the institutional structure of LBS. When it was shut, the intention was to formally mainstream sustainable development activities, but the research found no evidence of formal mainstreaming, no duties were handed over, the documents were not revisited or monitored in anyway. The mainstreaming (as LBS termed it) happened in the informal presence of the same two key officers who were invited to apply for jobs in the planning team. There was no guarantee that the officers involved would apply for the new positions or be awarded them. A formal process would have guaranteed the continuation of either policy documents or staff, but this was left to chance.

The EDEU was the classic example of a silo approach and had two unacknowledged outcomes which manifested in the informal dimensions of LBS and remained overlooked. One was an obvious lack of broad-based ownership

and avoidance of a full integration of sustainable development, or joined-up thinking; the other was a lack of engagement beyond the 'policy silo'. However, even with this set up, the possibility existed for the new policy goal to be used to serve instrumental gain in the form of politicising the more popular aspects of sustainable development. This was clear in the high-profile events organised by LBS with all-party support. This contrasted with the later lack of political comment on the density issue which allowed the local community to promote a 'NIMBY' (Not In My Back Yard) attitude. The formal dimensions of the process also engendered an attitude of personalism in that individuals or groups espoused a particular activity based on their individual norms and values. Professionalisation was also present when such activities contributed to career development. These issues were reflected in different interpretations of sustainable development at different policy levels, which changed over time as norms emerged in an informal manner and became formalised over time.

The problem focused interpretation of sustainable development was most predominant and related to the espousal of a weak interpretation of sustainable development. This was evident in a compliance approach to the incorporation of sustainable development in where the formal, strategic and stable dimensions of institutions were more evident, as shown in Figure 13 below. The empirical arena of LBS provided evidence in relation to Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretation which looked at the role of institutions, civil society, policy instruments and policy integration. It showed that public participation activities in LBS were organised with a focus on quantifying the number of activities and covering all sections of the population, including hard-to-reach groups. There were no changes to institutional structures; sustainable development activities were allocated to those officers charged with delivering related targets, for instance on the environment, planning or regeneration. Externally, lobbying from existing informal environmental groups continued. New structures (such as the LSP) remained closed to sustainable development discussions. This was closely related to a sector-driven approach which meant that sustainable development activities were placed within the 'silo' of existing responsibilities and roles, rather than mainstreamed across LBS. Managerial policies and instruments were used but these were limited in their effectiveness by a 'tick box' approach either whilst officers familiarised themselves with the

new tools or when time restrictions or lack of training prevented in-depth understanding. Figure 13 below shows these ways of thinking and ways of doing as a problem-focused interpretation of sustainable development which was evident in LBS. This coexisted alongside another interpretation of sustainable development, discussed next.
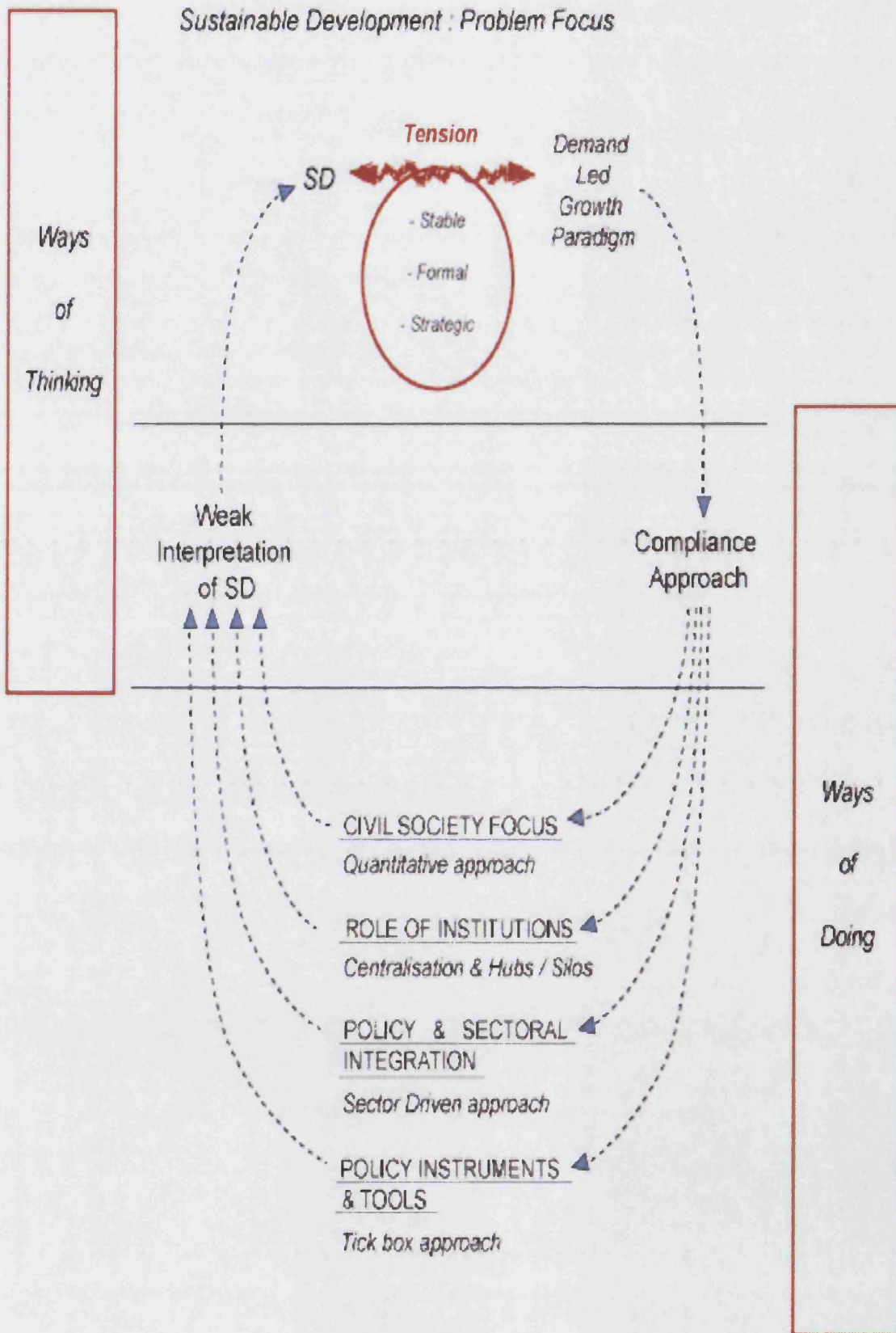
Figure 13: A Problem Focused Interpretation of Sustainable Development

A second interpretation of sustainable development was emerging but remained in the background for much of the case study period. It was found in the activities of the LBS planning officers and related to a strong interpretation of sustainable development and a more creative or transformative approach to the incorporation of sustainable development in the planning policy formulation process. It was linked to more instances of the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions as Figure 14 below shows. It's importance to the research was that a reflexive element became apparent when the creative approach was able to feed back to influence the prevailing paradigm[3]. Examples of this were when, in spite of an historical focus on economic regeneration, LBS made considerable effort to promote its sustainable development credentials in the high-profile LA21 public activities. These ways of thinking prompted ways of doing which provided a sound basis for sustainable development, though equally provided personal benefit to those wishing to promote themselves in this role. Public participation activities were focused on qualitative instances where full mutual value was achieved, through ensuring quality engagement and mutual satisfaction, though sometimes this was not pursued due to time pressures. Institutional moves to mainstream sustainable development were seen in the launch of the first Sustainability Policy for LBS and the formalisation of the Southwark Environment Forum who were promised a representative on the LSP. Alongside the new Sustainability Policy, the Community Strategy and the UDP itself demonstrated an integrated approach that other new and planned policies, such as the Southwark Climate Change Action Plan (LBS 2007b), were expected to continue. Sustainability appraisal of new and planned policies continued. As officers familiarised themselves with these relatively new tools, it became evident that there was opportunity beyond simply monitoring and evaluating policies. This presented itself in the form of building monitoring areas into policies early on, not just because guidance recommended this but because it worked well to achieve the set goals of the planning policy formulation process. Figure 14 below shows these findings as an opportunity focused interpretation of sustainable development.

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[3] The concept of paradigm change is commonly accredited to Thomas Kuhn (1962).
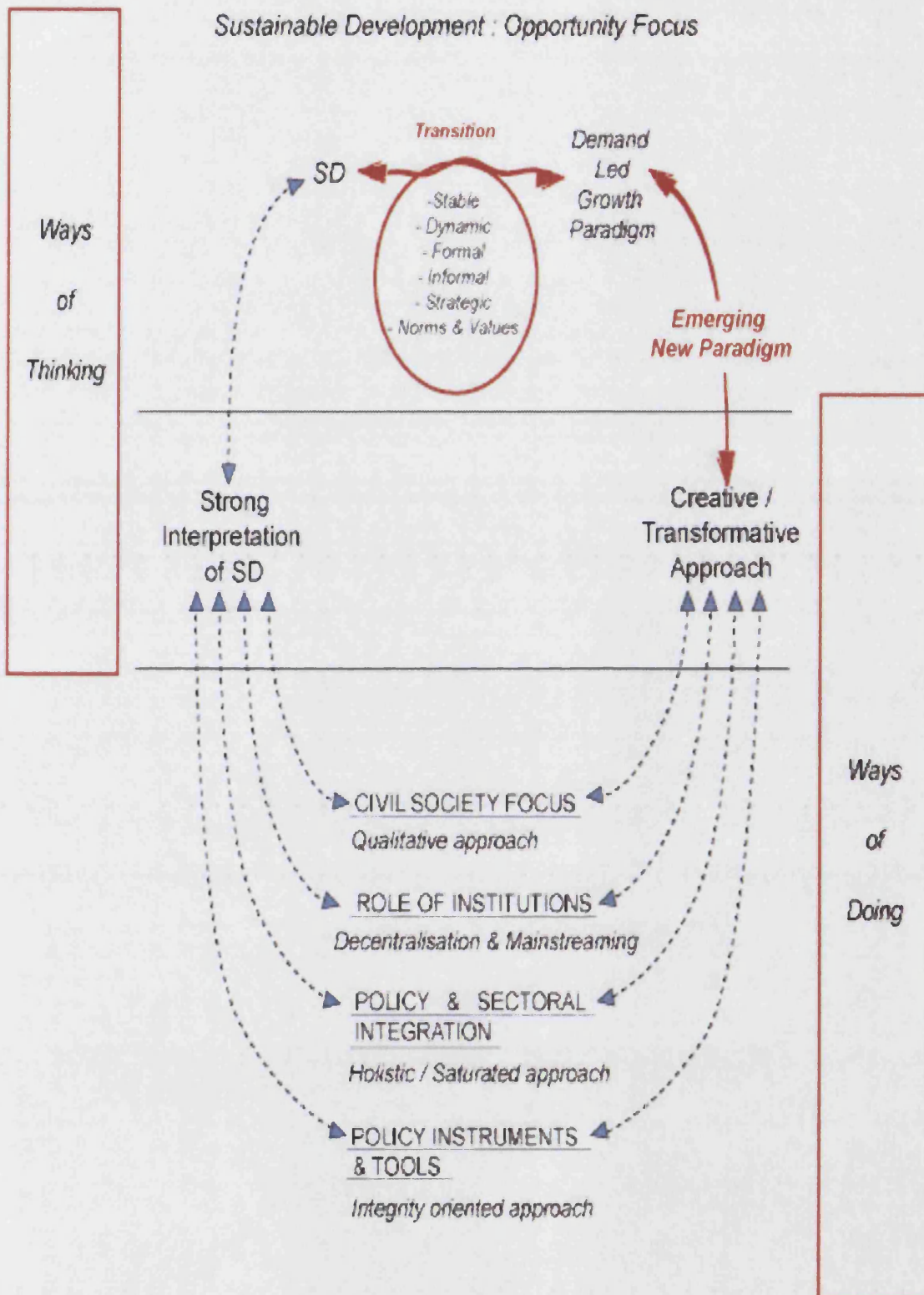
Figure 14: An Opportunity Focused Interpretation of Sustainable Development

These two interpretations of sustainable development co-existed in LBS and could form the basis for further research to explore their relevance to other local authorities, as discussed at the end of this chapter.

Reflections on Interpretations of Sustainable Development

Separately, but in parallel to sustainable development, the Government has focused on influencing current ways of thinking and ways of doing through the application of New Labour's characteristic NPM style. Essentially this implies more target setting and performance measurement. At the Government level this takes the form of Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and Service Delivery Agreements (SDAs), whilst local authorities are required to report under the powerful Best Value (BV) performance system and the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) system. However, with *quality of life* and *liveability* as the starting point for sustainable development, the environment is the main focus for these managerial tools and the other aspects of sustainable development remain sidelined. For example, Best Value has not always been helpful for supporting new ways of thinking and ways of doing, because it leads to conservative management decisions driven by cost-effectiveness, as its name suggests. In line with the *Modernisation Agenda* and the "third way", these monitoring aspects of managerial governance are accompanied by a move towards greater participatory governance. This involves encouraging partnership-working not only inter-departmentally, across government, but also between government and the private, voluntary and community sectors. However, as the *Modernisation Agenda* and the sustainable development agenda remain separate, the potential has, to date, remained overlooked by many academics and practitioners. Sustainable development requires equal consideration of social, economic, environmental and long-term aspects of decisions and this is the challenge for such policy tools.

Linked to the shift to governance and the involvement of a wide group of stakeholders are practical delivery mechanisms for sustainable development. They initially took the form of LA21 under a *quality of life* definition of the term (discussed in Chapter Four). More recently, linked to the *liveability* agenda, the *Community Strategy* has presented another opportunity, and fits well with the drive for partnership working because of the prominence of the LSP. However,

as the LBS example demonstrates, many formal policy networks such as the LSP are guided by a long established economic rationale and sustainable development is marginalised. There remains a need for a vehicle at the national level, to both mainstream sustainable development at that level and to coordinate and exemplify action at regional and local levels of government. Whilst central government requires regional and local government to implement sustainable development, there is no opportunity for feeding the practical lessons of regional and local government back to central policy and guidance. This has resulted in the view that central Government restrains the implementation of sustainable development, as seen in the case study through the rejection of the Sustainability Checklist for Developers.

Interpretations of sustainable development altered over the case study period and ranged from *quality of life*, to *liveability*, to climate change. These are discussed below in relation to Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretations. The assumption that sustainable development is not understood because of differing interpretations is questioned. This reveals a significant oversight in acknowledging the human reaction to understanding sustainable development that has led to an almost obsessive focus on getting the definition right. The impact of this definition obsession has been to overlook the importance of the disposition of the institution and the informal dimension of the institution, neither of which have received attention either in academia or in the planning policy formulation process. The research concludes that this has been a constraint to the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy and has resulted in little opening for institutional transformation for sustainable development.

As Chapter One highlighted, the contested nature and ambiguity of the definition of sustainable development are to blame for it being open to a broad range of interpretations. These many interpretations differ according to their source but they also differ over time. As a relatively new policy goal, since 1994 the UK government has interpreted sustainable development in formal and guidance documents, framing interpretations within the existing context of short-term economic gain. This has lead to a focus on regeneration and renaissance, both of which imply a return to the past rather than the creation of something

new. This is reflected in the interpretations of sustainable development which in an ideal model point to the need for a paradigm shift and a reconsideration of the socially constructed definitions of modern society (Kothari 1995 p250). The economic imperative has had an historical influence on institutions and is both explicit and implicit in existing ways of thinking and ways of doing. During the course of the research, the global context has experienced a dramatic shift following a significant increase in awareness about climate change (IPPR 2006, Futerra 2007). This has been accompanied by the realisation that there is not only an environmental and social cost to operating as usual, but also an economic cost - £3.86 trillion globally, according to the Stern Report (Stern 2006). There is the increasing recognition that the challenge of sustainable development requires new ways of thinking and ways of doing, and a new context within which to operate. This new context equates to a paradigm shift.

The research shows that, in fact, the definition of sustainable development has always been very clear and can be easily explained to others with the appropriate time, information, and (equally importantly) listening skills. The Brundtland definition (WCED 1987) was reflected in everyday conversations where local concerns were complex and interrelated. These included not only environmental, social and economic aspects but also equity and futurity. Though most people could identify with the aspirations of sustainable development, very few people had even heard of the term *sustainable development* itself.

So what exactly is the contested nature of the term *sustainable development*, if it is not the definition? The research proposes that we have incorrectly blamed the ambiguity of the definition of sustainable development for the lack of resulting action. Yet when we look at what it is to understand sustainable development, we see that it is to realise that something might be wrong with how we are thinking and doing now. Perhaps we need to be thinking and doing something different and new. This proposition leads to uncertainty, and it is at this point that the opportunity exists to either reproduce existing patterns or enter into something new. This pattern was clearly seen in the planning officers' interactions with stakeholders about sustainable development, in particular the issues around density and the Sustainability Checklist for Developers.

Existing ways of thinking and ways of doing are the institutional conduits by which interpretations of sustainable development have become accepted. These institutional behaviours contain the potential for the way change can occur at the institutional level and indeed at the paradigm level; in other words, transformation for sustainable development. However, discussion about what sustainable development is, its content and its definition has taken precedence over the more important discussion of its implementation and the opportunities it represents for new ways of thinking and ways of doing. Even where this discussion has begun there is still a tendency to focus on content, as evidenced by research on the different tools to implement sustainable development that represent new ways of doing. Defining sustainable development is important, but whatever the interpretation of sustainable development is, it still needs to be translated into policy that can guide action. Without looking at the ways of thinking and the ways of doing that the incorporation of sustainable development is embedded within, this cannot happen. The Government has attempted to couch sustainable development in terms that they believe lead more easily to action. The evolution of Governmental interpretations of sustainable development have progressed from a *quality of life* approach introduced in the late 1990s, to a *liveability* approach launched a few years later, to the emerging climate change approach signalled by the Stern Report (Stern 2006). These different approaches and the impact they have on land use planning are discussed briefly now. The intention of the discussion is both to highlight the struggle with clarifying the implications of sustainable development (or even *un*sustainable development) and form a foundation for discussing the impact of the use of these competing, evolving definitions on the ways of thinking and ways of doing in institutions.

The Labour Government first couched sustainable development in terms of *A Better Quality of Life: A Strategy for sustainable development for the UK* (DETR 1999). Whilst simplifying what is undeniably an extremely complex and holistic goal, the simplification of sustainable development to *quality of life* lead to a focus on the environment and acknowledged neither the holistic approach of sustainable development nor the potential for new ways of thinking and ways of doing. The use of the *quality of life* approach represented a marginal, 'bolt-on'

adaptation to existing policy approaches rather than a serious look at alternatives. In Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretations this represents the treadmill approach based on exponential growth, showing signs towards a market-reliant approach where environmental policy integration and changes in consumption patterns may be encouraged. This treadmill (or at best weak) form of sustainable development was reflected in the Sustainable Development Commission review of progress, which concluded and was entitled "*Shows promise but must try harder*" (SDC 2005).

The *liveability* agenda can be traced back to a Parliamentary Select Committee Report *Town and Country Parks* in 1999, so its focus on the environment is not surprising. It was in his April 2001 speech *Improving your Local Environment*, that the Prime Minister made '*liveability*' an explicit political objective in the UK for the first time (Blair 2001). *Quality of life* and *liveability* are meant to meet with sustainable development in the *Sustainable Communities Plan* (2003) but this has been heavily criticised for not incorporating sustainable development. The different agendas (*quality of life, liveability* and sustainable development) are currently presented as virtually inseparable. For example, in the UDP, the delivery of sustainable development equated to a *Cleaner, Safer, Greener* public realm (LBS 2004 section3). Yet it is clear that many of the substantive elements of sustainable development are not covered either by the *quality of life* or *liveability* agenda. Balancing the social, economic, environmental, equity and futurity aspects of local government management and delivery are beyond their scope. This requires new ways of thinking and ways of doing for effective implementation. This is what makes sustainable development such a "wicked issue" and the discussion over the definition of the term masks the need to transform the existing deeply entrenched ways of thinking and ways of doing.

The Government's Sustainable Development Unit R*eview of Sustainable Development Policy* (SDU 2005) concluded that sustainable development requires high-profile political support, dedicated expenditure, partnership working and an efficient operational and managerial baseline. The *liveability* agenda had demonstrated that this was possible as it had secured the PM's personal leadership; dedicated a £201 million budget for 2003-2006 (allocated under the *Sustainable Communities Plan* (2003) allied to a £1 billion increase in

funding for local authority environmental improvements); provided a testing ground for cross-departmental working; and introduced management practices to resolve existing operational shortcomings. The *liveability* agenda provided an example of the things required to make sustainable development work, but it was simply not a suitable vehicle for mainstreaming sustainable development because that was not it's stated aim. Considering the contested nature and complexity of sustainable development, it is not inconceivable that *liveability* may have come about precisely because sustainable development has not proven easy to mainstream. The *liveability* agenda presented considerable opportunities to manifest and practise genuine working partnerships across departments, policy areas, tiers of government and sectors (i.e. public, private and voluntary). The danger is that the potential of the *liveability* agenda as a vote winner makes sustainable development even less popular, thus compounding the existing challenges. This can be seen to have similarities to the trophy-approach to sustainable development adopted by LBS at the start of *LA21* activities.

The problem with *liveability* is it's political salience, it is a potential vote winner, concentrating as it does on the most popular elements of sustainable development – *quality of life*. It responds to the general public's immediate concerns as demonstrated in resident satisfaction surveys across the country and paraphrased in LBS's UDP "*A cleaner, safer greener Southwark.*" Yet it ignores the fact that what is *liveable* is not necessarily sustainable. For example, improving local car parking facilities may improve the *liveability* for some residents, but it is unlikely to contribute to public transport use and the broader, long-term goals of sustainable development. This dichotomy is reflected in differences between expert views of sustainable development and popular and local aspirations for *quality of life*. The simplification of sustainable development risks marginalising the more complex and politically intractable elements of sustainable development: notably, changing behaviour around lifestyle and consumption; reassessing the role of the economy; and the geographic focus of activities. *Liveability* cannot be expected to address the need for education and awareness-raising to the extent that sustainable development requires. In addition, *liveability*'s focus on the public management

of local environmental quality has neglected the important potential role of communal responsibility and ownership required by sustainable development.

Sustainable development includes, but is greater than, both *quality of life* and *liveability*. Whilst the research argues that both approaches fail to deliver sustainable development, they do impact the ways of thinking and ways of doing that make up the institutional framework. *Liveability* may have demonstrated how sustainable development can become a reality if the same support is given to it. Its emphasis on cross-departmental working may have contributed to reducing conflicting policies, strategies and targets in local and local-regional relationships. Its 'back to basics' approach may have pulled the managerial aspects of local government into shape. In addition, it may have increased the visibility and importance of the environmental aspect of sustainable development. Unfortunately, this may also have perversely contributed to the underdevelopment of the social and economic responses to sustainable development and reinforced the environment as a service provision, rather than a common good to be protected for future generations.

The definitions of sustainable development discussed above may therefore have contributed to sustainable development by providing impetus for mobility in the three main dimensions of institutions: the formal and informal; the strategic and norm-governed; the stable and dynamic. The use of these alternative terms is therefore a positive precursor for the emerging climate change approach to sustainable development, which holds the promise of the greatest support for the meaningful application of sustainable development in policy. *Planning Policy Statement: Planning and Climate Change: Supplement to Planning Policy Statement 1* (DCLG 2005) has promoted development with a lower carbon footprint which is resilient to the impacts of climate change. This supplement indicated the need for development to: contribute to global sustainability; secure the highest viable standards of resource and energy efficiency and reduction in carbon emissions; deliver patterns of urban growth that help secure the fullest possible use of sustainable transport for moving freight, public transport, cycling and walking; reduce overall the need to travel, especially by car; secure new development and shape places resilient to the effects of climate change in ways consistent with social cohesion and inclusion;

sustain biodiversity, and in doing so recognise that the distribution of habitats and species will be affected by climate change; reflect the development needs and interests of communities and enable them to contribute effectively to tackling climate change; and respond to the concerns of business and encourage competitiveness and technological innovation. The supplement is a tall order, but is a strong interpretation of sustainable development that specifies what needs to happen to create sustainable development. Other broader climate change-oriented interpretations of sustainable development maintain a similar focus. At the same time, the Government has started to acknowledge the positive public health impacts and potential of sustainable development.

Barriers to the Incorporation of Sustainable Development

The research has shown that the main barriers to strong interpretations of sustainable development in LBS appeared to be: a lack of understanding of sustainable development and government policy objectives; low importance attached to sustainable development against competing planning policy formulation priorities such as widening participation from excluded groups and responding to objections; low importance attached to sustainable development against competing Council priorities; a lack of time to educate on sustainable development and how it impacts the various areas of Council work; a lack of time to receive such education. The description of the historical context was not used by the research to explain existing events, rather it was used to exemplify that it was these events (whatever form they may have taken) that were influencing interpretations of sustainable development in the present. This is important for participatory governance as the observations showed that without acknowledgement of past interactions, participation is made more difficult. The tendency amongst interview respondents to talk about the past could be attributed to several things. Explanations of the past were often given as reasons for not being able to incorporate sustainable development in the present and this had the effect of deferring responsibility elsewhere – to another time, another person, or both. This led to a personal or collective disconnection from responsibility for contemporary events. How far in the past the explanations pointed varied from many years to a few months, but was seen equally to be something final and unlikely to undergo any change in the present or future. This view of temporality was particularly ironic: sustainable

development requires a consideration of future generations, yet it became clear that the past was influencing the future incorporation of sustainable development in LBS activities more than the present. This was another informal barrier to policy cascade, in spite of the policy imperative for sustainable development. This phenomenon was highlighted as a range of disempowering feelings summarised by two key quotes from interviews below:

"We are doing our best, but its hard swimming against the current" (Interview 24).

and:

"We are not really able to make the difference we want" (Interview 35).

The past was the biggest constraint to incorporating sustainable development in planning policy and was often linked to a lack of understanding of sustainable development. Failure to incorporate sustainable development also was a result of the past through a pre-existing idea of priorities, or an absence of past knowledge and information. The research proposes that the importance attached to the past is more pervasive than revealed by the small number of incidents highlighted through interviews as part of this research. It is suggested that not only is this phenomenon an individual one, but, following studies on organisational management, it may also be a collective phenomenon, where the assumptions behind the "disposition of the institution" may be past-based. This leads to a focus on institutional design and transformation based on history, in which the assumptions upon which the institution is based can be revealed. The impact of these basic assumptions on contemporary work can then be discussed before a new basis for activity or anew paradigm can emerge. This is a similar learning experience to that which officers experienced when approaching their public participation events.

Secondly, the contemporary context of local government and the focus on sustainable development experienced constant change and, as a result, much uncertainty. However, when talking about the past there was a retrospective benefit which allowed events to be explained with some certainty in a clear linear sequence, with knowledge of their results and with the impression of

stability. The fact that the same events were described by different people in different ways served to emphasise the attachment to the certainty with which the different interpretations of past events were given. This certainty enabled individuals to speak with confidence whether the event was interpreted as a success or a failure. In many cases, memories were backed up by other respondents' recollections as well as documentation and, where appropriate, observation of meetings. The research proposes that the challenge for modern governance is the ability to manage uncertainty, complexity and risk (Beck et al 1995). This involves individuals and institutions learning a new set of skills which not only moves away from "policy silos" (Evans et al 2004) and towards joined-up thinking and doing, but deals with the reality of differing views, lack of understanding of sustainable development, lack of buy-in and people's general resilience to change.

Finally, and linked to the above discussion on uncertainty, talking about the past also seemed to give a sense of safety which talking about the present did not provide. In spite of clear advanced explanations[4] of the potential uses of the interview material and respondent control over these, interviewees were notably more comfortable talking about past events than contemporary ones. This may be linked to some of the observation results which indicated that many of the interviewees discussed in more detail those events that were commonly and openly talked about within their relevant peer groups. A consensus view of events was reached in this way and it was this agreed version or interpretation which was re-presented in interviews. This indicates the importance of group dynamic and shared norms for appropriate behaviour, and the very real need for leadership on sustainable development.

However, the impact of the definition obsession has resulted in an almost complete omission of the importance of the context in which sustainable development is being implemented: the context of the British land use planning system. The impact of providing overarching guidance for sustainable development at the same time as allowing local participation without education is highlighted by the inability of the local land use planning process to introduce

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[4] Interviewees were given the option of distinguishing their comments for use as named quotes, anonymous quotes, off record comments not to be quoted, personal views, professional views or other.

creative, innovative local practices, as exemplified by the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. It is not suggested that the Sustainability Checklist for Developers itself is the answer to implementing sustainable development but it is an example of where local innovation was stifled and the research therefore suggests that institutional learning was slowed.

The peculiarity of sustainable development's openness to varying interpretations (based on informal and for the most part unknown biases) is part of the informal context (most often overlooked). The discussion presented here has given an overview of the evolving interpretations of sustainable development at the national level during the research period, and the impact of these interpretations on the local level, summarised in Figure 15 below. Notable was the lack of a feedback mechanism for relaying interpretations at the local level – both those supporting and those constraining sustainable development – back to the national level for wider benefit and improved communication. Encompassed in this is the familiar problem of policy timing and responsiveness. Media attention on the climate change debate at the time of writing means that interpretations of sustainable development are receiving more attention and exposure than ever before. This context is highly influential in the incorporation of sustainable development in the plan making process. Whilst the theoretical framework of NI allowed an exploration of the factors influencing the evolution of interpretations of sustainable development, the importance of context was crucial, in this case that of local government and the shift it is experiencing towards governance.

The reliance on the trickle-down effect of formal Government policy on incorporating sustainable development does not take into account the informal factors shaping the plan making process. Examples have been given above. On the one hand, it is clear that the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy has significantly improved. In the LBS UDP, the Environmental Review of the 1995 UDP found only one policy supporting sustainable development, whereas the sustainability appraisals of the draft and final UDP 2004 show that not only is sustainable development at the heart of the UDP itself but that no policy goes against it and many specific policies in fact support sustainable development (Chapter Six). It is likely that the

continued strengthening of formal central government guidance, the new portfolio style of the Local Development Framework and increased awareness of sustainable development will continue to strengthen the presence and implementation of sustainable development at the local level.

In light of the urgent need to respond to climate change, the research concludes that a reliance on the traditional trickle-down approach of policy cascade is not enough. Sustainable development is generally agreed to be the answer to the new threat posed by climate change, and it requires a new and speedier approach that means learning and leading on new ways of thinking and new ways of doing. The Labour Government has been gradually changing the institutional arrangements for ways of thinking and ways of doing. Its *Modernisation Agenda* and NPM approach aim to integrate more of the informal factors of local government through a move away from the top-down formal approach, to a horizontal thickening which includes more participatory activities. This approach starts to acknowledge the informal and norm-governed dimensions of institutions.

However, it presents another danger in the form of assumptions on understanding of sustainable development. The focus on participation assumes the public and local decision makers alike are educated in both strong and weak interpretations of sustainable development and are aware of the implications of their choices. This may look very different from the choices they are currently making, which are becoming bankrupt (Albrechts 2005) or void as their increasingly negative implications are realised. This thesis argues that understanding of sustainable development is essential amongst both local authority officers, elected Councillors and the general public. This is not to be confused with agreement on the need for or how to bring about sustainable development. Many elected Councillors disagreed with the formal requirement of the UDP to deliver sustainable development but they also possessed a lack of knowledge on the term. The research noted that where understanding of sustainable development was highest, was where public participation was most effective and where managerial tools were being deployed effectively.

Put simply, without appropriate education, more power to the people will not result in less impact on the planet, the people of the LBS generally associated improved *quality of life* with activities which have a negative impact on the environment - car ownership and more car parking spaces being the classic aspiration. Deliberative democracy relies on educated human beings who are able to see the bigger picture and are not motivated by fear or ignorance. Yet the mechanisms for ensuring education on the new sustainable development policy goal were not evident in the LBS. The government needs to take a leadership role and legislate to protect the lives of its citizens now and in the future, even if it may result in unpopular policies in the short term, as *quality of life* is redefined. The research suggests that it is not just a matter of formalising the informal, but acknowledging that the informal is often constrained by the formal. Combining both formal and informal dimensions of institutions in institutional design allows mutual benefit as the informal becomes formalised and is balanced and legitimised by the formal.

Opportunities for the Incorporation of Sustainable Development

Planners are very well equipped to incorporate sustainable development into planning policies as they have experience of urban and regional development and they are more adept with the technicalities of incorporating sustainable development within these activities. However, planners also have sound formal guidance in the form of the Planning Policy Guidance (now Planning Policy Statements) and other explanatory material which has evolved, particularly over very recent years, to meet the challenge of sustainable development. Planning professionals believe that sustainable development comes across well in new planning policy, and managerial tools to check and control progress are in development for wider use. With the new LDF process, the acid test is the soundness of the plan. There are ten tests of soundness, one of which is the recognition of sustainability principles:

> "If development plans are not sustainable then they will not be certified in accordance with regional or national regulations" (Interview 46).

Yet it is interesting to note how the evolution of local interpretations of sustainable development (within the LBS) differed according to their audience. The 'operating' definition of sustainable development for internal work was

different to that used for communicating to the public.   Overall the LBS embraced the term well, and in particular in relation to the role of institutions, civil society, policy tools and policy integration, as based on the preceding reflections and as shown in Figure 15 below.
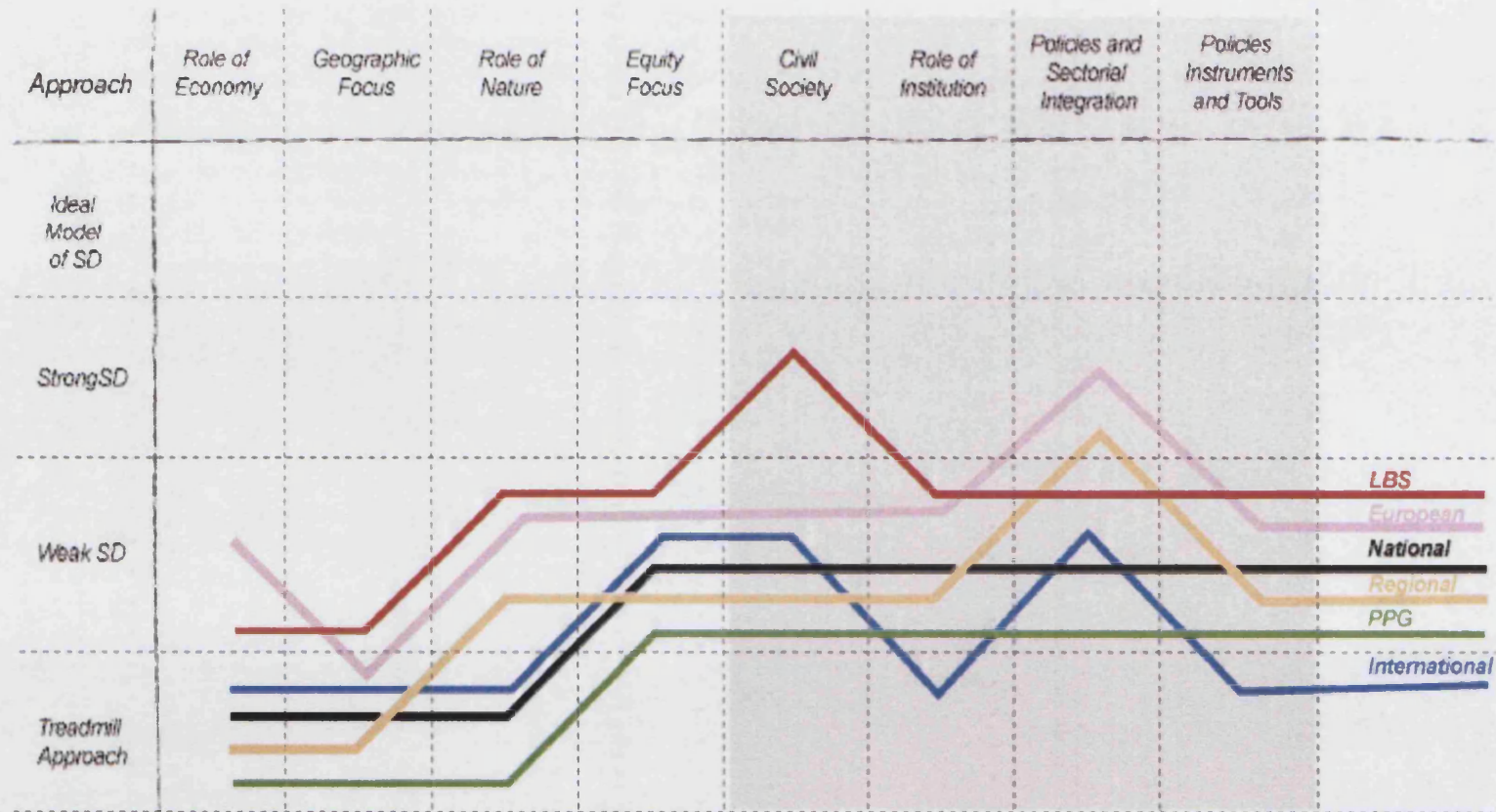
Figure 15: Interpretations of Sustainable Development in the London Borough of Southwark (in red and mapped against interpretations in international, European, national, regional policies and UK Planning Policy Guidance, based on Baker et al's (1997) ladder of interpretation).

These interpretations of sustainable development also developed over time, for example from the pre-deposit consultation papers to the first and final drafts of the UDP document itself. Within the policy making process, the informal offered the greatest opportunity for the incorporation of sustainable development. As the process became more formalised the interpretation of sustainable development was narrowed and its prominence reduced, as presented in Figure 16 below.
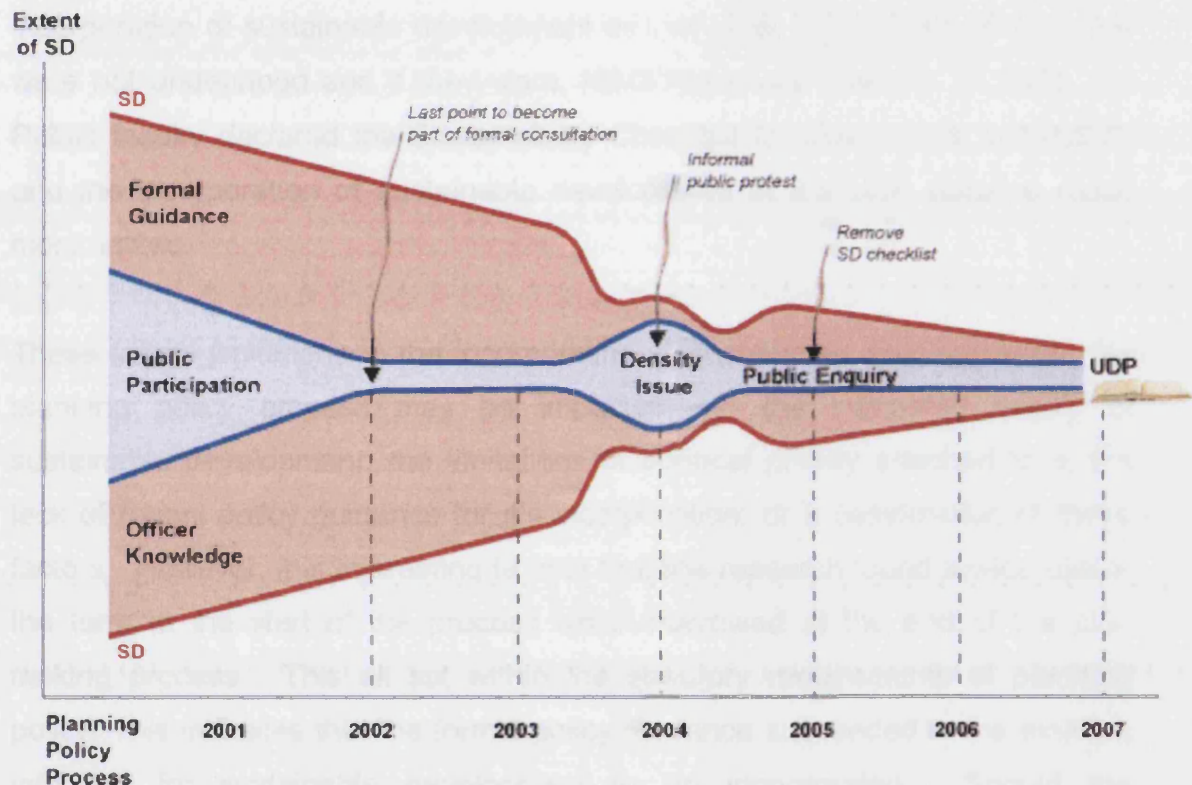
Figure 16: Opportunity for Sustainable Development in the Planning Policy Process

Figure 16 shows how the formal guidance on incorporating sustainable development in the UDP process was translated into practice through officer knowledge and resulted in the incorporation of sustainable development at different stages of the process (shown in red). Officer knowledge was based on a range of personal and professional experiences as well as aspirations, none of which are acknowledged with a formal view of institutions. At the same time, at the start of the plan making process, opportunities for public participation were available (shown in blue). Officers were responsible for shaping and delivering these opportunities, so again their background both professionally and personally came into play. In 2002, the participatory opportunities

narrowed as only those commenting on the first draft UDP were able to continue in the process. This meant that in 2004, when the issue of density was discussed in Council meetings, the local community had no formal participatory mechanism. They engaged in lobbying, demonstration and other forms of action to demonstrate their opposition to the proposed policy. This had the desired effect of enrolling local Councillors and won political support resulting in the LBS reducing the proposed density levels until required by the Public Inquiry to reinstate them. The public protest had the result of reducing further the incorporation of sustainable development as the wider implications of the issue were not understood and if they were, NIMBYism was present. In 2005, the Public Inquiry declared the Sustainability Checklist for Developers "unhelpful", and the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP became much more limited.

These formal limitations to the incorporation of sustainable development in the planning policy process may be impacted by: the contested nature of sustainable development; the limitations of political priority attached to it; the lack of formal policy guidance for it's incorporation; or a combination of these factors. However, it is interesting to note that the research found a wide use of the term at the start of the process which narrowed at the end of the plan making process. This all sat within the statutory requirements of planning policy. This indicates that the formal policy guidance succeeded to the extent it intended for sustainable development to be incorporated. Should the Government wish for sustainable development to be incorporated more strongly, or become more visible so that it can be monitored and demonstrate improvements in environmental indicators such as carbon emissions, the research points to the need to strengthen formal policy requirements. Any strengthening will find a supportive informal basis for action, at least in the LBS.

Theoretical Reflections

The value of the NI perspective was its ability to explore the policy making process and within that the potential for change, the basis for decision-making, and the full range of factors (both formal and informal) influencing the incorporation of sustainable development in local planning policy. This approach allowed the identification of interpretations of sustainable

development within the policy making process itself. This goes beyond much existing literature which has focused on interpretations of sustainable development in the policy documentation only. A focus on interpretations in the end result policy documents fails to identify where and how sustainable development is being negotiated in the process which creates those documents. Contrasted with a traditional review of interpretations in policy documents, this approach showed how it was the informal dimension which allowed sustainable development to be discussed at early stages of the policy making process. This demonstrated the potential for the incorporation of sustainable development but as the process became more formalised through a reduction of sustainable development in the final formal policy (see Figure 16).

The local government context which is experiencing a shift to conditions of governance made NI an even more relevant theoretical framework as it was able to capture these emerging new relationships. However, the success and extent of new governance arrangements was dependent on opportunities for institutional learning about collaborative action at the institutional level. Informal learning was highly visible in the public participation activities as discussed earlier. This was coupled with: the formal creation of appropriate organisational arrangements, such as representative bodies or umbrella groups – visible in the short lived SSP, and the long-awaited entry of the SEF into the LSP; and adequate organisational resources in terms of time, staffing, political will and technical support - although LBS did not make these resources available formally, they were available through the European research projects LBS undertook. The EU funding allowed resources for extra staff and engendered the early support of some local Councillors through high-profile events. The informal attempts of officers to provide support for institutional learning were captured with the NI framework. On reflection, given the predominance of the dynamic dimension of institutions, the research would have benefited from a greater focus on institutional learning and this may be a useful framework for future research.

The NI approach was able to identify the informal approaches utilised by planning officers in participatory engagement and the development of managerial tools and to some extent in the political influence of local

Councillors. However it was weak in specifying these factors as they formed the context of the case study. Combining contextual factors with the dimensions of institutions may be a more useful way of ensuring the coverage of their potential influences. Whilst the NI approach allowed the discovery of a wide range of factors, the framework of the three dimensions of institutions was more useful as a framing for the research and more difficult to use as the basis of analysis. The three dimensions were so closely inter-woven that separating them was not always possible or useful. Combined they painted a rich picture.

Methodological Reflections

The research methodology outlined in Chapter Three was conducted during the period 2002 to 2006 and was intended to explore the "forces that drive" the contemporary planning policy formulation process and decisions on the incorporation of sustainable development within it (Healey, 1997 p22). The hypothesis was that there was something beyond the content of planning documents and beyond the formal policy imperative. The content analysis was based on best practice in the field. It showed from "the fine detail of policies" (Hales 2000) that formal policy guidance was being followed, but that there was a lack of clarity around communicating how sustainable development should actually be implemented and how it could be coordinated across the range of local authority activities.

Interviews distinctly showed that there was much importance attached to the recent historical legacy for activities to incorporate sustainable development in planning policy formulation. Accounts based on memories were validated by observation of formal and informal participatory and managerial activities as well as documentary analysis of minutes, press releases, reports, conference proceedings, policies and website materials. This resulted in rich and sometimes complex contextual detail and led to the adoption of a chronological narrative in Chapter Four to Chapter Seven. The chronological narrative allowed the researcher to tell the story of the LBS UDP, so that the reader might to some extent, be able to experience the historical pressures and pulls for themselves. The use of a chronological narrative brought about an element of the descriptive-inductive approach that the research was intending to go beyond. Already the content was very different from the usual descriptions of

institutions, which tend to be based on formal rules, procedures and organisations of government but which, for the purposes of this research, included the informal in addition to the formal.

When asking questions about current events, it was notable that the researcher was referred to the LBS website, where all official documentation on the UDP process was publicly available. On the one hand, this was extremely useful and contributed to transparency and public participation in the planning policy formulation process generally. While it allowed an objective view of the documentation, this was not the main intention of the research. Having such a lot of information and having it available online meant that interviewees did not wish to expand further with their own views, as they were anxious not to misquote the information provided online. This meant there was less detail and material for the researcher to use from interviews regarding more contemporary events.

Many of the interview respondents referenced the formulation of planning policy in other London boroughs, in particular in relation to a growing interest by planning officers to provide some sort of checklist model for use at the development control stage, for planning applications. Whilst the LBS Sustainability Checklist for Developers was not recommended for inclusion in the final UDP, following the Inspector's recommendations other boroughs do now have their equivalent. Merton in particular has received much media attention because of its own Sustainability Checklist. It would be a useful follow-up exercise to compare the content of these documents in various boroughs and explore how some were included as part of the UDP and others were not. Was it the content of the document, differences in the planning policy formulation process, the political will, the Planning Inspector's decision or simply timing which made the difference? Whilst the content is likely to be similar, the duty to return such a checklist and then have it checked by the local authority may be treated differently. The greatest concern is that the objections raised by developers and the view taken by the Inspector at Public Inquiry may differ according to different local circumstances. This is another indication of the issues that arise from the assumption of policy cascade. However, additional

comparative research is required to identify where differences or similarities occur.

The CASE[5] Award collaborative arrangements provided the opportunity for the researcher to become immersed in the day-to-day aspects of the planning policy formulation process at the outset of the research. Whilst this was extremely helpful for an in-depth understanding, it also posed a couple of challenges for the research. One was the expectation to contribute to the CASE partner and the process under study. Reports with initial findings were eagerly consumed and resulted in changing the process with relative speed in some cases such as the public consultation events. This process was managed well on both sides and was not felt to negatively impact the research though this was more due to a review and new agreement for the researcher to step out of this role half way through the study period. Interviews with relevant stakeholders were interesting and rich but the close relationship with LBS expected to ease access to stakeholders had the opposite effect in accessing developers who were suspicious and opted out of the research process entirely meaning the research lacked their contribution.

The most difficult conflict of the CASE Award was the single case study focus and the academic expectation for generalisable findings. With no comparative data, it is difficult to say how relevant the findings from the LBS case study are to other local authorities. Chapter Three introduced and discussed the specifics and similarities of the case study focus to other London boroughs and local authorities in the UK. It can be argued that the findings from the LBS case study may be of interest to other local authorities ranking highly on the Index of Multiple Deprivation; or to inner London boroughs facing the same planning requirements and regional and central Government pressures. However, because the findings point to the importance of the informal activities of local authority officers, based on the personal backgrounds, education and norms, it could well be the case that any local authority may benefit from considering what happens beyond the formal policy remit of their staff or when informal champions leave their posts. The work on sustainability indicators which was fed into the formal system through reports, recommendations and briefings

almost disappeared in the absence of an officer to champion them. This raises the question of how to benefit from short-term injections of skills or staff for the longer term. It was clear in the case of the EU funded projects, that human resource, rather than formal reports and recommendations was a crucial element. This reinforces the importance of the role of individual officers to champion sustainable development and act as 'change agents' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992) and for future research to take a person-centred approach to the study of institutional processes.

Conclusion

The thesis argued that there are two common misconceptions in the existing literature on sustainable development and planning policy: the first misconception is that the contested definition of sustainable development is a (or the) key influence in its incorporation in planning policy, the research clearly showed that the interpretations of sustainable development in LBS, whatever they were, were influenced by both formal and informal factors which worked separately or in tandem to restrict and constrain the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. Sustainable development was socially and politically constructed at the local level, in spite of or perhaps because of the formal policy imperative. The second misconception is the notion of policy cascade as being a formal, standardised and therefore neutral influence on the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. This thesis demonstrated that in LBS the formal 'rules of the game' did not fully determine the processes and practices for the incorporation of sustainable development. Individually and collectively, officers were able to use their personal and professional knowledge, experience and aspirations to shape the incorporation of sustainable development.

Why LBS adopted the particular approach to incorporating the formal imperative of sustainable development into the LBS UDP can be said to stem from the three main areas:

- the historical and contextual background which made up the institutional disposition
- the individual preferences and entrepreneurialism of officers

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[5] CASE (Collaborative Awards in Science and Engineering) discussed fully in Chapter Three.

- the local political pressures

LBS interpreted sustainable development in the UDP and related documents with a fairly broad brush stroke, shying away from precise definitions but failing to communicate as effectively as they might have done. Interpretation of sustainable development in the plan making process was stronger at the start of the plan making process, in particular evidenced in early public participation activities as Figure 16 shows.

The three dimensions of institutions influenced the incorporation of sustainable development with the formal, stable and strategic dimensions generally leading to a more problem focused approach as Figure 13 demonstrates. Generally, the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions led to a more opportunity focused approach as demonstrated in Figure 14. Therefore the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions were seen in the LBS case study to provide considerable potential for the incorporation of sustainable development. Yet these informal dimensions left unchecked and outside of the formal process may never contribute further than the LBS example.

The research suggests that the gap between the intention of policy directives and the implementation of sustainable development in local planning is explained by the interactions between the formal and informal dimensions of institutions. Too often attempts to incorporate sustainable development fail, not because of the contested nature of the term itself and resulting differing formal interpretations, but because the informal ways of thinking and ways of doing that form the context for implementation are overlooked. By identifying the existing institutional perspective or institutional disposition, the research suggests that sustainable development can be incorporated into planning policy more effectively. Some parts of the disposition of institutions are now "bankrupt" (Albrechts 2005) and no longer support "the reality of modern living" and the pressing need to respond to climate change. Yet, those responsible for delivering sustainable development are unaware of the institutional disposition or theory in use in their work arena. It is often when a new policy goal requiring or bringing about creativity and innovation is put into practice that the informal assumptions behind the institution are revealed. Societal paradigms lead to

institutional "lock-in" or "inertia" (Pierson 1996) or "trained incapacities" (Veblen 1914 and 1919). Wong (2006) warns against this in planning, and this research points to the need to reveal and then intentionally reconceptualise these underlying assumptions in line with the new goals of sustainable development. Such conscious reinvention in new ways of doing would result in or be accompanied by new ways of thinking.

Areas for Further Research

Whilst the above findings relate only to the LBS, it is possible that they may be relevant to other Local Planning Authorities and finding out if this is the case is one of the key pieces of further research. However, within the LBS case study there are other areas for further research which would include identifying the new skills required to take account of the dynamic, norm-governed and informal dimensions of institutions. The research findings suggest that it is these informal dimensions that become formalised and shape future action, so knowing more about them in the first instance and then knowing how to shape them is crucial. Learning about the influence of the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions may help to reduce uncertainty, as it is here that the seeds of change are sown. Equal regard to the formal and informal dimensions of institutions safeguards a full range of stakeholder dialogue and acts as a balance on the undesirable extremes of each. Planning officers are well placed to deliver sustainable development in terms of 'what' this means for the built environment, but they require new skills in terms of 'how' this can happen. This would involve skills to identify and acknowledge the influence of the informal dimensions of institutions, of routinised habits and emerging norms and values within institutions and the ability to recognise those which support change to meet new policy goals and those which do not. Indeed, the lack of attention given to the informal, dynamic and norm-governed dimensions of institutions may have come about through the identification that they did not meet previous specific goals. The thesis argues that it is not that one needs to agree with the specifics of these dimensions of institutions, but that to possess knowledge of them, allows a transparent and more comprehensive assessment of the reality of the plan making process and the potential for the incorporation of sustainable development within. This is one of the major existing and future challenges and opportunities to be addressed.

Planning officers in LBS may have been well placed for the technical content of sustainable development but generally planning officers are not traditionally associated with institutional change. The research demonstrates that planning officers' actions within local government not only influence the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy but have critical implications for organisational change, institutional design (Alexander 2005) and institutional transformation (McLellan 2004). Their activities demonstrate double-loop learning (Argyris and Schon 1978, Argyris 1999). Their entrepreneurial spirit is embedded within standard formal procedures, such as the LBS public participation activities and the Sustainability Checklist for Developers. It is the informal context of their work that provides a stem and flow for creativity and innovation. The planning officers themselves, as one of many individual sets of stakeholders, play an important role in advocating different approaches (both negative and positive) to incorporating sustainable development, which become institutionally embedded, enforced, reinforced, or changed. An equal focus on the informal leads to a creative, questioning and transformational approach to the incorporation of sustainable development. It acknowledges the strategic role of planning officers and the use of their "discretion" and "autonomy" much like Lipsky's (1980) street level bureaucrats and promises a fruitful focus for future research.

Empirically, this research could usefully continue to explore why the Sustainability Checklist for Developers was not accepted in LBS when other London boroughs, such as Merton, are lauded for their activities in this very area. LBS could also share its activities in public participation and contribute to the recognised need for a long-term, coordinated approach to public involvement involving shared best practice, capacity building, awareness-raising of sustainable development and other issues to achieve mutually rewarding visibly responsive continuous dialogue. This approach to public participation contributes to open, transparent and accountable decision making.

The research results indicate that both individual and institutional capacity for learning and change shapes the incorporation of sustainable development in planning policy. It is therefore imperative to create, enhance and maintain

opportunities for individual and institutional learning for both the 'what' and 'how' of sustainable development. The research has demonstrated the need to reflect on and articulate the dualities of the institutional dimensions to ensure that sustainable development is incorporated effectively in future planning policy and can therefore shape our spatial surroundings to produce sustainable communities.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

London Borough of Southwark Supplementary Planning Guidance

1	Preferred Industrial and Office Locations and Mixed Use Development
2	Bankside and the Borough Action Area
3	Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area
4	London Bridge Opportunity Area
5	Bermondsey Spa Action Area
6	Camberwell Green Town Centre
7	Lordship Lane Town Centre
8	Old Kent Road Action Area
9	Walworth Road and East Street Town Centre
10	Canada Water Action Area
11	Peckham Action Area
12	Dulwich
13	Planning Obligations
14	Access and Facilities for People with Disabilities
15	Archaeology
16	Design
17	Designing Out Crime
18	Heritage Conservation
19	Open Space
20	Outdoor Advertisements and Signage
21	Parking
22	Resources
23	Shopfront Design
24	Sustainability
25	Tall Buildings
26	Telecommunications
27	Thames Special Policy Area
28	Affordable Housing
29	Residential Design Standards

APPENDIX 2

Interpretations of sustainable development in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG), November 2002

PPG Interpretation of sustainable development	Guidance for LPA on achieving sustainable development
PPG1 General Policies and Principles "..achieving now and in the future development to secure higher living standards whilst protecting the environment."	Highlights importance of planning system to achieving sustainable development Good design as route to sustainable development - Design SPGs
PPG3 Housing "..development should create sustainable residential environments...promoting more sustainable patterns of development ...making better use of previously developed land."	Encourage development that is: i. Linked to public transport; ii. Mixed use; iii. Greener residential environment; iv. Places for people/quality; v. Recognises needs, including affordable; vi. More efficient use of land
PPG4 Industrial and Commercial Development of Small Firms "..economic growth and high quality environment need to be pursued together.....sustainable development and attention to environmental and social issues make sense in economic terms."	Business location to take account of environmental/public needs i. Reduce motor vehicle trips; ii. Enable energy efficient transport; iii. Discourage new development where likely to add unacceptably to congestion; iv. Use classes map on local needs; v. Environmental Assessments for major industrial/commercial development
PPG5 Town Centres and Retail Development	i. Existing town centres serving local communities are sustained;

"..development should retain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres through achieving sustainable objectives......town centres are part of our national and civic heritage, and securing their health assists with promoting sustainable development."	ii. Developments in proximity of business, facilitates competition so all consumers benefit; iii. Developments to maximise use of transport other than the car; iv. Efficient, competitive, innovative retail sector maintained within town centres; v. Maintaining a wide range of attractions and amenities within town centres; vi. High levels of accessibility maintained or created within and to the town centre; vii. Continuing investment in development or refurbishment of existing buildings
PPG10 Planning and Waste Management	Waste management facilities for reduction/reuse/recovery/recycling/disposal/special waste Protect designated landscape/nature conservation areas from inappropriate development
PPG11 Regional Planning Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) "Land use planning is a key instrument in ensuring that development is compatible with the aims of sustainable development..."	i. Enhanced economic performance; ii. Sustainable development and environmental improvement; iii. Opportunity and choice Future planning activity to incorporate measures to contribute to a more sustainable future Boroughs should put their planning activities in the context of Local Agenda 21 LPA to demonstrate how it contributes to sd/maximises use of existing resources LPA decisions to encourage developments to: i Reduce energy outputs; ii. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions; iii. Reduce causes of pollution, especially air; iv. Increase recycling and reuse; v. Minimise need for waste disposal over long distances

PPG12 Development Plans "...development plan policies should implement the land use planning aspects of sustainable development.."	Land use planning aspects of sustainability addressed through land use planning system Consider interaction of policies; Environmental and social implications of policies are designed to encourage economic growth and vice versa; Holistic manner
PPG13 Transport "..to promote sustainable transport choices and reduce reliance on the car for work and other journeys."	Integrate planning and transport at the strategic, regional, national, and local levels Promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure by public transport, walking and cycling Housing in existing urban areas; Increased intensity in highly accessible (public transport, walking and cycling) areas; Parking decisions to support sustainable development Needs of disabled people as pedestrians/public transport users; Safe places to live/work/visit
PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment	Use of historic buildings can contribute to sustainability objectives
PPG16 Archaeology and Planning	Linked to sustainable development
PPG17 Sport and Recreation	Improve health/well being; Access for elderly/disabled Highlight social/economic value of improved health
PPG21 Tourism	Economic significance and environmental impact
PPG22 Renewable Energy	Renewable energy to achieve sustainability objectives
PPG23 Planning and Pollution Control	Contaminated land remediation, air and water quality measures, waste management

APPENDIX 3

Introduction and research overview for respondents

Headed paper:
London Borough of Southwark
Planning Policy and Research Unit

Date:

Dear XXXX

RE: Your participation in research on sustainable development in local planning policy

The London Borough of Southwark is working to update the existing 1995 Unitary Development Plan. As part of the Council's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement, it has entered a collaborative arrangement with the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE), allowing the planning policy formulation process to be the subject of a doctoral thesis starting in October 2002.

The doctoral candidate undertaking this research project is Victoria Hands and she will be contacting relevant stakeholders both internal to the Council and externally to gather information. We encourage you to participate in the research and express your views on the planning policy formulation process and in particular on the incorporation of sustainable development within this.

Victoria will be conducting documentary analysis, observation and interviews. We encourage you to make available to her relevant documentation, access to meetings and individuals in appropriate meeting rooms to allow the research to proceed.

A list of interview questions is attached* for your information and you will see that the questions relate to sustainable development and how the planning policy formulation process may contribute to or hinder this objective. Your participation remains anonymous and confidential at all times and will form the basis of a doctoral thesis.

We thank you in advance for your participation in this important piece of research.

Signature of Manager, LBS PPRU   Signature of researcher, LSE

*See Appendix 4 for Interview Questions

APPENDIX 4

Interview questions

1. Respondent Information

What is the name of your organisation? What is your position there? How long have you held this role?

What is your professional training in planning and sustainable development? What is your background, experience or expertise?

What is your role in relation to the UDP? How would you describe your main goal in respect to the UDP?

What is your normal daily work comprised of? Is the UDP part of this or additional?

Do you have regular contact with LBS on planning or other matters? Who is your most regular contact with regard to the UDP process? Is this a new or established contact? How would you describe the working relationship with your contact?

2. Questions on Sustainable Development

What is your understanding of sustainable development (business as usual, weak, strong or ideal sustainable development)? What has shaped your interpretation?

How is sustainable development interpreted in your role? By whom? What influences this interpretation?

Do you think you currently work in the field of sustainable development?

Have you worked in the field sustainable development before? If so describe

How is sustainable development relevant to planning in general? How is sustainable development relevant to the LBS UDP?

How is sustainable development relevant to LBS overall? What priorities does LBS have for sustainable development?

How important is sustainable development to your activities? How is sustainable development incorporated in your activities?

How does local planning influence the incorporation of sustainable development? And vice versa, how does sustainable development influence local planning?

To what extent do you think sustainable development is incorporated in the UDP? How does this happen?

To what extent do you think sustainable development is incorporated in the UDP process? How does this happen?

Which UDP policies support sustainable development? Are there any UDP policies which do not support sustainable development?

Are there any areas of conflict within the UDP?

How is economic growth and sustainable development balanced in the UDP?

How does central government balance economic growth and sustainable development?

Are you aware of any mechanisms or tools to ensure sustainable development enters the UDP?

What informal networks or relationships influence the incorporation of sustainable development?

What norms, values and beliefs do different stakeholders have? How do these influence the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP?

What influence do working routines, practices, customs or traditions have on the UDP or the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP?

What other factors influence the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP? Are there any broader social contextual factors?

What networks exist in LBS related to sustainable development?

Would you say there are any shared values regarding the UDP or the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP? Can you describe these?

How do norms influence decision making on the UDP and the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP?

Are norms supportive of sustainable development?

3. Questions on the UDP Process

During the UDP process, have there been any formal changes affecting local government? If yes, how have these changes impacted upon the UDP?

Have any gradual or informal changes taken place in local government and how have they impacted on the UDP process?

Does the political composition of LBS impact on the UDP in any way? If so how? Has this changed over the UDP process?

Who are the key stakeholders in the UDP process, (groups/individuals), how is this similar or different to previous planning processes?

Are there any specific individuals who play a key role in the UDP process? Inside/outside LBS.

How extensive is their involvement? What influences their involvement? What norms and values do stakeholders have?

How well-equipped are they to be involved? (time, understanding of process, issues, articulate communication etc).

Is there someone you would expect to be involved who is not? Who does not participate and why?

What does LBS do to ensure maximum support for participation?

Do insiders need support to understand better? Do external bodies? Does the public?

What interest or issue based groups are involved in the UDP process, why and how?

Which interests do you think receive the most attention and why?

Which groups share the same values? Where do they not share the same values and what is the result of this?

What informal networks and relationships influence the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP?

How would you describe the atmosphere in which the UDP discussions/feedback are conducted? (issues of trust, listening etc).

Tell me about levels of trust in the UDP process, Is this viewed differently by different groups?

Are you under any particular pressures in relation to working on the UDP?

Do you have a personal ambition for the UDP. Personal stamp. Do you feel that this is possible, that it is a shared common purpose, that it is supported and will succeed or has succeeded. What do you feel you have personally contributed to the UDP?

Tell me about the guidance documents and procedures for the UDP. How are these translated into practice?

What mechanisms do the guidance documents contain to support the incorporation of sustainable development into the UDP?

What factors support, contradict or undermine the policy guidance to include sustainable development in the UDP?

What other tools are there to ensure sustainable development enters the UDP?

How do you assess the role of Strategic Environmental Assessment in the UDP?

How stable is the local government arena in LBS, how does this compare to elsewhere?

Have there been any reviews or evaluations leading to improvements in local government, local planning policy or sustainable development in LBS or elsewhere?

What new activities, processes, people, training, education or communications influence the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP?

Can you identify any new ideas, trends or examples of learning by doing in the UDP process?

How would you assess the opportunity for institutional change and learning?

Can you give any examples of institutional learning where existing ways of doing things have been challenged or changed?

To what extent are there opportunities for change or doing things differently? Can you give examples? Do you have any views on the legitimacy of the UDP?

Are there examples of norms and values that have impacted the UDP process or brought any changes?

What changes would you make to the UDP process?

Do you think LBS responds well to change generally?

What are the key fora at which changes to the UDP are decided? (ie: committees etc) Who is making the decisions and where?

What is the rationale for decision making on the UDP and the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP? Is this supportive of sustainable development?

Where does the rationale come from and who supports, questions or opposes it?

What impact do political decisions have on the UDP process and the incorporation of sustainable development in the UDP?

What is the impact of non-conformance with LBS goals and with national government goals for sustainable development? Do they coincide or collide?

4. Additional Questions for those External to LBS

Have you actively supplied LBS with your views on the UDP and if so how?

How did the involvement start and what did it comprise of?

Who sets the framework, the boundaries for your involvement?

Who else is involved in the UDP consultation events? What is the capacity of the various stakeholders to engage in the UDP process? What support or constraints are there to engagement?

Who else participates? Why? How?

Which interests do you think receive the most attention and why?

During the preparation of the new UDP, have there been any important changes affecting your participation?

How have your views been received?

To what extent do you think LBS has the capacity to learn? 0 No capacity – 5 Great capacity

How satisfied are you with the UDP process? 0 Not satisfied – 5 Greatly satisfied

APPENDIX 5

Sustainability Checklist for Developers

Key Objectives	What contribution does this proposal make to:	Impact				
		−	−	0	+	+
Tackling Poverty & Creating Wealth	How will job opportunities be affected?					
	Will this provide job opportunities for local people?					
	Will this provide training for local people?					
	What is the affect on local shopping facilities?					
	Will this attract new business and investment?					
Life Chances	Facilities – young people, leisure, arts, health, care etc. (definition)					
	Will all types of communities benefit?					
	How will educational and school facilities benefit?					
Clean And Green	Design statement including secure by design					
	What is the impact on waste and recycling, use and provision, including:					
	Energy					
	Water					
	Air quality					
	Biodiversity					
	How will provision of open space (quality and amount) be affected?					
	What are the impacts in areas of deficiency?					
	Will the be significant impacts on amenity, and environment?					
	Will there be significant impact on the Thames?					
Housing	Will there be an affect on the quality of housing?					
	Will there be an affect on the choice of housing?					
	Will the provision of key worker housing be increased?					
	Will more affordable housing be provided?					
Transport	Reducing use of car					
	Improving public transport – especially at interchanges					
	Improving cycling and walking facilities					
	CCZ, tram and other projects					

APPENDIX 6

UDP Mapping: sections, objectives and policies. November 2002 First Draft

UDP Sec. No	UDP Section Title	UDP Sub title	Obj No	Objective wording	Pol No	Key Policy wording
1	Tackling Poverty and Encouraging Wealth Creation	Strengthening Enterprise and Creating Prosperity	1	To remove the barriers to employment and improve access to jobs and training opportunities for residents	1.1	Access to Employment Opportunities
			2	To create the conditions for wealth creation to succeed, and increase the number and range of employment opportunities available within the borough	1.2	Action Area Plans
					1.3	Preferred Office Locations
					1.4	Preferred Industrial Locations
					1.5	Mixed Use Developments
			3	To improve the range and quality of services available in the borough and ensure that these are easily accessible	1.6	Town Centre Statements
					1.7	Protecting the Range of Services Available
					1.8	Mixed Use in Town Centres
2	Life Chances	Preserving and Creating Community Assets	4 and	To reduce poverty, alleviate concentrations of deprivation and increase opportunities	2.1	Educational Establishments
			5 and	To allocate land for education, community and welfare services	2.2	Educational Deficiency
			6 too	To ensure that development improve local areas and address London's needs through planning agreements	2.3	Enhancement of Community Facilities
					2.4	Provision of Community Facilities
					2.5	Planning Obligations

3	Clean and Green	Protection and Improving Environmental Quality	7	To improve amenity and environmental quality	3.1	Environmental Effects
					3.2	Protection of Amenity
					3.3	Energy Efficiency
					3.4	Waste Reduction
					3.5	Water Efficiency
			8	To protect and enhance open spaces and areas of historic importance	3.6	Heritage Conservation
					3.7	Archaeology
					3.8	Metropolitan Open Land (MOL)
					3.9	Borough Open Land (BOL)
					3.10	Other Open Space
					3.11	Biodiversity
					3.12	Thames Special Policy Area
			9	To promote the efficient use of land, high quality developments and mixed uses	3.13	Sustainability Appraisal
					3.14	Quality in Design
					3.15	Urban Design
					3.16	Safety in Design
					3.17	Design Statements
					3.18	Tall Buildings
					3.19	Telecommunications and Control of Outdoor Advertisements

4	Housing	Creating Choice and Quality in Housing			4.1	Housing Density
					4.2	Residential Design Standards
					4.3	Combining Residential and Complementary Uses
			10	To provide more high quality housing of all kinds, particularly affordable housing	4.4	Affordable Housing Provision
					4.5	Loss of Residential Accommodation
					4.6	Mix of Dwellings
					4.7	Specific Housing Needs
					4.8	Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)
5	Transport	Improving Access and Convenience	11	To increase ease of movement by alternative modes of transport to the private car and to reduce congestion in and around Southwark by promoting the development of infrastructure of an efficient public transport, cycling and walking system	5.1	Transport Impacts
					5.2	Public Transport Programmes
					5.3	Pedestrians and Cyclists
					5.4	Infrastructure Contribution
			12	To reduce congestion and pollution within Southwark by minimizing the need to travel through increased densities at transport nodes and high public transport accessibility	5.5	Density
					5.6	Parking

APPENDIX 7

Content Analysis of November 2002 First Draft UDP

	Sustainable Development Objectives	Related Southwark Policies in UDP	No. policies	Index
1	Focus development at locations with current or planned good public transport links, spare capacity, and easy access by walking or cycling	1.2, 1.4, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.3, 3.12, 3.13, 3.18, 4.2, 4.6, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7	18	2.3
2	Reduce car dependency by improving transport choice.	1.4, 3.3, 3.12, 3.13, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7	12	2.7
3	Encourage mixed use development, with provision of key local services, and amenity	1.1, 1.4, 1.8, 2.4, 3.3, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7	25	2.4
4	Ensure more efficient use of natural resources, especially soil, mineral aggregates, water and energy.	3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	15	2.3
5	Protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats, and create new wildlife habitats	3.1, 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13	10	2.3
6	Maximise benefits of regeneration schemes for local people	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.10, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.18, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	37	2.5
7	Actively promote new clean technologies e.g. in sectors including the environmental economy, renewable energy and pollution control	3.3, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	12	2.3
8	Develop sustainable tourism industry	1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 2.3, 2.4, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13	13	2.0
9	Ensure inward investment projects are sustainable	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.3, 3.5, 3.10, 3.13, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	21	2.5
10	Improve river and canal ecological and amenity qualities, and seek more sustainable uses thereof	3.1, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13,	8	2.1
11	Protect, maintain, restore and enhance existing open spaces, create new open spaces, and ensure access to open spaces and wider public realm is maintained.	2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.11, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15 3.19,	12	2.5

12	Improve health, reduce health inequalities, and promote healthy living	2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 3.16, 5.7, 5.8	14	2.1
13	Reduce crime and fear of crime	2.3, 2.4, 3.10, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 4.8	7	2.0
14	Ensure access to good quality affordable housing for all	1.2, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8	13	2.6
15	Ensure, where possible, new development occurs on derelict, vacant and underused previously developed land and buildings, and that land is remediated as appropriate.	3.1, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15	7	2.1
16	Encourage communication between different local communities, in order to improve understanding of differing needs and concerns.	1.1, 1.8, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.12, 3.13	7	2.3
17	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and plan for further reductions to meet or exceed national climate change targets	3.3, 3.13, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	10	2.8
18	Improve air quality	3.3, 3.4, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	16	2.5
19	Reduce amount of waste requiring final disposal through waste minimisation, and increase proportion of waste reused, recycled, composted and recovered	3.3, 3.4, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15	5	2.2
20	Minimise ambient noise using best practice	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15	6	2.2
21	Substantially increase proportion of energy purchased and generated from renewable and sustainable resources	3.3, 3.11, 3.13,	3	2.7
22	Promote investment in and use of sustainable rail and water freight transport	1.2, 3.3, 3.13, 5.8	4	2.3
23	Create a climate for investment, with a modern employment structure based on a combination of indigenous growth and inward investment	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.5, 3.12, 3.13,	11	2.6
24	Promote high quality urban design in conjunction with sustainable construction principles and techniques	3.1, 3.2, 3.4, 3.5, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	27	2.1
25	Tackle poverty and social exclusion in areas of particular need	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.12, 3.13, 3.16, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.8,	20	2.3
26	Maintain and enhance the quality, integrity and distinctive character of the area	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10	41	2.3

		3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6		
27	Maintain and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets of the area.	1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.19	23	2.7
28	Avoid development that will impact on areas at high risk from flooding	2.5, 3.2, 3.5, 3.13	4	2.3
29	Increase tree cover as appropriate and ensure active and sustainable management of existing woodland	3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.13	7	2.1
30	Improve the image of the borough as part of an exemplary sustainable city	1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, 3.18, 3.19, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, 5.8	39	2.1
31	Actively challenge discrimination against all marginalized groups	1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.12, 3.13, 3.16, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8,	18	2.3
32	Ensure equal opportunities to employment and occupation	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.12, 3.13, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8	18	2.3
33	Respect people and value their contribution to society	1.1, 1.3, 1.8, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.2, 3.12, 3.13	11	2.3

Strength and quality in November 2002 First Draft UDP

Section	Policy	Index
Section One	**1.1**	**2.5**
Tackling Poverty and Wealth Creation	**1.2**	**2.4**
Strengthening Enterprise and Creating	1.3	2.2
Prosperity	1.4	2.4
(Overall Score = 2.5)	1.5	2.8
	1.6	2.4
	1.7	2.8
	1.8	2.4
Section Two	**2.1**	**2.5**
Life Chances	**2.2**	**2.9**
Preserving and Creating Community	**2.3**	**2.6**
Assets	**2.4**	**2.6**
(Overall Score = 2.6)	**2.5**	**2.4**
Section Three	**3.1**	**2.4**
Clean and Green	**3.2**	**2.5**
Protecting and Improving Environmental	**3.3**	**2.3**
Quality	**3.4**	**2.3**
	3.5	2.3
(Overall Score = 2.2)	3.6	2.3
	3.7	2.3
	3.8	2.1
	3.9	2.1
	3.10	2.2
	3.11	2.8
	3.12	2.2
	3.24	2.0
	3.25	2.1
	3.26	2.1
	3.27	2.3
	3.28	2.3
	3.29	2.0
	3.30	2.0
Section Four	**4.1**	**2.2**
Housing	**4.2**	**2.3**
Creating Choice and Quality in Housing	**4.3**	**2.4**
	4.4	2.4
(Overall Score = 2.4)	4.5	2.4
	4.6	2.6
	4.7	2.4
	4.8	2.3
Section Five	**5.1**	**2.5**
Transport	**5.2**	**2.5**
Improving Access and Convenience	**5.3**	**2.5**
	5.4	2.3
(Overall Score = 2.4)	5.5	2.5
	5.6	2.2
	5.7	2.6
	5.8	2.4

Sustainable Development Index - Key

0 = Unacceptable and/ or seriously threatens Sustainable Development Objective

1 = Does not comply with Sustainable Development Objective

2 = Complies with Sustainable Development Objective as covered by general statements

3 = Complies with Sustainable Development Objectives, provides detailed evidence and added value

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