



UNIVERSITY OF
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**Collaboration as a strategy for developing
cross-cutting policy themes: Sustainable
Development in the Wales Spatial Plan.**

*A thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the
University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to develop a useful analytical model for understanding the policy process for developing strategic cross-cutting policy themes, such as sustainable development.

The research is set within the context of a number of factors that have influenced the way in which public policy is formulated and delivered. Firstly, it is recognised that there is now a blurring of boundaries between the public, private, voluntary and non-government sectors in the development and delivery of public policy with the term governance emerging to describe this new style of government. The role of the state has changed from that of provider to enabler to the extent that the state is now one (albeit the most important) of a number of actors involved in the public policy process. Secondly, the changes described above, have been accompanied by the transfer of powers both upwards to the European Union, downwards to devolved administrations and outwards to agencies. Thirdly, these structural changes have been accompanied by a set of cross-cutting problems and issues that do not easily fit within the conventional boundaries and structures of administrative organisations or of professions. Sustainable development has been identified as a cross-cutting policy issue because its span of attention relates to economic, social and environmental concerns.

In this context, therefore, collaboration has become more central to public policy making and delivery. Collaboration is increasingly being recognised as a means of tackling those public policy problems that cut across functional administrative boundaries. It is also being recognised that collaboration provides an opportunity to build an integrated approach not only in terms of the development of policy but also in terms of the management of service delivery and improvements in outcomes. It is acknowledged, however, that whilst collaboration in policy making is of a practical concern, the process of collaboration is not well understood.

A number of approaches to public policy analysis are identified. Theories of collaborative policy making (within the generic heading of Policy Discourse) have been put forward by a number of writers but the actual process of undertaking and developing collaborative policy making has not been examined in any detail. This research is concerned with 'operationalising' the collaborative model within the context of public policy. It identifies the components of the collaborative policy

process and tests these in the context of sustainable development and spatial planning policy in Wales.

The research shows that the collaborative model can be used to analyse the public policy process in a policy environment that is characterised by cross-cutting policy themes involving a number of stakeholders. The findings do, however, highlight the ways in which the model can be reconfigured. Beyond this, the research confirms previous critiques of collaborative approaches related to the issue of power and the distorting effect that this can have on the public policy process. This particular aspect questions some of the fundamental assumptions under-pinning collaborative (planning) policy making i.e. that participants (stakeholders) are prepared to be 'open-minded' in defining a problem and addressing an issue; that they treat each other as equals; and that they work collaboratively in the process of problem / issue resolution.

It is, however, suggested that this weakness in the model does not mean that collaborative policy making should be abandoned merely because its theoretical basis is flawed in this one respect. The research demonstrates that it is possible to operationalise the collaborative model by identifying a number of phases or steps and use this model to analyse and manage the policy process where cross-cutting policy issues are being addressed.

The research concludes by recommending that the refinements to the collaboration model proposed by this research should be tested with other cross-cutting themes and that further work should be undertaken to address the phase of the collaboration model that it was not possible to test within the time-scale dictated by this study. It is also recommended that the term 'collaboration' should be reconsidered in favour of the term 'discursive' or 'participative' as one that more correctly describes the public policy process in an inter-organisational setting where the balance of power always ultimately lies in the democratic process.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION: SETTING THE RESEARCH CONTEXT AND AGENDA

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

To provide an overview of the thesis, outlining some of the key issues and setting out the aim and objectives.

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Research Context

1.3 Research Agenda

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

1.5 Research Strategy and Methodology

1.6 Structure of Thesis

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The following quotation summarises the context in which this research study is couched *'No single actor, public or private, has the knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic and diversified problems; no single actor has an overview sufficient to make the needed instruments effective; no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally'* (Kooiman, 2000, p.142).

Collaboration is increasingly becoming a feature of public policy making in the UK. In Wales, for example, the Welsh Assembly Government sees collaboration as being an important aspect in delivering its policy agenda (WAG, 2004a, 2005b, 2006). Collaboration is seen as a solution to those problems and issues that transcend functional and administrative boundaries; in public policy these have been identified as cross-cutting policy themes. Collaboration is also seen as a strategy that can be used to improve policy formulation and implementation in complex inter-organisational settings.

This thesis is about the use of collaboration as a tool of policy analysis and as a framework for practical action. More specifically, it is concerned with using a model of collaboration to analyse the policy process in the context of a cross-cutting policy theme in an inter-organisational setting. The term 'collaboration' or 'collaborative planning' has gained currency in a number of academic studies. In planning policy making, writers such as Healey (1997b) and Innes (1995) have advocated collaborative planning as an alternative theoretical approach to that based on the systems / scientific / technical – rational theories (McLoughlin, 1969; Chadwick, 1971; Faludi, 1973).

One of the issues increasingly recognised by governments are policy concerns that do not fit easily into the administrative responsibility of one government department, the so-called 'cross-cutting policy' themes (DETR, 1999b). Sustainable development is an example of such a cross-cutting policy theme. A number of writers such as Roberts (1994 & 1997); the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development (1999); and Rydin (2003) have suggested that more attention should be given to the operational processes

and procedures used in developing and implementing sustainable development policies, particularly at the regional scale and Rydin (op.cit.) has suggested that consideration should be given to the way in which the policy process is conducted. To meet these challenges it is necessary to look at the tools offered by the body of theoretical literature concerned with policy analysis and, in particular, at those theoretical approaches classified under the generic heading of the 'policy discourse approach' (Parsons, 1995). The policy discourse approach (sometimes referred to as the deliberative or interpretative approach) is helpful in meeting the challenges referred to above because the focus is on the ways in which views and values develop and how multiple stakeholder groups conceive problems and agendas. This approach allows attention to be focussed on the policy process rather than the product of the process. Theories concerned with collaborative or communicative policy (and planning) are included within the generic heading of the 'policy discourse approach' (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). These aspects are now considered in a little more detail.

1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

1.2.1 The political and policy drivers

It is increasingly being recognised that collaboration is central to public policy making, management and delivery. There is a blurring of the boundaries between the public, private, voluntary and non-government sectors. Modern government no longer possesses all the resources and knowledge needed to formulate and implement public policies. A characteristic of government in both the UK and elsewhere over the last 50 years has been the changing nature of the role of the state from that of provider to that of enabler. The term 'governance' has emerged to describe this new approach to public policy delivery in which government is but one of a number of actors involved and where the boundaries between the public, private and voluntary sectors have become less clear. This situation has been referred to as 'governing without government' (Rhodes, 1997, p.46).

Accompanying the process described above is another dimension relating to the transfer of powers both upwards to the European Union, downwards to

devolved administrations, and outwards to agencies. Rhodes (1997) has referred to this process as 'the hollowing out of the state' (ibid. p. 17). Within the UK, administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have received various levels of devolved power from the 'Westminster government'. A further factor that can be identified as having a bearing on the processes described above is the process known as 'globalisation' (Held et al., 1999). Globalisation is concerned with the growth of interconnectedness across a wide range of contemporary life, but at its core is the growth of international trade and the effect that this has on the economic policies of individual countries. This process has given rise to multi-layered or transnational governance (Richards & Smith, 2002).

In the light of the features described above, it can be seen that the government is one, albeit the most important, actor in the action space for public policy making. The problem solving capacity of governments is now dispersed amongst a number of organisations. Public policy formulation and implementation often requires the engagement of multiple actors. The focus is, therefore, on the inter-organisational dimension because the formulation and implementation of public policy increasingly involves different levels of government and agencies as well as interactions between the public, private and voluntary sectors. The issue is one of securing coordination and control in a highly fragmented and pluralistic policy and decision-making system.

These structural changes have been accompanied by a growing understanding of a set of problems and issues that do not easily fit within the conventional boundaries and structures of administrative organisations or of professions. These issues are complex and non-linear in the extent to which they relate across a wide range of areas of policy interest; they have become known as cross-cutting policies. Sustainable development can be regarded as a cross-cutting policy because its span of attention relates to economic, social and environmental issues. Sustainable development has other features that define it as a cross-cutting policy: - it is multi-organisational and involves a wide range of stakeholders and does not fit easily into the administrative responsibility of any one government department, agency or organisation; it

requires policy integration at the highest level; it has local, regional, national and global dimensions; it is also inter-generational in terms of its intended focus and impact; and it requires a collaborative effort to develop effective policy formulation and implementation. By its nature, therefore, sustainable development is a strategic policy because it takes a longer-term perspective; it provides direction; and it requires collaborative endeavours from a wide range of organisations to secure its realisation.

Policy formulation and implementation in such contexts requires more than a plan to achieve objectives; 'strategic plan-making is thus as much about process, about institutional design and mobilisation, as about the development of substantive policies ... 'strategic plan-making often involves developing this interrelational capacity' (Healey, 1997c, p.11). As already indicated, the policy processes relating to cross-cutting policies do not operate in linear way. They are interactive and consequently those approaches to policy analysis that are based on this 'top-down' or linear-view of the policy process are inappropriate in a world where interdependencies are evident and institutional and administrative boundaries have become blurred. In these situations a collaborative perspective offers better opportunities to resolve differences and generate shared visions of the future (Gray, 1989; Roberts & Bradley, 1991; Helling, 1998).

The UK Government has recognised the need for a more integrated approach to policy-making and implementation. For example, the White Paper *Modernising Government* (Cabinet Office, 1999, p.6) emphasised the need to ensure that '...policy making is more joined up and strategic...' The intention is that more horizontal working (as opposed to working vertically within 'departmental silos') is a more effective use of resources and secures better policy coordination and integration. However, this cannot be achieved without inter-organisational collaboration.

In a similar vein, the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), in its strategic agenda for the Second Assembly', set out its programme for the period 2003-2007 - '*Wales: A Better Country*' (WAG, 2003a). Collaborative governance is

now seen as an important feature of service delivery in Wales. This approach has been reinforced by WAG's 'vision for public services' - *Making Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales* (WAG, 2004a), *Delivering the Connections: From Vision to Action* (WAG, 2005b) and *Beyond the Boundaries. Citizen Centred Local Services* (WAG, 2006). In terms of addressing cross-cutting policy issues, such as sustainable development, the Welsh Assembly Government has identified the Wales Spatial Plan as the principal policy instrument for giving spatial expression to its sustainable development policies.

Collaborative working, therefore, is axiomatic to the successful implementation of cross-cutting policies and it is also a strategy that can be used to improve governance and formulate policies in complex inter-organisational settings (Gray, 1985 & 1989). Collaboration, therefore, is clearly of practical concern but the process of collaboration is not well expressed or understood.

1.2.2 The theoretical drivers

It is against the context outlined above that this thesis is written. The shift from the 'providing' to the 'enabling' form of governance and the parallel shift from unitary to devolved forms of government have created the conditions for collaboration as a means of formulating and implementing policy and for service delivery. It is noticeable that much of the theoretical work on collaboration in the inter-organisational context has been undertaken by American writers, probably reflecting the federal nature of politics and policy making in the United States. In contrast in the UK, where until comparatively recently, a more unitary system of government and policy making has existed little attention was given to policy making in the inter-organisational context.

In the UK, Healey (1997b) has been the major contributor to the debate in the context of land use planning in suggesting that collaborative planning can improve the legitimacy and quality of decision-making and building capacity amongst stakeholders. In a wider political and policy theoretical context there is a recognition that '...rise of a vocabulary of governance ... brings in new

sites, new actors and new themes' (Hajer & Wagenaar, p.3, 2003). Hajer & Wagenaar point out that political and policy analysis needs to focus on '... the tensions and conflicts generated by the impact of the newer 'networked' forms of policymaking and political mobilisation...' (ibid. p. 5). In terms of a theoretical time-line there is a move away from the traditional 'top-down' analysis towards an extension or deepening of the 'bottom-up' approaches but with more emphasis given to the role of policy actors and the dialogue that takes place in an inter-organisational setting. It is the recognition of interdependence and the fact that individual policy actors cannot solve problems by their actions alone that gives rise to collaboration.

Much of the theoretical work in public policy in the UK has revolved around exploring and explaining the decision-making process (e.g. Howlett & Ramesh, 1995 & 2003; Parsons, 1995). These approaches were useful where there was a dependence on one organisation for policy formulation and implementation. However, in situations characterised by the inter-organisational dimension for policy formulation and implementation (governance), the approaches referred to above are limited because they do not allow consideration to be given to the way in which policy is developed and implemented and, in particular, the means by which information and knowledge is acquired, understood and developed into a policy framework. The collaborative theoretical framework allows attention to be given to the complexity and interrelation of many of the problems that governments are now required to address through the actions of those involved in the policy process.

Whilst Healey (1997b) has led the way amongst British planning academics in advocating the collaborative approach to plan making, there have been no attempts to set out or examine the actual components of the collaborative policy making process. Indeed, writers on collaboration and collaborative planning (Harris, 2002 and Mantysalo, 2002) have questioned whether in its present state collaboration is a theory or merely a description of a process. Moreover, Sullivan & Skelcher (2002, p.10) have suggested that '...the collaborative agenda for public purpose has been both under-theorised and

overlooked'. In America, Barbara Gray (1985 & 1989) has attempted to define the components of the collaborative process in the form of a number of phases and steps. Building on earlier work (McCann, 1983), Gray suggests that the process-oriented approach to the study of collaboration can be used in situations of resolving conflict and advancing shared visions. There have been attempts to use Gray's approach in the context of conflict resolution (e.g. Selin & Chavez, 1995; Bentrup, 2001; Margerum, 1999 & 2002); however, in terms of the use of collaboration as a visioning process, there have been comparatively fewer studies - in America (Roberts & Bradley, 1991; Helling, 1998) and none in the United Kingdom.

1.3 THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Reflecting on the context and the issues discussed in the preceding section, there are a number of matters that need to be addressed and investigated in relation to the political, policy and theoretical drivers that have been identified. Collaborative policymaking is now becoming embedded in public policy. At the heart of collaborative approaches to policy-making are the processes of inclusiveness, communication, openness, trust and consensus building. However, there have been no attempts in the UK to examine and explore the components of collaboration in the public policy making (visioning) process. This research will, therefore, disaggregate the components of collaboration and relate these to the policy process.

This research will contribute to the understanding of the public policy process through the 'collaborative' lens and assess the value of such an approach in relation to the formulation of cross-cutting policy themes. It will also meet the challenges, referred to earlier, suggested by writers such as Roberts (1994 & 1997), the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development (1999) and Rydin (2003) to examine the operational processes and procedures used in developing and implementing sustainable development policies at a regional or meso-governmental scale.

The value of collaboration to public policy making will be tested by means of a case study selected to represent the development of a cross-cutting policy

within a strategic policy framework. Sustainable development is selected as an example of a cross-cutting policy because it is a multi-dimensional policy theme requiring the application of 'holistic' or 'joined-up government' to secure effective policy formulation and implementation. The case study is the Wales and the Wales Spatial Plan. This has been selected because the devolution settlement imposed the consideration of sustainable development as a statutory duty on the National Assembly. The Wales Spatial Plan is selected because it is regarded (by the Assembly Government) as the spatial expression of the Assembly Government's policies and it is a meso-level plan and, as such, will meet the call to look, in particular, at regional level systems and administrative structures and procedure and their effectiveness in delivering sustainable development.

1.4 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

Reflecting on the discussion above, the aim of this thesis is **to develop a useful analytical model for understanding the policy process for developing strategic cross-cutting policy themes, such sustainable development.** The following research objectives support this aim: -

1. To examine why changing structures of government and the emergence of a new appreciation of cross-cutting policy themes are requiring a changed approach to policy development and delivery.
2. To establish why sustainable development can be considered to be an example of a cross-cutting policy theme.
3. To examine theories of policy analysis and, in particular, identify whether there is a model of collaboration that can provide a suitable framework for considering the policy process in relation to cross-cutting policy themes.
4. To assess the appropriateness and value of the collaboration model in explaining the policy process in relation to collaborative policy making and sustainable development policy formulation in Wales.

5. To assess the effectiveness of a collaborative approach to public policy making in terms of its wider application to similar cross-cutting policy themes.

1.5 RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY

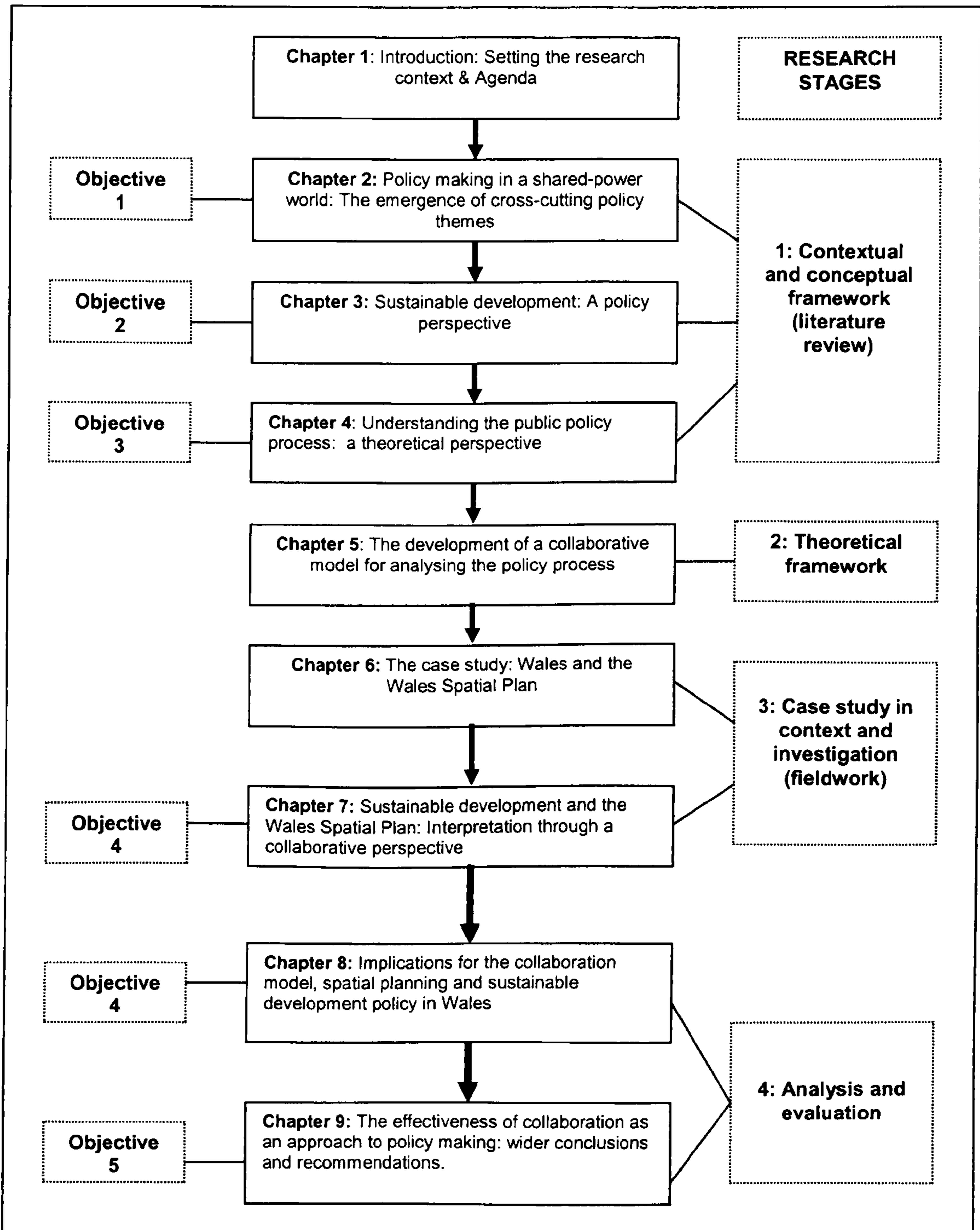
The research strategy and methodology is dictated by the problem under investigation and the body of theory that underpins the phenomena that is the subject of the study (Robson, 2002). A case study-based approach has been adopted as the core methodology for this research because the nature of the subject requires an approach that allows the focus of interest to be on peoples' experiences within a highly contextualised setting (Yin, 2003). The research methodology is also dictated by having to deal with a variety of evidence from a number of policy actors.

The research strategy has four components: -

1. Contextual and conceptual framework: this component (the literature review) is defined by the first three objectives of the research and identifies the political, policy and theoretical drivers that influence the scope and direction of the study.
2. Theoretical framework: this component is informed by the review of the theoretical literature and, in particular, on collaborative models of policy analysis. The theoretical framework, which has been devised, provides the link between the contextual aspects of the study and the empirical work that leads to the conclusions.
3. Case study in context and investigation: this component sets the case study within its geographic, political and administrative context. It also provides for the empirical investigation of the collaborative plan-making process.
4. Analysis and evaluation: this component is defined by Objectives 4 and 5 and meets the overall aim of the study. An assessment is provided of the value of the analytical framework in terms of the case study and its potential for a wider application to other cross-cutting policy themes.

Figure 1.1 illustrates the research strategy and relates it to the structure of the thesis. Each of the four stages of the research are linked to the particular chapter outputs and, in turn, these are related to the detailed objectives that support the overall research aim.

Fig. 1.1 Research Strategy and Structure of Thesis



Source: Author

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THESIS

This first chapter introduces the thesis by explaining the research context from both the political and policy perspectives and sets these aspects within a theoretical context. The aim and objectives of the thesis arise out of this discussion and the research strategy and methodology is outlined to meet these and address the subject of the study.

Chapter 2 is concerned with setting the research in its broad political and policy context by explaining how changes in the nature of the state (the 'hollowing out' process) have impacted upon the public policy process. Paralleling these changes in the institutional structure, is the recognition that some problems that governments are now required to address are complex and do not fall within the competence of any single administrative department, the so-called 'cross-cutting' policy issues. These two aspects of public policy have resulted in collaborative working becoming more evident in public policy making and implementation.

Chapter 3 identifies sustainable development as a cross-cutting policy theme. It looks at the intrinsic features of sustainable development that define its status as a cross-cutting policy and one of the reasons why collaboration is seen as an important aspect of policy formulation and implementation.

Recognising that there is a changed institutional structure and an increasing awareness that there are some policy issues (cross-cutting policies) that cannot be resolved without collaboration, Chapter 4 explores the literature of public policy analysis to identify a suitable body of theory that can be used to analyse public policy making in a policy world characterised by multiple stakeholders and cross-cutting policies. A body of literature, variously known as 'discourse, deliberative, interpretative' is identified as being appropriate because it recognises the inter-organisational dimension which is characteristic of political and administrative structures classified under the term governance. Within these broad generic headings, the body of literature known as collaborative policy making (planning) is explored as it is judged to

offer a means of understanding policy making in the inter-organisational setting. In particular, it allows the focus of analysis to be on the ways in which multi-stakeholder groups conceive problems and agendas and the ways in which these values develop.

Chapter 5 builds on the conclusions of the previous Chapter and develops a model for the evaluation of the policy process. This Chapter introduces the rationale for using a model of collaboration to analyse the policy process. It also provides the justification for adopting the case study approach and the reasons for selecting Wales and the Wales Spatial Plan as the case study. This Chapter also sets out the detail of the case study research methodology.

Chapter 6 describes the case study in the context of devolved power to the National Assembly for Wales and with the policy direction that has emerged post devolution. The Wales Spatial Plan is identified as the key policy document for looking at sustainable development policy in Wales because of the role that the Assembly Government has accorded this Plan in translating into practice its sustainable development duty. The Assembly Government view the Wales Spatial Plan as a means for delivering a wide range of Assembly programmes and policies, including sustainable development and providing a framework for collaborative working and decision taking across sectoral and functional boundaries.

Chapter 7 examines the policy process involved in producing the Wales Spatial Plan through the lens of the collaborative model developed in Chapter 5. The investigation explores details of the policy process from the perspective of the stakeholders engaged by the Assembly Government to manage and advise on aspects of the Wales Spatial Plan.

Chapter 8 considers each phase of the model in the context of their implications for spatial planning and sustainable development in Wales. This Chapter concludes by identifying a number of issues that have been identified in the case study and have implications for the consideration of similar cross-cutting themes in other collaborative policy forums.

Chapter 9 brings together the final conclusions of the research. It recognises that the scope of this research has only allowed a partial testing of the collaboration model. Nevertheless, there is sufficient evidence to support further work in applying and extending this work in collaborative policy analysis to other similar cross-cutting policy themes with a view to developing both a tool for policy analysis and a practical tool for engaging stakeholder groups in collaborative policy making. At the present moment it is reasonable to agree with writers such as Harris (2002) and Mantysalo (2002) that collaboration is a description of a process rather than a theory. However, by seeking to identify the components of the collaborative process (as this research has done), there is an opportunity to build a model that is capable of being tested and refined. Such a model not only assists policy makers devise effective fora for collaborative policy making but it also contributes to the debate in collaborative policy making theory where there is a need to understand the contribution that the various components in the collaboration process make to the process and the sensitivities that attach to those components.

In the wider context of the research agenda in public policy making, this study is seen as providing an insight into the policy making process where cross-cutting policy themes are involved and also terms of attempting to move the debate on collaborative policy making (planning) from a description of a process to one where the components of that process can be identified and be tested for sensitivities. It is only in this way that it will be possible to establish whether there is any theoretical basis to the claims made for collaborative policy making (planning).

CHAPTER 2:

POLICY-MAKING IN A SHARED-POWER WORLD: THE EMERGENCE OF CROSS-CUTTING POLICY THEMES.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

To examine why changing structures of government and the emergence of a new appreciation of cross-cutting policy themes are requiring a changed approach to policy development and delivery.

2.1 Introduction

2.2 From government to governance

2.3 Factors influencing changes in the policy-making environment

2.4 Recognition of the complexity of policy issues

2.5 Conclusion

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to set out the contextual factors that impact upon the public policy process.

This contextual setting can be characterised by a number of features that include a widening of the number of policy actors in the public policy arena (now characterised by the term 'governance'); the process of globalisation (which is characterised by interconnectedness); and the transfer of some of the powers of the State both upwards and downwards to other organisations. In parallel to these institutional changes is recognition that many public policy issues require a cross-cutting policy approach because their nature is non-linear and multi-dimensional.

Public policy involves a formal decision-making process that is taken by the State. That decision-making process clearly has implications for the citizens or civil society subject to the jurisdiction of the State. Public policy, according to Dye (1995, p.2) 'is whatever governments choose to do or not to do'. The analysis of public policy is concerned with the way in which policy is made or implemented. This subject will be explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

In the years after the Second World War and up until the 1980s the main style of government was the so-called 'Westminster model' (Rhodes, 1997; Marsh et al, 2001). In this view of government, the government of the day was the principal public policy actor who would decide on a particular policy and utilise the civil service to draft the legislation and implement policy once it had been passed through the political process. However, from the mid-1980s onwards this picture of government changed. Now, the government of the day has a less dominant (or top-down) role in the public policy process. It is still the most important policy actor but there are now other actors involved in the policy process, particularly in the implementation stages. As a consequence, the boundaries between the public, the private and the voluntary sectors in different aspects of the policy process are less well defined (Hirst, 2000). This situation reflects what is now termed 'governance'- a situation that is characterised by a wider range of policy actors in the public policy arena.

Whilst the policy arena was becoming more populated in the changed political and administrative environment known as governance, there were parallel changes taking place in other areas that were also having an impact on the way in which governments operated in policy making and implementation. Two aspects are identified for brief consideration because they have altered the way in which governments operate, namely, the process of globalisation (Held et al, 1999) and the transfer of power both upwards (e.g. to the European Union) and downwards (e.g. to devolved administrations within the UK) – the so-called ‘hollowing out of the state’ (Rhodes, 1997).

These changes in the style of government and the changing role of the state have been manifest in the fragmentation of the policy process. This, in turn, has given rise to problems associated with ensuring coordination of policy, particularly in the policy-making stages where there are dangers that policy may be developed in one area without taking into account the unintended implications that an action may have for other areas of public policy (Jervis & Richards, 1997). Also, there has been a growing recognition that some policy areas are inherently cross-cutting, because their span of interest and action covers a wide range of government administrative responsibilities (DETR, 1999b). The problems that cross-cutting policies are called to address cannot be tackled by a single department or agency acting alone. These processes, referred to above, have encouraged forms of collaborative governance as a means for formulating and implementing public policy on cross-cutting issues (Huxham, 2000; Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002).

Each of the aspects discussed in the preceding paragraphs are now considered in more detail to provide a context into which the research can be placed.

2.2 FROM GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNANCE

As indicated above, from the end of the Second World War, in 1945, until the early 1980s successive UK governments maintained direct responsibility for a range of policy areas, including health, education, environment and

transportation, social security, and law and order. They also took increasing responsibility for the management of the economy through fiscal and later monetary policies and increasingly intervened in particular sectors of the economy through direct ownership (the nationalised industries) and through sector and regional (locational) policies (Hogwood, 1992).

The style of government of this period has been described as the 'Westminster model' and is characterised by parliamentary sovereignty; strong cabinet government; accountability through elections; majority party control of the executive (i.e. Prime minister, cabinet and the civil service); doctrine of ministerial responsibility; and non-political civil service. (Rhodes, 1997, p.5; Richards & Smith, 2002). In this style of government, policy was made within government departments, where considerable expertise existed. Civil servants were influential in this process, being concerned with both policy-making and implementation. This style of government fitted the classic Weberian model where relationships between politicians and civil servants were clearly defined; there was a clear organisational hierarchy of responsibility with an emphasis on control by means of a regulatory and administrative framework. Clearly defined procedures were established to ensure uniformity and neutrality in the application of the machinery of government. From this policy environment there developed a public sector ethos that saw civil servants as impartial policy advisors to Ministers (see Parsons, 1998, cited in Richards & Smith, 2002, p.45).

It is not surprising, therefore, that policy analysts saw the policy process as being comprised of a number of stages that in many ways reflected the environment described in the preceding paragraph. Each stage in the policy process followed a logical order from initiation to formulation to implementation and finally through the process of monitoring and review. This model of policy analysis is discussed in Chapter 4.

The 1980s and 1990s saw a transformation from the style of government described above, where government was essentially the only policy actor, to one that saw the role of government in policy formulation and implementation

becoming shared with other organisations in a wider policy arena. This process of change was accompanied by a changing view of the role of the state and an ascendancy of neo-liberalist views of economic management. In this era of government there are more actors involved in the policy process and the boundaries between the private, public and voluntary sectors are less well defined. Governments operate in a more complex and fragmented political and administrative environment. This 'new' environment is termed 'governance'. Governance describes the changing nature of the state, from one of provider to enabler – 'governing without government' (Rhodes, 1997. p. 46).

The term 'governance' has grown in usage and popularity by academics and commentators; some writers e.g. Bache and Flinders (2004), argue that the term is often '...used loosely and perhaps inappropriately' (ibid. p.35). Bache and Flinders (p.35) offer a broad definition of the term governance which entails '...the increased participation of non-governmental actors in public policy making and delivery. The term is used to imply an appreciation of an increasingly complex state-society relationship in which network actors are prominent in policy-making and delivery and the state's primary role is policy co-ordination rather than direct policy control'. In a similar vein, Pierre (2000) attempts to clarify the term by suggesting that governance has a dual meaning, '...on the one hand it refers to the empirical manifestations of state adaptation to its external environment as it emerges in the late twentieth century' and 'on the other hand, governance also denotes a conceptual or theoretical representation of co-ordination of social systems and, for the most part, the role of the state in that process' (ibid. p.3)

Thus in the UK policy arena of the 21st Century, the boundaries of government are increasingly blurred and the activity of government is now more of a shared process. Governance, therefore, is increasingly concerned with managing inter-organisational networks. 'Interdependence, fragmentation, the limits to central authority, agency autonomy and attenuated accountability are all features of governance' (Rhodes, 1997, p.55). From another perspective, Osborne and Gaebler (1992, p.35) have pointed to this change in the role of

government as from that of provider to that of enabler of public service delivery – ‘entrepreneurial governments have begun to shift to systems that separate policy decisions (steering) from service delivery (rowing)’. Governance can therefore be regarded as entailing a fragmentation of the mono-centric state; it reflects the fact that there are a number of centres of power that operate at different levels. This fragmentation of the role of the state has resulted in a drive towards a more negotiated order with the development of consensus building or collaboration as part of the policy process (Healey, 1997b; Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002).

2.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING CHANGE IN THE POLICY-MAKING ENVIRONMENT

The blurring of roles and responsibilities in this new era of governance has been accompanied by other changes, which have had varying impacts on the policy process. These are, namely, the process known as globalisation and the transfer of powers both upwards and downwards to other forms of government (Rhodes, 1997, p.53, refers to this process as ‘hollowing out of the state’.

Globalisation is a term which has attracted considerable debate about its meaning. According to Held et al (1999), there is no precise definition of the term ‘globalisation’, ‘... Globalisation reflects a widespread perception that the world is rapidly being moulded into a shared space by economic and technological forces and that developments in one region of the world can have profound consequences for life chances of individuals or communities on the other side of the globe’ (Held et al, 1999, p.1).

However, there is more agreement about some of its characteristics, principally its concern with interconnectedness and the loss of sovereignty in some areas of government activity. For example, the growth of new communications technologies and the parallel growth in international trade are two aspects of globalisation. Another aspect relates to economic policy. For instance, the UK government is increasingly influenced by the international agreements on world trade, the G8 group of countries, the EU and economic

policies pursued in the United States, especially in terms of interest rates and economic growth. While, in the field of environmental policy, the EU now plays a significant role in determining the UK government's legislative programme.

According to Held, another feature of the process of globalisation is the '...widening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual' (ibid. p.2) Globalisation is an ongoing process; it is multi-dimensional but perhaps its core element is economic change arising from the growth of international trade, liberalisation of capital and the increasing dominance of multi-national companies. This process has also been accompanied by innovations in information technology, particularly with infrastructure developments in computing and telecommunications that have permitted information to be transmitted more cheaply and quickly than ever before.

The process of globalisation has given rise to multi-layered or transnational governance (Richards & Smith, 2002). This can be seen in the form of international cooperation on international problems such as through the G8 organisation of leading economic states and through international agreements (such as Kyoto) that are concerned with global warming and climate change. Another form of multi-layered governance is the creation of permanent transnational organisations, such as the United Nations and associated organisations, such as those dealing with world trade (World Trade Organisation) and finance (World Bank).

Globalisation, therefore, is a complex issue and is a substantial subject for study in its own right. However, a brief reference has been made to it here to illustrate that public policy decisions are increasingly being made within international policy frameworks that have clear policy implications for the nation state. This too is part of the process of increasing the number of actors in the policy arena.

Reflecting both moves towards governance and globalisation is the phrase coined by Rhodes (1997, p. 17) 'the hollowing out of the state'. Rhodes identifies four aspects that are characterised by this term: - 'privatisation and limiting the scope and forms of public intervention; the loss of functions by central and local government departments to alternative delivery systems (such as agencies); the loss of functions by British government to European Union institutions; and limiting the discretion of public servants through the new public management, with its emphasis on managerial accountability, and clearer political control through a sharper distinction between politics and administration' (ibid.1997, p.53-54). It is those aspects that are concerned with the loss of functions upwards to the European Union and downwards to devolved administrations that are of particular relevance to this study. Rhodes refers to this as 'differentiated polity' – functional and institutional specialisation and the fragmentation of policies and politics' (ibid. p.7).

At the European level there has been an increase in the scope and depth of policy making by the European Union. It is through reforms such as the Single European Act and the Maastricht Treaty (1993) that this process of 'Europeanisation' has increased the competence of the EU in policy matters that were, hitherto, in the domain of the nation state (Marks et al., 1995, cited in Richards & Smith, 2002). For example, in the fields of agriculture, trade, fishing and competition the EU is now predominantly the competent authority. In such policy areas as the environment, transport, social policy and regional policy the EU shares responsibility with national governments. As Richards & Smith point out '...the key premise of multi-level governance is that authority has dispersed away from centralised nation-states, and that different decisions are made at different levels of government' (ibid. p. 164). Thus, governance operates at multiple levels and occurs through a negotiated order; as Richards & Smith point out 'policy-making is consequently about networks' (ibid. 2002, p.165).

Whilst Europeanisation has resulted in the transfer of some powers to a 'higher' authority, there has been a process, since 1998, of transferring some powers from the UK Government to devolved administrations in Scotland,

Wales and Northern Ireland. Devolution is about creating an elected body that is subordinate to the Westminster Parliament where certain powers have been transferred. According to Bogdanor (2001, p.2) '... devolution may be defined as consisting of three elements: the transfer to a subordinate elected body, on a geographical basis, of functions at present exercised by ministers and Parliament. These functions may be either legislative, the power to make laws, or executive, the power to make secondary laws – statutory instruments, orders, and the like – within a primary legal framework still determined by Westminster'.

To illustrate this point, in the context of this research, Wales achieved executive and administrative devolution under the 1998 Government of Wales Act, whereas Scotland achieved legislative devolution. The National Assembly for Wales was granted a wide range of administrative and secondary legislative powers and the Act specified (Schedule 2) the functions that were to be transferred from the Westminster Government (Chaney, Hall & Pithouse, 2001; Pilkington, 2002,). This meant that the National Assembly for Wales became a policy-making institution rather than a legislative body – it cannot consider primary legislation only 'secondary' or regulatory legislation. However, the Government of Wales Act 2006 has revisited the powers given to the National Assembly under the 1998 Act and now gives the Assembly limited legislative powers (amongst other things) with the agreement of the Westminster Parliament; this issue is considered in more detail in Chapter 6.

This 'new' policy environment characterised by globalisation and the transfer of powers both upward and downward, means that policy-making is becoming increasingly pluralistic and with that the number of actors in the policy arena is increasing. These trends have all increased the fragmentation of the policy process. However, it would be wrong to suggest that power has moved from the centre '...we would suggest that power within the British political system remains asymmetrically distributed in favour of the core executive...' (Richards & Smith, 2002, p.272). What has happened is that the policy process is now a more shared process than it was in the past. As a consequence of this, there is a disaggregation of the policy and decision-

making processes that, in turn, creates issues for policy coordination and integration (joined-up government).

2.4 RECOGNITION OF THE COMPLEXITY OF POLICY ISSUES

Whilst the structure of government in the UK has been under-going a metamorphosis towards governance, the nature of the problems that governments are now required to address has also been changing, with many issues now recognised as being beyond the traditional boundaries of scope, content and administrative responsibility and, therefore, not so clearly defined as in the past. According to Trist (1983), these issues are located within the 'inter-organisational domain' and cannot be tackled by one organisation acting alone. These so-called cross-cutting policies were not amenable to solutions that would emerge from a government organised along vertical departmental lines – often referred to as 'policy silos'. Some writers (e.g. Perri 6, 1997; Jervis & Richards, 1997) recognised that a fundamental change in the architecture of the system of public policy formulation and implementation was required to deliver effective responses to the increasingly complex problems faced by society.

These problems had long been recognised. In the 1970s, Anthony King (1975) recognised, having examined government policy and its reaction to events in the 1960s and 1970s, that the range of problems that governments were required to address has increased and its capacity to deal with these problems has decreased. However, when the Labour Party came to power in 1997 there was a renewed emphasis on tackling those policy issues that did not recognise the administrative boundaries of government both horizontally (i.e. across departments) and vertically (i.e. between different levels of government). The new administration was committed to what it termed 'holistic government' – joined up policy and service delivery (Perri 6, 1997).

According to Pollitt (2003), 'Joined up government is a phrase which denotes the aspirations to achieve horizontally and vertically coordinated thinking and action. Through this coordination it is hoped that a number of benefits can be achieved. First, situations in which different policies undermine each other

can be eliminated. Second, better use can be made of scarce resources. Third, synergies may be created through the bringing together of different stakeholders in a particular policy field or network. Fourth, it becomes possible to offer citizens seamless rather than fragmented access to a set of related services' (ibid, 2003, p.35).

The importance of joined-up working was formally recognised in the 1999 White Paper *Modernising Government*, which emphasised, inter alia, the need to ensure that 'policy making is more joined up and strategic' (Cabinet Office, 1999). Holistic government called for changes in policy formulation and implementation. It had a clear resonance in the field of social policy tackling related issues such as sickness, unemployment, poverty, and crime; while in spatial policy urban regeneration was linked to social and community development. As Perri 6 states 'the new agenda for government in the twenty-first century is becoming clear. At its heart is the idea and goal of ever more holistic government, built as much from the bottom up as from the top down.' (ibid, 1997, p.70). Holistic government required a shift from departmental hierarchies toward horizontal working between government departments and agencies. It required a breaking down of 'departmental silos' and encouragement of extra-departmental thinking.

An example of joined up policies can be seen in policies aimed at tackling social exclusion, where there is a need to recognise the interrelationships between such diverse policy areas as, for example, health, education, housing and transport. In another example of joined-up policy, Rhodes (2000) differentiates between *area-based programmes or action zones* (26 in health and 25 in education) linking central and local government, health authorities, the private and voluntary sectors and *group-focussed programmes*, such as that expressed in the programme 'better government for older people'. Holistic government also requires the development of partnerships and collaborative methods of policy formulation and implementation e.g. Community Safety. The Prime Minister, writing in the context policies to address social exclusion, noted that that 'joined-up problems need joined-up solutions' (Blair, 1998; cited in Knox, 2003). At the heart of the debate is the need to secure more

effective and efficient delivery of policy outcomes which are difficult to achieve in a governmental system that is characterised by functionally structured departments and it concluded that ‘...resources are being wasted due to insufficient collaboration between agencies...’ (Knox, 2003, p. 20).

Joined-up or cross-cutting policies have also been referred to as the so-called ‘wicked issues’ (see for instance, Williams, P & Thomas, A, 2004). As a class of policy they exhibit a number of characteristics (ibid, pp.1 & 2): - they do not relate to fixed organisational, jurisdictional or professional boundaries; their resolution depends on a wide range of stakeholders; the nature of the problem is complex and non-linear; they are not amenable to optimal solutions or ‘quick fixes’; and they are not capable of being managed by single agencies acting autonomously. In this context, Williams & Thomas (op.cit) were referring to Sustainable Development as an example of such a policy, because it required collaborative action from a wide range of public, private and voluntary agencies, working at a number of levels, to achieve policy formulation and Implementation.

Another study (DETR, 1999b) provided a similar perspective on the characteristics of a cross-cutting policies. In the context of the study referred to, cross-cutting policies would exhibit the following characteristics: - the issues would involve a multiplicity of agencies at both central and local level; some of the issues are heavily professionalised; different Whitehall departments, each with a different relationship to locality, lead on different issues, creating a complexity of relationships between the centre and the locality; all cases involve citizen participation as both a means and an end; some of the issues involve ‘arms’ length public bodies; and they offer scope for more preventative action.

The characteristics of cross-cutting policies have implications for the way in which government is organised and, more particularly, in the way in which policy is formulated and implemented. This class of policy requires the development of collaborative governance to secure effective policy

development and implementation. It is for this reason that collaboration as a policy process is explored in this research.

2.5 CONCLUSION

It was noted that changes in the style of government and the changing role of the state together with a fragmentation of the policy process have led to a situation where the boundaries of government has become blurred and the activity of government is now more of a shared process. The term governance describes this situation where there is an increase in the number of policy actors involved in the public policy process. It was also noted that the problems which governments are now required to address have also changed with the result that many public policy issues do not fit easily within the boundaries of the administrative responsibility or jurisdiction of single government departments because the scope and content of policy are more wide ranging. These policy issues were classed as cross-cutting policies because they were not amenable to solutions from a government organised along vertical lines. Joined up or holistic government became the mantra of the Labour Government when it came to power in 1997.

It was also noted that the problem solving capacity of governments is now dispersed amongst a number of organisations (the hollowing out of the state). It is in this context of interrelatedness and interdependencies that collaborations are increasingly being seen as a solution to those problems that cut across functional boundaries (Gray, 1985 & 1989). For cross-cutting policies such as sustainable development, where boundaries in scope and content are wide, the inter-organisational dimension is an important consideration because of the way in which problems and solutions are linked between sectors, activities, agencies and individuals (Ravetz, 2000). Inter-organisational co-ordination is a means of managing interdependencies that require joint action. Collaboration can provide a logical link between the elements of the inter-dependence.

The next Chapter explores those aspects of sustainable development that define it as a cross-cutting policy.

CHAPTER 3: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A POLICY PERSPECTIVE.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

To establish why sustainable development can be considered to be an example of a cross-cutting policy theme.

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Defining sustainable development

3.3 Representation of sustainable development

3.4 The principles of sustainable development

3.5 An outline of U K Sustainable Development Policy

3.6 Sustainable development as a cross-cutting policy

3.7 Conclusion

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of sustainable development entered the public policy agenda in the late 1980s and has grown in significance during the 1990s and into the new millennium. In many ways it has become a shibboleth, almost a mantra for policy makers in central, devolved and local governments, involved in environmental, social and economic policy making. Sustainable development was seen as providing a framework for looking at the relationships between the environment, the economy and society (Healey & Shaw, 1993). The concept of sustainable development has generated considerable debate in terms of its meaning and how it can be applied in a wide variety of policy fields, consequently it is not surprising that it has spawned a vast amount of literature (e.g. Pezzoli, 1997).

This Chapter picks up the themes of the preceding chapter and in particular the trend towards policy making in a more diverse or shared power world and, more specifically, the increasing emphasis given to collaborative policy activity, to 'joined-up' or holistic government and to the emergence of so-called cross-cutting policies. This Chapter is concerned with sustainable development as an example of a cross-cutting policy. It will be shown that the intrinsic features of sustainable development define its nature in the field of public policy. It is the cross-sectoral nature of sustainable development that puts it at the centre of joined-up government. This will be demonstrated through consideration of the elements of the recent UK Sustainable Development Strategy '*Securing the future - delivering UK sustainable development strategy*' (DEFRA, 2005a). However, the strategic nature of sustainable development requires horizontal integration between government departments as well as vertical integration and coordination between the various levels of government. Inevitably, some consideration has to be given to the emergence of sustainable development on the public policy stage to provide a context, but it is in terms of the key themes and principles that underlie the concept of sustainable development that attention has to be focussed because these features define its status as a cross-cutting policy and one of the reasons why collaboration is seen as an important aspect of policy formulation and implementation.

In essence, this Chapter addresses two questions: – What is sustainable development and what makes it a strategic cross-cutting policy theme?

3.2 DEFINING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The concept of sustainable development can be traced back to the 1970s. As Pezzoli (1997, p.550) points out, ‘... the 1970s do mark a turning point in the use sustainability as a concept to guide development’. Concern for the environment has a long history but it was the connection between resource use and economic growth that began to be the focus of attention in the 1970s. The rising concern about pollution and the use of resources in the 1960s and 1970s found expression in the Club of Rome Report *The Limits to Growth* in 1972 (Meadows et al. 1972). Also, in 1972, the ‘Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment met to consider the issues that emerged from the Club of Rome Report. This Conference placed environmental issues into a broader economic and social context. It produced a declaration of 26 principles and an action plan for the human environment and an environmental fund. A year later, the UN Environmental Programme was established. However, it was not really until the 1980s that sustainable development entered the public policy arena with the publication of the *World Conservation Strategy* in 1980 (IUCN 1980). The use of the term ‘sustainable development’ was limited at this stage to a focus on ecological sustainability. It was not until the publication of the ‘Brundtland Report’ (named after its Chair, Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Prime Minister of Norway) in 1987 that the concept was broadened out and placed at the centre of a wider policy debate that concerned the interdependence between the environment and development and the need to deal with world poverty and inequality. (Pezzoli, 1997; Baker et al. 1997).

In contrast to the World Conservation Strategy, the Report of the Brundtland Commission adopted a more anthropocentric position with respect to sustainable development, arguing that people would be at the centre ‘...whose well-being is the ultimate goal of all environment and development policies (WCED, 1987, p.xiv). The Report (*Our Common Future*, WCED, 1987) provided the most widely cited definition of sustainable development

that has formed the basis of the consideration of sustainable development for almost twenty years – ‘...sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (WCED, 1987, p.43). This definition contained a number of themes or core ideas that underpin the concept of sustainable development (Jacobs, 1999) and a number of operational principles (Haughton, 1999); these aspects are considered in more detail below.

The Brundtland Report recognised that sustainable development was a process ‘...sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs’ (ibid. p.9); sustainable development is a mediation process achieved through policy formulation and implementation. Brundtland also recognised that sustainable development was a political process that would involve making choices that would at times be painful. Furthermore, Brundtland was remarkably prescient in recognising the integrative and strategic nature of sustainable development and the fact that solutions required ‘joined up government’ ‘...the objective of sustainable development and the integrated nature of the global environmental / development challenges pose problems for institutions, national and international, that were established on the basis of narrow preoccupations and compartmentalised concerns’ (WCED, 1987, p.9). Brundtland also recognised that ‘...the concept of sustainable development provides a framework (my emphasis) for the integration of environment policies and development strategies’ (ibid. p.40). These are all features of the concept of sustainable development that are the concern of this research.

Lele (1991, p.611) notes that while the Brundtland Commission’s statement on the fundamental objectives of sustainable development were brief, they were much more elaborate on the ‘operational objectives’ of sustainable development (WCED, 1987, p.49): -

- Reviving growth;

- Changing the quality of growth;
- Meeting essential needs for jobs, food, energy, water, and sanitation;
- Ensuring a sustainable level of population;
- Conserving and enhancing the resource base;
- Reorienting technology and managing risk;
- Merging environment and economics in decision making; and
- Reorienting international economic relations.

Meeting these objectives has implications for governments in terms of resource utilisation, social and economic changes, lifestyle changes, technological development and effective participation in decision-making. Brundtland was also concerned with both inter- and intra-generational equity in resource use. From the first perspective, inter-generational equity refers to the need to take account of future generations in the design and implementation of current policy. In terms of the second perspective, the concern is with meeting the basic needs of present generations.

In the context of defining sustainable development and its application as a policy theme, it has to be acknowledged that sustainable development is a contested concept with a wide range of meanings and definitions (Pezzey, 1989; Pearce et al. 1989, pp.173-185; Giddings et al., 2002; Rydin, 2003). Others, for example, (Richardson, 1997; Baker et al.1997) have suggested that sustainable development is essentially a political fudge or a form of words to allow conflicting parties to sign up to the concept without losing credibility. It was seen as being able to combine the anthropocentric (environmental or business as usual approach) with the bio-centric (ecological or fundamental behavioural change approach) views of society. Others have concluded that sustainable development, as a policy theme, 'has been so badly abused and misused that it has lost any useful meaning; it now serves to obscure rather than reveal the real issues'... 'sustainability and sustainable development are not capable of precise scientific definition' (Cullingworth & Nadin, 2002 p.198).

Some have criticised sustainable development on the grounds that ‘...it has come to mean whatever suits the particular advocacy of the individual concerned’ concluding that ‘...it is difficult to be against sustainable development...something we should all approve of like motherhood and apple pie’ (Pearce et al. 1989, p.1). However, not everyone writing on the subject of sustainable development would accept this particular interpretation. Blowers (1993, p. 6), for example, suggests that the aim of sustainable development should be ‘to promote development that enhances the natural and built environment in ways that are compatible with; -

1. The requirement to conserve the stock of natural assets, wherever possible offsetting any unavoidable by a compensating increase so that the total is left undiminished.
2. The need to avoid damaging the regenerative capacity of the world’s natural ecosystems.
3. The need to achieve greater social equality
4. The avoidance of the imposition of added costs or risks on succeeding generations.’

In this context he sets out five goals – resource conservation, built development, environmental quality, social equity and political participation – that can achieve sustainable development.

In a later work on sustainable development, Pearce (1993) suggests that ‘sustainability means making sure that substitute resources are made available as non-renewable resources become physically scarce, and it means ensuring that the environmental impacts of using those are kept within the Earth’s carrying capacity to assimilate those impacts.’(ibid. p.4). Thus the rationale of sustainable development is concerned with raising the standard of living (especially for those that are least advantaged) while simultaneously avoiding uncompensated costs to future generations. In essence what is being referred to is sustainable economic development. In this context a differentiation is made between ‘weak sustainability’ and ‘strong sustainability’. In the former case society accepts that environmental considerations are taken into account but there can be a trade off in terms of the use of the natural capital asset (e.g. mitigation or compensatory payment

in the form of a replacement asset). Weak sustainability assumes that some forms of capital are substitutable for each other. In the latter case, environmental considerations would act as a constraint upon development because the view taken is that a particular asset is regarded as 'critical environmental capital' (e.g. essential for biodiversity or to human survival – the ozone layer for example). In this context the forms of capital stock are not easily substituted for each other. Strong sustainability requires action to protect the asset for future generations.

In a similar vein, Owens (1994a) looks at the resource issue, from a land use planning perspective and explores the issues relating to the application of the concepts of sustainable development in terms of a stock of environmental assets whose value is to be maintained or enhanced over a period of time. Maintaining 'critical environmental capital' was seen as a challenge for the planning system in the context that 'economic activity must respect environmental capacities' (Owens, 1994b, p.7).

At the other extreme, Beckerman (1994) has questioned the very essence of the term sustainable development. He argues that sustainable development is a technical issue; whether it ought to be followed is another matter. In place of sustainable development, Beckerman advocates that welfare economics is capable of addressing the issues typically raised in the consideration of policies for sustainable development; welfare maximisation rather than sustainability should be the over-riding objective of policy. Allowances can be made for inter-generational considerations by the use of an appropriate discount rate. He maintains that '...sustainable development has been defined in such a way as to be either morally repugnant or logically redundant' (ibid. p. 192).

Whilst sustainable development is likely to remain a contestable concept, Reid (1995, p.231) suggests that the concept does have a number essential characteristics about which there is a considerable consensus and which can be summed up as follows: -

- Integration of conservation and development;

- Satisfaction of basic human needs;
- Opportunities to fulfil other non-human-material human needs;
- Progress towards equity and social justice;
- Respect and support for cultural diversity; provision for social self-determination and the nurturing of self reliance; and the
- Maintenance of ecological integrity.

The UK Government has defined sustainable development in a number of ways. (DOE, 1994a; DETR, 1999a; DEFRA, 2005a). In essence it would seem that sustainable development is about ‘...selecting patterns of economic and social development compatible with sound environmental stewardship’ (Meadowcroft, 2000, p.371). However, its flexible meaning and interpretation is perhaps one of the concept’s strengths in the sense that it does at least establish a framework to enable policy makers to consider the implications of a proposed line of action.

3.3 REPRESENTATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Given the difficulties of defining sustainable development, a number of ‘models’ have been devised to express the essential features of the concept and how this may be applied in a policy setting. Sustainable development is typically presented as being represented by three pillars or legs of a stool (Barrow, 1995); each leg of the stool represents the three dimensions of sustainable development – social, economic, and environment - and is considered separately and in relation to each other. The triumvirate model has also been expressed in terms of a Venn diagram (see below) and a series of concentric circles (Giddings et al 2002; Rydin, 2003).

Fig 3.1 Representations of sustainable development

Fig 3.1(a): The Venn Diagram

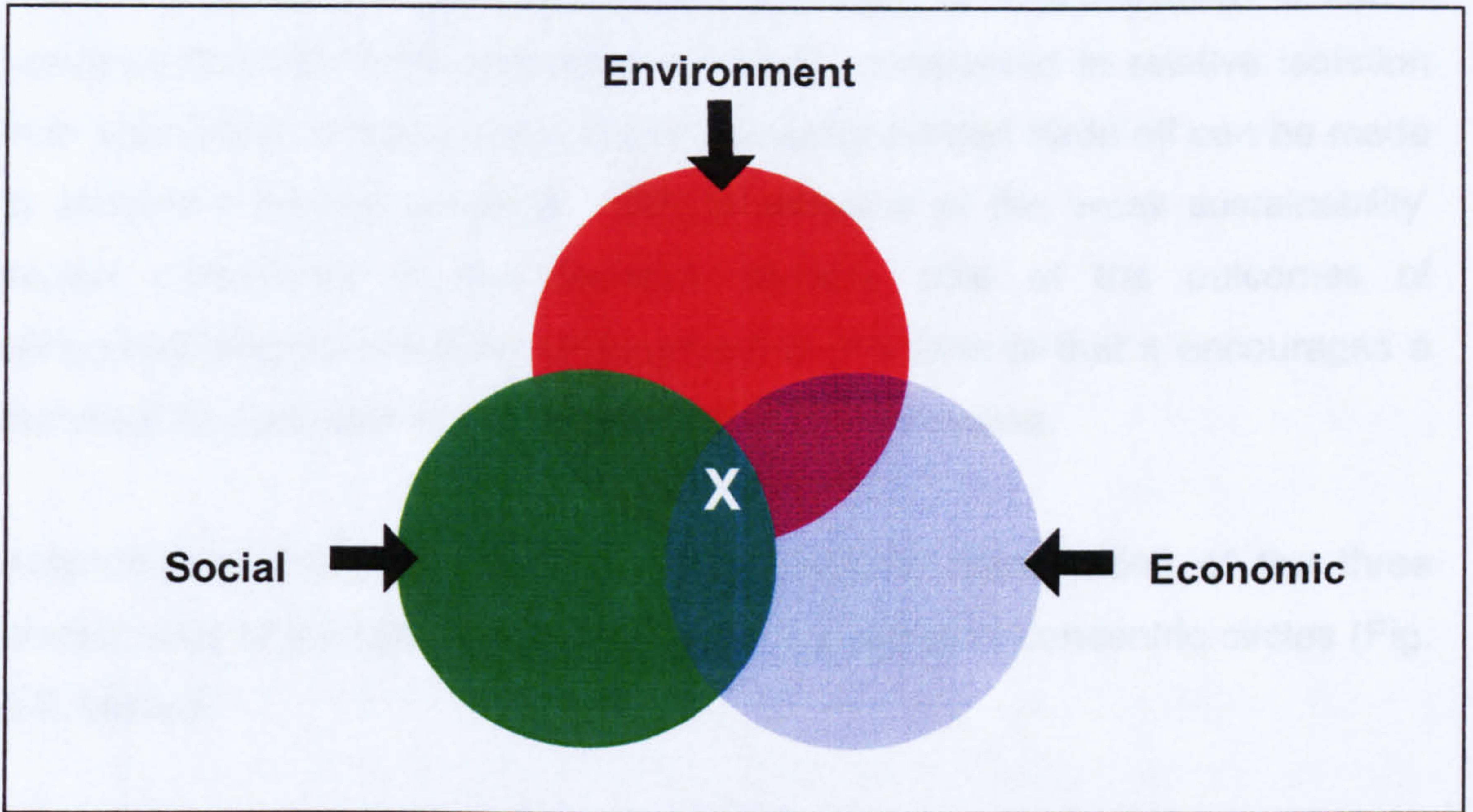
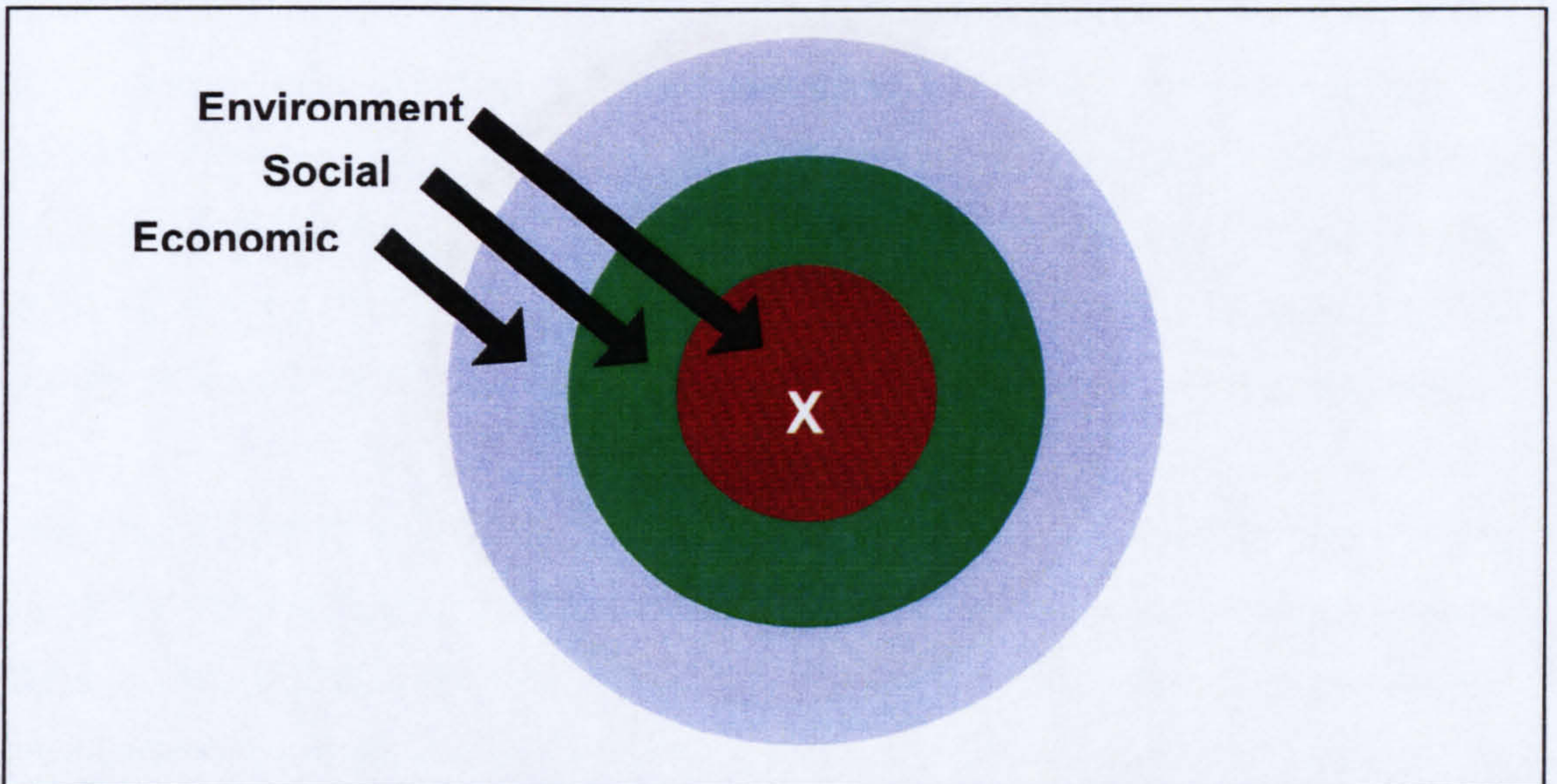


Fig 3.1 (b): The Russian Doll Model



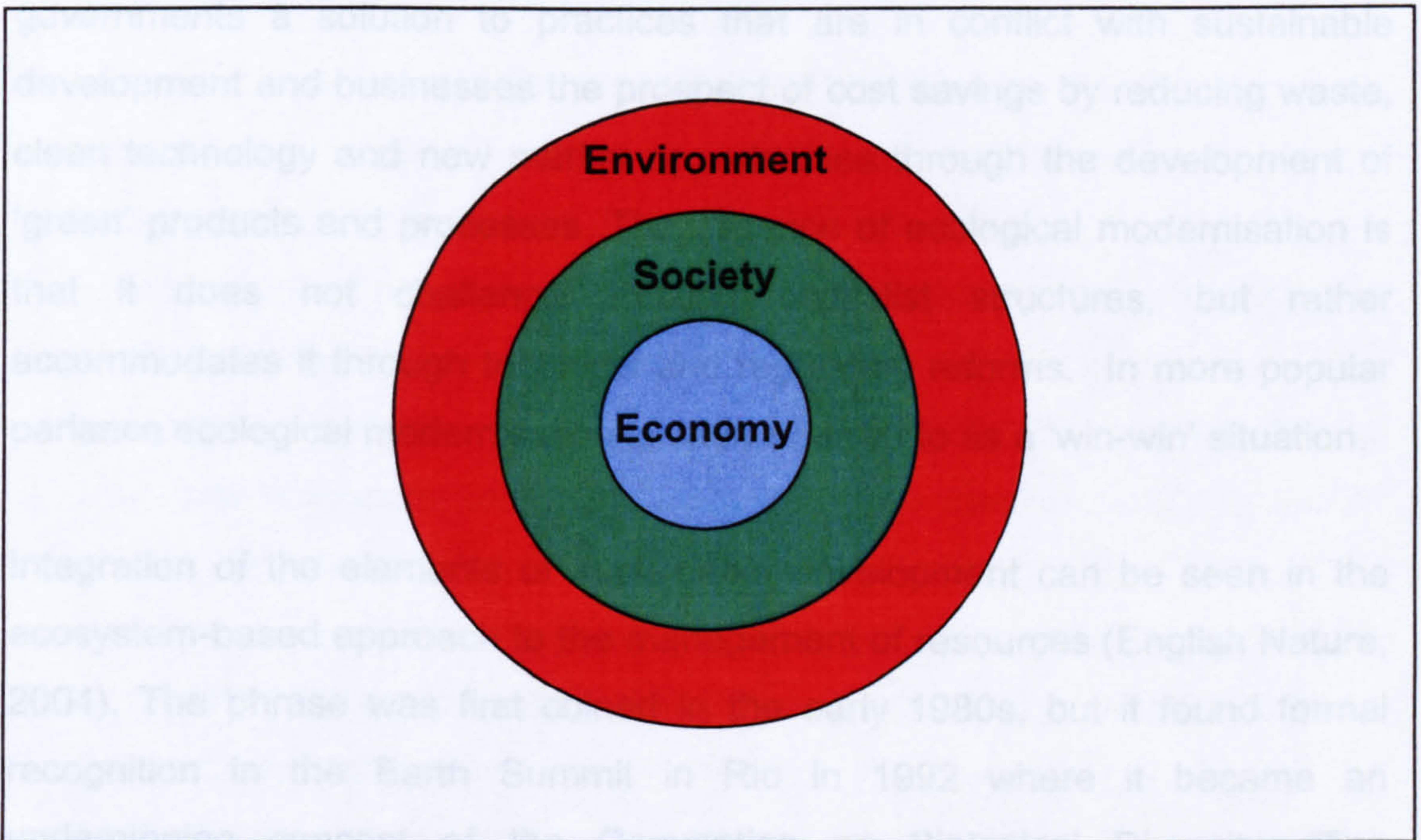
Source: Rydin (2003)

Sustainable development is presented as aiming to bring the three elements represented by the circles together in a balanced way, the aim of policy being to combine the three elements to achieve an optimal outcome. The area of

overlap defines the 'true' position of sustainable development. In many ways this conceptualisation reflects the manner in which the land use planning system works in terms of balancing competing objectives in the public interest. However, a weakness of this particular conceptualisation is that it assumes that the three components can be considered in relative isolation from each other. It leads to the implicit assumption that trade off can be made to achieve a desired outcome. This is reflective of the 'weak sustainability' aspect considered in the previous section. One of the outcomes of conceptualising sustainable development in this form is that it encourages a technical fix approach to sustainable development issues.

According to Giddings (2002) a more accurate presentation of the three components of sustainable development is a series of concentric circles (Fig. 3.2, below).

Fig 3.2: 'The nested model'



Source: Giddens et al (2002)

In this representation the economy is placed at the centre to reflect the fact that it is a subset of the others and is dependent upon them. However, in Rydin's representation (Fig. 3.1 b), the order is reversed with the environment

being placed at the centre because sustainable development has environmental concerns at its core. Wherever the merits of the positioning of the three components of sustainable development, the key point is that the model based on concentric circles reflects more clearly the fact that sustainable development requires '...the integration of different actions and sectors, taking a holistic view and overcoming barriers between disciplines' (Giddings et al, 2002, p.192).

The concept of 'ecological modernisation' (Weale, 1992; Pepper, 1999) suggests that it is possible to integrate the environment and the economy through a more environmentally benign development process, which is essentially dependent on technological innovation. It requires that the problem is recognised and that solutions are sought. Gouldson (1995, p. 106) suggests that '...the concept of ecological modernisation relies on the presence of a synergistic relationship between economic development and environment protection'. Ecological modernisation is characterised as offering governments a solution to practices that are in conflict with sustainable development and businesses the prospect of cost savings by reducing waste, clean technology and new market opportunities through the development of 'green' products and processes. The essence of ecological modernisation is that it does not challenge existing capitalist structures, but rather accommodates it through technical and regulatory reforms. In more popular parlance ecological modernisation is often referred to as a 'win-win' situation.

Integration of the elements of sustainable development can be seen in the ecosystem-based approach to the management of resources (English Nature, 2004). The phrase was first coined in the early 1980s, but it found formal recognition in the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 where it became an underpinning concept of the Convention on Biological Diversity. 'The Ecosystem Approach is a strategy for the integrated management of land, water, and living resources that promotes conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way' (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2000; cited in English Nature, 2004, p.7). A good example of the application of the ecosystem approach, and one which illustrates the need to take into account the three

pillars of sustainable development, can be seen in the fishing industry where there has been a shift in emphasis from a narrow preoccupation with fish stock management (as under the Common Fisheries Policy) to a more holistic management (both co-management and adaptive management, as under the Regional Advisory Committees for the management of fishing in the 'regional seas') that includes sustainable use of resources and the supporting marine ecosystems. The ecosystem-based approach underpins the Government's vision for the marine environment, set out in '*Safeguarding Our Seas: A strategy for the Conservation and Sustainable Development of our Marine Environment*' (DEFRA, 2002).

3.4 THE PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The discussion so far has been concerned with defining and interpreting the concept of sustainable development. In seeking to look at sustainable development in a policy context, it is appropriate to examine some of the core ideas or themes and the underlying principles of the concept.

In terms of core ideas, Jacobs (1999) identifies six, which are easily recognisable in the development of sustainable development policy in the U K, as illustrated in the next section, (and at E U level): -

1. Integration of economic development and environmental protection.
2. Obligations to future generations.
3. Reducing pollution and environmental degradation; conservation of natural resources and living within the environmental carrying capacity of biological resources.
4. Commitment to social justice; inter and intra – generational equity.
5. Quality of life; recognition that this may not always be measured by economic welfare.
6. Participation; an acknowledgement that sustainable development involves active citizen and stakeholder involvement and an institutional response that can support such participation.

In a similar way, Haughton (1999) suggests that sustainable development can be based on five equity principles: -

- (i) inter-generational equity – futurity; the most widely quoted aspect of sustainable development and reflecting the Brundtland definition.
- (ii) intra-generational equity – social equity or social justice: the emphasis is on addressing the causes rather than solutions that involve redistributive measures.
- (iii) geographical equity – transfrontier responsibility; this is a recognition that policies have an impact at both local global levels. It is about recognising the wider or external impacts of decisions.
- (iv) procedural equity – people are treated openly and fairly; this aspect is about openness in decision making, including rights of access to information, involvement in decision-making processes, which also has implications for political and administrative processes; and
- (v) inter-species equity – recognising the importance of preserving the ecosystem and maintaining biodiversity (English Nature, 2004). This aspect reflects concern for the environment from the perspective of environmental stewardship and suggests the need to continually work within the carrying capacities of natural systems and maintaining levels of critical natural capital (English Nature, 1992).

In looking at sustainable development from the perspectives of core ideas and underlying principles, consideration can be given to the policy context that has emerged over nearly twenty years since the publication of the Brundtland Report in 1987. It allows policy to be evaluated in terms of its congruency with the basic principles. Before discussing the characteristics that make sustainable development a cross-cutting policy, however, it is necessary to briefly outline the evolution of UK policy for sustainable development to provide a context for the following discussion on the characteristics of the policy and to illustrate how the principles of sustainable development have found their expression in government policy.

3.5 AN OUTLINE OF U K SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY.

Sustainable development has been on the UK policy agenda since beginning of the 1990s. The 'environment' White Paper *This Common Inheritance*

(DOE, 1990), marked a step change for British Government policy concerned with environmental issues. It was a recognition that there was growing public concern with a number of matters relating to the environment. That concern, however, had to be contained within the Government's view that market economies provided '...a blue print for prosperity and a guarantee of freedom' (ibid, para. 1.2 p. 8). The White Paper, however, contained reference to sustainable development. For example, one of the foundations of the Government's policy towards the environment was based on stewardship and in that context it would be reasonable to conclude that the principles contained in Brundtland had influenced government policy thinking. Indeed, the Government's approach to the environment was based on four objectives: - protecting the physical environment through the planning system and other controls and incentives; using resources prudently, including increasing energy efficiency, recycling and reducing waste; controlling pollution through effective inspectorates and clear standards; and encouraging greater public involvement and making information available. Other aspects of government policy included the recognition of policy based on sound evidence; application of the precautionary principle in appropriate cases; informing the public about the facts and recognizing that the environment had an international dimension.

The White Paper was very comprehensive in its treatment of the environment dealing with air, water, noise; hazardous substances and nuclear power and radio active waste, and genetically modified organisms; waste and recycling. Attention was also given to land use and planning, countryside and wildlife, the urban environment and heritage. This listing of some of the aspects of the Environment Strategy set out in the White Paper serves the purpose of illustrating the fact that the issues are wide ranging and have implications for the activities of a number of government departments and agencies. The Government acknowledged the interrelatedness of environmental policy '...the Government needs to ensure that its policies fit together in every sector; that we are not undoing in one area what we are trying to do in another; and that policies are based on a harmonious set of principles rather

than a clutter of expedients' (ibid. p.8, para. 1.6). This was a recognition of what later became known as 'joined up' policy.

The Environment White Paper was published prior to the 'Earth Summit' held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 (UN Conference on Environment and Development). Rio produced four important documents that have influenced the way in which the world has interpreted sustainable development: - Agenda 21 – a programme of action to achieve a more sustainable pattern of development; the Climate Change Convention – a programme of action to limit the emission of 'greenhouse gasses' and thereby reduce the risks of global warming; the Biodiversity Convention – a programme to protect the diversity of species and habitats; and a statement of the principles for the management and conservation of the world's forests. An important recommendation of the Earth Summit was that individual countries should prepare strategies and action plans to implement the agreements made at the Earth Summit. The UK Government prepared a document on each of the four agreements made at Rio (DOE, 1994, a, b, c, d)

The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development (DOE, 1994a) built upon the 1990 Environment White Paper and looked at a range of factors that would impact upon the environment over a twenty-year time horizon and identified new arrangements and processes for carrying forward sustainable development in different sectors of society. The '1994' Strategy recognised the importance of economic development in securing higher standards of living but it equally recognised that it was necessary to protect and enhance the environment for present and future generations. Sustainable development was seen as attempting to reconcile these two objectives. The strategy addressed this matter by recognising that decisions would need to be based on a number of factors – scientific information and an analysis of risks; the precautionary principle where uncertainty and risks exist; ecological criteria based on carrying capacity (the extent to which the resources are renewable and may be irreversibly damaged); and the cost implications based on the 'polluter pays' principle.

The 1994 Strategy did not set any targets but recognised that it would be necessary to do so. Looking at some of the proposals that are relevant to this study, the Strategy recognised the importance of regulation (although it was intended that this would not be excessive) and to this end it proposed creating new Environment Agencies for England and Wales and for Scotland. There was to be a Cabinet Committee to consider environmental policy and 'Green Ministers' were to be appointed to embed sustainable development policies in each Department. The Strategy recognised the work that local authorities had done with Local Agenda 21 and it was proposing a joint approach to the development of an eco-management and audit process. Land use planning was recognised as playing an important part in the achievement of sustainable development objectives and it was proposed to undertake research into the ways in which the principles of sustainable development could be applied by planning authorities. In terms of the overall framework, the Government felt that it was necessary to actively promote sustainable development and three organisations were established: - the Government's Panel on Sustainable Development (to give expert and independent advice); a UK Round Table on Sustainable Development (to bring together representatives of the main sectors or groups) and a Citizens' Environment Initiative (to encourage the growth of interest of individuals and local communities in sustainable development).

The new Labour Government embarked on a review of sustainable development policy when it came to power in the second half of the 1990s and in 1999 it published a new strategy for sustainable development in the UK – *A Better Quality of Life – A strategy for sustainable development for the UK* (DETR, 1999a). Whilst acknowledging the Brundtland definition, the Government emphasised that sustainable development was about '...ensuring a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come' (ibid. p.8). The strategy went on to set out four objectives: - social progress which recognises the needs of everyone; effective protection of the environment; prudent use of resources; and maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment. The Strategy identified priority areas for action and indicated targets to measure progress; it also recognised

changes in government brought about by the emergence of devolved governments for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In the Welsh context, reference was made to the responsibilities that the National Assembly had under the 1998 Government of Wales Act to ‘...make a scheme setting out how it proposes in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development’. The strategy identified ten ‘guiding principles’ (ibid. Chapter 4) and the Government sought to embed sustainable development in the government’s policy making processes (ibid. Chapter 5).

The Strategy recognised the need for policy integration and institutional depth in relation to sustainable development ‘...we need institutions and policies which can take a cross-cutting approach to sustainable development objectives’ (ibid. para. 7.77). In England, the Government indicated that it intended to give local authorities a new duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. This intention was subsequently incorporated in to the Local Government Act 2000. Local Authorities were given responsibility for developing Community Strategies, again bringing a more holistic perspective to local sustainable development issues, complementing, if appropriate, Local Agenda 21 Strategies. The new approach to sustainable development was beginning to influence other areas of public policy, especially in the Regional Economic Strategies being prepared by the new Regional Development Agencies (DETR, 1998) and in Regional Planning Guidance (DETR, 2000a). There was a growing concern that about policy conflicts and the need for policy coordination at the regional level (DETR, 2000a). In 2000 (DETR, 2000b), the Government issued guidance on preparing Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks, which were intended to be ‘...high level documents that set out a vision for sustainable development in each region, and the region’s contribution to sustainable development at national level’ (ibid. para. 1.2). The main intention of regional sustainability frameworks was to ‘show how the sustainable development agenda can be taken up at the regional level’ (DETR, 2000b, para. 3.4.1). The Frameworks were about securing vertical and horizontal policy integration.

The Government's approach to sustainable development shifted the emphasis away from an environmental interpretation of sustainable development to one of simultaneously achieving economic, social and environmental objectives. In many ways this perspective towards 'win-win' solutions emphasised the new integrated approach to policy formulation and delivery (Cabinet Office, 1999), where the emphasis was on taking a holistic or whole system approach to policy. In opposition, the Labour Party had identified sustainable development as a cross-cutting policy (one of the so-called 'wicked issues'); policies which by their nature are complex and the scope of their nature is wide-ranging and not easily falling within the jurisdiction of a particular administrative department (DETR, 1999b).

Whilst both the 1994 and 1999 Sustainable Development Strategies embodied the Brundtland principle of sustainable development, they both acknowledged the importance of economic development to the achievement of sustainable development. Both strategies recognised that behavioural change was necessary and this would be achieved through more efficiency in the use of resources and reducing waste – sustainable production and consumption. In many ways this approach relates to the concept of 'ecological modernisation' referred to earlier.

The review of the 1999 Strategy was initiated in April 2004 '*Taking it On – Delivering a sustainable development strategy together*' (DEFRA, 2004b) and the new Strategy – *Securing the Future* (DEFRA, 2005a) set out the Government's plan to deliver sustainable development, with particular emphasis on policy delivery. The basic principle of sustainable development was maintained, 'the goal of sustainable development is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations' (ibid. p.16). However, this Strategy moved away from the more traditional 'three – pillar' model of sustainable development and indicated that for a policy to be sustainable, it must respect all five of the following principles: - living within environmental limits; ensuring a strong, healthy and just society; achieving a sustainable economy; promoting good governance; and using sound science

responsibly. Whilst still recognising the economic and social dimensions, the Strategy focussed on environmental capacities in relation to natural resources and the need to respect their finite nature in the context of their availability for future generations. It also introduced the requirement to use science responsibly and invoke the precautionary principle in instances where there is scientific uncertainty. Another new dimension was the recognition of 'good governance' in the achievement of sustainable development and, in particular, the need to engage at all levels of society, to participate and to collaborate.

The Strategy also gave a steer on how the Government wished to see its sustainable development policy operate '...we want to achieve our goals of living within environmental limits and a just society, and we will do this by means of a sustainable economy, good governance, and sound science' (ibid. p.17). Clearly, the environmental and social 'pillars' are significant policy objectives and these will be delivered by means of '...a sustainable economy, good governance and sound science' (ibid. p.17). The economy is still seen as an important driver in terms of providing prosperity and opportunity but it is recognised that the negative externalities (the unintended social costs, e.g. pollution) would fall on those who create them but that resource efficiency would be 'incentivised'. This marks an important shift in policy when compared with previous models, which attempted to integrate the three components of sustainable development in a balanced way. The recent strategy also recognised that it may be necessary to seek trade-offs but if this were to be done it had to be made 'in an explicit and transparent way' (ibid. p, 17).

Four priority policy areas were identified for action: - sustainable consumption and production; climate change and energy; natural resource protection and environmental enhancement; and sustainable communities. These aspects are considered in more detail below. Clearly, these action areas reinforce the consideration of sustainable development as a cross-cutting policy theme; each of these four elements of the Strategy do not fit easily into the jurisdiction of one particular government department or tier of government. Whilst DEFRA is the Department having responsibility for the delivery of the

Strategy (under the Public Service Agreement), the Strategy proposes a range of actions (ibid. Chapter 7) to ensure that sustainable development is put into practice across all central government departments.

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy covers the period up to 2020, a 15-year time horizon. It also provides a strategic framework for the Devolved Administrations (DEFRA, 2005b), which it recognised will develop further priorities, measures and indicators. For instance, the Welsh Assembly's *Sustainable Development Action Plan* covers the period 2004-2007 (WAG, 2004b), and will be reviewed as part of its statutory duty under the 1998 Government of Wales Act following the election of the third Assembly in 2007.

3.6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AS A CROSS-CUTTING POLICY

From the preceding discussion it has been established that sustainable development is multi-dimensional in terms of its potential policy impact. It embraces social, economic and environmental dimensions and the interactions between human systems and ecosystems; there is a high degree of inter-dependency between all these elements. Sustainable development is not only about pursuing the principles discussed above but it is also about the way in which the policy process is conducted. Brundtland recognised that the way in which policy is conducted was an important aspect of sustainable development (Rydin, 2003). Governments need to have the institutional capacity to deliver their policy goals within an organisational and policy framework. They also need to have the capacity to involve all those with an interest in sustainable development in the policy process. To some extent this has been recognised in the Government's recent Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2005a), as outlined above. It is a process involving different levels of government and their agencies, the NGOs and the voluntary sector and the business sectors.

From the brief examination of UK sustainable development policy, it would be reasonable to conclude that 'Sustainable development is a broad orientation towards policy rather than a specific policy in itself' (DETR, 1999b, para. 2.9). As indicated previously, this can be seen in the emphasis given to various

components of the UK sustainable development policy, which has shifted over the last decade. It is not a policy per se but rather a list of strategic objectives with actions that are applied across discrete policy areas. As Brundtland points out, 'the concept of sustainable development provides a framework for the integration of environmental policies and development strategies...'
(WCED, 1987, p.40).

The previous Chapter (Section 2.4) identified a number of characteristics that a cross-cutting policy theme might be expected to exhibit (DETR, 1999b).

The key characteristics relevant to this research are identified below: -

- Issues are complex and involve a multiplicity of agencies;
- Responsibility for policy involves different government departments and different levels of government;
- Citizen participation in both policy formulation and implementation; and
- Scope for preventative policy action

These characteristics provide a useful framework to examine UK government sustainable development policy, as set out in the latest UK strategy (DEFRA, 2005a), as a means of demonstrating the multi-dimensional nature of sustainable development in a policy context. The focus here is to look at the elements of sustainable development in the context of the four characteristics rather than, as previously, in terms of a longitudinal analysis of UK Government sustainable development policy.

Issues are complex and involve a multiplicity of agencies

The Brundtland Report recognised the integrated nature of sustainable development. The Report also acknowledged that the institutions facing the challenges posed by adopting policies for sustainable development '... tend to be independent, fragmented, working to relatively narrow mandates with close decision processes ... those responsible for managing natural resources and protecting the environment are institutionally separated from those responsible for managing the economy'(ibid. p. 9).

The cross-cutting and complex nature of sustainable development as a policy theme can be illustrated by reference to the four priority action areas identified in the recent Government Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2005a). Each of these priority action areas is considered below: -

Sustainable consumption and production: this aspect of policy is about efficiency in the use of resources – ‘achieving more with less’. The policy is about influencing consumer behaviour in terms of their choices encouraging producers to be efficient in their use of resources and reduce waste. Sustainable production and consumption is also about government and its agencies as a purchaser of goods and services. The range of policy initiatives includes measures to integrate sustainable development in the Department for Trade and Industry’s technology strategy; measures to reduce environmental impacts of products across their life cycle; waste reduction; environmental regulation; influencing household consumption patterns through a proposed information service; and an Environmental Action Fund to support voluntary organizations with community level projects. The business sector is also identified as having a key role in sustainable development in terms of its own impacts on processes and products.

Climate change and energy: this aspect of sustainable development policy has an international dimension and therefore the number of agencies involved is considerable. The key aspect of the policy response here is to reduce emissions of ‘greenhouse gases’ such as carbon dioxide and methane through the use of energy. The Strategy identifies six sectors where action can be taken – energy supply; business; transport; households and energy efficiency; land use, agriculture and forestry; and the public sector. The range of policy instruments includes regulations, incentives, agreements and impact assessments.

Protecting natural resources and enhancing the environment: taking essentially an anthropocentric view, the Strategy sees the natural world as being vital to the existence of the human race. It highlights the need for a better understanding of environmental limits, the need for environmental enhancement, particularly those environments that are most environmentally degraded and for policy integration to deliver outcomes. In identifying the key environmental assets – air, water, soils and biological resources (species and

habitats), it becomes evident that the issues involved are diverse and the policy response equally wide-ranging. Clearly, the agencies having responsibility for the natural environment are equally diverse, encompassing not only central government departments and its agencies e.g. DEFRA, the Environment Agency, English Nature, but also the 'environmental NGOs' e.g. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

Sustainable Communities: the focus of this action area is the integrated delivery of social, economic and environmental goals at the local level. Actions include initiatives to improve the quality of the environment (including its overall appearance), community safety, measures that improve health and well-being, and provision of affordable housing. The process involves community engagement and involvement in drawing up action plans including Local Development Frameworks (for land use policies) and Community Strategies. Again the policy thrust involves the vertical and horizontal integration of organisations involved in delivering policy and actions.

Responsibility for policy involves different government departments and different levels of government

From what was said earlier about the core ideas and concepts implicit within the term 'sustainable development', it is not surprising that responsibility for policy relating to sustainable development should be spread across a number of government departments. Brundtland recognised that '...intersectoral connections create patterns of economic and ecological interdependence rarely reflected in ways in which policy is made... sustainable development requires that such fragmentation can be overcome' (ibid. p.63)

The UK Sustainable Development Strategy recognises that sustainable development is a cross cutting policy theme. The Strategy identifies an organisational network (DEFRA, 2005a. p.153), encompassing public sector organisations such as central government departments and their agencies; government offices in the regions, Regional Development Agencies; local authorities and organisations such as local strategic partnerships; and voluntary organisations who increasingly play an important role in the process of policy delivery. Central government has established an inter-departmental

Sustainable Development Task Force to advise on policy delivery across Whitehall Departments and it is proposed to extend the role of the Sustainable Development Commission to provide for an independent monitoring of sustainable development policy. Twelve central government departments have identified their 'high level' contributions to meeting the aims and objectives of the Strategy (ibid. pp 146 – 151) and they are tasked with producing Sustainable Development Action Plans.

At central government level DEFRA has a key role, being charged with coordination of sustainable development strategy including the publication of indicators. At a regional level in England, Regional Assemblies have a key role through Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks in ensuring that sustainable development objectives and priorities are reflected in regional and sub-regional guidance. Local authorities and their partners also have a key role to play in delivering sustainable communities through such policy instruments as Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks. The devolved administrations also have a role to play in relation to the implementation of the Strategy; each will take forward the principles of the UK Strategy and include further priorities and actions. As already mentioned, Wales has statutory duties in relation to sustainable development (as does the Greater London Authority) and this is the subject of more detailed consideration in Chapter 6.

The discussion so far has focussed on responsibilities for sustainable development policy within the UK; however, UK policy has been and is influenced by the international agreements and increasingly policy emerging from the EU. International action is essentially defined by a series of international governmental conferences. There have been a series of 'summit' meetings, all building on the principles agreed at Rio in 1992. For example, the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development looked at progress since Rio Earth Summit ten years previously. There have been conferences on trade e.g. the World Trade Doha Round (2001) and considerations of finance for developing countries e.g. the Monterrey Financing for Development Conference (2002). The European Union,

however, is important in defining policies for sustainable development, and in terms of the environment it has been particularly active in driving the UK government's approach (Wilkinson et al. 1998). The EU Sustainable Development Strategy, which was agreed at Gothenburg in 2001, identified four key priority areas: climate change, sustainable transport, public health and natural resources. At the review of progress on the EU Sustainable Development Strategy in Spring 2003, the European Council Heads of Government focused on the environment dimension of sustainable development, including the role of environment technologies. Following a period of consultation in 2004, the EU has reviewed its Sustainable Development Strategy and the European Council adopted its renewed sustainable development strategy at its meeting in Brussels in June 2006.

Citizen participation in both policy formulation and implementation

Whilst central government has a key role to play in the development of policies for sustainable development, '...change cannot be ordained from above alone; it must be stimulated from below as well (Blowers, 1993, p.8). The concept of sustainable development requires the commitment of people; this was an important aspect of Agenda 21- the global plan of action, which most countries translated into sustainable development strategies. Brundtland recognised that sustainable development required '...a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision making' (ibid. p.65). This is a particularly important feature when it is considered that behavioral change is an essential element of sustainable development and important consideration in the development of collaborative approaches as a means of engaging citizen participation.

Citizen participation at a more strategic level, in the policy process has been encouraged through stakeholder involvement. In Canada, for example, multi-stakeholder collaborative roundtables were established to solve complex environmental problems by involving all sectors of society - all levels of government, businesses and the general public in measures for environmental protection (Turcotte & Pasquero, 2001). This can be contrasted with the UK approach where there is a more limited engagement at

a strategic level. The 1994 Sustainable Development Strategy (DOE, 1994a) established the UK Round Table on Sustainable Development to provide authoritative and independent advice; the 1999 Sustainable Development Strategy (DETR, 1999a) replaced the Round Table and established the Sustainable Development Commission to provide independent advice on sustainable development issues. In the most recent strategy (DEFRA, 2005a), it is proposed to give the Sustainable Development Commission an executive rather than advisory role in advising the government on matters relating to sustainable development.

In referring to the essentially 'top down' role of central, regional and local governments in the development of sustainable development policies, it has to be acknowledged that there is a 'bottom up' dimension to policy formulation and implementation that is activated through citizen awareness and involvement. Bottom up participation in the policy process (especially in relation to environmental policy) has been a steady and increasing feature of the last three decades (Baker et al, 1997). It has become more plural, embracing professionals, stakeholders, NGOs and a public that has become more informed. The public has been engaged in environmental issues in a number of ways. In the early 1960s, for example, there was growing public concern about the increasing use of pesticides and the impact that this could have on wildlife through the food chain e.g. Rachel Carson, *The Silent Spring*, (Carson, 1962); in the 1970s *The Limits to Growth* (Meadows et al, 1972), highlighted to governments and the public the implications of continued economic and population growth on the earth's resources and the ability of the environment to accommodate this level of growth. There began a fundamental questioning of the way in which western society was organised, encouraged through such publications as the '*Ecologist*'- *A Blueprint for Survival* (Goldsmith et al., 1972) and Schumacher's '*Small is Beautiful*' (Schumacher, 1973), which emphasised the need to restructure society on a more human scale. Disasters such as the oil spillage from the Torrey Canyon (1967) and powerful images such as the Apollo space programme photographs (1968) of the earth from the moon have served to capture the public's attention on environmental issues.

At another level, citizen participation has also been encouraged and fostered through the Local Agenda 21 process and, more recently, in the development of Community Strategies. The 1999 Strategy had 'putting people at the centre' as one of its policy objectives in delivering the social justice aspect of sustainable development. In the recent Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2005a), citizen participation is at the heart of the 'Sustainable Communities' agenda that embody the principles of sustainable development at the local level. This agenda is wide-ranging, embracing such elements as community safety; environmental improvements, featuring both the built and natural environments; improvements for education and training, health provision and transport. There is extensive citizen engagement in developing public service provision at the neighbourhood level. Community engagement is also central to the process of preparing Local Development Frameworks and Community Strategies; these plans will shape the future of local areas and have an important contribution to the achievement of 'local' sustainable development.

Scope for preventative policy action

Governments have long had a responsibility for instigating policy to correct for market failure. In the field of environmental policy this can be demonstrated by reference to British social and environmental policy stretching back to the Nineteenth Century e.g. The Public Health and Housing Acts. In the context of sustainable development, the Brundtland Report gave a strong pointer that 'governments must begin now to make the key national, economic and sectoral agencies directly responsible and accountable for ensuring that their policies, programmes and budgets support development that is economically and ecologically sustainable'; governments were also asked to '...reinforce the roles and capacities of environmental protection and resource management agencies' (ibid, p.20). The extent to which the UK Government responded to this request has been referred to above.

Preventative policy action is clearly a feature of environmental policy as it has emerged over the last century. The range of policy instruments is diverse and

reflects the problem being addressed. Instruments include regulation and enforcement (prohibitions, and limits); economic incentives (targets, charges and taxes); and voluntary agreements. The policy response may include a mixture of one or more of these alternatives. Environmental policy is wide-ranging covering matters such as industrial pollution; air, water and noise; waste and biodiversity.

Respecting environmental limits is one of the guiding principles of sustainable development and the Government has developed policies, for example, in the field of climate change (UK Climate Change Programme), water (EU Water Framework Directive) and fisheries (EU Common Fisheries Policy) to reflect the fact that there has to be a limitation imposed on use. Climate Change is one of the strategic sustainable policy themes at both EU and UK governmental levels (CEC, 1992 & DEFRA, 2005a). The recent UK Strategy (DEFRA, 2005a) acknowledged the interrelated nature of sustainable development and climate change '...our ability to develop more sustainably will determine the speed and degree of climate change we experience' (ibid. p.73). The UK Government's approach to climate change illustrates the preventative policy characteristic that defines sustainable development as a cross-cutting policy. The approach recognises the importance of an immediate reduction in 'greenhouse gas' emissions (e.g. to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2010) and a range of policies designed to manage future impacts on climate change (e.g. increased use of renewable energy; EU emissions carbon trading scheme; climate change levy on businesses as an incentive to reduce energy consumption; in the transport sector, incentives to use low sulphur fuels, use of bio-fuels, encouraging the use of LPG; for households a range of measures to stimulate the take-up of energy saving measures).

In the context of economic policy, preventative policy action is being expressed, for example, initiatives that support production and consumption patterns that are based on reducing the use of resource inputs. Whereas the environmental aspects in relation to the economy (referred to above) were considered in terms of reducing pollution, attention is now focused on the

whole life cycle of goods, services and materials. An aspect of this particular policy is the growth in corporate responsibility and the focus of this beyond the bounds of an individual enterprise towards the chains of supply. The UK Government have proposed to establish a Sustainable Consumption and Production Task Force to develop ideas for practical action on key aspects of sustainable consumption and production. The Government is also taking action its self as a major buyer of goods and services through its own procurement policies.

In the context of the social pillar the scope for early preventative action can be seen, for example, in the Government's social exclusion agenda, where there is an emphasis on achieving changes in outlook and opportunity. In 1998 the Government created the Social Exclusion Unit to develop an integrated and sustainable approach to the wide range of problems that existed on the worst housing estates, including drugs, unemployment, community breakdown and bad schools. Specific programmes (New Deals) were established to deal with unemployment, lone parents and the disabled together with actions to address failing schools, crime and public health. Funding programmes were also established to support the regeneration of poor neighbourhoods in the New Deal Communities and in other communities through such programmes as the Single Regeneration Budget and Sure Start. Coherence and a joined up approach is ensured through cross-authority action teams.

Preventative policy action can also be seen in a range of other related government actions. For example, the land-use planning system is accorded a key role because of its ability to take a long-term and wide-ranging perspective in the management of natural resources, matters at the heart of sustainable development. Land use planning is also closely aligned to initiatives being taken by the Environment Agency in relation flood and coastal erosion risk management, again this illustrates both the cross-cutting nature of sustainable development policy and the importance of long term preventative policies.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has sought to demonstrate the nature of sustainable development in policy terms and its classification as a cross-cutting policy. It is normative to the extent that it offers a 'vision' of a future based upon certain principles, but it is also prescriptive and process orientated to the extent that it is concerned with legislation, management and organisational matters. Sustainable development involves strategic planning because it involves wide ranging objectives, broad areas of policy and long-range goals. This aspect of the policy was demonstrated by reference to UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2005a). It is a process of continuous improvement and adaptation requiring joint action by numerous actors. Again, reference to UK Sustainable Development Strategy indicated the way in which this policy has been integrated into government policy and into the wider policy process. At a national level, the formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies are closely aligned with regional spatial planning.

It was seen that there is an element of tension within the sustainable development process. The concept of sustainable development is contestable by its nature, and the triune characteristics inevitably produce tensions in policy terms. The success of the policy requires a balance to be struck between these characteristics. However, it was seen that the latest UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DEFRA, 2005a) suggests a model of sustainable development that indicates that the goals of the Strategy will be achieved by living within environmental limits and securing a just society; the economy, good governance and sound science play an important supporting and contributory role.

There are also tensions arising from the process itself. At one level, there is the top-down pressure of international agreements, EU policies and the policies of the UK Government; at the bottom-up level there are the concerns of the various stakeholders, devolved and local governments. Promoting successful sustainable development policies within this context requires that a coordinated approach be taken to policy formulation and implementation. That

process of consideration requires inter-organisational coordination and collaboration.

Whilst it may be difficult to come to a definitive conclusion on the definition of sustainable development because it is an evolving concept, in terms of the nature of sustainable development as a policy, it is possible to bring the elements of sustainable development discussed above together to illustrate those factors that make sustainable development a cross-cutting theme. These are summarised in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Policy characteristics of sustainable development.

Principles of sustainable development	Characteristics of cross-cutting policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational equity – futurity • Intra-generational equity – social justice • Geographical equity – transfrontier responsibility • Procedural equity – people treated openly and fairly • Inter-species equity – importance of biodiversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues are complex and involve a multiplicity of agencies • Responsibility for policy involves different government departments and different levels of government • Citizen participation in both policy formulation and implementation • Scope for early preventative action

Derived from DETR, 1999 and Haughton, 1999

Sustainable development presents an overarching framework within which individual elements of the policy can be considered and redefined. It encompasses a wide spectrum of policy matters – economic, social and environmental; it is based on a number of principles. To be made meaningful in terms of practical application it requires connections to be made between the elements of sustainable development and the agencies concerned with implementation. Policy integration and collaboration at various levels of government are required to secure effective sustainable development outcomes.

In attempting to come towards an overall conclusion, it is perhaps fair to suggest that ... 'Sustainable development encapsulates par excellence the classic public policy problem of balancing competing objectives, it tends to be

a policy objective espoused at the level of rhetoric, but difficult to achieve in practice' (DETR, 1999b, para. 1.14)

CHAPTER 4:

UNDERSTANDING THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS: A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

To examine theories of policy analysis and, in particular, identify whether there is a model of collaboration that can provide a suitable framework for considering the policy process in relation to cross-cutting policy themes.

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Contextualising the analysis

4.3 The policy-making environment

4.4 Analysing the policy process

4.5 Conclusion

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this Chapter is to examine theories of policy analysis and, in particular, identify whether there is a model of collaboration that can provide a suitable framework for considering the policy process in relation to cross-cutting policy themes. As discussed in previous chapters, this analysis is set within a world that is characterised by greater inter-dependence and a fragmentation of government responsibilities. In terms of public policy, a new perspective has emerged to address sets of policies, known variously as the 'wicked issues' or as cross-cutting policies (Rittel & Webber, 1973; cited in Williams & Thomas, 2004).

It has been noted that cross-cutting policies require a multi-agency approach in both policy formulation and implementation. These set of policies have no fixed sectoral or administrative boundaries; they require an understanding of interconnections between social, economic and environmental aspects of political, policy and administrative systems and are not amenable to optimal solutions; they are grounded within multi-organisational and stakeholder environments; and they are not capable of being managed by single agencies acting autonomously. These circumstances have enhanced the importance of collaboration as a means of formulating and implementing public policy.

The emphasis of this Chapter, therefore, is concerned with the policy process and the identification of a method that can be used to analyse the policy process in the context of the issues set out in the preceding paragraph. It will be seen that the analytical framework proposed draws on a number of theoretical perspectives for the purpose of contextualisation but it is argued that the analysis of public policy in the policy world characterised by multiple stakeholders and cross-cutting policies requires the use more specific tools of analysis. As Parsons (1995, p.73) points out, 'No one theory or model is adequate to explain the complexity of the policy activity of the modern state. The analyst must accept the pluralistic nature of inquiry, both in terms of the interdisciplinary quality of investigation and the need for a hermeneutic tolerance of diversity. The analysis of public policy therefore involves an

appreciation of the network of ideas, concepts and words which form the world of explanation within which policy-making and analysis takes place’.

4.2 CONTEXTUALISING THE ANALYSIS

This element of the research draws on the related disciplines of policy analysis, policy sciences and policy studies. According to Hogwood and Gunn (1984, p. 26), ‘the terms ‘policy analysis, ‘policy sciences’, and ‘policy studies’ are used by various authors in different ways, at times interchangeably, at times in an attempt to impose a particular meaning on a specific term...’ However, there are attempts to define these terms in a meaningful way and a discussion of these is set out below.

Policy

The term policy has been defined variously. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines policy as ‘a course of action adopted by government’; Friend, Power and Yewlett (1974, p. 40) suggest that ‘policy is a stance which, once articulated, contributes to the context within which a succession of future decisions will be made’; and Hecllo (1972, p. 85) suggests that ‘a policy may usefully be considered as a course of action or inaction rather than specific decisions or actions’. Policy, therefore, is about a course of action rather than a discrete decision. It suggests that the action is rational and based upon some principle.

Policy Analysis

Public policy, according to Dye (1995, p.2), ‘is whatever governments choose to do or not to do’. The analysis of public policy focuses on the way in which policy is made and implemented; it is concerned with people, actions and events. According to Lasswell (cited in Parsons, 1995, p.xvi), policy analysis has a number of defining characteristics; it is: - ‘multi-method: multi-disciplinary; problem-focussed; concerned to map the contextuality of the policy process, policy options and policy outcomes.’ It is about ‘...finding out what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes’ (Dye 1976,p.1); ‘it is the systematic identification of the causes and consequences of public policy, the use of scientific inference, and the search for reliability

and generality of knowledge (Dye 1976, p.3). Again, referring to Dye, 'understanding public policy is both an art and a craft. It is an art because it requires insight, creativity, and imagination in identifying societal problems and describing them, in devising public policies that might alleviate them, and then in finding out whether these policies end up making things better or worse. It is a craft because these tasks usually require some knowledge of economics, political science, public administration, sociology, law and statistics.' Wildavsky suggests that 'Policy analysis is really an applied sub-field whose content cannot be determined by disciplinary boundaries but by whatever appears appropriate to the circumstances of the time and the nature of the problem (Wildavsky, 1979, p.15. Cited in Parsons, 1995. p.xv). For Parsons (1995), there is no one theory or model that can adequately explain all that is involved in the process of public policy development and implementation.

Hogwood and Peters (1985) suggest that policy analysis is to social science what medicine is to biology: it applies a general body of knowledge to specific cases. This is the approach being adopted in this thesis; the approach is to use 'tools' from a number of theoretical approaches and seek to apply them to a specific case study in order to test their validity. As Wildavsky (1980, p.16) points out in the introduction to the British publication of his book, 'the technical base of policy analysis is weak. In part, its limitations are those of social science: innumerable discrete propositions, of varying validity and uncertain applicability, occasionally touching but not necessarily related, like beads on a string. Its strengths lie in the ability to make a little knowledge go a long way by combining an understanding of the constraints of the situation with the ability to explore the environment constructively'.

Policy Science

In providing an introduction to the journal *Policy Science*, E S Quade (1970, p.1) pointed out that the policy sciences are '...an interdisciplinary activity that attempts to blend the decision with the behavioural sciences ... the integration of the policy sciences is simply to augment, by scientific decision methods and behavioural sciences, the process that humans use in making

judgements and taking decisions' Thus, policy sciences can be regarded as an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of public policy. Lasswell (1951, p. 4) points out that '...the policy sciences includes (1) the methods by which the policy process is investigated, (2) the results of the study, and (3) the findings of the disciplines making the most important contribution to the intelligence needs of our time'. The policy sciences are about explaining the policy making and implementation processes; they are, according to Lasswell, contextual, multi-method and problem-orientated. 'The policy sciences may be conceived as knowledge of the policy process and of the relevance of knowledge in the policy process' (Lasswell 1970, p.3). A number of authors, for example Hogwood and Gunn (1984), Gordon, Lewis and Young, (1977) and (Hill), (1997) have adopted this distinction as a means of classifying public policy making, with knowledge of the policy process being defined as *policy studies* and knowledge in the policy process being defined as *policy analysis*. Hogwood and Gunn (1984, p.29), suggest that the term policy sciences is an 'umbrella phrase' that can be used to cover both 'policy studies' and 'policy analysis'.

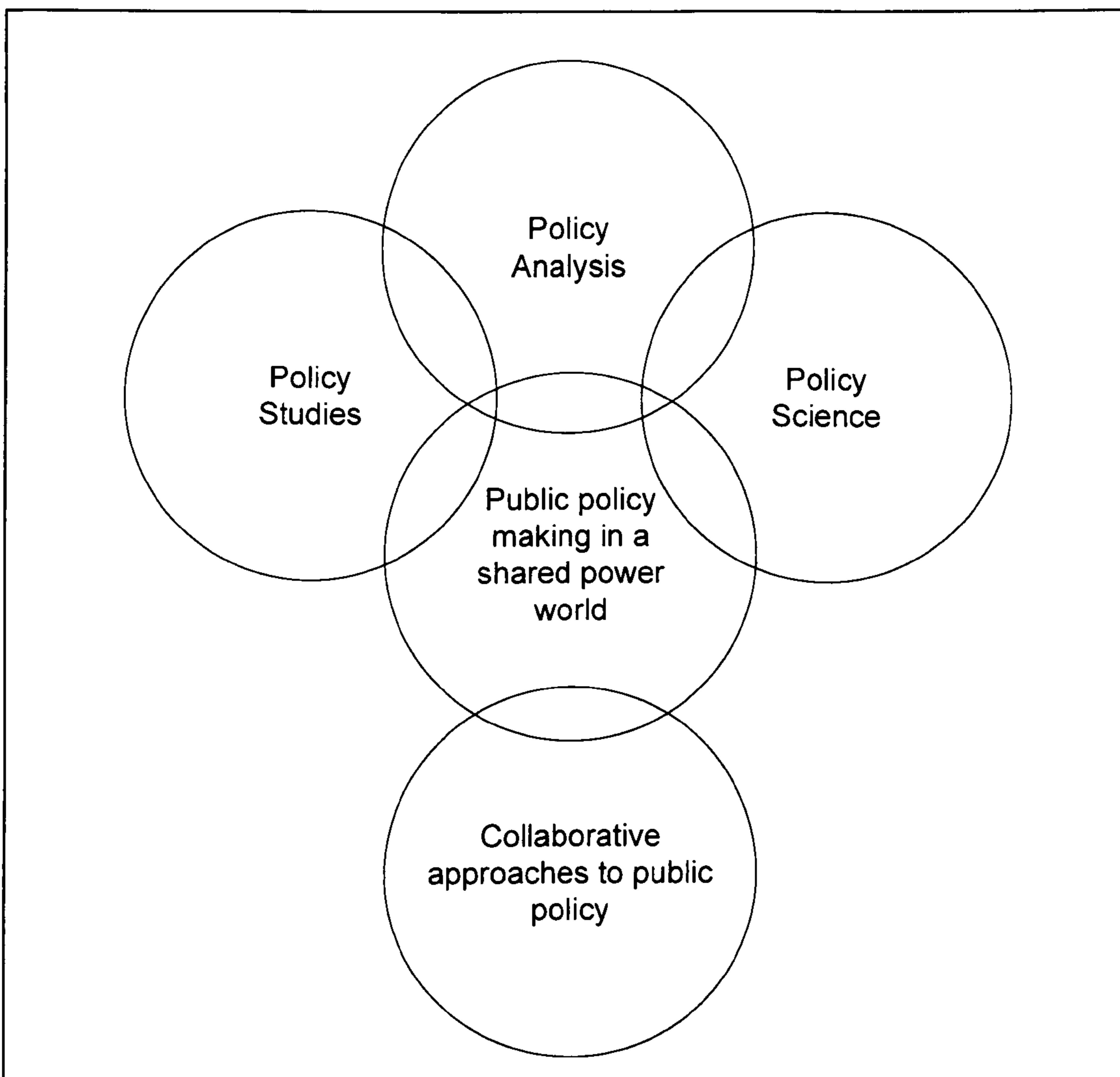
Policy Studies

Policy studies are concerned with understanding public policy processes. They are about describing and explaining the policies of governments in terms of the political, social, and economic factors that impact upon policy. Parsons (1995, p.75 et seq.) points to the growth of interest in policy studies in the 1970s and 1980s in both the United States and in Europe.

This differentiation between policy analysis, policy science and policy studies is helpful in clarifying the meanings of these terms and placing the literature consulted within a bibliographic framework. However, the literature consulted for this study is located in all three of these fields of public policy making. This approach reflects the conclusions suggested by both Parsons and Wildavsky (op. cit.) that no one theory can adequately explain all that is involved in the process of public policy making. Indeed, it will be demonstrated that the trends identified in Chapter 2 with regard to the fragmentation of the role of the state, globalisation and the new approach to addressing cross-cutting

policy themes requires other models or representations to understand the public policy process. One of the conclusions to emerge from Chapters 2 & 3 is the fact that collaboration is now an important aspect of the public policy making process. This aspect will be explored in more detail in this Chapter. Figure 4.1 below summarises these relationships discussed above.

Fig 4.1 Understanding Public Policy in a Shared Power World



Source: Author

4.3 THE POLICY MAKING ENVIRONMENT

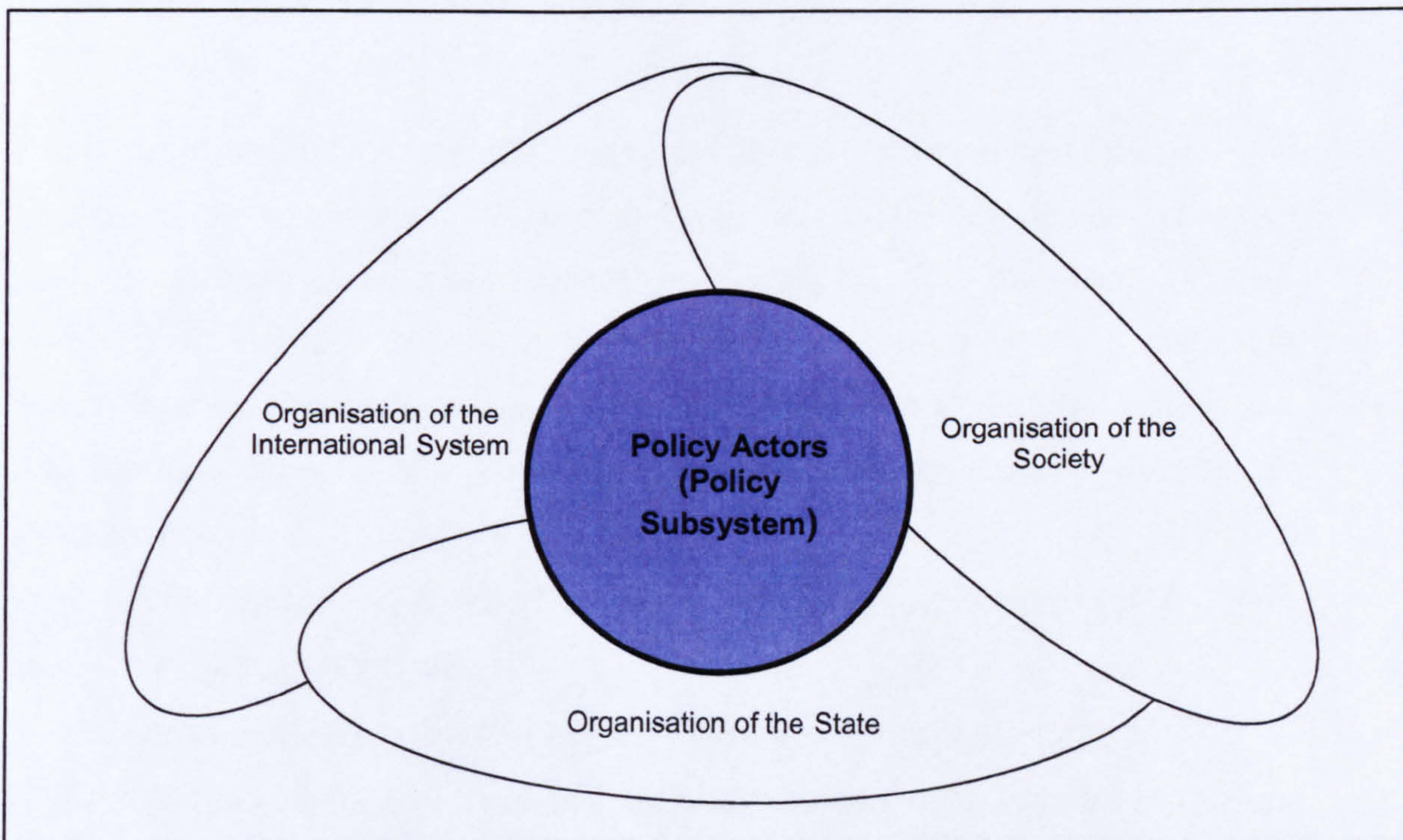
There is a need to place public policy making within a wider institutional and organisational setting in order to provide a context in which to view the various approaches for analysing the policy process. The role that institutions and actors (those individuals and organisations involved in the policy process)

play in the public policy process is an important element analysing and understanding the policy process.

Policy analysts have developed a number of concepts to explain the policy process. In the 1960s, particularly in the United States, the concept of the 'iron triangle' was used to explain the relationships that existed at that time between interest groups, congressional committees, and government agencies in policy areas such as agriculture, transportation and education. In the 1970s and 1980s the work of writers such as Hugh Hecllo (1978) and Rod Rhodes (1984) led to the development of policy network analysis as an alternative conceptual approach to the study of the policy system. Such concepts as policy networks and advocacy coalitions are used to explain the policy process

Howlett and Ramesh (1995) provide a useful conceptual framework to express the relationship between actors and institutions that comprise the policy process, which is set out in Figure 4.2 below.

Fig. 4.2 Actors & institutions in the policy process

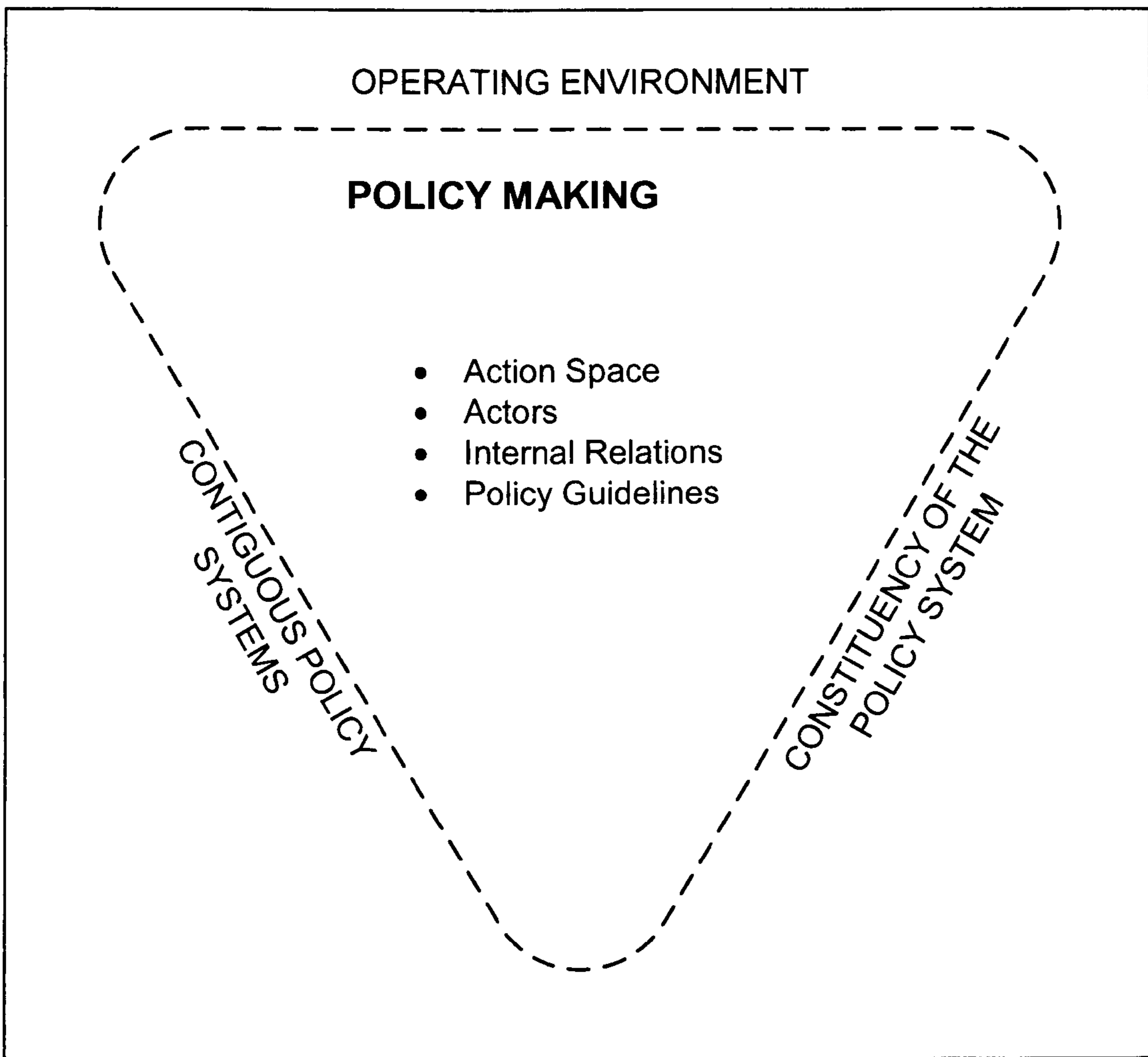


Source: Howlett & Ramesh (1995, p.51)

In this framework, policies are made by policy subsystems (cf. action space) consisting of actors dealing with a public problem. The term 'actor' includes both state and societal actors; they can be individuals or groups (elected representatives; appointed officials e.g. civil servants; interest groups e.g. Non-government Organisations). These actors participate in the policy process as members of policy networks and those involved belong to policy communities (Rhodes, 1988; Marsh & Rhodes, 1992). Similarly there are policy domains comprising of sets of actors with major concerns (Hill, 1997, p. 76). Policy sub-systems (c.f. Action space) are policy forums where actors discuss policy issues and negotiate their policy interests. Actors working with the policy subsystem are influenced by institutional arrangements surrounding the policy process, which in turn, reflects their ability to pursue their interests. These institutions are the state, society and the international system.

Another useful approach to conceptualising the public policy making environment is provided by Friend, Power and Yewlett (1974) who provide a systems view of the policy process. This is illustrated in Fig. 4.3 overleaf. Again, the focus is on the roles of actors in the context of the institutions within which they operate.

Fig 4.3 The policy system and its environment



Source: Friend, Power, Yewlett (1974, p. 28)

The policy system is defined as '... any set of organisational and interpersonal arrangements which has evolved to deal with some identifiable class of decision problems, however simple and complex this may be'...(Friend, Power, and Yewlett, 1974 p.24). Policy-making occurs within a definable 'action space'. The system is subject to both internal and external influences. The internal aspects of the policy system essentially have a number of components: -

- *Action space* – a class of problems within its competence (cf. problem domains, defined later)
- *Actors* – a set of people involved in the policy system.
- *Internal relations* – a set of relations between actors inside the policy system

- *Policy guidelines* – a set of rules, policies objectives, precedents acknowledged by the actors as guidelines to choice within the action space.

The policy system, according to Friend et.al, is operating within a wider environment that affects the roles of the actors working within the policy system. This defines the external influences and relations to actors outside the policy system. This environment has three main facets: -

- *Operating environment* – which includes all those aspects from which problems (and issues) emerge.
- *Constituency of the policy system* – a set of public or other interests to which the actors in the policy system consider themselves to be responsible for the actions which they may select.
- *Contiguous policy systems* – a recognition that problems and policies are inter-related and that the geographical boundaries of policies may be extensive in terms of their influence i.e. interdependencies between policy systems.

These concepts were empirically tested in a study of policy coordination in the West Midlands Region (Friend, et. al. 1974). The significance of this work to the development of the theory of policy analysis lies in the fact that it was a challenge to the 'top down' view of policy analysis (which emphasised the administrative, legal and procedural aspects) and pointed the way to what became known as the 'bottom up' approach (which emphasised the role of actors, networks, agencies and stakeholders). This aspect will be considered further later in this Chapter.

These approaches are useful because they enable the public policy process to be conceptualised within the context of the actual organisational, institutional and political setting. They provide a particular lens through which the complexity of the policy process can be viewed and understood. However, there is a need to recognise that these conceptual perspectives do not fully explain the detail of how policy is developed. It is for this reason that attention is now turned to models of the public policy process.

4.4 ANALYSING THE POLICY PROCESS

4.4.1 An overview of the discussion

There are two approaches that can be used to analyse the policy process; one is grounded in instrumental rationality or the scientific positivist approach (expressed in the 'Stages Approach) and the other, variously known as the discourse, deliberative, interpretive, or collaborative approach, is based on the ways in which stakeholder groups conceive problems and issues (Vigar & Healey, 2002). It is not the intention to go into the philosophical detail of the theoretical underpinnings of these two approaches to policy analysis, except only to explain why one is used rather than the other in context of a policy analysis in a multi-level governance regime.

The emergence of governance has brought into focus a new consideration for understanding the policy process. Policy analysis has traditionally focussed on problems and decisions; it is based on a hierarchical view of the policy process, as evidenced by the classical top-down approach to policy analysis. In this technical bureaucratic model of the policy process, attention is focussed on analysis of the problem, regulation, and implementing stated objectives. It works best when there is neither diversity nor interdependence among interests (Innes & Booher, 2000). This approach is less appropriate to a policy-making situation that is characterised by 'governance' where policy formulation and implementation are the responsibility of a number of organisations. Policy making in this environment is more than finding solutions to problems; it is about, for example, recognising interrelationships, establishing ground rules, generating trust amongst the varying actors that have an interest in the policy domain.

Collaboration, both in theory and in practice has not been fully explored, particularly in the UK context (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002). The collaborative model accommodates diversity and interdependence because it creates a framework within which interdependencies are explored and solutions sought based on a collaborative approach. New policy practices have emerged to cope with policy-making in this pluralistic environment such as 'consensus-

building' and 'round-tables'. The next section will explore these two approaches to policy analysis in more detail to provide a theoretical context in which to view the development of cross-cutting policy themes.

4.4.2 The Stages Approach

The Stages Approach is grounded in the bureaucratic, technical-rational approach to policy-making and analysis. This view of the policy process is based on disaggregating the policy process into a sequence of stages generally referred to as the policy cycle. It is also referred to as 'the stages heuristic' (Sabatier, 1999) and is generally adopted as a structural feature in most textbooks for explaining the policy process (Parsons, 1995, p.78). It is to Lasswell (1956) where the origins of the concept of the policy process can be traced. He divides the policy process into seven stages; - intelligence; promotion; prescription; innovation; application; termination; appraisal. Over the years, Lasswell's model has been refined and adapted. Hogwood and Gunn (1984), for example, like many other analysts find it useful to analyse the policy process in terms of nine stages: - deciding to decide (issue search or agenda setting); deciding how to decide (or issue filtration); issue definition; forecasting; setting objectives and priorities; options analysis; policy implementation, monitoring, and control; evaluation and review; and policy maintenance, succession, or termination.

Other writers (e.g. Hague & Harrop, 2001) have simplified the stages model into five distinct phases; - policy initiation; policy formulation; policy implementation; policy evaluation; and review. These are now considered to explain the policy cycle in more detail: -

Policy Initiation.

Policy initiation emerges from the political agenda and can stem from a wide range of influences and events. It defines those issues that are to be on the agenda and the way in which those issues are to be addressed. For example, much of the UK's environmental policy has been driven by the agreements that were made at the 1992 Rio 'earth summit' and the subsequent

agreements made at summits such as Kyoto where targets were made on 'green-house' gas emissions.

Policy Formulation.

Policy formulation begins once a decision has been made that an issue is on the political agenda. It is a process that involves analysis to develop systematic policy proposals, although in practice the process may not be as systematic as the rational models of the policy process may suggest. This stage of the policy cycle is very much concerned with exploring a range of options that can be considered and a refinement to those which policy makers are likely to accept. As Howlett and Ramesh (1995, p.122) point out '...the essence of the search for solutions to a problem entails discovering which actions are considered possible and which are not...' The process is highly complex and is characterised by a number of features including: - the likely presence of more than one set of policy actors; the possibility that formulation can proceed with more than one set of policy actors; the possibility that the process can proceed in a non-linear manner with formulation and reformulation taking place over a long period of time with the outcome not necessarily leading to a firm policy proposal (Jones, 1984 cited in Howlett & Ramesh, 1995).

In analysing policy formulation, a number of models have been developed to explain the policy / decision making process. Whilst Lasswell was perhaps the doyen of the emergent policy approach, the contributions of Herbert Simon (1957), Charles Lindblom (1959), Yehezkel Dror (1964) and Amitai Etzioni (1967) were notable in looking at the way in which policy decisions are made, although, it must be acknowledged that in many ways they tend to look at the process in administrative terms as 'ideal type' models and ignore the political context. This is a point developed later when the concept of networks is explored. Howlett and Ramesh (1995, p.137) point out that '...the decision-making stages of the policy cycle received most attention in the early development of the policy sciences...' The 1960s were characterised by the debate surrounding the 'rational' and 'incremental' models; the former

generally being regarded as a model of 'how decisions ought to be taken' and the latter a model of the 'actual practice of decision-making in governments'.

In many ways Simon and Lindblom can be represented as being at two ends of a continuum that is concerned about the manner and process by which decisions are made with Dror and Etzioni occupying the middle ground. Simon published his *'Administrative Behaviour'* in 1957. As he points out, *'Administrative Behaviour'* is basically a book for organisation watchers and organisation designers' (ibid. p. vii); it is about examining organisations from the perspective of their decision processes. Simon developed a 'rational' theory of decision making in the public policy arena based on an 'ideal' model, which is designed to assist the social scientist explain real phenomena. Hogwood & Gunn (1984, p.43) suggest that presenting a decision making theory based on pure rationality allows comparisons to be made between 'what is' and 'what ought to be' the situation. In many ways parallels are drawn with 'perfect competition' in economics.

Simon's 'rational' approach is typically explained (see, for example, Hill 1997, and Hogwood and Gunn, 1984,) as problem identification and goals; identification of options; assessment of the consequence of options; relating consequences of options to values; and, finally' the selection of the preferred option. Simon acknowledged difficulties relating to the rational approach, especially those relating to values. Etzioni (1967, p.386) points out that '...we frequently do not have a specific, agreed upon set of values that could provide the criteria for evaluating alternatives. Values are rather fluid and are affected by, as well as affect, the decisions made. Moreover, in actual practice, the rationalistic assumption that values and facts, means and ends, can be clearly distinguished seems inapplicable.'

At the other end of the continuum, Charles Lindblom (1959) is critical of the rational comprehensive method of decision making in the *'Science of Muddling Through'*. He contrasts (ibid, p. 81) the 'rational comprehensive (root)' model with that which he terms 'successive limited comparisons (branch)' – decision making progresses by successive limited comparisons

rather than by the more rigorous process suggested by Simon's rational comprehensive approach. In a later work, with David Braybrooke (*A Strategy of Decision*, 1963), Lindblom refines the successive limited comparisons method with the concept of 'disjointed instrumentalism'. Again, Etzioni (1967, p.386) provides a useful summary of Lindblom's position; the method essentially involves examining policies which differ from each other incrementally and which incrementally differ from existing policies. The analysis is not comprehensive because only a small number of 'important' policy alternatives are considered. The decision maker is concerned with resolving immediate problems rather than a fundamental review of the whole policy context.

As Parsons (1995, p.289) points out '...by the end of the 1970s Lindblom had revised his ideas to take account of his critics (such as Etzioni and Dror) as well as his own appraisal of pluralism'... As Dror (1964, p.155) points out, 'incrementalism' or 'muddling through' is only appropriate in instances where a fundamental change of policy is required. In its place he suggests a 'normative optimum model' which lies somewhere between the rational-comprehensive and incremental methods. This is the comprehensive examination of alternative consequences as under the rational comprehensive model and what he terms the 'extra-rational' elements which comprise 'intuitive judgements', 'holistic impressions' and 'creative invention of new alternatives' – 'brainstorming' and other approaches.

Etzioni's mixed scanning approach (1967) uses the analogy of cameras employed in weather observations. In the rationalistic model, if the total information about the weather situation were required, cameras would scan the total weather scene and a detailed observation of each and every element of the broad picture. However, incrementalism would focus on those areas in which similar patterns developed in the recent past and perhaps a few nearby regions. 'A mixed scanning strategy would include elements of both approaches by employing two cameras: a broad angle camera that would cover all parts of the sky, but not in great detail, and a second one which

would zero in on those areas revealed in the first camera to require more in depth examinations' (ibid. p. 389).

As Etzioni points out '...mixed scanning provides a particular procedure for the collection of information...a strategy about the allocation of resources...and guidelines for relations between the two' (p.389). Etzioni's approach perhaps helps in the matter of research design methodology but does not assist in defining the way in which policy issues should be examined. Etzioni provides both a description of the policy process and also an indication (or model) of how policy information and development might proceed.

To conclude this reference to the works of Simon, Lindblom, Dror and Etzioni, it might be said that Lindblom, Dror, and Etzioni offer an alternative to the concept of comprehensive rationality; they recognise that it is possible to develop approaches to policy and decision making that are pragmatic and recognise the realities of the process of policy research, development and implementation.

Policy Implementation

The policy implementation stage of the policy cycle is about translating policies or programmes into action. Policy analysis has made a particular contribution to the implementation phase of the policy cycle (Hague & Harrop, 2001). Traditionally, implementation was seen as part of the administrative process; it was essentially taken for granted as being largely a technical exercise carried out by paid officials. This view of policy implementation persisted until the early 1970s when Pressman and Wildavsky's study (cited in Howlett & Ramesh, 1995, p. 153) of job creation programmes in Oakland, California showed that the outcomes of the policy were different from those that were intended by the legislators or policy makers. Research in Britain (Barrett & Fudge, 1981) similarly confirmed the conclusion that that the traditionally accepted 'top-down' model of policy implementation did not always reflect what happened in practice. These studies on policy implementation led to a debate between the 'top-down' and the 'bottom-up' perspectives on the implementation process.

The Top-down approach

The top-down approach takes the decisions of government as essentially as given and then proceeds to examine the extent to which officials (administrators) implement these decisions taken at a high level. The top-down perspective is reflected in the 'stages model'. The emphasis is on the extent to which policy objectives have been achieved. According to Sabatier (1986), the work of Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983) provides a useful example of the top-down approach. 'The essential features of the top-down approach are that it starts with a policy decision by government (often central government) officials and then asks: -

1. To what extent were the actions of implementing officials and target groups consistent with (the objectives and procedures outlined in) that policy decision?
2. To what extent were the objectives attained over time i.e. to what extent were the impacts consistent with the objectives?
3. What were the principle features affecting policy out-puts and in-puts, both those relevant to the official policy as well as other politically significant ones?
4. How was the policy reformulated over time on the basis of the experience?' (Sabatier, 1986, p. 22).

The 'top-down approach has been subject to considerable empirical testing (Sabatier, 1986, p. 26) and it has been criticised by the supporters of the alternative 'bottom-up approach. Perhaps the most fundamental criticism relates to the focus on the higher echelons involved in the policy process at the expense of lower levels of officials. It assumes that those involved in the formulation process are the key actors and that those involved lower down the chain are basically impediments. The 'top-down' approach also has difficulties in explaining the policy implementation process in situations where policy is implemented by a number of different agencies, for example, in the policy area of social service delivery where there has been a significant growth of executive government agencies. In such instances the implementers are distanced from the original policy-formulating process and this may lead to

problems in policy delivery. Also, again a criticism of the stages model, is the need to recognise that many government policies are not necessarily 'new' policies and programmes but rather adjustments to existing activities.

The Bottom-up approach

Whereas the top-down approach tends to focus on the extent to which policy objectives are achieved, the bottom-up approach starts by identifying the network of actors involved in the implementation process and identifies their goals, strategies, activities and contacts. Thus the 'bottom-up approach to the analysis of policy implementation allows the focus of research activity to be aimed at the formal and informal relationships of actors in the policy process. The concept of a 'network' is employed to explore these relational aspects in policy making. It provides an alternative to the 'rational-procedural' model embraced within the 'top-down' approach

There are a number of definitions of policy networks. Rod Rhodes, a leading exponent of the network concept, defines it as follows '...a cluster or complex of organisations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies' (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992, p.182; Rhodes, 1997, Chapter 2). Rhodes argues that policy networks are the interactions within and among government agencies and social organisations. These networks are instrumental in formulating and developing policy and their 'texture' varies according to the level of integration. The emphasis is on common material interests.

Benson (1982), cited in Klijn (1996), defines policy networks as a '...cluster or complex of organisations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependencies'. Rhodes elaborates on Benson's definition by distinguishing between five types of network ranging along a continuum from highly integrated policy communities to loosely integrated issue networks (Marsh & Rhodes, 1992, p.13; Rhodes, 1997, p.38).

Whilst recognising policy networks as a generic concept, Marsh and Rhodes make the distinction between 'policy community' and 'issue network'. The former (policy community) comprises a limited number of participants based on functional interests in and out of government and the latter (issue networks) a large number of participants and a limited degree of interdependence.

The network concept, therefore, provides a means '...to analyse complex relations between governmental agencies and interest groups' (Klijn, 1996).

According to Klijn, three main features characterise the network approach: -

1. Dependency – actors are dependent upon each other.
2. Processes – in a policy network no single actor has enough steering capacity to determine the strategic actions of other actors
3. Institutions – a policy network consists of a pattern of relations. Dependencies between actors and the interactions that result, create patterns of relations between actors.

The network concept is part of the process approach to public policy. This process is complex because of the interactions between actors who have different perceptions and preferences about problems and solutions.

Dowding (1995, p.136) has criticised policy networks because the concept is essentially a metaphor and '... may only become a theory by developing along the lines of sociological network analysis'. Policy network analysis looks at patterns of relationships. The focus is on the functional relationships that describe the properties of the network. There is an informal process that concentrates upon the features of actors. Policy Network Analysis says nothing about the informal process that concentrates upon the features of actors or about the discourses or rules that bind individual actors. Dowding, therefore, looks at the policy process as '...a bargaining game between different types of actors ...a concentration upon the generation of preference motives' (p.147).

In meeting some of the criticisms of the policy cycle framework and policy networks, Dowding advances the concept of 'advocacy coalitions'. The advocacy coalition framework examines policy change from a variety of public and private organisations that are actively involved with a policy issue i.e. a policy subsystem. Drawing on the bottom-up approach, the model assumes actors can be aggregated into a number of advocacy coalitions (each composed of politicians, officials, interest groups leaders) who share a set of normative and causal beliefs on core policy issues. Each group will adopt a strategy to further its policy objectives. Any conflict in strategy is mediated through a third group of actors known as 'policy brokers' whose main function is to find a reasonable compromise to reduce conflict.

To accommodate areas subject to policy change, the model distinguishes between the 'core' and 'secondary' aspects of a belief system or government policy programme. Coalitions are unlikely to alter their positions (beliefs) on core issues, whereas secondary aspects can be subject to change if they are instrumental in maintaining core beliefs. Changes to core policy (e.g. a change of government) would be a fundamental shift whereas changes in secondary aspects of a government policy programme could reflect the result of policy-oriented learning by various coalitions or policy brokers.

There is no clear view as to whether the top-down or bottom-up approach provides a better means of understanding the implementation process (Sabatier, 1986). The top-down approach is useful where there is a dominant aspect of public policy under consideration or where the policy analyst is interested in the effectiveness of a particular policy. In contrast, the bottom-up approach is more appropriate in situations where there is no dominant aspect of public policy (legislation) and where there are large numbers of actors. It is also seen as useful where the interest is '...in the dynamics of different local situations' (ibid. p.37). However, as Sabatier points out '...the bottom-up approach ... has not yet developed much of a substantive theory and is thus poorly equipped to make predictions' (ibid. p.37) From a methodological perspective, 'the top-down approach is more useful in making a preliminary assessment of which approach to use' (Sabatier, 1986, p.36).

Policy Evaluation.

The policy evaluation stage is concerned with critically evaluating whether a policy has achieved its goals. It ‘...refers broadly to the stage of the policy process at which it is determined how public policy fared in action’ (Howlett & Ramesh, p.207, 2003). Thomas Dye (cited in Parsons, 1995, p.545) defines policy evaluation as an ‘...empirical examination of the effects ongoing policies and public programmes have on their targets in terms of the goals they are meant to achieve’. As Parsons points out, ‘evaluation research addresses two dimensions: how a policy may be measured against the goals it sets out to attain, and the actual impact of the policy’ (ibid. p. 545). Hague and Harrop (2001, p. 277) suggest that a distinction needs to be made between policy *outcomes* (what government achieves, including the unintended effects) and policy *outputs* (what government does). Outcomes are the activity but are more difficult to measure because of, for example, externalities – the unintended consequences; outputs can be more easily measured because there is a tangible outcome. Thus, it is easier to measure the latter (outputs) than the former (outcomes).

Policy evaluation, therefore, provides policy analysts with information to correct and/or control the delivery of policies. Howlett & Ramesh (2003, p.210) suggest that policy evaluation can be classified into three broad categories: -

- Administrative evaluation – generally concerned with managerial performance, budget and delivery, for example value for money studies and cost-benefit evaluation;
- Judicial evaluation – essentially concerned with legal issues relating to the manner in which government programmes are implemented. They may explore possible conflicts between government actions and constitutional provisions;
- Political evaluation – generally not as systematic as the other two categories because by their very nature they tend to be partisan and technically biased.

From a policy evaluation perspective administrative evaluations tend to be the more useful to policy makers. Falling within this category are management information systems, which have been designed to assist the overall process. The Conservative government introduced MINIS (Management Information Systems for Ministers) in the 1980s to provide Ministers with information on what was going on in their departments (Heseltine, 2000. pp.190-194). This was followed by FMI (Financial Management Initiatives), which were designed to provide managers with information so that policy objectives could be met more efficiently. The development of evaluation techniques was very much aimed at controlling public finances and attaining higher levels of value for money, efficiency and effectiveness. However, the emphasis was on outputs rather than outcomes.

Policy Review.

After policy has been evaluated, it may be necessary to re-think the particular policy completely and, in terms of the stages model, actions may swing back to initiation or formulation stages. Policy review is really concerned with decisions being made about the continuance, modification or termination of the policy or programme in question. This stage completes the policy cycle because information derived from the evaluation stage can be fed back into the initiation and formulation stages.

Howlett & Ramesh (2003, p.216) suggest that the potential outcomes from the policy review stage are three-fold: -

- The policy is a success and can be continued in its present form;
- The policy is considered to be deficient in some respect and suggestions are made for its modification;
- The policy is a complete failure (or success) and can be terminated.

The first two outcomes of the evaluation process would feed the policy back to some other stage of the policy cycle. Instances of policy termination are rare. Bardach (1976, cited in Hague & Harrop, 2001) suggests that there are five reasons for this situation: - policies are designed to last a long time; termination brings conflicts which leave too much blood on the floor; no-one

wants to admit that the policy was a bad idea; termination may affect other programmes; politics rewards innovation rather than tidy-house keeping.

The policy cycle model set out above provides an understanding of public policy making by breaking down the process into a number of stages, each of which can be investigated individually or in terms of its relationship to other stages of the policy cycle. 'This aids theory building by allowing numerous case studies and comparative studies of different stages to be undertaken' (Howlett & Ramesh, 1995, p. 12).

The stages heuristic or policy cycle has been subject to a number of criticisms (Sabatier 1999 and Parsons 1995): -

- It is not a causal theory because it does not provide an explanation of how policy moves from one stage to another;
- The sequence of stages does not reflect how policy is developed in the real world e.g. evaluation of existing programmes affects the agenda setting;
- It characterises policy making as essentially 'top down'; it neglects the use of other policy actors in the process of interaction within the policy domain;
- It assumes that there is one policy cycle focussed as a major piece of legislation and ignores the multiple levels of government;
- It does not provide for an integrated view of the analysis of the policy process that includes research and information; policy analysis is not confined to the evaluation phase.

In conclusion, therefore, whilst the policy cycle model has been criticised for, amongst other things, not reflecting how policy is developed in the real world, it does, however, provide a useful means of disaggregating the complexity of the policy process and provides a framework for explaining the various components, as evidenced by the fact that most authors on policy analysis adopt the 'stagist' or policy cycle as a basic structure. As Hill and Hupe (2002,

p.6) conclude, ‘...it is useful both analytically and heuristically for both the study and practice of the policy process’.

4.4.3 The Policy Discourse Approach.

The policy process model described above focuses on how policies are made rather than the substance or content of policies. As already indicated, these so-called ‘techno-rational’ models (those grounded in instrumental rationality) are best applied to situations where there is dependence on one organisation. Discourse, deliberative or interpretative approaches overcome the limitations of the essentially ‘technocratic’ approach by recognising the inter-organisational dimension, an important feature of the more pluralistic policy process characterised by governance.

The policy discourse approaches, variously known as ‘communicative’ (Habermas, 1984; Forester, 1989; Healey, 1992; and Hillier, 2002), ‘collaborative’ (Healey, 1997b), ‘consensus’ (Innes, 1995), ‘argumentative’ (Fischer and Forrester, 1993), deliberative (Vigar & Healey, 2002) and, more recently, ‘dialogue’ (Roberts, 2002) allow a consideration of the content of policy because they emphasise the importance of how meanings are socially constructed and the influence that arises from communication or language. At the heart of these approaches is an assumed mutual respect between parties based on listening to factual argument; evaluation of these facts through discussion; avoiding coercion and allowing parties to gain insight into the problem or issue. These various approaches allow the focus of analysis to be on the ways in which multi-stakeholder groups conceive problems and agendas and the ways in which values develop.

Policy discourse analysis allows the focus of interest to be placed on the meanings or frames of reference within which a policy is situated. The various policy discourse approaches (listed in the preceding paragraph) suggest that there is a need to focus on the process by which policy is developed and implemented and, in particular, the means by which information and knowledge is acquired, understood and developed into a policy framework. The complexity and inter-relatedness of problems in modern society suggests

that policy analysis needs to move away from its 'cross-sectional perspective' to one that can encapsulate the manner in which policy is developed and implemented in a society where the role of government is increasingly being seen as embracing a number of organisations in the delivery of public policies. Sullivan & Skelcher (2002, p. 20) note that 'collaborative arrangements have always been a feature of governmental activity, but they are now more significant than in earlier periods'. They also point out that '...the collaborative agenda has a powerful momentum enhanced by the political significance of cross-cutting issues and outcome delivery' (ibid. p. 33). Thus collaborative government is now seen as the key to successful implementation of those public policies that are cross-cutting in nature and in the context of policy making in Wales collaborative government is seen as a vital component in delivering public policy (Bishop & Flynn, 1999).

Thus, policy studies, which focus on the way in which policy is made and implemented and the use of such metaphors as the 'stages model', 'policy networks', 'iron triangles', 'black boxes', and its use in different perspectives for understanding policy implementation processes ('top down' and 'bottom up'), often do not give sufficient recognition to the complexity and interrelation of many of the problems which governments are now required to address. Such policy studies have essentially focussed on policy development and policy implementation processes and how these could be made more effective. The studies based on the concept of the policy cycle, referred to earlier, have either focussed on the role of individuals and groups and the structural activities of an organisation. However, in comparison, there has been relatively little attempt to focus on inter-organisational behaviour and, particularly, in the analysis of the process of collaborative activity. As the boundaries of government have widened to embrace the non-government and voluntary sectors as a means of delivering services that at one time might have been delivered by the state (governance) and the recognition that policy delivery no longer neatly fits into the responsibility of a single government department, there is a need to look towards other tools of analysis to view the policy process. This is particularly the case where the collaborative agenda has been enhanced by the political significance of cross-cutting policies, i.e.

those policies that have implications for more than one department, agency or organisation and more than one client group. This point was discussed in Chapter 2

4.4.4 Collaborative and communicative dimensions of policy discourse

From an epistemological perspective, many areas of public policy study reflect the neo-classical liberal economic theories grounded in micro-economics and instrumental rationality. In terms of its focus, policy studies have tended to concentrate on intra-organisational phenomena. In planning theory, one of the most active spheres of policy study, this perspective was typified in the systems approach of McLoughlin (1969), Chadwick (1971) and Faludi (1973). Writers such as Forrester (1989), Healey (1992 & 1997b) and Innes (1995) have challenged this perspective and suggested that planning should be based on a process communication, discourse and negotiation. These writers drew on the work of the German philosopher, Jurgan Habermas (1984), who challenged the theoretical perspective of instrumental rationality based on scientific and technical knowledge in favour of intersubjective communication that arises through the exchange of ideas and discourse between people with differing world views.

In terms of its relevance to planning, the theoretical approaches based on communication and inter-subjective discussion suggests that '...outcomes negotiated consensually, through the process of uncoerced reasoned debate with all participants working collaboratively, are more readily owned and accepted by participants than those imposed by the bureaucratic system' (Hillier, 2002, p.43). In the context of formulating planning policy, participants (actors) exchange ideas, decide what is valid, relevant and important. Similarly, as Innes (1998, p.vii) points out '...post modern planning is about making connections among ideas and among people and that this connection process sets in motion a whole series of changes'. Planning is, therefore, a process of interactive collective reasoning (Rydin, 1998).

Collaborative planning has two features; it is a framework for understanding process and a framework for practical action (Harris, 2002); this is a feature

that is judged to be significant given the aim of this research. Healey does not provide a rigorous definition of collaborative planning, however, but she does point to the nature and the components of this theoretical concept. It is suggested that the nature of collaborative planning '...is about why urban regions are important to social, economic and environmental policy and how political communities may organise to improve the quality of their places' (Healey, 1997b, p.xii). Reflecting Habermasian terminology in terms of the validity claims of speech and intersubjectivity, Healey (1992, p.154-155) identified the main components of communicative (collaborative) planning as follows: -

- Planning is an interactive and interpersonal process;
- Communicative action will take place between diverse groups;
- The methods require respect for one another's' opinions;
- Debate is the key to the process and the establishment of arenas where conflicts are identified and mediated;
- The need to acknowledge, understand and fully explore the diverse claims to policy development;
- The need to be reflective to enable participants to evaluate and re-evaluate;
- The process enables new discourses to emerge as the process proceeds;
- Participants gain knowledge new understandings and values;
- The process enables participants to change things through collaboration;
- The process encourages participants to find practical solutions to problems in the implementation stage.

It should be pointed out, however, that Healey did not set out a theory of collaboration but merely described the process (Harris, 2002).

As already noted, these approaches (policy discourse, interpretive, communicative, collaborative, consensus and argumentative) have their roots in Habermas' *Theory of Communicative Action*, the core of which is an

emphasis on how language shapes the way in which individuals (or groups) understand the world. Language conveys meaning; it influences what is seen as knowledge. It is through the process of self-reflection and inter-subjective discussion that participants deepen their understanding and possibly change their positions. Parsons (1995, p.151), points out that if '...we want to understand how a 'problem' has been defined, we must endeavour to analyse the way in which its 'discourse' has been framed'. It is the process that provides the framework for the policy development. 'Language frames and structures the policy process (Parsons, 1995, p. 152).

Thus, these hermeneutic or interpretive approaches to social investigation allow the policy analyst to focus attention on the communicative and rhetorical strategies employed in the policy process. 'Theoretically, the focus on argumentation allows us to recognise the complex ways analysts not only solve but formulate problems, the ways their arguments express or resist broader relations of power and belief, and the ways their practical arguments are inescapably both normative and descriptive' (Fischer and Forrester, 1993 p.14). This approach lays emphasis on the need to understand how meaning is being manufactured, the language frames and the structure of the policy process.

Fischer and Forrester (1993, pp.5-7) suggest that the argumentative (collaborative) approach contributes a number of aspects to the development of policy analysis: -

- An appraisal of the ways in which practitioners formulate or construct problems;
- An understanding of the nature of claims (e.g. the findings) but also the rhetoric of analysis;
- An understanding of the complexity of the policy process through the study of language;
- An insight into the work (policy discourse) that takes place as the policy document evolves through its drafting stages;

- An appreciation that professional expertise and technical knowledge can be determinate features in shaping public policy.

4.4.5 Consensus building as an approach to policy formulation

Parallel to the ideas emerging from the theorists propounding collaborative, communicative and argumentative approaches to planning theory and policy analysis, there was emerging the idea that consensus building presented a method of model building and an opportunity to develop a new approach to the resolution of disputes, many of which are at the heart of issues central to planning (Innes, 1996 and Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987). Consensus building effectively 'operationalises' the theorists account of communicative rationality by setting out a procedure for bringing together individuals that have an interest in a particular issue and a procedure to ensure that a discourse can take place in which all participants express their concerns in a forum. Out of this process consensus should emerge upon which to base a process of implementation. This 'process' will be considered in more detail later in this Chapter.

One aspect in the process of consensus building is dialogue. Roberts (2002, p.6) uses the term 'dialogue' to describe '...the co-creation of new meaning through mutual understanding and reciprocal communication between two or more parties'. For Roberts, dialogue is a necessary condition for collaboration; it acknowledges and deals with interdependencies that reflect the complexities of modern living. Dialogue is about relation building; participants treating one another as equals; refraining from exerting coercive influences over one another; listening and responding to one another; and trying to understand the other's point of view. The dialogue process is one of emergent understanding. The links to Habermasian communicative action and to its application in collaborative planning theories can be clearly seen. Roberts cites the ending of the cold war through the process of dialogue between Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev at Reykjavik as testimony to 'the transformative power of dialogue' (Roberts, op.cit. p.7).

The use of institutional processes for collaboration provides a means for developing an approach to policy making based on consensus. Consensus building is increasingly being seen as a way of dealing with environmental issues (Selin & Chavez, 1995; Innes, 1996). It can also be seen as a means for developing strategy and direction (Healey, 1997a). Spatial strategies are grounded in identifying issues and priorities; they require participants in the process to be reflective, re-frame problems, examine opportunities and constraints, discuss, analyse and commit to a course of action. As Healey (1997b, p.244) points out '...effective institutional processes for collaboration can build consensus not only around what the problems are, but about strategies and directions. Strategies provide simplifying concepts. They organise thinking about issues.'

Healey (1997a), regards spatial planning practices as part of the field of public policy because just as public policy is regarded as being concerned with an aggregate of formal organisations and informal relationships so spatial planning practices are about bringing people together to articulate concerns about the management of the environment. 'Spatial planning is about setting frameworks and principles to guide the location of development and physical infrastructure. It consists of a set of governance practices for developing and implementing strategies, plans, policies and projects, and for regulating the location, timing and form of development' (Healey, 1997c, p.4). This perspective on spatial planning reflects the 'institutional approach' to public policy where the emphasis is on policy actors and the part that they play in the policy process (sometimes referred to as the bottom-up approach). Strategic spatial plan making is, therefore, conceived as a social process (Innes, 1995 and Healey, 1997b & c). These processes take place in the context of governance. It is in this organisational context that consideration is given to collaborative consensus building as a means of analysing and understanding the process by which spatial plans are constructed.

Spatial planning (in the context of the European Spatial Development Perspective) is also about interrelating and integrating the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. However, it has to

achieve coordination at an organisational level (Williams, 1996). In many ways, therefore, the process of plan making is about developing an institutional and organisational framework in which to achieve this integration. The process is about deepening understanding, creating alliances and developing an interrelational capacity (Innes & Booher, 1999). For Healey (1997b, p.57) '...it is in the theory of such relation - building processes that the idea of collaborative planning is grounded'. The focus is both on the formal organisation (its legal basis) and also on the more informal arenas and networks. As Healey points out 'the institutional approach emphasises the social relations through which collective action is accomplished, producing public policy discourses and relational responses through which material and cultural benefits are developed, and activities regulated' (Healey 1997b, p72).

These ideas, stemming from Habermas reflecting policy analysis in terms of discourse or deliberation and expressed in more practical terms by the planning theorists mentioned above, effectively deal with the process of collaboration. Collaboration is increasingly being seen as important in addressing matters that no single organisation can achieve an outcome acting unilaterally. It is a process that can be considered in dealing with matters, for example, that have environmental concern and also in the practice of developing spatial planning strategies. However, the writers advocating this particular approach to policy making have not considered the components (in terms of an operational framework) of this particular policy process. This aspect of the policy process is now considered in more detail as a means of providing a framework for understanding the policy process in the context of an inter-organisational and multi-stakeholder policy environment.

4.4.6 Defining collaboration.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines '*collaborate*' as 'to work in conjunction with one another or others'. A more comprehensive definition of collaboration, which has been used in many studies, is provided by Barbara Gray (1985 & 1989). In the earlier reference (Gray, 1985, p.912) collaboration is defined as '...(1) the pooling of resources of appreciations and / or tangible resources, e.g. information, money, labor (*sic*), etc., (2) by two or more stakeholders, (3)

to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually'. In the later work (Gray, 1989, p.5), collaboration is defined as '... a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible'. Wood and Gray (1991, p. 146) provide another definition to reflect a more contextual perspective - 'who is doing what, with what means, toward which ends?' This definition effectively broadens Gray's earlier definition (1989, p.5) to read - 'collaboration occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain'. This definition identifies a number of other concepts e.g. domain, which will be considered later.

Collaboration, therefore, is about mutual learning; developing an understanding. It has elements of consensus building, facilitation and participation and provides a framework or strategy for examining problems and searching for solutions. As mentioned previously, it is also a means of dealing with complex issues and problems that emerge from the complexity of modern society where, increasingly, the actions of one organisation acting independently can have an impact on other organisations and individuals with unanticipated or dissonant consequences - Emery and Trist's turbulent environment' (Emery & Trist, 1973). Perhaps Gray (1989, p.1) sums the definitional issue up by the phrase 'the need to manage differences'. Gray presents a process model of collaboration that can be used in a number of circumstances and in this respect she perhaps 'operationalises' the approaches suggested by writers such as Forrester, Healey and Innes referred to earlier; the extent to which there is a similarity between these approaches will be explored later.

The definition suggested by Wood and Gray, referred to above, indicates that a number of other concepts should be considered: -

- *Domain* – a set of actors (individuals, groups, and / or organisations) that become joined by a common problem or interest (Gray, 1985, p.912)

- *Stakeholders of a problem domain* – groups or organisations with an interest in the problem domain; the term stakeholder is borrowed from business management to explain how collaboration is activated. (Wood & Gray, 1991, p.146)
- *Autonomy* – stakeholders retain their independent decision making powers even when they agree to abide by shared rules (Wood & Gray, 1991, p.146)
- *Interactive process* - a change oriented relationship in which all stakeholders are involved.
- *Shared rules, norms, and structures* – stakeholders normally agree on the rules and norms that will govern their interactive process; the structures may be temporary initially but could become more permanent.
- *Domain orientation* – participants orient their processes, decisions, and actions toward issues related to the problem domain that brought them together.

4.4.7 Theory of Collaboration

Before looking in more detail at the theory of collaboration, it is apposite to consider another theoretical perspective to provide a contextual background to the work of Gray (1985 & 1989) and others concerned with collaboration. Although writing just over forty years ago, Emery and Trist (1965) essentially took a systems view of the organisational environment, being influenced by cybernetics and information theory that were *a` la mode* at that time. Emery and Trist were questioning the validity of the centre-periphery model – a model put forward by Schon (1971) to explain the process by which innovation is diffused from the centre to its ultimate users. Emery and Trist were arguing that this view of the world was no longer valid, recognising that interdependencies, complexities and uncertainties were becoming a feature of society and to which they later referred to as a ‘turbulent’ environment (Emery & Trist, 1973, cited in Trist, 1979). They drew attention to the fact that the behaviour of an organisation depends not only on intra-organisational processes but also on to what they referred to as the ‘causal texture’ of the

environment itself – the pattern of interdependence among the network of organisations composing a pluralistic system. In other words, they were recognising that the culture and norms of the operating environment were an influence on the behaviour of an individual organisation. Trist (1979) pointed to the need to establish partnerships as a means of accomplishing objectives that organisations acting alone cannot accomplish.

Thus, 'turbulence' creates the conditions where it is not possible for an individual organisation to act unilaterally to seek solutions to problems without imposing constraints on the activities of others. Trist (1979) recognised that there must be some surrender of power and transfer of resources otherwise the independent organisations would remain ineffective. This is typical of the situation relating to many physical environmental problems. Such problems are typically complex to the extent that they have many dimensions that are beyond the bounds of the capability of one organisation to resolve. These problems, following Trist (1983), are referred to as 'meta-problems' to reflect the degree of complexity is such that solutions require inter-organisational collaboration to resolve. As already mentioned, under turbulent conditions organisations become highly inter-dependent, problems are bigger than any single organisation acting alone can solve and traditional adversarial methods of resolving conflicts are limited (Gray, 1985) and, therefore, collaboration is a logical and necessary response to such conditions. Collaboration is a means of controlling turbulence by '...building a collective capacity to reduce unintended consequences' (Gray, *ibid*).

Trist (1983) recognised that societies are now having to face up to complex rather than discrete problems, variously defined as 'problematique', 'meta-problems' or 'messes'. 'The issues involved are too extensive and too many sided to be coped with by any single organisation, however large. The response to clear up a 'mess' is inter-and-multi-organisational' (Trist, 1983. p.270). Trist points to the need for inter-organisational collaboration at the domain level and assigns this collaborative role to 'referent organisations'.

In this contextual setting, therefore, collaboration amongst what are termed stakeholders is increasingly being seen as a practical means for generating and delivering innovative policy. It reflects the need for consensus. In a shared power world this means that policy initiation, formulation and implementation are no longer the preserve of a single organisation.

Gray (1989, Chapter 10) advances a theory of collaboration built upon 'collaboration as an emergent inter-organisational process'. In essence, the theory is based on examining five key aspects of collaboration within the wider context of negotiated order theory: - interdependency among stakeholders; dealing constructively with differences; joint ownership of decisions; collective responsibility for the future direction of the domain; and collaboration as an emergent process. The theory suggests that collaborations are negotiated inter-organisational orders created by the stakeholders.

Negotiated order theory '... emphasises the fluid, continuously emerging qualities of the organisation, the changing web of interactions woven among its members, and it suggests that order is something at which the members of the organisation must constantly work'. Collaboration is conceptualised ...as a mechanism by which a new negotiated order emerges among a set of stakeholders' (Gray, 1989, p. 228). The collaboration process is built upon joint appreciation and stakeholders then develop agreements by which to regulate their future interactions.

In conceptualising collaboration as negotiated orders, Gray (1989, p.230) identifies four components: - (1) collaborations involve strategies collectively constructed by the stakeholders to cope with exogenous environmental pressures; (2) these inter-organisational arrangements are exploratory and developmental in character and may lead to some form of institutionalised agreement; (3) collaborations serve as quasi-institutional mechanisms for accommodating differing interests; (4) collaborations serve as vehicles for action learning. Collaboration, therefore, establishes a process for stakeholders to acknowledge that differences exist and creates a framework

for examining and resolving these differences – it ‘...establishes a process by which the domain can become more organised’ (Gray, 1989, p.234). Collaboration, therefore, can be viewed as a process of consensus building as well as a vehicle for action learning in the context that the process allows the potential for reframing the problem; it also provides a means of securing integration between ideas and actions.

4.4.8 Features of collaboration

In putting forward a useful taxonomy for considering collaboration, Gray (1989) suggests that two categories are appropriate: - resolving conflict and advancing shared visions. This thesis is particularly concerned with the latter – advancing shared visions. However, it is appropriate to examine the nature of the first category – resolving conflict – because the theory has been quite extensively used in the context of resolving environmental issues: -

Resolving conflict.

In this context collaboration is very much about settling disputes through a process of negotiation or dialogue (Roberts, 2002). This is particularly evident in environmental disputes. Bingham (1986, cited in Gray, 1989, p.7) has identified six broad categories within which collaborative solutions to disputes have been sought: - land use, natural resource management and public land use, water resources, energy, air quality, and toxics. At an international level, major collaborative ventures have been initiated to address global environmental issues, such as those relating to sustainable development initiated at the 1992 Rio ‘earth summit’ and agreements on emissions such as put in progress at Kyoto.

Another example of the use of collaboration in conflict resolution can be seen in the fishing industry (Barrie Deas in the Buckland Lecture, given at the Coastal Futures 2006 Conference, SOAS, London – www.coastms.co.uk), where it is suggested that one of the strongest arguments for the ‘new’ approach to resolving disputes about fishing quotas is through a forum (Regional Advisory Committees - RACs) in which fishermen and scientists can work collaboratively to establish long-term objectives about managing a

'regional sea'. This marked a radical break with the previous policy process that was essentially top-down (the Common Fisheries Policy with its emphasis on quotas) and dominated by science to the exclusion of other views. Deas suggested that RACs, being based on communicative rationality, offered the potential for solutions to emerge from a shared understanding of the problem and an agreed basis for action.

In a wider public sector context, Susskind & Cruickshank (1987) illustrate the use of consensus building as a means of resolving distributional disputes such as zoning issues e.g. housing and matters relating to coastal zone management. They suggest a three-phase process to building consensus: - Pre-negotiation (getting started, representation, drafting protocols and setting the agenda, joint fact finding); Negotiation (inventing options for mutual gain, packaging agreements producing a written agreement, binding the parties to their commitments, ratification); and Implementation or Post-negotiation (linking informal agreements to formal decision making, monitoring, creating a context for re-negotiation). These particular features of consensus building are discussed again later in this chapter. In a later work Susskind, McKearnan, & Thomas-Larner, (1999), provide a practical guide to consensus building for use by practitioners involved in the actual process of resolving issues through consensus.

Synthesising several sources of research on collaborative processes (Gray, 1985 & 1989; McCann, 1983; Waddock, 1989), all of which are considered later, Selin & Chavez (1995) construct a process model of collaboration as it occurs within natural resources management systems. They aim to present an approach that will be of use to environmental planning managers in the field of natural resource management. This model (presented by Selin and Chavez) is tested by Bentrup (2001) in the context of watershed planning and as a result of this work a number of refinements are suggested to the model. Although not strictly a model of collaboration but embracing many of the features of collaborative models, Margerum (1999) presents a model – Integrated Environmental Management as a means of providing a '...holistic and goal oriented approach to environmental management that addresses

interconnections through a strategic approach' (ibid. p.151). The model sets out twenty elements (conditions) that are regarded as critical to the success of the process. Once again, these aspects, raised by the authors referred to above, will be considered again later in this chapter. Busenberg (1999) considers the benefits of the collaborative approach in resolving environmental policy disputes and compares this method with that of a more adversarial form.

Advancing shared visions

Collaborations advancing shared visions have a number of aspects but, as Gray (1989, p.8) points out they '...are intended to advance the collective good of the stakeholders involved'. Reference has already been made to the use of collaborative and consensus approaches in the field of planning (Innes, 1995 and Healey, 1997b) but there are other examples in the public sector's domain, for example, in the field of visionary proposals for state education (Roberts & Bradley, 1991) and in social welfare situations (Hudson in Hill, 1997). In the 1990s public-private partnerships and collaborations became an ever-increasing feature of public sector activity (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002); in the field of planning and urban regeneration in Britain, partnerships were particularly evident as a means of pooling resources to tackle housing, education and economic development issues. In some cases these collaborative partnerships were formalised through joint funding regimes such as the Public Finance Initiative.

At a national or societal level, Pasquero (1991) and Turcotte and Pasquero (2001) have explored the application of collaboration theory at the inter-organisational level to test the basic principles of collaboration in context of the use of roundtables in addressing environmental protection matters. However, Helling (1998) advises some caution in the use of stakeholder collaborations based on her analysis of a project (*Vision 2020*) in the metropolitan region of Atlanta, Georgia, suggesting, amongst other things, that attention should be focussed on the setting processes and, in particular, in defining purpose and goals, the timetable for action and measuring achievements.

4.4.9 Components of collaborative models

Collaborative Policy making (planning) involves interaction in the form of a partnership. It is a process of joint decision making among key stakeholders of a problem domain. As Gray (1989, p.16) points out '...collaboration creates a temporary forum within which consensus about a problem can be sought, mutually agreeable solutions can be invented, and collective actions to implement the solutions can be taken'. Gray (1989, p.11) identifies five features that are critical to the collaborative process: -

- Stakeholders are interdependent – collaboration produces solutions that none of them working independently could achieve;
- Solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences – collaboration works on the basis of respect for differences and constructive dialogue and discourse; and harnessing the learning potential from that process;
- Joint ownership of decisions – collaboration requires stakeholders (participants) to be responsible for reaching agreement on a solution. As Gray (1989, p.14) points out '...the outcome of collaboration is a weaving together of multiple and diverse viewpoints into a mosaic replete with new insights and directions for action agreed on by all the stakeholders';
- Stakeholders assume collective responsibility for future direction of the domain – the process of collaboration restructures or reframes the rules for dealing with problems or issues, for instance collaboration may lead to increased coordination among stakeholders; and
- Collaboration is an emergent process – cooperation and coordination emerge from the evolutionary process that is a feature of collaboration.

Collaborative models have a number of constituent parts or phases, and in terms of the type of collaboration, certain phases can be more important than others (Gray, 1989). These constituent parts range from three (Susskind & Cruickshank, 1987; Gray, 1985 & 1989) to five (Selin & Chavez, 1995; Bentrup, 2001). Differences can be explained by the fact that certain steps are subsumed under others. A useful summary of the various models of the

'collaborative process' is provided in Table 4.1 (below), which sets out, in summary form, the models of the collaboration process.

McCann (1983), although not using the term 'collaboration' defines a three-stage process for 'solving social problems'. The social problem-solving model (SPS) has three '...integrally woven processes, each posing a critical developmental issue for those affected' (McCann, 1983, p.178). The three processes describing the SPS model are called problem setting (problem identity), direction setting (ends legitimacy) and structuring (functional viability). The process involves social actors or stakeholders and the unit of analysis is the problem domain.

Gray (1985) draws on the work of McCann and others to put forward a similar model, but this time refers to the term 'collaboration' to explain the process of two or more stakeholders getting together to address a set of problems that neither can solve independently. Again, Gray uses the three-phase model and terminology of McCann but establishes a set of generic conditions (through a series of propositions) that are necessary to move through each of the three phases of the collaboration process. In a later work, Gray (1989) offers further refinements to the three-phase model with the third phase being clearly identified as the implementation phase and the list of the steps in each phase of the collaboration process being identified.

Another perspective is offered by Waddock (1989), which again reflects the 'increasing complexity and turbulence' identified by other writers e.g. Emery & Trist (1965), Gray, (1985), in the inter-organisational context. Waddock puts forward a model of what she terms 'social partnerships' to represent the mechanisms for social problem solving among organisations from more than one economic sector. The three-phase model is again identified, although the terms are different – 'issue crystallisation' (the process of shaping or forming an issue so that understanding can be built around it and action taken); 'coalition building' (incorporating the relevant actors or stakeholders with the appropriate knowledge and authority); and 'purpose formulation or direction setting' (building domain consensus, establishing goals for the partnership).

Table 4.1: Models of the collaboration process

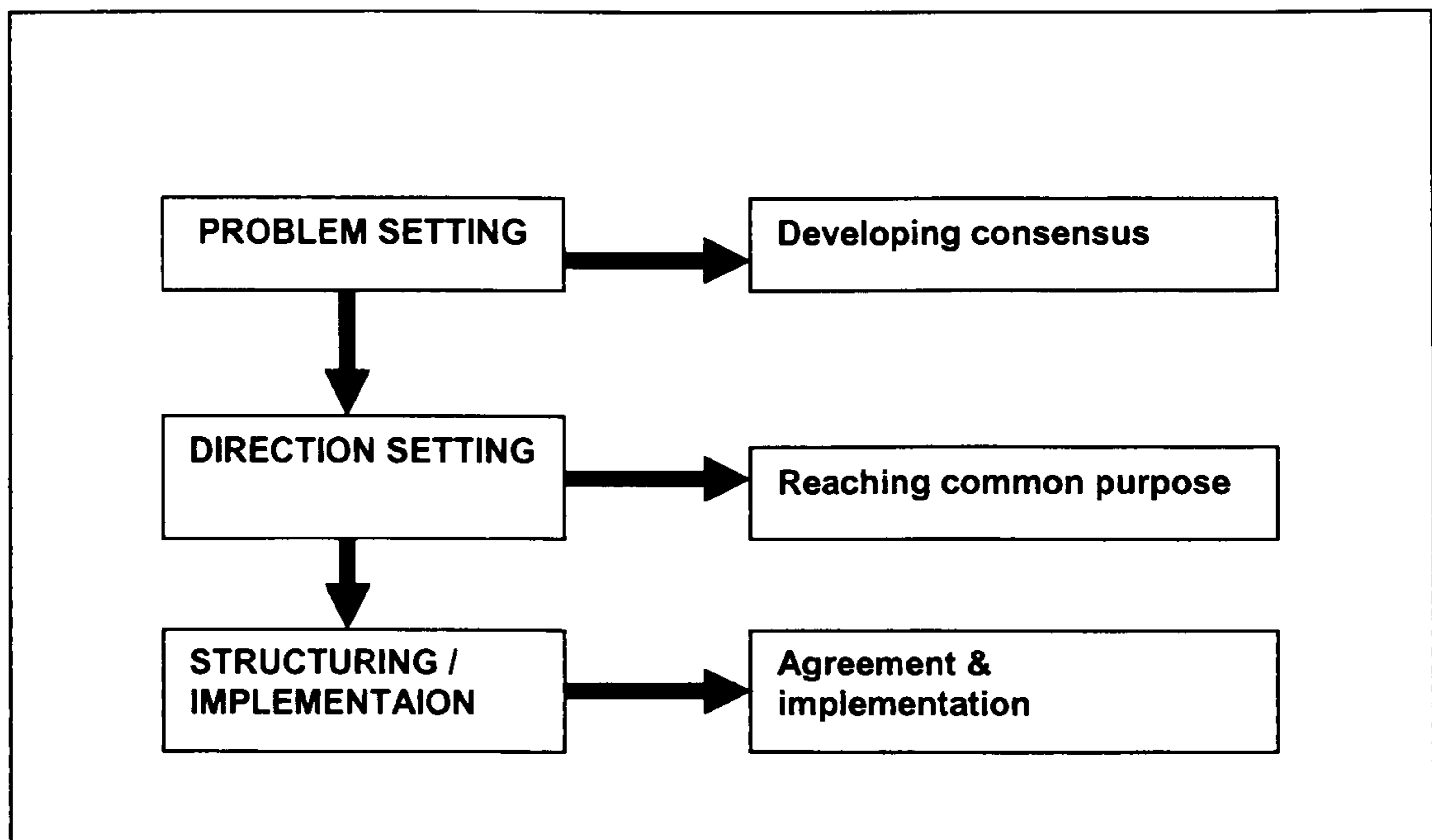
GRAY (1985)	GRAY (1989)	MCCANN (1983) (Social Problem Solving)	WADDOCK (1989) (Social partnerships rather than collaboration)	SELIN & CHAVEZ(1995)	BENTRUP (2001)
PROBLEM SETTING Identification of stakeholders. Commitment to collaborate. Expectations about outcome. Degree of recognised interdependence. Legitimacy of stakeholders. Convenor characteristics.	PROBLEM SETTING Common definition of the problem. Commitment to collaborate. Identification of stakeholders. Legitimacy of stakeholders. Convenor characteristics. Identification of resources.	PROBLEM SETTING Developmental phase. Legitimises claims of stakeholders. Current situation; is it desirable? Who is affected? What needs to be done to achieve the desired state? Stakeholder understanding of their role.	ANTECEDENTS Mandate. Existing networks. Third party org. / brokers. Common vision. Crises. Visionary leadership.	ANTECEDENTS Crises. Broker. Mandate. Common vision. Existing networks. Leadership. Incentives.	ANTECEDENTS Mandate. Leadership. Common vision. Existing networks. Incentives. Crises. <i>Lack of data.</i> <i>Threat of regulations.</i>
DIRECTION SETTING Coincidence of values amongst stakeholders. Dispersion of power among stakeholders.	DIRECTION SETTING Establishing ground rules. Agenda setting. Organising sub-groups. Joint information search. Exploring options. Reaching agreement and closing the deal.	DIRECTION SETTING What is the more desirable state? What must be done to bring this about? Ends legitimacy – must be valued for society at large. Policies, programmes and actions must be perceived as accurate and feasible.	ISSUE CRYSTALLISATION Identification and agreement of the problem / issue. Recognition of interdependence. Relinquish some autonomy. Perceived benefits from engagement.	DIRECTION SETTING Establish goals. Set ground rules. Joint information search. Explore options. Organise sub-groups.	DIRECTION SETTING Set ground rules. <i>Formalise relationships.</i> Establish goals. Joint information search. Organise sub-groups Explore options. Reach agreement. <i>Establish base line data.</i>
STRUCTURING Degree of on-going interdependence. External mandate. Redistribution of power Geographical factors. Influencing the contextual environment.	IMPLEMENTATION Dealing with constituencies. Building external support. Structuring. Monitoring the agreement and ensuring compliance.	STRUCTURING Functional viability – how agreed-upon ends become institutionalised. Who shall assume the functional roles and responsibilities? What mechanisms must be created and managed to regulate relations?	COALITION BUILDING Include relevant stakeholders Right level of authority & skill – ability to act. Educate & inform about issue & norms and values of partners. PURPOSE FORMULATION OR DIRECTION SETTING Defining roles & goals Building consensus	STRUCTURING Formalising relationship. Roles assigned. Tasks elaborated. Monitoring & control. OUTCOMES Programmes. Impacts. Benefits derived.	IMPLEMENTATION Deal with constituencies. Roles assigned/ Tasks elaborated. MONITORING/EVALUATION Implementation / compliance /adaptive management.

Source: Author

In contrast to the other approaches, Waddock (1989, p.81) identifies ‘... six specific types of environmental forces or pressures that result in interaction of potential partners...’viz. mandate or the legal system; existing networks which introduce members of a potential partnership to each other; third party organisations or brokers to provide a forum or create an opportunity for interaction; common vision or common understanding that exists in a community about an issue and the way in which it should be handled; crisis which directs potential partners to a specific problem; and visionary leadership which is manifest in an individual.

The three phases identified by Gray and others (referred to above) are – Problem Setting, Direction Setting, and Structuring/Implementation. These are summarised in Figure 4.4 below: -

Fig. 4.4. Collaboration: summary of basic model



Source: Author

Problem Setting.

The *Problem Setting* phase is about ‘getting to the table so that face to face dialogue can begin’ (Gray, 1989, p.57) and problem identity or understanding the issue. Waddock (1989, p.83) refers to this stage as ‘issue crystallization’ – ‘a process of shaping and forming an issue so that understanding can be built

around it and action taken.' McCann (1983, p.179) sees the prime purpose of this phase as '...recognition of the problem and agreement about the bounds and identity of stakeholders'. Other elements of this phase include: - legitimising the claims of stakeholders; incorporation of appropriate and relevant stakeholders (actors) – coalition building; balancing power amongst the actors and ensuring the appropriate level of representation (i.e. power to take decisions); appreciation of the issues and interdependencies that exist; realisation that resolution of the problem will require joint action. Gray (1989) identifies the role of the convenor as an important element of the problem-setting phase. 'The inspiration to collaborate may come from the convenor or from one of the stakeholders, but it is up to the convening organisation to invite and/or persuade other stakeholders to participate' (Gray, 1989, p. 70). The convenor may be the government, or a government agency, or a stakeholder. However, the convenor has a key role in identifying and bringing all the legitimate stakeholders to the table.

Direction Setting

The *Direction Setting* phase is about reaching a sense of common purpose; 'stakeholders identify the interests that brought them to the table' (Gray, 1989, p. 74); they begin to develop a sense of common purpose that can be achieved through a 'search conference' in which stakeholders engage in discussions about the future of the domain. Waddock (1989) refers to this stage as 'coalition building'. It is about bringing together the right people at the right level to ensure organisational commitment and to educate or inform those representatives and their organisations about the issue under consideration – joint working and information search is an important part of this phase. According to Gray (1989), the direction setting phase can be broken down into a number of components – establishing ground rules, agenda setting, organising sub-groups, joint fact finding, exploring options and reaching agreement. As McCann (1983, p. 179) points out, the prime purpose of this phase is about '...agreement about values, shared ends and a direction for action.

Structuring or Implementation.

The *Structuring or Implementation* phase of the collaboration process is about translating the results of the previous phase into a behavioural change; 'through structuring, stakeholders generate a system for sustaining coincident values and establishing order within the domain' (Gray, 1985,p. 918). For McCann (1983), the structuring process is about 'functional viability' – 'how agreed-upon ends become institutionalised' (ibid. p.180). It is about assigning functional roles and responsibilities. Waddock (1989) refers to this stage as 'purpose formulation' – building domain consensus and establishing goals for the partnership.

The next two approaches – that of Selin and Chavez (1995) and Bentrup (2001) - are effectively an application of the models referred to above in the field of environmental and natural resource management although refinements are suggested as a result of empirical testing. Selin and Chavez (1995) synthesise the process models of collaboration outlined above and apply the principles to natural resource management. The model, outlined by Selin and Chavez, is summarised in Table 4.1 and gives particular emphasis to the phase entitled 'antecedents', drawing heavily on the work of Waddock (1989). The authors recognise that collaboration is becoming increasingly important in a world where interdependencies are becoming ever more evident and they recognise that understanding the process of collaboration can be important in designing new forms of public participation in resource policy decision making. Bentrup (2001) provides an empirical test of the Selin and Chavez model by applying it to three case studies of watershed planning. From the perspective of model building, Bentrup suggests some refinements to the Selin and Chavez model: - 'lack of data' and 'threat of regulations' were added to the antecedents phase; 'formalising relationships' was moved from the implementation phase to the direction setting phase and 'establishing base-line data' was added to the direction setting phase (see Table 4.1).

Although considered outside the summary of the collaboration process, two further approaches are referred to for completeness of the survey because they exhibit the three-stage approach set out in Table 4.1. Reference was

made earlier to the three-stage model put forward by Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) which divided the consensus building process into three phases; - pre-negotiation, negotiation, and implementation or post-negotiation. Margerum (1999, p.151) identifies a 'holistic and goal-oriented approach to environmental management that addresses interconnections through a strategic approach' under the title of Integrated Environmental Management (IEM). The basis of this model is stakeholder collaboration and engagement with the public and is based on the concept of environmental regions. IEM acknowledges the interconnections in both the physical and human systems. The model again comprises three elements:- Initiation (describes the legal, institutional, and organisational elements that appear necessary to initiate an integrated approach; Operation (describes the elements that appear to make IEM stakeholder groups operate effectively; and Outputs and Outcomes (describes the factors that contribute to the successful implementation of the collaboration). Within each of these three broad headings are twenty elements that, if attained, will increase the success of the IEM process.

The 'phase model' appears again in the work of Bryson and Crosby (1992), who are principally concerned with the role of public leadership in a shared-power world. The authors identify seven phases of what they term 'the policy change cycle': - initiating and agreeing on a preliminary strategy for policy change; identifying problems that probably can be solved; searching for solutions to identified problems; reviewing and adopting the policies; implementing and evaluating the policies; and maintaining, changing, or terminating the policies. Bryson and Crosby (p. 91) see the policy change process going through three settings – forums, arenas and courts. In *forums* the emphasis is on the creation and communication of meaning; getting an agreement to act and how the process will proceed. The role of the leader is critical at this stage. In *arenas* the emphasis is on policy making and implementation; it establishes the structural, or collective basis for policy development – its about refining the problem or issue. Finally, in *courts* the emphasis is on the management of residual conflict and enforcement of underlying norms.

Again, lying outside the bounds of process models of collaboration, Lasswell considered the complexity of the decision making process (Parsons, 1995, p.445 *et seq.*) Lasswell suggested that decision seminars could be used as a technique for developing decision-making. He set out to map the decision making process and proposed a 'social process' model to map the way in which stakeholders in a decision process seek to achieve their objectives.

4.4.10 The benefits of collaboration

Gray (1989, p.21) suggests that the collaboration process produces a number of benefits to multi-stakeholder problems: -

- It improves the quality of solutions being based on collective capacities of stakeholders and a comprehensive analysis of the problem;
- It can minimise the possibility that an impasse will occur by ensuring that each stakeholder's interests are considered;
- It ensures that each stakeholder's interests are considered in the agreement;
- It ensures that each stakeholder retains ownership of the problem and enhances the acceptance of the outcome and a willingness to implement it;
- It creates the potential to discover novel, innovative solutions and can leave parties with a clearer understanding of the differences; and
- It has the potential to reduce costs that individual stakeholders might incur from acting alone and provides mechanisms to coordinate any future interaction.

In terms of outcomes, collaboration builds institutional capacity and enhances working practices and knowledge and understanding; it also allows ideas and policies to be considered in a strategic way and the interrelatedness between them recognised and agreements reached (Healey, 1997a).

4.4.11 Limitations of collaborative processes – consideration of power

An underlying feature of collaboration is the concept of shared power. Stakeholders have to be prepared to be 'open-minded' if they are to define a problem or address an issue in order to initiate action to address it. The dynamics of power influence collaborative fora in both overt and covert ways and the influence of power shapes the collaborative process and outcomes. Power can be manifest in a number of different ways during each phase of collaboration. For example, power can be derived from stakeholder legitimacy, which stems from their right to be involved and participate in the process. Power can also be derived from stakeholders because of their capacity or expertise / knowledge with respect to the issues under consideration.

As discussed earlier, collaborative policy making (planning) is grounded in Habermas's theory of communicative action. This is based on the premise that uncoerced reasoned debate is possible, with all participants treating each other as equals and working collaboratively. This theory also assumes that decisions are owned and accepted by the participants and built upon mutual respect and trust and that the process produces an effective negotiated outcome. However, this view is subject to a number of challenges, which centre around the view that Habermas's communicative action is really based on a utopian vision of the world. It is an ideal situation where discourse seeks consensus amongst equal participants and the distorting effects of power are neutral. In many ways it is analogous to the perfect competitive model used in economic theory to explain the operation of markets – it is an ideal state against which other market structures are judged. It is essentially a normative theory, concerned with what should be; it is about process. Habermas '...describes to us the utopia of communicative rationality but not how to get there' (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002)

From a theoretical perspective, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998) have identified a number of concerns with the theoretical base underpinning collaborative policy making. The assumption regarding uncoerced and open discourse may be challenged because an individual stakeholder may employ

strategies and tactics to effect a certain course of action and outcome. Adopting shared agendas is one means of achieving this. Individual stakeholders may withhold certain information in an attempt to achieve an outcome that is favourable to them. Assumptions regarding individual stakeholders participating in collaborative fora having either the same knowledge about the issues being discussed and the necessary skills to enable effective participation in the discourse can also be challenged. Quite evidently interpersonal skills will vary from one individual to the next. One further example will illustrate the range of concerns about the underpinnings of collaboration theory. From a more pragmatic perspective, Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger (1998) point out that collaborative frameworks can be criticised because they assume that all sections of a community can be included within the forum; nothing is said about how this could be achieved or how the stakeholders would be identified.

Collaborative policy making based on Habermasian theory leaves many questions unanswered. There is a lack of connection between the ideal and reality, between intentions and implementation. Collaborative policy making (planning) is essentially based on an ideal framework based on the absence of domination or undue influence. It is through communicative action that interests and needs are collectively interpreted and solutions to problems considered and agreed. However, insufficient attention is given to the realities of power and the distorting effects that this can have (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002).

The work of Michel Foucault (see for instance, Mills, 2003; Danahar, Schirato & Webb, 2000) enables the realities of power to be captured within a theoretical framework. Foucault recognises the ‘...importance of power in the shaping and control of discourses, the production of knowledge, and the social construction of spaces’ (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, p. 51). He presents an alternative theoretical approach that focuses on what is actually done (as opposed to Habermas where the focus is on what should be done).

Foucault recognises the importance of power in shaping and controlling discourses because it is through this medium that power is transmitted. He focuses on the analysis of the effects of various institutions (e.g. prisons, clinics, hospitals) on groups of people and the role that those people play in affirming and resisting those effects that emanate from these institutions. He is not concerned with the view of power as a repressive force (on individuals or groups) but rather with the way that power operates within everyday relations between people and institutions.

'Power should be seen as a verb rather than a noun, something that does something, rather than something which is or which can be held on to' (Mills, 2003, p. 35). Foucault conceptualises power as a system or network spread throughout society rather than a set of relations between particular individuals. Power flows from one point or area to another depending on changing alliances and circumstances. It moves around and through different groups, events, institutions and individuals. Certain people or groups have greater opportunities to influence how the forces of power are exercised - 'power is mobile and contingent' (Danaher, Schirato & Webb, 2000, p. 71). Power can exhibit both productive and destructive dimensions and it can be both overt and covert in its manifestation. As Flyvbjerg & Richardson (2002, p. 54) point out 'the value of Foucault's approach is his emphasis on the dynamics of power. Understanding how power works is the first prerequisite for action, because action is the exercise of power'.

Power, therefore, has the potential to distort the process of argumentation or discourse. In the context of empirical studies, Hillier (1993, p.95) recognised that the theoretical basis of collaboration theory, which derives from Habermas, '...does not allow sufficient consideration of the why and how of power relations'. She demonstrates this in the context of 'distortions' of information arising in an Australian planning issue (Bold Park, in Perth, Western Australia) where government planners appeared to manipulate the outcome of a planning decision through the control of information. In a similar study, in the Danish town of Aalborg, Flyvbjerg (1998) showed how business

leaders and local politicians were able to secure their favoured decision through their use of knowledge and information.

Powerful political, social and economic agents have considerable influence on the policy process and spatial planning can be regarded as an aspect of that process. Another example, from a UK perspective, is the influence that economic agents have on road building programmes, where it is contended that road building is a prerequisite to successful local economic development. (T M Coburn, M E Beesley & D J Reynolds; cited in Starkie, D 1982). In another study, Tait and Campbell (2000) explore the role of language and discourse in reflecting power relations between professional planners and elected representatives in a planning authority. They also cast doubt on whether collaborative planning is a useful tool in evaluating planning processes. Specifically in terms of Habermasian theory, their research indicated that the theory takes insufficient account of how power operates in society. The existence of power (whether explicit or implicit), therefore, is a key feature in understanding the policy process

Drawing on a number of sources, Selin and Chavez (1995) identify four factors that can inhibit the positive development of collaborative frameworks, although it should be noted that their observations relate to the field of environmental management, rather than public policy making. Nevertheless, it is possible that some of these factors could be relevant in collaborative fora engaged in public policy formulation.

Firstly, there can be institutional and situational obstacles to collaboration. The rational comprehensive planning process is cited as impeding collaboration with local groups because of its centralising tendencies and the fact that it does not easily accommodate the use of small working groups and consensus based decision-making. Other institutional factors, particularly with environmental advocacy organisations, view consensus-based dispute resolution as compromise and a watering down of their specific mission.

Secondly, relational factors can also discourage collaboration among some stakeholders. This is especially the case where organisations have a history of bitter adversarial disputes

Thirdly, collaborative frameworks can also be impeded when there are differences in power among parties or where parties are viewed as not having a legitimate claim to participate in consensus forums.

Fourthly, the obstacles may be of such a scale that collaborative action would fail before it starts. Gray (1989, cited in Selin and Chavez 1995) identifies the following instances where failure would be inevitable: -

- Where conflict is rooted in basic ideological differences;
- Where one stakeholder has the power to take unilateral action;
- Where constitutional issues are at stake or legal precedence are sought;
- Where past interventions have been unsuccessful;
- Where issues are too threatening because of historical antagonism;
- Where a legitimate convenor cannot be found.

These studies demonstrate how power has influenced the outcome of the decision-making process. The problem with collaborative or communicative policy frameworks based on Habermasian principles is that the theoretical basis is essentially normative and idealistic in stance, which is reflected in the underlying assumptions. Foucault's theory of power suggests that it is necessary to recognise the existence of power and examine how it affects policy making in the real world. In looking at public policy analysis it is important to recognise the political dimension in policy formulation and implementation and be conscious about how and where this is exercised in the policy process; '...communication is part of politics, but much of politics takes place outside communication' (Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002, p. 59). This point will be explored in the case study. However, in spite of these reservations, collaboration and collaborative approaches to problem-solving

and policy development are increasingly being employed in dealing with complex societal problems and issues.

4.5 CONCLUSION.

Drawing from the numerous and varied approaches to public policy analysis discussed above, it is possible to discern a number of features that are helpful in developing a model that is capable of being 'operationalised' and applied to the case study. In this context it is recognised that collaboration is identified as a key component of British public policy making, management and delivery (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002) and that this was a consequence of a number of influences, such as an increasing number of actors in the public policy process – governance; globalisation, loss of functions by central government both upwards (EU) and downwards (devolution); and the emergence of cross-cutting policy issues. These features are now considered below: -

- Policy making (collaboration) occurs within a defined action space and is characterised by a set of people (actors) who are involved in the policy system. The policy actors operating within this action space are subject to internal influences occurring within the operating environment and to external influences and relations to actors outside the policy action space (Friend, Power, Yewlett, 1974). Some writers (Healey, 1997a) have referred to the concept of 'arenas' – political, administrative and legal systems through which policy principles have to pass to achieve legitimacy. Other writers (Bryson & Crosby, 1992) have referred to 'forums' that enable stakeholders to be identified, networks to be built up, issue search and a common understanding of the problem to be established.
- A number of models of the collaboration process were identified (Table 4.1). The basic model suggested by Gray (1985 & 1989) and others was summarised in Figure 4.4. This model has three components: - Problem Setting (developing consensus); Direction Setting (reaching a common purpose); and Structuring / Implementation (agreement and implementation). Some writers (Waddock, 1989; Selin & Chavez, 1995;

Bentrup, 2001) have suggested that collaborations should be seen in the context of what they refer to as Antecedents.

- Collaborations require the identification of a 'convenor/champion' and 'key actors/stakeholders' who have a legitimate interest in addressing the problem (Gray, 1985 & 1989; Healey, 1997b).
- Collaborations require the identification and inclusion of a full range of stakeholders and representatives of all relevant interests (McCann, 1983; Gray, 1985, 1989; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Healey, 1997b; Bentrup, 2001; Margerum, 2002).
- There is a need to support and facilitate the process (Gray, 1989);
- There is a need to establish a common definition of the problem or shared task (Gray, 1985, 1989; Waddock, 1989; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Healey, 1997b);
- There is a need to organise the process, in terms of ground rules, agendas, objectives, topics, etc. (Gray, 1989; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Bentrup, 2001)
- Participants / stakeholders are engaged in joint information search; they recognise that there are multiple sources of knowledge and understanding; they gain new knowledge and understandings as a result of discourse; and they are encouraged to challenge the status quo and develop new options and reframe the problem to achieve an eventual solution (Gray, 1985, 1989; Healey, 1992, 1997; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Bentrup, 2001);
- Agreement is reached through consensus only after the issues have been fully explored (McCann, 1983; Gray, 1985, 1989; Healey, 1992, 1997b; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Bentrup, 2001;)

This chapter has reviewed the literature on public policy analysis and has established that, from a theoretical perspective, the Policy Discourse Approach is best able to explain public policy processes in the shared power world, characterised by governance and the emergence of new cross-cutting policies. Collaboration was identified as an element under the general heading 'policy discourse analysis', which characterised those approaches, which are essentially based on the ways in which stakeholder groups conceive problems and issues. It has also been noted that collaboration is now central to public policy making, management and delivery. A number of approaches to collaborative policymaking have been identified and from these a set of common characteristics has emerged that will enable a model to be built and tested in a 'real world' context. The development of this model will be addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL FOR ANALYSING THE POLICY PROCESS.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

Within the context of Objective 3, to develop a model for understanding the policy process based on a review of the literature and to set out the methodology for analysing the case study.

5.1 Introduction

5.2 The rationale for using the model of collaboration to analyse the policy process

5.3 Justification for the case study approach

5.4 The rationale for selecting the case study

5.5 Methodology

5.6 Conclusion

1. INTRODUCTION.

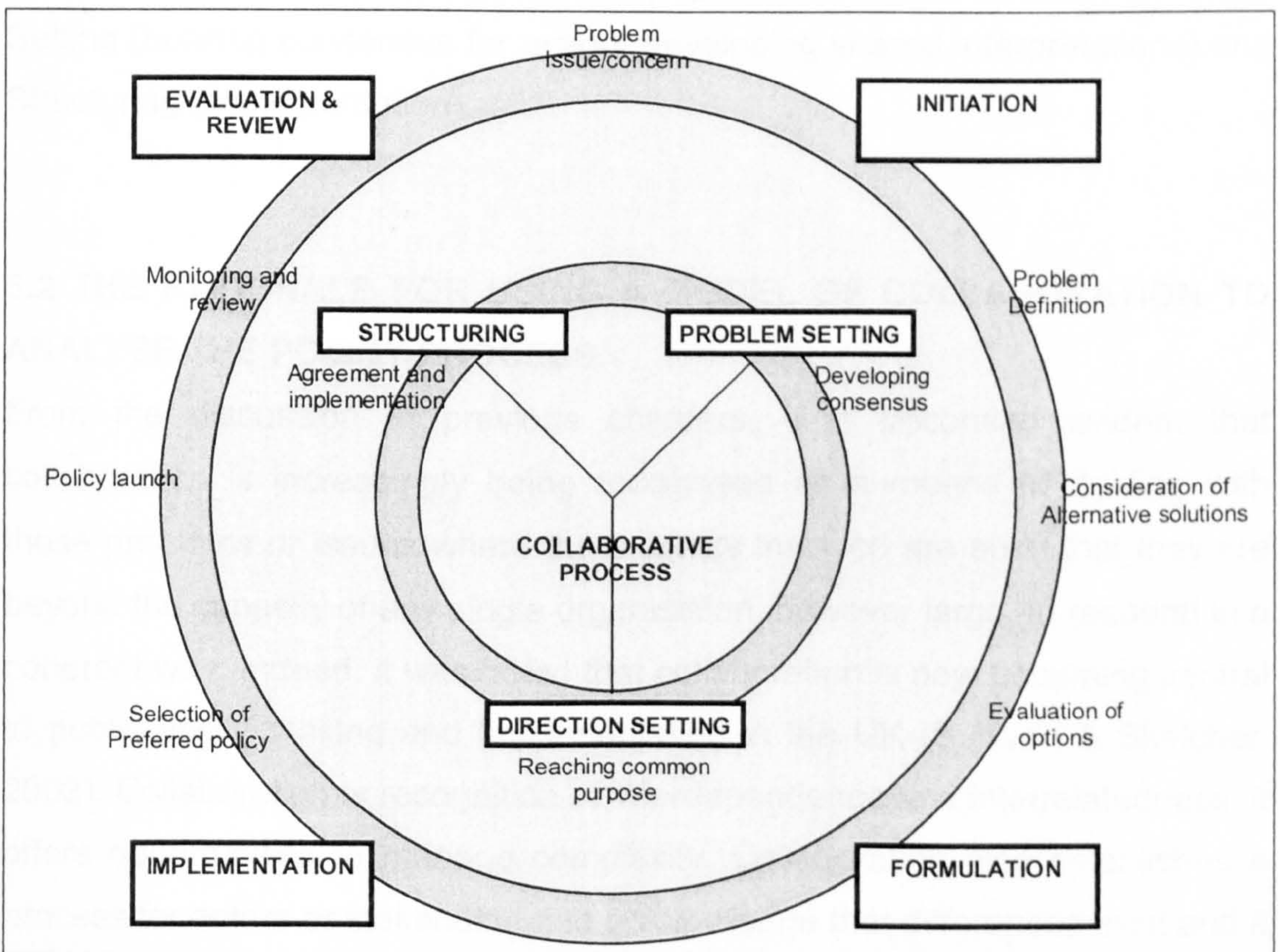
This Chapter takes forward the conclusions reached in the preceding Chapter and seeks to develop and set out the methodology that is to be a model for the evaluating the policy process.

Chapter 4 identified two strands of theoretical analysis - the Stages Approach (reflected in the model of the policy cycle) and the Policy Discourse Approach (under which collaborative approaches to policy analysis are classified). These two approaches are potentially useful in understanding the policy process in relation to cross-cutting policy themes. In terms of understanding the policy process from the perspective of both strands of analysis identified above, there is a need to juxtapose the policy cycle model (as reflected in the Stages Approach) with that of the collaboration approach (as reflected under the generic heading of the Policy Discourse Approach). The juxtaposition (see Fig. 5.1 below) is not such that a 'new' theory emerges but rather that aspects of the Stages Approach are used to contextualise the policy process and the Policy Discourse Approach is used to explore the inter-relationships between stakeholders and the policy process in the context of the case study.

It was noted in Chapter 4, that whilst the policy cycle model (The Stages Approach) provided a means of understanding public policy making by disaggregating the process into a number of stages, it is to the Policy Discourse Approach and to collaboration in particular where attention is focussed as a means of understanding and evaluating the policy process where cross-cutting policy themes are involved. The Stages Approach is essentially concerned with the role of individuals and groups and the structural activity of the organisation. Again, as indicated in Chapter 4, policy studies have tended to focus on policy development and policy implementation processes and how these could be made more effective. In contrast, the Policy Discourse Approach is more concerned with the inter-organisational dimension and the components of collaborative activity by allowing the policy analyst to focus on the communicative strategies employed in the policy process. More fundamentally, it could be said that the former is really concerned with 'the how', whilst the latter is concerned with 'the what'.

Again, as indicated earlier, one of the contributions that the collaborative approach provides to the development of policy analysis is that it gives an insight into the work (policy discourse) that takes place as the policy document evolves (Fischer & Forrester, 1993). However, it was noted that it was the collaborative (consensus) building approaches suggested by, for example Gray, that essentially 'operationalise' the theorists account of communicative rationality by setting out a procedure to ensure that the discourse can take place.

Fig. 5.1 The policy process and collaboration



Source: Author

The Stages Approach is based on the policy cycle and is reflected in the outer ring shown in Figure 5.1. In this representation there are four basic stages in the policy process: - initiation; formulation; implementation; and evaluation and review. Each of these stages were considered in detail in Chapter 4 along with the limitations about the use of such a model as a representation of

how the policy process actually operates in practice, particularly in the context of governance and in relation to cross-cutting policy themes. Nevertheless, it was concluded that the Stages Approach does provide a useful heuristic device because it disaggregates the complexity of the policy process and provides a framework that assists in locating particular stages in the plan making or policy process.

The inner ring is intended to reflect the key elements of the Policy Discourse Approach, as expressed in the model of collaboration suggested by Gray (1985 & 1989) and other writers referred to in the preceding chapter and relates to the three stages of the collaborative process – Problem Setting (problem/issue identity or understanding, issue crystallisation), Direction Setting (building consensus for action, developing shared interpretations) and Structuring (implementation).

5.2 THE RATIONALE FOR USING A MODEL OF COLLABORATION TO ANALYSE THE POLICY PROCESS.

From the discussion in previous chapters, it is becoming evident that collaboration is increasingly being recognised as a means of dealing with those problems or issues where the subjects involved are such that they are beyond the capacity of any single organisation, however large, to respond in a coherent way. Indeed, it was noted that collaboration is now becoming central to public policy making and implementation in the UK (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002). Collaboration is recognition of interdependence and interrelatedness; it offers opportunities to manage complexity. Collaboration also establishes a process for actors or stakeholders to acknowledge that differences exist and it creates a framework for examining and resolving those differences. From a policy formulation and implementation perspective, the issue is about securing joined up or holistic government and developing coordination and control in fragmented and pluralistic decision-making systems. The response is such as to require a multi-organisational response based on some form of collaboration. Collaboration can, therefore, be seen as a management

process involving both managing actors and stakeholders (who may hold differing viewpoints) and a policy process.

There is now a recognition that the nature of some problems are such as to require more 'joined-up approach'. As seen in Chapter 3, related issues such as sickness, unemployment, poverty and crime are now addressed by the Government in a more holistic and coordinated way. Some of the relatively new policy themes, such as sustainable development, by their very nature do not sit easily within the administrative or operational bounds of one particular government department. In this political and administrative context there is an increasing emphasis being placed on collaboration as a means of securing successful policy formulation and implementation. The challenge, therefore, is to examine whether the model of collaboration (as set out by Gray and others) can provide a methodology that is capable of providing a useful analytical tool for understanding the policy process relating to cross-cutting policy themes.

5.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CASE STUDY APPROACH

A case study has been defined as '...an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 2003, p.13)

Yin suggests that the case study approach is most appropriately employed when the aim of the research is to explore peoples' experiences, study processes and to draw attention to contextual issues. One of the strengths of the case study approach is its ability to deal with a variety of evidence. As Yin (2003, p. 7) points out '...the case study is preferred in examining contemporary events, but when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated'.

A case study methodology, therefore, has been adopted here because it is the preferred strategy for exploring phenomena in a real life situation (Yin, 2003). The case study approach provides a comprehensive research strategy

because it allows consideration to be given to a large number of variables based on multiple sources of information i.e. the views of stakeholders in relation to a series of propositions that identify with the collaboration process. It is also relevant in a highly contextualised situations where the focus of interest is on peoples' experiences and where it is necessary to rely on multiple sources of evidence.

Yin (2003, p.39 et seq.) sets out the circumstances in which a single-case study is appropriate: -

- When the case study 'represents the critical case in testing a well-formulated theory' – the case study is used to determine whether a theory's propositions are correct;
- When 'the case represents an extreme case or a unique case';
- When the case is 'the representative or typical case' – 'when the objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation';
- When the case is a 'revelatory case' – 'when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation';
- When the case study 'is the longitudinal case – when the need is analyse how certain conditions have changed over a period of time.

In terms of the above criteria, the use of a single case study in this research strategy is justified for the following reasons: -

- The research involves applying a theory (Policy Discourse, Collaboration) and a model that has been used both in conflict resolution and in advancing shared visions based on stakeholder collaboration. The research strategy employs a single case study because the subject is typical of the situations where a collaborative approach may be required (e.g. '...collaborative strategy making offers a way of interlinking economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues of collective concern by constructing general organising ideas' (Healey, 1997a, p.32);

- The research is examining a unique situation in the context of a devolved administration (Wales) having a statutory responsibility for a cross-cutting policy theme – sustainable development. It is, nevertheless, possible to draw conclusions from this study that could be applicable to other situations where stakeholder collaboration is required in a ‘visioning’ activity concerned with policy making;
- The research is longitudinal to the extent that it is investigating the policy process through the stages of inception and formulation within the context of a collaborative framework.

5.4 THE RATIONALE FOR THE SELECTION OF THE CASE STUDY

The rationale for selecting Wales, Sustainable Development and the Wales Spatial Plan as the case study will be considered in more depth in the next Chapter. It will be shown that there is a close association between these three elements in a context that is rooted in the development of collaborative governance in post devolution Wales. For the present, the main emphasis is on the relationship between spatial planning and sustainable development.

It was demonstrated (in Chapter 3) that sustainable development is a strategic high-level policy theme. It is a cross-cutting policy in the context that policy formulation and implementation do not fit easily into the jurisdiction of any one government department. It was seen, following Brundtland, that there is a need to integrate social, economic and environmental considerations into policy making. It was also noted that this definition of sustainable development made the concept contestable and that this has led to some degree of confusion and debate (Baker, et. al., 1997). The view has emerged that sustainable development is a process based on a set of principles that should guide decision making in all policy areas (Haughton, 1999). A key issue is the means by which this policy integration should take place.

Spatial planning is an important policy instrument for delivering sustainable development, ‘...a spatial planning approach should be at the heart of planning for sustainable development’ (ODPM, 2004, para. 13(iii)). As

Tewdwr-Jones (2004, p.563) points out '...spatial planning will become a core component in the delivery of sustainable development'...because '...the spatial planning is the process concerned with the coordination of strategy and policy'. Spatial planning provides an institutional mechanism for implementing sustainable development because it is an activity undertaken at a strategic scale, typically at a regional scale (Hardy & Lloyd, 1984; Healey, 1997a & d). This is one of the reasons why this study has taken the 'regional' dimension (or meso-government level) in seeking to explore the 'process' aspects of sustainable development policy.

Spatial planning emerged on the policy stage in the late 1990s with the publication of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) in 1999 (Committee on Spatial Development, 1999). This policy statement had far reaching implications for planning in the UK in terms of the application of spatial planning principles at a regional level (Tewdwr-Jones et al., 2000; Haughton & Counsell, 2004). The UK Government gave a clear lead in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (S.32) for Regional Spatial Strategies to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. These Strategies are intended to provide the spatial framework to inform Local Development Documents and Local Transport Plans as well as regional and sub-regional strategies and programmes. In Wales, spatial planning was seen as the spatial expression of the Assembly's sustainable development strategy; this aspect is considered in more detail in Chapter 6.

Spatial planning embraces more than land use planning (Williams, 1996; Tewdwr-Jones, 2004; Planning Policy Statement 11, ODPM, 2004). It is about creating vision, policy integration and coordination, managing and delivering programmes, engaging with stakeholders in a participatory way and forming partnerships. Healey (1997d, p.4) suggests that 'spatial planning is about setting frameworks and principles to guide the location of development and physical infrastructure. It consists of a set of governance practices for developing and implementing strategies, plans, policies and projects, and for regulating the location, timing and form of development'. It is the potential for integration, both vertically and horizontally, that links spatial planning to

sustainable development. Spatial planning provides the necessary framework for informed policy discourse to take place. It also provides the framework for action and the development of partnerships and accommodates the broader picture and allows a long term trajectory to be charted, again accommodating key aspects and principles of sustainable development. Strategic spatial planning provides a method for the achievement of sustainable development objectives (Roberts, 1996).

Thus, spatial planning allows the links between the elements of sustainable development to be explored in a political arena and it provides an institutional mechanism to assess the implications of policies and programmes for their ability to meet sustainable development objectives. It is for this reason that this study has focused on spatial planning as a means for understanding the policy process as it relates to cross-cutting policy themes.

The case study is set within the wider research context, which was discussed in previous Chapters. These are summarised below to support the reasons for selecting the Wales Spatial Plan as the case study: -

- The government's 'modernising agenda' that emphasises the need for 'joined-up' policy making (Cabinet Office, 1999) and the view that 'collaborative strategy making offers a way of interlinking economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues of collective concern by constructing general organising of ideas' (Healey, 1997a, p.32).
- The statutory duty placed on the Welsh Assembly to 'make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development' (Government of Wales Act 1998, S.121). Bishop and Flynn (1999) contend that this reinforces the move towards collaborative government;
- The Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) view that The Wales Spatial Plan 'will be the spatial expression of the Assembly Government's policies' (Planning Policy Wales, 2002);
- The requirements under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the Welsh Assembly to prepare and keep under review the

Wales Spatial Plan and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;

- The view that spatial planning is at the heart of planning for sustainable development (ODPM, 2005, para 13 (iii)).

Thus, The Wales Spatial Plan is selected as the case study because the Welsh Assembly Government sees it as being ‘...a spatial expression of the Assembly Government’s policies’ (WAG, 2002, para. 1.4.15). In turn, The Wales Spatial Plan is seen by the Assembly Government as ‘...help[ing] to translate into practice our sustainable development duty’ and ‘help[ing] integrate the policies and actions of the Assembly and others to achieve our vision of a sustainable Wales’ (WAG, 2003b, p1).

The case study provides an opportunity to examine whether collaboration can be used as a framework for understanding process and as a framework for practical action and, also, whether it is useful in developing a common vision based on a set of stakeholders that have potentially conflicting aims and objectives. The case study, therefore, provides an opportunity to explore theory in relation to practice, through the application of the proposed model of collaboration.

5.5 METHODOLOGY.

The research methodology requires the development of a theoretical framework in which the case study can be placed. The model, which is derived from the theoretical framework, is useful because it allows the observer to identify the subject matter of the investigation. It is a means of simplifying the complexity of the policy process, providing a lens through which the detail of the process is examined (Sabatier, 1999). As Sabatier points out (op.cit. p.4) ‘...understanding the policy process requires a knowledge of the goals and perceptions of hundreds of actors throughout the country ...’ In this study this is achieved by adapting the model of collaboration suggested by McCann (1983), Gray (1989) and Waddock (1989). Translating this model (discussed in Chapter 4) into a research plan of action requires a number of steps, which are set out below: -

- Identification of matters to be explored
- Identification of key stakeholders and convenor.
- Data capture.
- Evaluation of empirical evidence.
- Evaluating the collaboration process

5.5.1 Identification of matters to be explored

Reference was made in Chapter 4 to a number of models of collaboration but essentially they all contain the elements of the phases referred to as 'Problem Setting', 'Direction Setting' and 'Structuring'. Table 5.1 (below) provides a summary of the collaborative process in terms of the three phases and the steps in each phase of the process. It draws on the summary of the models of the collaboration process set out in the preceding chapter, in Table 4.1

Table 5.1 The Collaborative Process

Phase 1: Problem Setting	Phase 2: Direction Setting	Phase 3: Structuring/ Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common definition of the problem • Commitment to collaborate • Identification of stakeholders • Legitimacy of stakeholders • Convenor characteristics • Identification of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing ground rules • Agenda setting • Organising subgroups • Joint information search • Exploring options • Reaching agreement • Dispersion of power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing with constituencies • Building external support • Structuring • Monitoring the agreement & ensuring compliance

Source: Derived from Table 4.1; Author

This study will only focus on the Problem Setting and Direction Setting Phases of the collaborative process outlined above because the Structuring phase lies outside the time frame of this study. This is because this study has tracked the actual time-line of the Wales Spatial Plan (c.f. Chapter 6, Box 6.1). The implementation phase was not underway at the time the research was undertaken and this phase is consequently outside the scope of this study.

As indicated in Table 5.1, each phase of the collaborative process comprises a number of steps that are important in defining that process. Building on the work of McCann and others, Gray identifies a number of conditions that are necessary to move through each phase of the collaborative process. These

conditions together with others that have been identified by the author (as a result of consideration of the literature summarised in Table 4.1) and with reference to a later work by Gray (Gray, 1989) and are used as a basis for defining the information sought from the research study.

In essence, the conditions necessary for the collaboration to occur have been transposed into a series of propositions. These propositions are a useful way of testing perceptions about the policy process. They provide a means of simplifying the steps involved in the collaborative process and are framed to allow the respondent scope to develop an answer without necessarily confining the answer to a particular aspect. This recognises that policy actors may be pursuing a wide variety of objectives within the collaborative framework and have differing views on the policy process. Table 5.2 (below) illustrates how a model of collaboration has been adapted and contextualised to provide a framework to capture information relating to the policy process of the Wales Spatial Plan.

The choice of issues identified for consideration fall into two categories. Firstly, to those conditions that the literature has indicated as being potentially necessary for collaboration to take place, and, secondly, to sustainable development in the context of spatial planning in Wales. In respect of the conditions necessary for collaboration to occur, there are two phases that are relevant to this study - Problem Setting (developing consensus) and Direction Setting (reaching common purpose).

In the Problem Setting phase the principal steps identified as significant are: - there has to be a common definition of the problem and stakeholders have to recognise that their actions are inextricably linked to the actions of other stakeholders; stakeholders have to believe that collaboration will produce positive outcomes; the stakeholder set needs to reflect on the complexity of the problem under consideration; stakeholders must have a legitimate stake (interest) in the problem and they must have the capacity and expertise to participate.

Table 5.2 : Developing a collaborative analytical framework

THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS (GRAY)	PROPOSITIONS DERIVED FROM THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS (GRAY)	PROPOSITIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WSP
<p>PHASE 1: Problem Setting</p> <p>1. Common definition of the problem</p>	<p>1. Common problem definition is rooted in interdependence; collaboration depends on recognition by stakeholder groups that their actions are inextricably linked to the actions of other stakeholders; the greater the degree of recognised interdependence among stakeholders, the greater the likelihood of initiating collaboration</p>	<p>1. Agreement with overall 'vision' statement and the basic principles of sustainable development. The WSP presents a framework for collaborative working & decision making across sectional & functional boundaries. Stakeholder recognition of interdependence</p>
<p>2. Commitment to collaborate</p>	<p>2. Sharing a common definition of the problem is a sufficient ingredient to get people to the table. Stakeholders must believe that collaboration will produce positive outcomes and that the benefits will outweigh the costs</p>	<p>2. The Management Board was the most effective way of developing a collaborative approach to producing the WSP</p>
<p>3. Identification of stakeholders</p>	<p>3. The stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the problem under consideration if collaboration is to occur. Complex problems require multiple sources of information to search for a solution</p>	<p>3. The Management Board needs to be representative of the key stakeholders. All the key stakeholders have been included on the Management Board. The management Board was balanced in composition & represented the key stakeholders. The stakeholder set is composed of equal players. Members of the Management Board should take a wider representational role</p>
<p>4. Legitimacy of stakeholders</p>	<p>4. The stakeholders must have a legitimate stake (interest) in the problem. The collection of stakeholders requires those with the relevant expertise if a solution is to be achieved. They must have the capacity to participate and possess resources and skills sufficient to justify their involvement</p>	<p>4. Management Board should only include those whose expertise is essential to the task. Management Board needs to be represented at the appropriate level, i.e. skill, ability to make decisions, etc. The composition of the Management Board adequately reflects the issues being discussed.</p>
<p>5. Convenor characteristics</p>	<p>5. Collaboration will be enhanced by convenors who possess legitimate authority and appreciative skills and who can serve as reticulists to rally other stakeholders to participate. The convenor may be a government agency. It is critical that all stakeholders believe the convenor has legitimate authority to organise the domain</p>	<p>5. It was appropriate that the Management Board was convened & chaired by Welsh Assembly Government Officials</p>
<p>6. Identification of resources</p>	<p>6. Sufficient resources are required to ensure that stakeholders can participate equally in the process.</p>	<p>6. Adequate resources were committed to the process for developing The WSP. Public participation was adequate in terms of extent & response. set is composed of equal players.</p>

Source: Gray, 1985 & 1989; Author

Table 5.2 : Developing a collaborative analytical framework (continued)

<p>THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS (GRAY) PHASE 2; Direction Setting</p>	<p>PROPOSITIONS DERIVED FROM THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS (GRAY)</p>	<p>PROPOSITIONS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WSP</p>
<p>1. Establishing ground rules</p>	<p>1. Reaching agreement about how the stakeholders will interact with each other is vital to direction setting.. Ground rules can remove uncertainty for the participants & lessen the likelihood of misunderstandings. Search conferences can assist stakeholders in discovering coincident values & preferred directions in domains</p>	<p>1. Clear procedural guidelines were established. The terms of reference reflected the task. The aims & objectives were discussed & accepted. Sufficient time was given to consideration of key issues. Opportunity was given to provide an input into the content of the Plan.</p>
<p>2. Agenda setting</p>	<p>2. Agenda setting will reflect the breadth of the issues being discussed & will parallel the number of stakeholders who are present. There is a trade-off between the number of stakeholders and the ease of managing the process.</p>	<p>2. All members of the Management Board accepted the scope & purpose of the WSP. As the process proceeded the membership of the Management Board should have been increased to reflect new & emergent issues</p>
<p>3. Organising subgroups</p>	<p>3. The way convenors organise the collaborative process will affect their success at promoting consensus. If the number of issues to be discussed is large or the number of stakeholders exceeds the 12-15 it is often advantageous to create sub-groups</p>	<p>3. Sub-groups would have been beneficial</p>
<p>4. Joint information search</p>	<p>4. An important ingredient in building consensus & reaching agreement on problem definition is searching for 'the facts.' The process allows parties to get to know one another & personal interactions create a basis for increased trust. Third parties can also assist the information search.</p>	<p>4. Links between WSP & other WAG policies were considered. The process resulted in a greater appreciation of interrelationships & policy integration.. The research reports from consultants & issues raised from public consultation led to</p>
<p>5. Exploring options</p>	<p>5. Exploring multiple options is important in seeking solutions to multi-party conflicts/issues. It forces parties to think in terms of trade-offs. Options can be scrutinised in sub-committee meetings.. These approaches inject new sources of creativity & objectivity into options under consideration</p>	<p>5. New options were considered & explored. The policy process generated new policy thinking. The Management Board satisfactorily explored any differences. The process led to a better understanding of sustainable development & its implications for WAG policies. The process generated new partnership working</p>
<p>6. Reaching agreement</p>	<p>6. Reaching agreement means gaining commitment of all parties to a single option or package of options. The agreement can be in the form of a general framework within which details are subsequently worked out</p>	<p>6. The WSP reflects all of the views of the Management Board. The final product is a realistic assessment of the situation & is a useful policy tool. Implementation of the Plan is operationally feasible. The process will lead to changes in behaviour of stakeholders. All issues have received adequate attention. Difficult & conflicting issues have been resolved through consensus. The WSP has resulted in a higher profile being given to SD in the policy process. The WSP process has resulted in the need to acknowledge interdependencies</p>
<p>7. Dispersion of power</p>	<p>7. Collaboration will be enhanced when power is dispersed among several stakeholders rather than among just a few. An equal distribution of power is not necessary; sufficient distribution of power is necessary to influence direction setting.</p>	<p>7. The views of one particular stakeholder or group of stakeholders was not allowed to dominate the process. The Chair of the Mang't. Board allowed full discussion & sought consensus.</p>

Source: Gray, 1985 & 1989; Author

In the Direction Setting phase the principal steps relate to those steps that ensure that the outcome of the collaborative process achieves a sense of common purpose. They include the following: - establishing ground rules; agenda setting; building trust and consensus through joint information search; exploring options; and reaching agreement by gaining commitment of all parties.

Collaboration takes place in a forum or arena and the Spatial Planning Management Board is identified as the unit of analysis. The justification for this decision is set out more fully later in this Chapter and relates to the formal terms of reference given to the Management Board (Chapter 6, Section 6.6.4). Another important consideration in the collaboration model is the role accorded to the 'convenor', who has the responsibility of inviting or persuading stakeholders to participate in the process. The convenor may be a corporate body or an individual who has a key role in bringing legitimate stakeholders to the table.

In addition to those issues that relate directly to the steps in the collaboration process, another feature that requires attention in the empirical testing of the model relates to the underlying theoretical assumption of shared power. Stakeholders have to be prepared to be open minded if they are to address problems in a collaborative framework. In the study it was decided that power would be examined from the perspective of individual stakeholder's being able to dominate the collaborative process and in terms of the role of the chair of the collaborative forum, who clearly would have a key role to play in ensuring that each stakeholder had the opportunity to take part in the discussions.

In respect of sustainable development, the focus of interest is in sustainable development as a cross-cutting policy theme within a spatial planning framework. The overall 'vision statement' that defined the focus of the Wales Spatial Plan is identified as the issue around which the collaboration is set. This statement is fundamental to the whole spatial planning process because it provides a description of what the desired outcome of the policy process will

aspire to achieve and embraces the principles that underpin the Plan's proposals. As such it provides a measure of the extent to which the collaborative process has been successful in agreeing the overall direction of policy. Given the role of spatial planning in delivering sustainable development and other Assembly Government policies in Wales, it is appropriate to explore whether or not collaboration had assisted the spatial planning process in so far as policy formulation was concerned. It is also necessary to explore the views of stakeholders concerning their understanding of sustainable development, given the extent to which it was identified (in Chapter 3) as being of a contestable nature. There is also a need to form a view about whether sustainable development had received sufficient attention in the collaborative process in the light of the role accorded to spatial planning in delivering sustainable development at a meso (or regional) government level.

5.5.2 Identification of the stakeholders and the 'convenor'

A key component of research methodology is the identification of the 'unit' of analysis. Two potential units of analysis presented themselves in the context of the Wales spatial planning process, the Spatial Planning Network and the Spatial Planning Management Board.

The Spatial Planning Network (which met on one occasion only) was intended to be a 'forum for the informed participation and consultation on the scope, form and context of the National Spatial Planning Framework (subsequently titled the Wales Spatial Plan) taking into consideration the priorities of the National Assembly for Wales' (Minutes of Meeting). This group included all local authorities and their regional groupings, Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies (ASBPs), business, voluntary organisations and Non-government Organisations (NGOs) and representatives from the academic community.

The Spatial Planning Management Board was a smaller group with more defined terms of reference (see Chapter 6, Section 6.6.4). Within this group, some of the stakeholders had attended the larger 'Network' Group or represented at a more strategic level those attending in an individual capacity

e.g. the Welsh Local Government Association collectively representing individual local authorities. There were, however, some notable omissions in representation on the Management Board, for example the utilities, representatives of disability groups and transport were absent. Nevertheless, it was intended that the Spatial Planning Management Board would meet more frequently than the larger 'Network' group and that the 'Network' would feed its views through representatives on the Spatial Planning Management Board. It was also agreed that the Management Board would not seek to replicate representation on the Spatial Planning Network. (Minutes of Meetings - Management Board).

Membership of the Spatial Planning Management Board was by invitation from the Minister. The letter of invitation spelt out the anticipated role of the Board and provided a 'job specification' to assist the organisation in nominating the appropriate person. The person specification required the representative to be able to 'speak authoritatively on behalf of the representative organisation; have a good understanding of the land use planning system and an appreciation of the ways in which spatial planning can assist decision making in the economic, social and environment sectors' (Letter of Invitation, May 2001).

In the light of the terms of reference, the anticipated role of the Management Board and person specification it was decided, a priori, the Spatial Planning Management Board would be the 'unit of analysis' (in the context of 'operationalising' the collaboration model). Again, in the context of operationalising the model, it was also decided that the 'convenors' would be the three people who chaired the Spatial Planning Management Board over the time of its existence

In addition, it was decided that it would be appropriate to interview a small number of stakeholders who were not represented on the Spatial Planning Management Board to provide an alternative view of the process from an 'outside' perspective. This small group of stakeholders were engaged in the process through the consultation exercise, which included attending a number

of workshops that were concerned with shaping the Plan. They were identified from the list of those who had submitted written representations on the Consultation edition of the Wales Spatial Plan. Whilst this particular group would not be able to address all the matters put to members of the Management Board, they would, nevertheless, be able to provide a perspective on a number of matters, particularly in relation to the Problem Setting aspects of the collaborative process.

Table 5.3 (below) provides a framework for identifying the stakeholders who would be interviewed in the study. This table has arranged those organisations that responded to the Consultation edition of the Wales Spatial Plan according to whether their principal focus of responsibility or interest is economic, environmental or socio-cultural, simply to provide a general indication of their respective loci of interest within the three components (pillars) of sustainable development. In some instances (e.g. Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) Planning Division and the Welsh Local Government Association) it is difficult to assign the organisation to one specific category. However, in instances such as these, it has been done on the basis of a judgement on the principal focus of their work, although it is acknowledged that there are weaknesses of this approach in these particular instances. Those organisations that were contacted are identified by under-lining.

Whilst it will always be open to criticism why some organisations were selected for interview rather than others, a decision was made to include those organisations where it was felt that, *a priori*, they would be important in policy terms in delivering sustainable development. In terms of this agenda the following were identified: - House Builders Federation (supply of housing and affordable housing); Welsh Water – Dwr Cymru (provision of infrastructure); Energy Saving Trust (influencing carbon dioxide emissions); The National Trust (a major land owner with a capacity to influence land management practices); Disability Wales (representing the social justice agenda); Welsh Language Board (representing cultural and community aspects); the Welsh NHS Confederation (representing health service delivery and the social pillar of sustainable development); and the Rail Passengers

Committee for Wales (representing transport and accessibility aspects – and the social pillar).

Within the resource constraints of the study and the fact that the emphasis of the study was confined to the policy process rather than the content of sustainable development and spatial planning, it is felt that the aims and objectives of the research are not compromised by a relatively small sample of non – Management Board Stakeholders. This conclusion can be supported by the fact that this group of stakeholders were offered the opportunity to comment on those aspects of the Direction Setting phase relating to certain steps in the collaboration process (these are identified in the questionnaire – Annex 2 - in a light type face); none of this group chose to comment.

In total, 14 people were interviewed from the Spatial Planning Management Board (comprising the organisations identified in the Table 5.3 below) and the three officials who chaired the Board and acted in the 'convenor' role. In addition, 6 people were interviewed from the stakeholder group not represented on the Management Board.

5.5.3 Data Capture

At the outset of the Study, an approach was made to the relevant Director within the Assembly Government. The researcher arranged an appointment with this Director, outlined the purpose and focus of the study and sought his agreement to the overall approach. Approval was given following consultation with both the Permanent Secretary and the relevant Minister.

Representatives from each of the organisations identified in Table 5.3 and Assembly Policy Divisions were approached and an appointment arranged. At the interview the purpose of the research was explained and respondents were given a commitment that the information derived would be presented in such a way that no one individual could be identified. They were then invited to complete the questionnaire comprising forty-two propositions (see Annex 1 for Management Board Members and Annex 2 for stakeholders not

Table 5.3: Framework for identifying stakeholders

ECONOMIC	ENVIRONMENTAL	SOCIO - CULTURAL
<p>Associated British Ports British Waterways (Wales & Border Counties) <u>Confederation of British Industry*</u> <u>Dwr Cymru Welsh Water</u> Federation of Small Businesses Highways Agency – Network Strategy Directorate <u>House Builders Federation</u> Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council National Grid Transco SWWITCH Wales Tourist Board <u>Welsh Development Agency*</u> <u>Construction Industries Council*</u> Coalfields Community Campaign Menter a Busnes National Farmers Union Cymru Strategic Rail Authority <u>WAG Transport Division*</u> <u>WAG Economic Development Division*</u> <u>WAG Planning Division*</u></p>	<p>Council for the National Parks <u>Countryside Council for Wales*</u> <u>Energy Saving Trust</u> <u>Environment Agency Wales*</u> Coed Cadw (Woodland Trust) <u>National Trust</u> Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Cymru SUSTRANS <u>Wales Wildlife Environment Link*</u> World Wildlife Fund British Archaeology Wales Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales Friends of the Earth Cymru Keep Wales Tidy Ramblers Association Royal Commission of Ancient & Historical Monuments Open Spaces Society The Civic Trust for Wales Wales Coastal & Maritime Partnership</p>	<p>All Wales Ethnic Minority Association Assoc. of Welsh Community Health Councils British Archaeology Wales Community Transport Association <u>Disability Wales</u> Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee Commission for Racial Equality National Museums & Galleries of Wales Wales Association of Community & Town Councils <u>Welsh Language Board</u> <u>Welsh Local Government Association*</u> <u>WAG Health Policy Unit*</u> <u>ELWa*(Education & Training Wales)</u> <u>Welsh NHS Confederation*</u> Children's Commissioner for Wales Higher Education Funding Council for Wales Play Wales Urdd Gobaith Cymru Sports Council for Wales Women's Institute <u>Rail Passengers Committee Wales</u></p>

SOURCE: Derived from *People, Places, Futures: Report on Written Consultation*. <http://walespatialplan.tyfad.com>

NOTES: 1. Organisations allocated to the above categories on the basis of prime focus of their activity

2. Excludes individuals, professional associations and organisations with a specific geographical locus

3. * Indicates membership of the WSP Management Board

4. Underlining indicates selected for interview

5. In addition to the above, the 3 WAG officials who chaired the Management Board ('Convenors') were also interviewed

represented on the Board). It was decided at the outset that the questionnaire would be completed at the time of the interview rather than being circulated prior to the interview so that any potential collusion between individuals in framing their responses would be avoided. This decision reflected the author's prior knowledge that the policy community, certainly within the Assembly Government and between its agencies, is relatively small. A recorded interview then took place, with respondents being invited to explain why they scored each proposition in the way that they did. Again, assurances were given that comments made on tape would remain non-attributable and that only the author would know their identities. Additionally, respondents were advised that at any time they could request that the tape recorder be turned off.

A total of twenty interviews took place - 14 with members of the Spatial Planning Management Board and 6 with stakeholders not on the Board. It was not possible to interview two of the people approached; one was a Board Member (an albeit late appointment intended to reflect the under-representation from health sector) and the other a stakeholder not represented on the Board (representing the environment sector). It is not considered that the failure to secure interviews with these two persons would prejudice the research conclusions in any significant way. In one instance, the person involved (because of his relatively late appointment to the Management Board) would have had some difficulty in addressing some of the propositions included on the questionnaire because he would not be aware of the issues and in the other instance (a stakeholder not on the Management Board) it was considered that there was a reasonable representation from the 'environment' sector and the conclusions reached from the analysis would not be prejudiced in any significant way. In spite of these two limitations it is considered that there is sufficient evidence arising out of the other interviews for valid conclusions to be drawn.

A number of additional questions were asked of the three Assembly officials who acted as Convenors; these are set out below: -

- *Where would you say that the key decisions have been made with the Plan?*
- *What were the main influences on the content of the Plan?*
- *How much was dependent upon the personal commitment, interests and personality of the Minister?*
- *Do you feel that the stakeholder set (Management Board) provided the appropriate level of guidance/input to the process?*

These additional questions were asked of the 'convenors' in an attempt to gauge the extent to which the political dimension may influence the policy process and to provide an understanding of where the key decisions were made. The final question was an attempt to assess how the convenors viewed the success or otherwise of the Management Board in providing guidance to the policy process.

The author attended four meetings of the Management Board in an observer capacity. He was given an opportunity to introduce himself and outline the aims and objectives of the study. The benefits of being able to attend Management Board Meetings were essentially two-fold. Firstly, they enabled the author to observe the dynamics of Board in terms of its ability and desire to provide the levels of guidance anticipated in the terms of reference; and secondly, presence at Board meetings provided an opportunity to establish contacts that were later used as a basis for approaching Board Members for interviews. It was also hoped that the author's presence would give some degree of assurance that the research was a serious piece of work and that presence at the meeting conferred at least implicit recognition of the research by Assembly Government officials (although it was never formally acknowledged as such by Assembly officials at Board meetings).

In addition, the author has attended a number of seminars and workshops in connection with the preparation of the Plan. In these instances he was there in his capacity as an Appointed Member (Board Member) of the Countryside Council for Wales and took part in the proceedings in this capacity. He has

also contributed to the debate on the Wales Spatial Plan within Council and assisted in the Council's response to the Consultation exercise. These activities were concerned with the substance of the Plan and its relevance to the activities of the Countryside Council for Wales and as such the area of interest was outside the scope of this study.

5.5.4 Evaluation of empirical evidence

Respondents were asked to score each proposition on a scale of 1 – 5; scores 1 & 2 indicating that they do not agree with the proposition, a score of 3 that they have no particular view or are indifferent and scores of 4 & 5 that they agree with the proposition. The scoring process enabled a 'quantum' to be established upon which a 'qualitative' explanation was sought. The self-scoring of answers to individual propositions also provided a useful means of grouping answers for analysis. However, it was never intended that the scoring would be used to produce a statistic. The scoring merely provided a relative indication of the strength of views, which the interview would be used to explore the detail.

The scores from the individual interviews were aggregated for each proposition (these are presented in Chapter 7). The transcript of each interview was then related to the particular proposition by means of a matrix table (not produced because it would have been possible to identify the individual respondent) and a 'story-line' was then built up from the answers given in support of the recorded score to each of the propositions.

The interviews revealed a wide range of views about sustainable development and the spatial planning process. Inevitably, some respondents were more expansive than others. In this context it was necessary to be aware of the dangers of treating one respondent's (actor's) view as 'an' or 'the' explanation of a particular issue. It was possible in number instances to confirm the comments made by an individual by reference to the answers given by another respondent and, in some cases, by reference to Minutes of the Management Board or the author's own reflections and observations at these meetings. As explained, the author was also involved in the plan-making

process as a result of his position with the Countryside Council for Wales and this provided another means by which the context of answers given could be judged. This process of 'triangulation' (Robson, 2005; Silverman, 2001) is an attempt to try and establish a 'true' position by comparing results from different sources. As Robson (op cit., p.175) points out '...triangulation can help to counter all of the threats to validity'.

5.5.5 Evaluating the collaboration process

A number of writers have recognised the need for an evaluation of the collaboration process, for example, Innes and Booher (1999) and Margerum (2002). Evaluation criteria are set out in Table 5.4 (below). These authors broadly agree on the process criteria, but Innes and Booher refer more specifically to what they term 'outcome criteria' and to 'second and third order effects', i.e. those, effects that become evident outside and beyond the boundaries of the project e.g. new collaborations, new partnerships, new working practices, new institutions, etc. In many respects this particular dimension reflects Healey's reference to the build up of 'social, intellectual and political capital' (ibid. 1997b p. 311). These criteria provide a useful means for examining the effectiveness of collaboration as a policy process and are addressed in the concluding chapters.

Table 5.4. Criteria for evaluating the collaboration process.

PROCESS CRITERIA	OUTCOME CRITERIA
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Includes representatives of all relevant and significantly different interests. 2. Is driven by a purpose and a task that are real, practical, and shared by the group. 3. Is a self-organising, allowing participants to decide on ground rules, objectives, tasks, working groups, and discussion topics. 4. Engages participants, keeping them at the table, interested, and learning through in-depth discussion, drama, humour, and informal interaction. 5. Encourage challenges to the status quo and fosters creative thinking. 6. Incorporates high-quality information of many types and assures agreement on its meaning. 7. Seeks consensus only after discussions have fully explored the issues and interests and significant effort has been made to find creative responses to differences. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produces a high quality agreement 2. Ends stalemate 3. Compares favourably with other planning methods in terms of costs and benefits 4. Produces creative ideas. 5. Results in learning and change beyond the group. 6. Creates social and political capital 7. Produces information that stakeholders understand and accept. 8. Sets in motion a cascade of changes in attitudes, behaviours and actions, spin-off partnerships, and new practices or institutions. 9. Results in institutions and practices that are flexible and networked, permitting the community to be more creatively responsive to change and conflict.

Source: Innes & Booher, 1999, p. 419

5.6 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has provided an outline of the way in which the model of collaboration outlined by Gray and others has been developed and 'operationalised' for testing in the case study. Justification for the case study approach has been put forward as has the reasons for selecting Wales and the Wales Spatial Plan as the case study.

CHAPTER 6:

THE CASE STUDY: WALES AND THE WALES SPATIAL PLAN

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

To describe the case study and explain its context of the devolution of power to the National Assembly for Wales, Welsh Assembly Government policies, with specific reference to spatial planning and sustainable development.

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Wales: A geographical perspective

6.3 Wales: A political perspective

6.4 Devolution and Sustainable Development

6.5 Devolution and new ways of policy making

6.6 Sustainable Development and Spatial Planning in Wales

6.7 Conclusion

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter describes the case study in terms of the context of the devolution of power to the National Assembly for Wales and with the policy direction that has emerged in Wales post devolution. The statutory duty placed on the National Assembly with regard to sustainable development and the requirements for formal partnership working have implications for the way in which public policy is made and delivered in Wales. Collaboration has emerged as a means of policy formulation and implementation and this is particularly evident with the Assembly's cross-cutting policies, of which sustainable development is one.

Whilst collaboration is seen as a policy mechanism, spatial planning has emerged as one of the main policy tools for delivering sustainable development policy and outcomes. One of the key functions of spatial planning is to provide strategic vision and a broad policy framework for spatial and sectoral policy integration and development. The Welsh Assembly Government have accorded a key role to the Wales Spatial Plan in translating into practice its sustainable development duty. Thus, there are close associations between collaboration, sustainable development and spatial planning in Wales and as such they are considered appropriate subjects to form the basis of a case study in the context of the overall research objectives.

6.2 WALES: A GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Wales is one of four constituent countries of the UK, located to the south west of Great Britain. It covers an area of about 8,000 sq. miles (20,800 sq. km) and is about 170 miles (274 km) long and 60 miles (97 km) wide. It is bounded by England to the east and by the sea on the other three sides (Map 1 below).

Map: 1. Wales



source [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Map_of_Wales.GIF]

The population of Wales is 2.9 million (2001 Census). Most of the population lives in South Wales (60%). Wales is mainly rural in character, with 88% of the land surface given to agriculture and woodland; urban land uses account for the remaining 12% (*The State of the Welsh Environment, WAG, 2003c*). Nearly 20% of its population lives in settlements less than 1,500 persons. The major towns are Cardiff (the Capital), Swansea and Newport in the south and Wrexham in the north. The Welsh language is spoken by nearly 21% of the population, with the greatest concentrations being located in the north and the west. Wales has undergone a significant change in its economic base with the shift from the primary and manufacturing sectors to the service sector, in 2001 employing just over three-quarters of the employee population.

Much of Wales's beautiful and diverse landscape is mountainous, particularly in the north and central regions. As already mentioned, 88% of the land surface is given to agriculture and woodland, with much of it being focussed

on livestock farming largely because of the terrain. Over the years, farming has had a considerable impact on the landscape. Much of the Welsh landscape is protected; 25% is designated for high landscape value and heritage coast – there are three National Parks and five Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; 12% is designated to protect species and habitats of international significance and there are over 1,000 Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

6.3 WALES: A POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE.

Wales was incorporated with England in the sixteenth century by what became familiarly known as the 'Acts of Union'. This was the culmination of a process that had begun with the conquest of Wales by Edward I in the thirteenth century. There were proposals for political and administrative devolution in the nineteenth century but they received little support in Parliament (Davies, 2000). There was, however, a series of administrative devolutionary measures relating to such policy areas as education, agriculture, health, and housing but these were mainly through the creation of separate Welsh departments within existing ministries. It was not until 1964 that the first Secretary of State for Wales was appointed and with that the establishment of a Welsh Office with executive responsibilities (McAllister, 2000; Bogdanor, 2001).

The Welsh Office of 1964 had responsibility for housing, local government, planning, water, forestry, parks, museums and libraries, the Welsh language, regional economic planning and highways. Over the next thirty years, the Welsh Office gained administrative responsibility for tourism, health, agriculture, primary and secondary education, economic development (through the Welsh Development Agency and the Development Board for Rural Wales), employment and training and University of Wales funding, and finally, in 1993, Funding Councils for further and higher education. One writer (J Barry Jones, 2000, p.19) noted that, '...for most domestic purposes the Welsh Office had, by 1995, become the expression and means of government in Wales ... however, while the Welsh Office grew in financial importance and administrative responsibilities, it did not grow in democratic accountability'.

The Secretary of State for Wales, therefore, had executive powers in respect of a wide range of public services and extensive budgetary freedom. 'The process of administrative devolution created the capacity for successive Secretaries of State for Wales to develop policies in response Welsh needs as they interpreted them' (Commission on the Powers & Electoral Arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales, 2004, p.8).

It should also be noted at this point that by the mid -1990s there had been a growth in the amount of public services in Wales delivered by non-elected government agencies, known colloquially as quangos – 'quasi-non governmental organisations'. This issue became a matter of increasing political concern in Wales because these organisations were not properly accountable to the electorate and responsible expenditure of considerable amounts of public money. As Jones (2000, p.21) points out, '...the issue of public accountability of Welsh quangos was not resolved but allowed to fester on until the general election in 1997, when it provided one of the strongest arguments for political devolution and an elected Assembly'.

The 1997 referendum on the issue of devolved government for Wales was not the first time the Welsh people had been asked to consider this issue. Nearly twenty years earlier, in 1979, a similar referendum was conducted and the Welsh electorate rejected the issue of devolved government for Wales. This time the circumstances were different, although the result was fairly close – on a turn-out of just over 50%, 50.3% voted for and 49.7% voted against (Balsom, 2000). On this basis the UK government introduced the Government of Wales Bill, which received Royal Assent in 1998. Elections were held 1999 and the First National Assembly for Wales met later in the year following the transfer of powers on 1 July 1999.

The Government of Wales Act 1998 provided administrative and executive devolution (rather than legislative devolution, as in Scotland). Under this Act, the Welsh Assembly had no power to pass primary legislation, but only secondary legislation, which involve orders, rules and regulations. The powers of the Assembly were limited to those previously exercised by the

Secretary of State for Wales and were specifically listed in the Transfer of Functions Order, specified in the Act. As Bogdanor (2001, p.255) points out, '...legislative devolution involves a transfer of powers, executive devolution involves a division of powers...'. Osmond (2004, p.47) has referred to this as the 'unfinished constitution' because Wales had to accept a compromise arising out of the deal that Ron Davies, as Shadow Secretary of State for Wales, could push through the Wales Labour Party ahead of the 1997 general election.

This compromise also had implications for the way in which the Assembly became structured and also for the way in which it operated. As Osmond (2004, p. 47) points out, '...this inheritance inevitably cast a shadow across the National Assembly's first four-year term'. One of the principal concerns related to the architecture of the Assembly as set out in the Government of Wales Act, which effectively created the Assembly as a corporate body, combining the legislative and executive functions along local government lines. One of the defining aspects of the First Assembly was the way in which it rejected this organisational architecture. Within the terms of the legislation the Assembly created separate identities for the executive side, which became known as the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), and the administrative and legislative side, which was known as the Presiding Office. The majority of the civil service was transferred to the Welsh Assembly Government. The National Assembly effectively delegated its responsibility to the First Minister and he, in turn, to Ministers in the Cabinet (Osmond, 2003 & 2004).

This arrangement had no legal basis under the 1998 Government of Wales Act and in July 2002 the Richard Commission (Commission on the Powers & Electoral Arrangements of the National Assembly for Wales) was appointed to review the powers and electoral arrangements of the Assembly. The Richard Commission Reported in March 2004, and following debate within Welsh polity, the UK Government brought forward the Government of Wales Bill 2005, which subsequently received Royal Assent in July 2006. This Act, inter alia, gave Wales powers to make legislation with the consent of the UK

Parliament (through the mechanism of Orders in Council, which effectively allows the UK Parliament to confer enhanced legislative power on the Assembly in relation to specified subject matters within devolved fields) and also formalised the organisational architecture of the Assembly, referred to above. Political leaders in Wales from Ron Davies to Peter Hain have continually referred to devolution as a process rather than an event.

6.4 DEVOLUTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The White Paper *A Voice for Wales* (Welsh Office, 1997) set out the case for the devolution of power to a new Welsh Assembly. Economic development was placed high on the agenda – ‘one of the Assembly’s most important tasks will be to provide clear leadership and strategic direction to boost the Welsh economy’ (ibid. para. 2.1). The White Paper saw the creation of ‘a new economic powerhouse’ – an expanded Welsh Development Agency to provide a unified and expanded strategy across Wales. There was no mention of the environment or sustainable development in the White Paper, other than a short reference, in para. 1.22, to the requirement for the Assembly to ‘balance the needs for economic development against the needs of environmental protection and conservation’.

This emphasis on economic development provoked a reaction in the form of a group known as the Sustainable Development Charter Group – ‘a group of over 25 environmental NGOs, key government agencies in Wales and the Environmental Planning Research Unit at Cardiff University’ (Bishop & Flynn, 1999, p.66). This Group lobbied Parliament during the passage of the Government of Wales Bill to ensure that consideration of the environment was not lost in debate on the devolution process. Although the published Bill did not contain any clause on sustainable development, commitments were given, following extensive lobbying, to a clause which placed the Assembly under duty to publish ‘a scheme setting out its proposals for securing that its functions are exercised with due regard to the principle that sustainable development should be promoted’ (clause 115). As Bishop & Flynn point out this amendment did not satisfy the Charter Group and following intense lobbying by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds a stronger clause

was introduced which subsequently was embodied into the Government of Wales Act 1998 requiring the Assembly to 'make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development' Section 121 (1).

When compared with the other devolved administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland, The Government of Wales Act (S.121) gave the Welsh Assembly a unique power in relation to Sustainable Development. As Bishop and Flynn (1999. p.62) point out '...this requirement represents a significant challenge for the Assembly in terms of establishing institutional structures and operational processes that will facilitate and promote sustainable development across all its areas of responsibility'. The duty (under S121) gives the Assembly direction, purpose and legitimacy; it holds the Assembly to account in this specific policy area. In relation to Sustainable Development the Assembly has to consult on, make and then publish a Scheme stating how it proposes to promote sustainable development in the exercise of its functions; report annually on what has been done to implement its proposals; report after each Assembly election on the effectiveness of the Scheme; and make and publish a revised or remade scheme. The duty put sustainable development at the heart of the Assembly's activities and enables it to be identified as a cross-cutting policy theme.

There is a cross-party sub committee on sustainable development and a formal Cabinet Sub-committee charged with sustainable development and the Wales Spatial Plan. As will be discussed later, the Assembly regards the Wales Spatial Plan as translating into practice the sustainable development duty and helping it achieve its vision of a sustainable Wales. Within the Assembly's structure, the sustainable development portfolio resides with the Minister for Environment, Planning and Countryside. The Sustainable Development Unit has moved around in the organisational structure. In 2006 it was combined with the Spatial Plan Unit to form the Sustainable Futures Group, within the Strategy and Communications Directorate.

The statutory duty in relation to sustainable development, which Wales shares with Tasmania and Estonia, has been an important catalyst for action (Williams & Thomas, 2004). For example, national and international NGOs such as Oxfam and WWF have established offices in Wales; a Sustainable Development Forum (Cynnal Cymru) has been established to offer an independent voice for Welsh civil society on sustainable development matters and to act as a catalyst for change; the Assembly Government has been active in developing international sustainable development networks (the Gauteng Declaration involving 22 regional governments).

As indicated above, each Assembly, at the beginning of its term has a statutory requirement to review and publish and revise the Sustainable Development Scheme. The Second Assembly has reviewed its initial Sustainable Development Scheme (*Learning to Live Differently*) and published its revised Sustainable Development Scheme (*Starting to live Differently*) in March 2004. The Sustainable Development Scheme was incorporated into *The Sustainable Development Action Plan 2004 – 2007* (WAG, 2004b), which sets out how the Assembly Government will implement its Sustainable Development Scheme. A wide range of actions are proposed under four headings where the Assembly feels that it believes that it can make the most impact: -

- *Living Differently* – structural issues for sustainable development – energy, settlements, natural environment, and production and consumption;
- *Leadership and Delivery* – creating the governance structures and civil society that can deliver sustainable development;
- *Making our money talk* – ensuring that Assembly and other public sector spending is focussed on delivering sustainable development
- *Measuring our progress* – testing progress against indicators and reporting on progress

The Action Plan (ibid, p.10) made reference to the Wales Spatial Plan as a vehicle for providing a ‘...context for places to develop differently in

accordance with their needs and opportunities, and will bind in government funds and services to help deliver these more local visions'

In terms of the Assembly's overall policy framework, Sustainable Development is one of four cross-cutting policy themes, the other three being Equal Opportunities, Social Inclusion (now Social Justice), and the Welsh language. It has been argued (Williams & Thomas, 2004) that these other cross-cutting policies are all aspects of sustainable development and reduce its impact and orientation because different choices lead to different courses of action and to different forms of management and organisation. Viewed in this context, there is a danger that sustainable development (with its own internal tensions) and the other cross-cutting policies referred above, will create significant problems for policy integration and consequent effective delivery. It is, therefore, understandable that the Assembly should attach importance to the Wales Spatial Plan as a means of delivering its sustainable development objectives and policies.

6.5 DEVOLUTION AND NEW WAYS OF POLICY MAKING

Devolution, therefore, has provided Wales with a degree of autonomy, albeit within specified areas of responsibility. It is a 'process rather than an event' (Chaney et.al. 2001, p.3). Devolution has also allowed the Assembly to develop new ways of policy making. In addition to the requirement under the Government of Wales Act 1998 to promote sustainable development in exercising its functions and to have regard to equal opportunity, the Act requires the Assembly to work in formal partnership with the voluntary sector, local government, and business and to promote their interests in policy-making. The Assembly Government has also committed itself to open government, and publishes Cabinet and Cabinet Sub-committee papers and minutes six weeks after the relevant meeting.

The Assembly has developed new policy tools to respond to the new environment in which policy is now made following Devolution (Quinn, 2002). In the context of its *Delivering Better Policy* agenda, the Assembly Government has been developing tools that assist policy making. The *Policy*

Gateway is a tool to assist staff in the process of policy development particularly in the development of evidence-based policy; consultation tools are being developed to ensure that the process can meet user needs; and a *policy integration* tool has been developed to test whether policies and programmes reflect and measure up to the Assembly Government's overall objectives. Devolution has presented Wales '...with a chance to develop a greater capacity for addressing cross-cutting issues'...'it is a good size to test factors which need to go together to make good policy-making and to trial approaches to bringing together evidence-based and participative policy development (Quinn, op. cit., pp 30 &41).

Each Assembly has developed a 'corporate plan' to guide its programme of work. The Assembly's first 3-year strategic plan, 'www.betterwales.com' (NAW, 2000 b), set out, amongst other things, the intention to develop a distinctive Welsh dimension to policies and programmes; this approach was particularly evident in the policy area of land use planning (Welsh Office, 1999). The Assembly was committed to working in new ways. Policy was to be evidence-based; formal partnerships were established with the voluntary, local government and business sectors to promote their interests in policy-making. There was an emphasis in breaking down policy silos by making corporate connections between policies and values.

The second strategic plan *Wales: A Better Country*, (WAG, 2003a) published September 2003, following the election, set a detailed agenda for action covering a wide range of issues including the economy, social justice, the environment, culture and language, education and health. The Plan, again, re-affirmed commitment to open government, participation and partnership. Collaboration was an important aspect of governance in Wales. 'The objective of all these partnerships is to promote inclusiveness, increase efficiency and achieve greater administrative integration, what is often termed 'joined-up' government' (Osmond, 2004, p.67).

The dimension of collaborative working has achieved a new status in the publication of two documents concerned with putting collaboration on a more

formal policy footing, *Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales* (WAG, 2004a) and *Delivering the Connections: From Vision to Action* (WAG, 2005b). This agenda for improvements to service delivery is based on four principles, one of which focuses on collaborative working. It is about seeing the development of a 'Welsh public service', which works across functional and organisational boundaries to achieve economies of scale and maximise efficiency gains as well as more 'joined-up' service delivery.

The Beecham Committee was appointed in July 2005 to identify improvements in the arrangements for local service delivery and examine how existing arrangements for accountability can be used, developed and adapted. It is noteworthy that Beecham was not engaged to look at structural reform but rather making the existing organisational framework for public service delivery work more efficiently and effectively. The Beecham Report, *'Beyond the Boundaries. Citizen Centred Local Services'* (WAG, 2006) made a number of recommendations for the principal policy actors in Wales. Building on the principles of *'Making the Connections'*, the Beecham Report made particular reference to the focus of service delivery from the perspective of the citizen, which is rooted in joined-up government, adding that service delivery should be designed and built on the advantages that derive from Wales being a small country. The features outlined in this section are indicative of a force for collaborative governance, a feature that is growing in importance in the way in which post-devolution Wales is now being managed.

6.6 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SPATIAL PLANNING IN WALES

6.6.1 Background to the Wales Spatial Plan

The mandate to produce a National Spatial Framework (The Wales Spatial Plan) was given in the Assembly's strategic plan '*www.betterwales.com*' (National Assembly for Wales, 2000b) where one of the priorities identified was to produce '...a new national spatial framework for planning, setting a clear context for sustainable development and environmental quality'. This has to be seen within the wider policy context (referred to earlier) of the statutory duty imposed on the Assembly by The Government of Wales Act 1998 to 'make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its

functions, to promote sustainable development' (S.121.1). The Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme (National Assembly for Wales, 2000a) recognised that its key strategic policy documents would contribute to sustainable development and in this context the 'National Spatial Framework' (The Wales Spatial Plan) was recognised as a key policy document.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 60) provided a statutory basis for the Wales Spatial Plan - (Section 60 (1) 'There must be a spatial plan for Wales to be known as the 'Wales Spatial Plan'. Thus the Act made it a requirement for the National Assembly for Wales to publish and keep the Plan under review. The Plan is required to '...set out such of the policies (however expressed) of the National Assembly for Wales as it thinks appropriate in relation to the development and use of land in Wales' (Section 60 (2)). In their turn, local development plans, prepared by local planning authorities, are required to have regard to the Wales Spatial Plan (Section 62 (5) (b)). Thus the Wales Spatial Plan is a key policy document in influencing both land use policy and spatial planning in Wales. The same Act (Section 39 (2)) also makes it a requirement to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

6.6.2 The Wales Spatial Plan

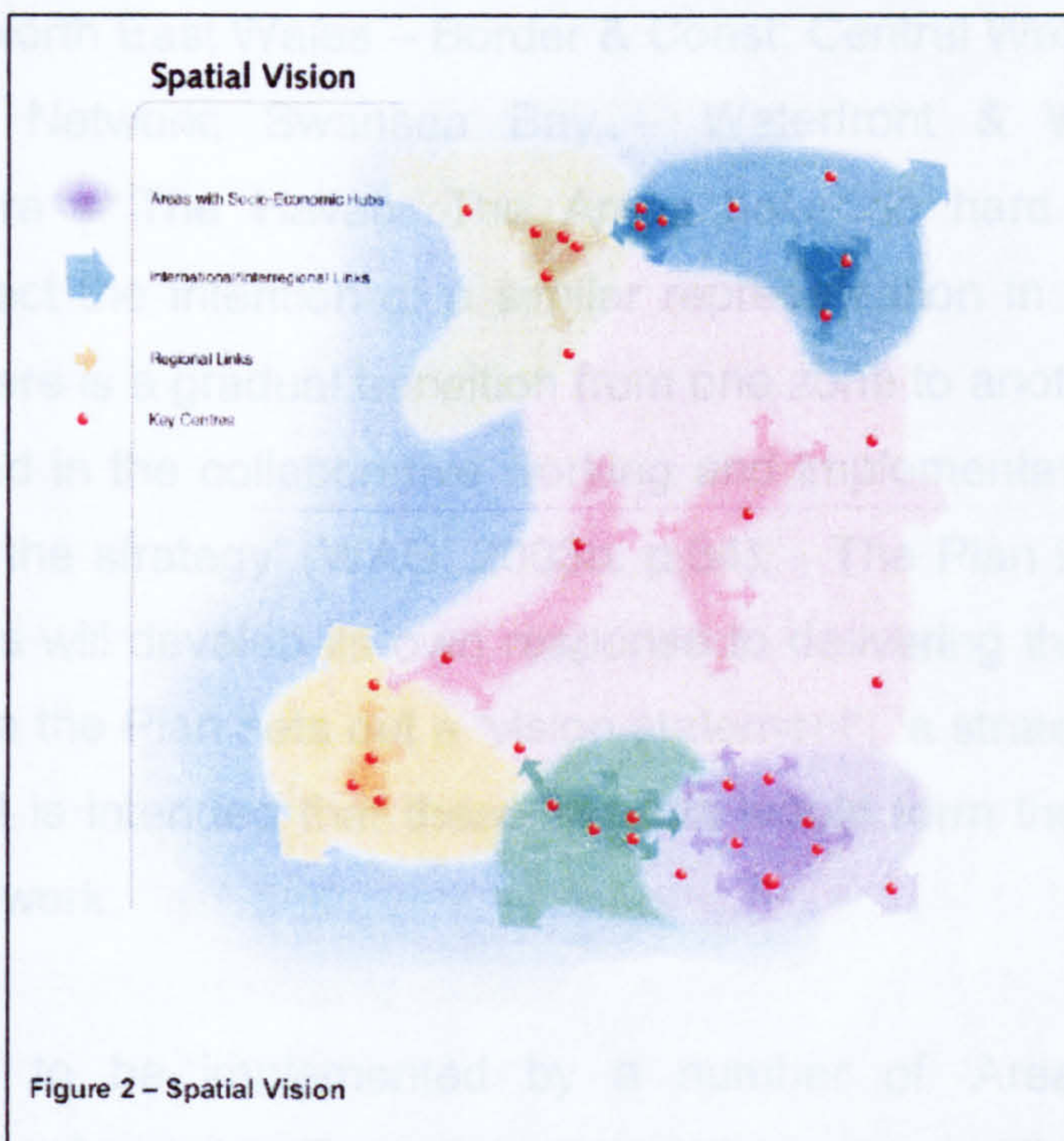
The Wales Spatial Plan, '*Peoples Places, Futures*' (WAG, 2005a), sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's vision for Wales in the next 20 years. It was adopted by the National Assembly in November 2004 and published in January 2005. It aims to provide a framework for collaborative working and decision making across sectoral and functional boundaries. Although the Plan is intended to provide a high level context for decision-making, particularly in the public sector, it is also intended that these decisions should be informed by stronger geographic element.

The Assembly Government recognised that the Wales Spatial Plan was a strategic planning document. It was one of the strategic building blocks alongside the Assembly Government's own strategic plan '*Wales: A Better Country*' (WAG, 2003a) and to the Assembly's Sustainable Development

Scheme (ibid. p.5). The Plan was intended to meet a number of objectives including: - providing a framework for collaborative working involving the Assembly Government and its agencies, the private and voluntary sectors; influencing the location of Assembly Government expenditure and that of its agencies; setting the context for local and community planning; and providing a clear evidence base for the public, private and voluntary sectors to develop policy and action. The role of the Plan was set out in the following terms: - *'making sure that decisions are taken with regard to their impact beyond the immediate sectoral or administrative boundaries; that there is co-ordination of investment and services through understanding the roles of and interactions between places; and that we place the core values of sustainable development in everything we do'* (ibid. p. 5)

The Plan sets out, in diagrammatic form, what it terms as 'The National Framework' (Map 2 below).

Map 2: Wales Spatial Vision



Source: Wales Spatial Plan (2005)

The 'National Framework' is built on the following vision: - *'we will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; we will grow in ways which will increase our*

competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; we will enhance our natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to our well-being, and we will sustain our distinctive identity'.(WAG, 2005a, p.8). The vision reflects the Assembly's cross-cutting themes of the Assembly – Equal Opportunities, Social Justice, Sustainable Development and the Welsh Language.

The National Framework is supported by six themes; - Building Sustainable Communities; Promoting A Sustainable Economy; Valuing Our Environment: Achieving Sustainable Accessibility: Respecting Distinctiveness: Working With Our Immediate Neighbours. For each theme there is a position statement, a series of objectives and a list of actions.

In contrast with the 'Consultation Draft' of the Plan (WAG, 2003b) the 'approved' Plan (WAG, 2005) presents a more simplified spatial structure. The 'Zones' and 'Areas' have been replaced by six areas: - North West Wales – Eryri a Mon; North East Wales – Border & Coast; Central Wales; South East - The Capital Network; Swansea Bay – Waterfront & Western Valleys; Pembrokeshire – The Haven. The Areas have no hard boundaries and probably reflect the intention of a similar representation in the 'Consultation Draft' that 'there is a gradual transition from one zone to another that will need to be reflected in the collaborative working and implementation necessary to take forward the strategy' (WAG, 2003b. p.34). The Plan intends that each area of Wales will develop its own response to delivering the national vision. For each area the Plan sets out a 'vision statement', 'a strategy', and a series of 'actions'. It is intended that these aspects would form the basis for future collaborative work.

The Plan is to be implemented by a number of 'Area Level' groups, comprising the Assembly Government and its partners. There is a National Spatial Planning Group, chaired by the Minister and shadowed by an officials' group. The Plan is not a 'trend' or 'trend-busting' plan but rather a framework built around a series of actions. As indicated earlier, it is intended that the Plan would form part of the Assembly Government's new approach to public

service delivery and the Plan provides the framework for delivering public policies in an integrated way both nationally and locally through the influence that it has on policies (of WAG and its partners including local government) and programmes of public expenditure. As the Plan points out 'the bulk of implementation will be achieved through focussing of policy interventions spatially and by the collaborative working of partners' (ibid, p. 59). The Spatial Plan has a 20-year time horizon and it is intended that the Plan will be 'subject to an updating 'refresh' at regular intervals' (ibid. p. 59). It is proposed that a series of indicators will be developed to monitor progress.

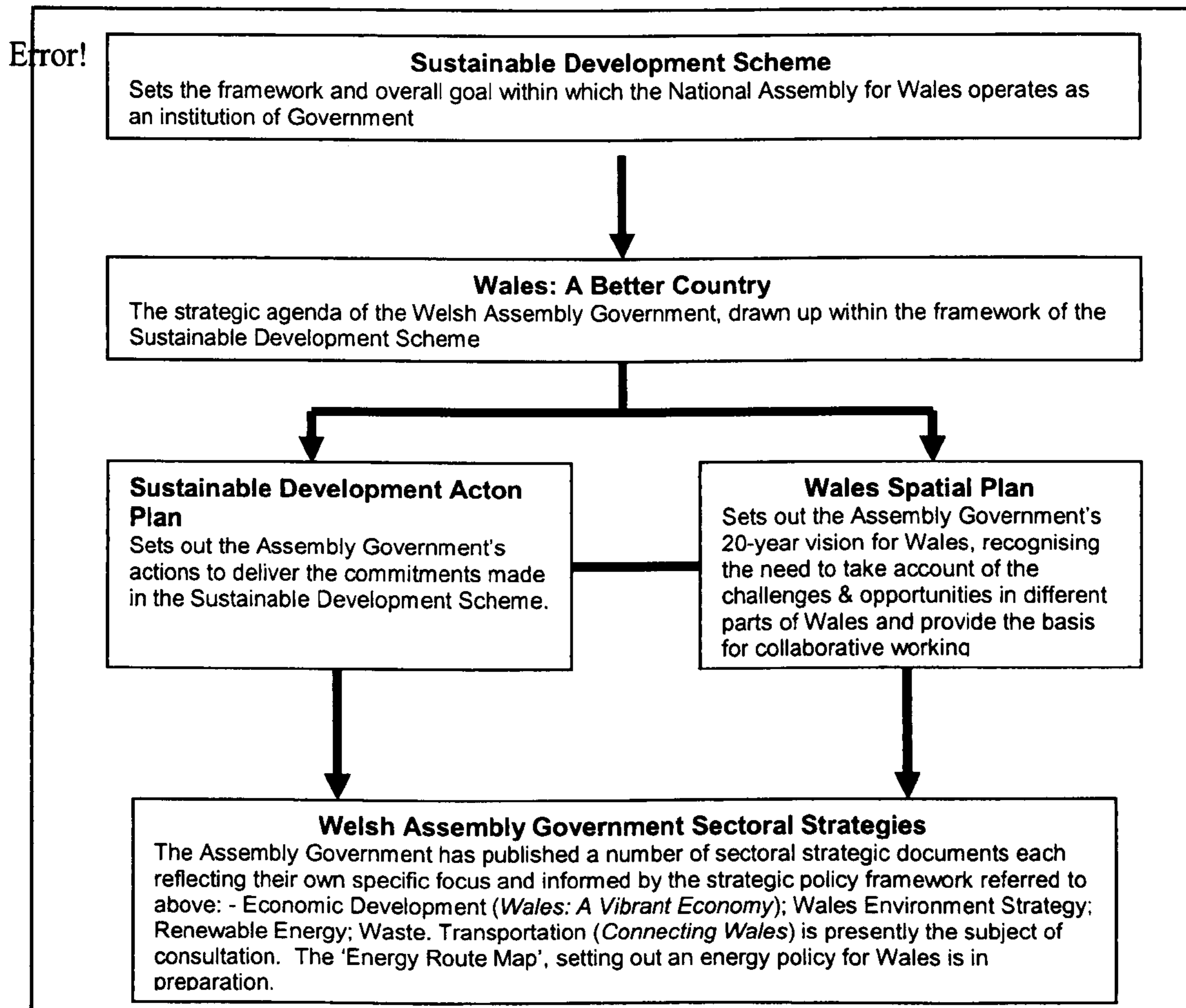
6.6.3 The place of the Wales Spatial Plan in the policy hierarchy

'The Wales Spatial Plan sits outside, and is complementary to, the statutory land-use planning system'. As already mentioned, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirmed not only the statutory basis of the Wales Spatial Plan (S.60) but also the requirement for Local Development Plans, prepared by local planning authorities, to have regard to the Wales spatial Plan in preparing their Local Development Plan (S.62). The Plan also provides a context for Community Strategies, prepared by local authorities, and to Management Plans prepared by National Parks and Areas of Natural Beauty; it is also intended that there should be links with health, social care and well-being strategies. The Spatial Plan is aimed at both vertical integration (as indicated in the previous sentence) and horizontal integration across the Assembly Government's own policy domain.

The Wales Spatial Plan, therefore, has an important role in co-ordinating the Assembly Government's policies, together with those of local government, business and other partners across Wales. It is a higher order policy document because it is about the spatial and sectoral integration of public policy; it provides a framework for policies, plans and programmes. It also has to provide an indicative framework for the private and voluntary sectors through an understanding of the roles and interactions of places and policy actors.

Fig. 6.1 below illustrates and summarises the policy framework that exists in Wales. It can be seen that the Sustainable Development Scheme, which is a statutory duty of the National Assembly, sets the overall policy framework into which the other strategies, which are prepared by the Welsh Assembly Government, fit.

Fig. 6.1. Wales - Integrated Policy Framework



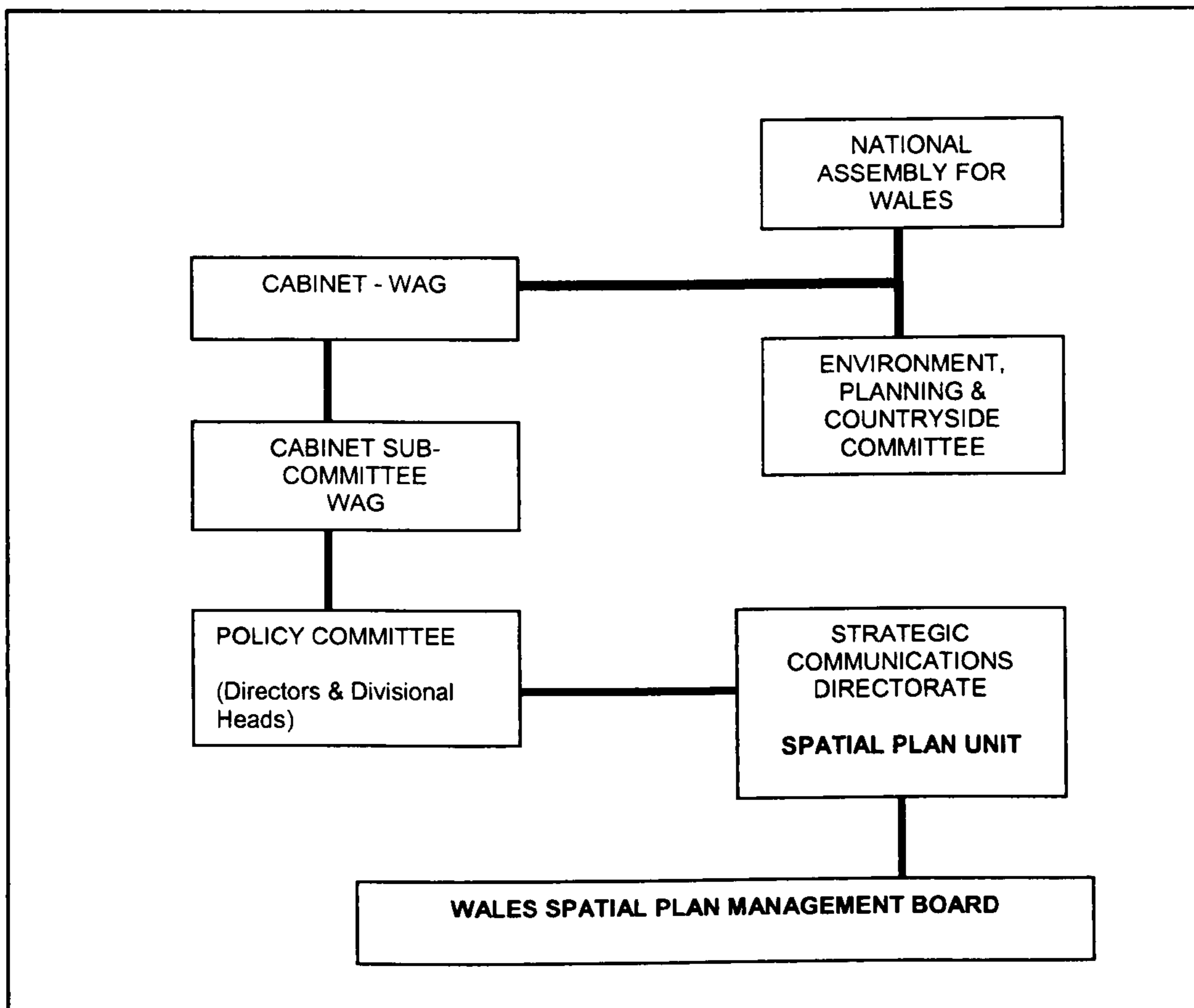
Source: Author. Position as at December 2006

6.6.4 The process for producing the Wales Spatial Plan

The process for producing the Wales Spatial Plan is set within the administrative structures of the Welsh Assembly Government. In terms of structures the following are an important consideration: - the Wales Spatial Plan Management Board; the Welsh Assembly Government Cabinet and Cabinet Sub-Committee; the Assembly Environment, Planning and

Countryside Committee and the National Assembly as a corporate body. The relationship between these administrative structures is set out in the diagram below (reflecting the position at the time of the field work): -

Fig. 6.2 Wales Spatial Plan Process: organisational aspects



NOTE: Organisational structure as at February 2005

The Wales Spatial Plan is 'championed' at Cabinet level by the Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services (Sue Essex). Although this particular Minister's portfolio of responsibilities has changed following the Welsh Assembly election in May 2003, (she was formerly the Minister for Environment) the First Minister invited her to continue as the Minister responsible for the Wales Spatial Plan.

At a political level, Member involvement is achieved through the National Assembly for Wales; the Assembly Environment, Planning and Countryside Committee (formerly the Environment, Planning and Transportation

Committee); and the Welsh Assembly Government Cabinet and Cabinet Sub-Committee for Sustainable Development and the Wales Spatial Plan. On the official side, these groups are to some extent mirrored by the Policy Committee (Directors and, as appropriate, Heads of Divisions). Administratively, the Wales Spatial Plan is a Unit (Spatial Plan Unit) located within the Strategy and Communications Directorate. The administrative location of the Wales Spatial Plan has changed a number of times since the project was initiated in April 2000.

Considerable emphasis was placed on the process by which the Wales Spatial Plan is prepared. It was recognised that there was a need to engage the key stakeholders at an early stage and to encourage their continued support through out the various stages in the plan-making process. Again, this approach reflected the point made earlier in relation to the Assembly Government's commitment to participation and inclusiveness in policy-making. In a slightly different context, the emphasis on 'process' also reflects the point made by Healey (1997d, p.11) that strategic plan-making is as much about process as it is about the product – 'strategic plan-making is thus as much about process, about institutional design and mobilisation, as about the development of substantive policies'.

The spatial planning process was informed by a number of studies undertaken by consultants and events held throughout Wales to engage stakeholders in the development of spatial policies (Harris, Hooper, & Bishop, 2002). At the beginning of the process, the Assembly commissioned research on the most appropriate approach for the preparation of the National Spatial Planning Framework, as it was then called (Cardiff University & Ecotec Research & Consulting, 2001). Research was also undertaken on a comparative review of spatial planning practices in the United Kingdom and mainland Europe and another research study was undertaken to identify the expectations of key stakeholders in relation to a spatial planning framework (cited in Harris, Hooper & Bishop, 2002, p.560).

Throughout the plan-making process stakeholders have been engaged on a number of occasions in a series of 'regional workshops'. In the early stages (May, 2002), key stakeholders were invited to consider key trends and drivers and develop spatial options for Wales and its regions. Following the publication of the 'Consultation Draft' in the autumn of 2003, a series of seminars were arranged to consider the issues raised in the Plan. In July 2004, two conventions were held (one in North Wales and the other in the South), addressed by the Minister, to consider a number of propositions relating to the thrust of the Plan. Following the publication of the 'approved' Plan, in November, 2004, a further series of workshops were arranged to consider matters relating to the implementation of the Plan, defining priorities for action under the Plan's five themes and considering how existing regional structures could be adapted to facilitate the implementation process. Again, the Minister took a strong lead in this process.

Box 6.1 (below) sets out a time-line for the principal activities and milestones in the process for producing the Wales Spatial Plan.

Box 6.1: Wales Spatial Plan: Time-line of Activities and Milestones

POLICY INITIATION / PROBLEM SETTING

- **January 2000** – the establishment of the Land Use Planning Forum to provide advice on the review of planning policy.
- **December 2000** – an event, *Key Challenges for Wales*, to involve a wide range of participants to help refine and suggest key questions that will need to be addressed in developing the spatial framework.
- **May 2001** – Minister for Environment invites nominations for the National Spatial Planning Framework Management Board and the Spatial Planning Network.
- **June 2001** – Spatial Planning Network met for its first and only meeting.
- **June 2001** – Spatial Planning Management Board met for the first of a series of meetings that have broadly paralleled the progress of the Plan.

POLICY FORMULATION / DIRECTION SETTING

- **September 2001** – publication of consultation document *Wales Spatial Plan; Pathway to Sustainable Development*.
- **May 2002** – regional workshops based on a series of regional scenarios
- **September 2003** – publication of the consultation document *People, Places, Futures - The Wales Spatial Plan*
- **October-December 2003** – series of seminars and workshops relating to the Plan and its regional dimension.
- **July 2004** – two 'national' workshops to assist in the framing of the plan
- **November 2004** – Wales Spatial Plan presented and debated at Plenary Session of the National Assembly for Wales; the Plan was 'adopted' as a basis for policy. The Wales Spatial Plan was formally published in January 2005.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION / STRUCTURING

- **February 2005** – series of Regional Workshops to consider the implementation process.
- **June /July 2005** – Ministerial and Official-level meetings established on a regional basis to action the implementation process. This process is now on-going.

Returning to the mechanisms for producing the Plan, there are two groups that have responsibility for developing the Wales Spatial Plan: -The Spatial Planning Network and the Spatial Planning Framework Management Board (now known as the Wales Spatial Plan Management Board). The former group is a large body intended to be a sounding board for ideas. More formally, it is a 'forum for informed participation and consultation on the scope, form and context of the National Spatial Planning Framework taking into consideration the priorities of the National Assembly for Wales'. The Spatial Planning Network met for its first and only time in June 2001. The

Management Board is a smaller body and involves key stakeholders in Welsh polity. The Management Board has the following terms of reference: -

- To provide advice on the management, scope, form and content of the National Spatial Planning Framework (NSPF) taking into consideration the priorities of the National Assembly for Wales;
- To provide advice and guidance on research and data requirements necessary to support the preparation of the NSPF;
- To monitor progress on NSPF preparation to ensure that it remains on time including the provision of advice on corrective action where necessary; and
- To provide advice and guidance on the Framework consultative process.

The Management Board is comprised of the following organisations: - WAG policy divisions (Strategic Policy – Spatial Planning Unit, Planning, Transport, Economic Development, Health); Countryside Council for Wales; ELWa – Education & Learning Wales; Welsh Development Agency; Environment Agency Wales; Confederation of British Industry – Wales; Wales Wildlife Link (representing the environment NGOs); Welsh Local Government Association; Construction Industries Council; Wales National Health Service Confederation. Over a period of four and a half years the Management Board met on 15 occasions. The constitution of the Board (both in terms of membership and representation) has remained fairly stable through out this period. However, as a result of ‘sustainability appraisal’ undertaken by Forum for the Future in April 2004, it was decided and agreed that the social and health dimensions had not been adequately represented on the Board. Accordingly, ELWa (representing the post 16 education and training sectors) and representatives from the public and acute health care sectors were invited to become Board members (Forum for the Future, 2004; Minutes of the Management Board, May 2004).

This case study and analysis will focus in particular on the Management Board as a means of identifying the key stakeholders involved in the planning process.

6.7 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has demonstrated that there are a number of features present in the case study to reflect the primary aims and objectives of this research. The Devolution settlement placed a statutory duty on the National Assembly for Wales under the Government of Wales Act 1998 (S.121) to make a scheme setting out how it proposes, in the exercise of its functions, to promote sustainable development. This is a unique duty in the context of devolved government in the UK. Devolution has also allowed the National Assembly to develop new ways of policy making and the Act required the National Assembly to develop formal partnerships as a means of working with a number of partners in the governance of Wales. In adopting Sustainable Development, Equal Opportunities and Social Inclusion (now Social Justice), as well as the Welsh Language as cross-cutting policy themes, policy integration became a necessity and Assembly Government civil servants were having to develop tools not only to facilitate their newly acquired policy making role but also to ensure policy integration at the highest level.

The Assembly Government were not only concerned with joined-up government but also with the quality of service delivery. The 'Making / Delivering Connections' agenda emphasised the need for collaborative working. Indeed, the recent Beecham review of local public service delivery again recognises, amongst other things, the importance of collaborative working and joined-up government to the extent that there is developing the concept of a Welsh public service. The result of all this is that collaboration is now at the heart of policy formulation and delivery in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government see the Wales Spatial Plan as a means of delivering a wide range of Assembly programmes and policies, including sustainable development and providing a framework for collaborative working and decision taking across sectoral and functional boundaries. The UK

government also recognises that spatial planning provides a broad framework for policy integration and development and it suggests that 'spatial planning lies at the heart of planning for sustainable development' (ODPM, 2005, para. 13 (iii)).

As discussed in Chapter 3, sustainable development has certain characteristics that make it a cross-cutting policy theme. It was also shown that its nature is contestable and that it contains some inherent conflicts. Collaboration is a policy tool that can be used to manage such tensions and, hopefully, lead to a positive outcome.

Thus collaboration, sustainable development and spatial planning are closely linked on the Welsh public policy terrain. It is for these reasons that Wales, Sustainable Development and the Wales Spatial Plan are considered as the case study. 'Devolution has turned Wales into a natural laboratory that some social scientists have always thought it should be' (Chaney, et al., p.vii).

CHAPTER 7:

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE WALES SPATIAL PLAN: INTERPRETATION THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE PERSPECTIVE

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

Within the context of Objective 4, to examine sustainable development and the spatial planning policy process through a collaborative perspective

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Problem Setting

7.2.1 Common definition of the problem/issue

7.2.2 Securing the commitment to collaborate

7.2.3 Identification of stakeholders

7.2.4 Legitimacy of stakeholders

7.2.5 Convenor characteristics

7.2.6 Identification of resources

7.2.7 Conclusion on Problem Setting Stage

7.3 Direction Setting

7.3.1 Establishing ground rules

7.3.2 Agenda setting

7.3.3 Organising sub-groups

7.3.4 Joint information search

7.3.5 Exploring new options

7.3.6 Reaching agreement

7.3.7 Dispersion of power

7.3.8 Conclusion on Direction Setting Stage

7.4 Conclusion

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter will examine the policy process involved in producing the Wales Spatial Plan through the lens of the collaboration model, outlined in Chapter 5. As explained in Chapter 5, it will do this by examining the responses of members of the Spatial Planning Management Board (and a sample of stakeholders who were not members of the Management Board) to a series of propositions that relate to the collaborative process. The Spatial Planning Management Board has been identified as the focus for attention because of its role in the policy process and the fact that it includes principal stakeholders that will have an important influence on the implementation process.

The analysis will be confined to the first two phases of the collaboration process – Problem Setting and Direction Setting; the third phase, Structuring or Implementation, is outside the scope of this study because that process was not underway at the time the field work was being undertaken. Each of these phases of the collaborative process is now considered in turn. Within each phase a number of steps are identified as the basis for managing the collaboration process. They have been used (and adapted in appropriate circumstances, as indicated in Chapter 5, Table 5.2) to examine the process in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan. This Chapter, therefore, describes the Wales Spatial Plan policy process through the lens of a collaborative model.

7.2 PROBLEM SETTING

Problem setting is about developing consensus – ‘getting to the table’. ‘The primary objective of problem setting is to give the situation an explicit form or identity that allows stakeholders to communicate about and eventually act upon it’ (McCann, 1983, p. 18). Problem Setting provides the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue and an opportunity to understand the issue ‘issue crystallisation’ (Waddock, 1989, p.83).

The Problem Setting phase of the model comprises a number of steps (Gray, 1989, p. 57): - establishing a common definition of the problem / issue; securing a commitment to collaborate; identification of stakeholders;

legitimacy of stakeholders; convenor characteristics; and identification of resources. Each of these steps is now considered in turn.

7.2.1 Common definition of the problem / issue

This step in the process is about agreeing the definition of the problem and is grounded in recognition of the interdependence of the parties concerned. This is a fundamental stage in the process of collaboration. Getting parties to the table and an awareness of the circumstances that join them and their ability to jointly influence the outcome is a critical stage in the collaborative process. The Table below summarises the responses to the propositions relating to this step in the collaborative process.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION 1=Do not Agree: 5==Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
Vision Statement: Agreement with the overall vision of the Wales Spatial Plan			(1)	6 (1)	8 (4)
The Wales Spatial Plan presents a framework for collaborative working and decision making across sectional and functional boundaries.	(1)		3 (2)	6 (3)	5
Sustainable Development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs				7 (3)	7 (3)
Stakeholders recognised that interdependencies exist between each other in the sense that their individual actions could impact upon the activities if another organisation.		(1)	5 (1)	5 (2)	4 (2)

Note: figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board Stakeholders

Vision Statement

The Vision Statement is fundamental to the whole spatial planning process because it essentially sets out a description of what the desired outcome of the policy process will aspire to achieve over the period of the Plan. It also embraces the values or the philosophical principles that underpin the Plan's proposals.

The Wales Spatial Plan sets out an overall spatial vision for Wales for the next twenty years – *'we will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; we will grow in ways which will increase our competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off*

areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; we will enhance our natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to our well-being; and we will sustain our distinctive identity' (WAG, 2005a). This overall vision is supported by five guiding themes: - Building Sustainable Communities; Promoting a Sustainable Economy; Valuing Our Environment; Achieving Sustainable Accessibility; and Respecting Distinctiveness.

There was general support for the Vision Statement, by both stakeholders represented on the Management Board and those not on the Board. The Vision Statement is phrased in such a manner that it invites agreement or approval. There is some evidence that this statement was arrived at as a result of 'drafting by committee', but one that had a clear political steer. One senior official pointed out that *'...I'm not sure whether there was agreement on that statement amongst the Management Board. I think that statement reflects where Ministers were, because you know we had a Cabinet Sub-Committee which ran in parallel with the Management Board so that was a different group of stakeholders ... and they also saw the Consultants' reports and things that were coming in ... we were working with them about their political objectives as we were developing the text of the plan [we] would then go back to the Management Board. So for example, the importance of the balance between spreading increasing competitiveness whilst spreading prosperity was outwardly a very key political balance that we got from that arena'*. This official also recognised that the Spatial Plan had to fulfil another function, that of taking forward the Assembly's sustainable development agenda. One member of the Management Board (not an Assembly official) felt that the Vision Statement was a much stronger statement of sustainable development than any that had appeared in other Assembly documents.

Whilst there was a broad agreement with the Vision Statement, a number of respondents attempted to qualify their responses in a number of ways. For example, one respondent recognised that high level statements are all well and good but *'...its when different kinds of aims within that potentially come into conflict with each other...'* In this context he cited the potential conflicts that arise from house prices and the Welsh language (this is the concern in

some quarters, particularly in Welsh speaking areas, that rising levels of prosperity drive up house prices that make properties unaffordable to young people who may then have to leave the area and so weaken cultural and linguistic basis upon which the community is built). Another respondent felt that the Statement should be more specific, in particular he felt that there should be more reference to connectivity between issues, citing the way in which health matters impact upon many of the elements described in the Statement '*... health is part of sustainable development, and we still come up against a barrier that sustainable development is green issues...*' Another Member of the Management Board felt that the Statement was an '*elegant exposition of what sustainable development is*', recognising, however, that there are contradictions involved in '*spreading prosperity to less well off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts*'.

Two respondents (one from the environmental sector and the other not) mentioned that the statement was very much '*motherhood and apple-pie - having something for everyone*'. Interestingly, a member of the Management Board, representing the development sector, qualified his answer in the following terms by pointing out that priorities may change over the Plan period '*... I think in 10-15 years time as the environmental agenda [and] climate change agenda develops worldwide ... the emphasis of this kind of long term vision is going to change and there'd be much more concern about the environment being fundamental rather than being secondary to presenting our competitiveness as being the be-all and end-all of our way of life as it stands at the moment*'.

Stakeholders who were not on the Management Board similarly found the Vision Statement acceptable. One respondent felt that the last clause in the Vision Statement should be strengthened to reflect the Welsh Language; another felt that Plan was seeking to '*...spread something everywhere without making difficult choices*'; another felt that the Vision was a reasonable reflection of what can be achieved over a twenty year timeframe.

From the answers given to views about the 'Vision Statement', it is fairly obvious that the Statement had been crafted in such a way as to secure broad

acceptance from those who were likely to be engaged in implementation. From the comments made by an Assembly Government official, it would appear that a strong political steer was given to the wording of the Vision Statement. It can be concluded, therefore, that the basic principles of sustainable development (as evidenced in the Vision Statement) were accepted by both Management Board members and those stakeholders not represented on the Board.

A framework for collaborative working

Most members of the Management Board felt that the Wales Spatial Plan presented a framework for collaborative working. In terms of producing the Plan, one Board Member, representing the environment sector felt that the plan process provided '*...a good model for collaborative working. Much better than what we have been used to in Wales in recent years and I feel that the views of [environmental organisations] have been respectfully received even if they haven't been agreed with...*' Another Board Member recognised that the Plan provided a framework for joint working and establishing functional linkages and to start to shape policy so that the Assembly is more able to think in terms of fulfilling wider objectives, rather than on just a single programme basis. One Assembly official felt that there was an internal dimension to collaborative framework development and cited the development of more bi-lateral discussions on policy matters as well as the development of e-mail discussion facilities.

Of those not fully supporting the view of the majority, one felt that the process had generated a collaborative framework for producing the Plan but the key to a collaborative framework lay in the implementation; another felt that the Assembly had been engaged in developing collaborative frameworks and the Wales Spatial Plan was part of a wider framework of collaboration that had already been developed; and a third Board Member felt that the framework was blurred by confusions over its intended purpose. For example, he cites the use of the Plan in a statutory planning context, its use by the Economic Development Minister as an overarching policy document and, for local government, its role as regional plan in encouraging cross-border working.

He felt that it was resource indicative and was '*...the thin end of a very big wedge for a lot of people*'. The inference made by this respondent implies that the real agenda of the Spatial Plan is its role as a resource allocation mechanism for the Assembly Government rather than as the broader objectives suggested by the Vision Statement. Another Board Member, whilst fully supporting the view that the Plan provided a framework for collaborative working, acknowledged that the collaborative framework would be driven by resource availability '*...it is apparent that the Assembly and the politicians in particular attach great importance to this [the Plan] and if it becomes a key driver for resources then that will drive collaborative working in many ways, so people will see its important and organisations need to get together and work out how they are going to work across boundaries in particular*'. Clearly, the relationship between the Spatial Plan and the Assembly's budgetary process was in the minds of several stakeholders in their consideration of matters relating to the development of collaborative frameworks.

Turning to 'non-Management Board stakeholders', there was some agreement that the Plan would provide a basis for collaborative working. One stakeholder in the transport sector referred to the necessity of developing effective partnership working as the basis for effective service provision (he was referring in particular to local government's role in public transport). Another stakeholder was concerned that some key sectors (house building) had been excluded from the policy development process and had to rely on the consultation process to provide an input into the Plan process. A major utility provider made a similar response. Those stakeholders not directly represented on the Management Board clearly had concerns about their exclusion from the Board in terms of their ability to more directly influence the policy formulation process. Whether the Plan was weakened by their exclusion is a matter of judgement, but it has to be acknowledged that they would have had an opportunity to influence the Plan through their direct representations on the Consultation process and also through their involvement in the Workshop events.

Interpreting sustainable development

Stakeholders were asked to confirm their agreement or otherwise with the Brundtland definition of sustainable development. The reason for adopting this particular definition was, other than its widespread and familiar usage, that the Welsh Assembly had based its Sustainable Development Action Plan on this particular definition. At the interview, stakeholders were invited to consider other definitions, such as that used by the UK Government in the UK Sustainable Development Strategy (DETR, 1999). There would appear to be a general agreement with what sustainable development is about, typical of the comments made is the following '*...I think actually the Brundtland one is a pretty robust definition. People have come up with other ones - talking about quality of life – and various more convoluted ways of saying it, but I think that's a good summary of what it's all about, it's about thinking about tomorrow and today*'. There were, however, some interesting qualifications to the general agreement with the definition of sustainable development. One member of the Management Board, representing the 'environment sector', suggested that '*...I have ticked that one a 4 because I think that the only problem I have with that definition is that it's very much based on people rather than the environment so it doesn't refer to ecological limits of the world it can be read to refer to the needs of people rather than, or as well as, the needs of the environment, but obviously it's an accepted definition and it's one which we're reasonably happy to run with.*' Almost a counter view was suggested by another member of the Management Board, representing the economic sector, who similarly scored "a 4" '*...I see very much the creation of wealth is really what allows us to do everything else...*' In many ways these views reflect the relative positioning of the economy and the environment in the various conceptual models of sustainable development, such as those presented in Chapter 3.

Recognition of interdependencies

As was noted above, recognition by stakeholder groups that their actions are inextricably linked to the actions of other stakeholders is fundamental to the collaborative process. It is also relevant in the consideration of cross-cutting policy themes, such as sustainable development. Positive benefits can ensue

when stakeholders begin to appreciate the extent of their interdependence on each other. There was some degree of consensus amongst stakeholders regarding the recognition of interdependencies in relation to individual actions and policy stances. However, of those members of the Board expressing doubt about the recognition of interdependencies, one stakeholder suggested that interdependency grew over time *'... I think initially people came at it from their own specialisms, but I think the more that as issues were discussed, the more people realised the connections and so I think that developed over time.'*

Another dimension to collaboration was revealed by a member of the Management Board representing the Assembly Government who suggested that *'... some stakeholders just wanted to see what could be achieved on their agenda through the plan and how much stakeholder buy-in did we [would] have to [do] change in the way we did things. Some stakeholders were really keen on that. The voluntary sector is always really strong'. Some stakeholders appeared to engage on the basis that they had to protect their own policy position as the following comment indicates '... the economic agenda ... its just a case of - let's make sure we are not disadvantaged by, and let's see how far we can push forward our own position of advantage. And that is no disrespect to them - I think that people had come to it with different agendas. I wouldn't say that everyone was there to recognise interdependencies and see how they could make all that work better now. People were just there to make sure their own position was looked after'*

One member of the Management Board saw the recognition of interdependencies as part of the development of a much wider collaborative way of working across different areas of the public sector in Wales. *'I think it [the recognition of interdependencies] was probably recognised at the outset, but, it gathered momentum because whatever else you say about the Assembly Government and the way in which it put together the Spatial Plan, it was a fairly open process. It was a hell of a long gestation period with extensive consultation and stakeholder involvement throughout it and I think that process started people thinking about some of the connections that they could make, and some of that thinking then rubbed off on other parts of the*

Assembly and also in Local Government circles. A whole ethos of partnership working seems key at the moment and I think people are starting to look at how they met the linkages - WAG with the Spatial Plan, Local Authorities [with] community strategies, community strategy partnerships and so on and its interesting that at that other local authority level there's talk now of local service boards, and separate joint commissioning of services and so on, so I think, if nothing else the Spatial Plan has got the language, its joint working correct.' This comment probably reflected another policy agenda that was being developed by the Assembly Government (*Making the Connections*), which is concerned with developing the concept of a coordinated response to the delivery of public services in Wales – 'the Welsh Public Service ideal' (WAG, 2004a).

One non-Board member took issue with the proposition with particular reference to the Welsh language in the context that some stakeholders did not recognise the impact that their activities and actions were having on sustaining and promoting the language. This comment was aimed at the development sector where it was felt that the impact of development proposals on the language should be given more consideration in the appraisal process.

Conclusion

It is reasonable to conclude that there was a good understanding and acceptance about the issue of sustainable development and with the overall vision of a 'sustainable Wales'. In many ways the comments made in relation to both these two issues supports the contention made in Chapter 3 that sustainable development, as generally defined, was in many ways a political compromise and reflected the classic public policy problem of having to balance competing objectives. Stakeholders referred to the fact that the scope of the definition of sustainable development enabled them to interpret the actions required of them sufficiently flexibly so as to not necessarily constrain 'the business as usual approach'. Sustainable development did, however, allow policy areas such as health to link into a wider policy agenda, although this aspect was not initially recognised, as evidenced by the

composition of the Management Board. The recognition of interdependence was achieved as the process developed, although it was not always recognised at the outset of the exercise. Although not stated explicitly, there is some evidence of a hidden agenda, which was reflected in some of the responses to the propositions. In particular, it was suggested that collaboration was being accepted as a means of securing future resources, rather than as a means of producing a plan that would, in time, reflect sustainable development. For some stakeholders the potential resources nexus seemed to be stronger than that of more immediate consideration of subject and issue. As already illustrated, it was a case of ensuring that your position was protected or represented should the Spatial Plan be used as a means of resource distribution.

In terms of the collaboration model, the motives for collaboration, in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan, were not necessarily grounded in the desire to produce a Plan that reflected sustainable development but rather a concern that the Plan could have future resource implications for the respective organisations represented on the Management Board. Whilst there was agreement around the definition of sustainable development this was not the aspect that drove the collaboration process, as indicated above. Similarly, the model suggests that recognising interdependence is a fundamental aspect of any collaboration. In this instance, recognition of interdependence was not evident in the early stages of the policy process.

7.2.2 Securing commitment to collaborate

As Gray (1989, p.59) points out '...sharing a common definition of the problem is often not a sufficient ingredient to get people to the table'. Stakeholders' commitment to collaborate is driven by a number of other factors including, the need to produce positive outcomes, the need to consider whether it is possible to produce an agreement that serves a particular interest and whether the process is likely to be fair and whether other stakeholders will enter into a collaborative process. One important aspect of the collaborative process, particularly in terms of 'advancing shared visions' (Gray, 1989, p.8)

is securing the commitment of stakeholders to enter into a collaborative framework or process.

In the context of producing the Wales Spatial Plan, the Management Board was accorded a specific role in bringing together the principle stakeholders to provide advice on the management, scope, form and content of the Plan as well as advising on research and data requirements, monitoring progress with the Plan including the consultative process (c.f. Chapter 5). Stakeholders were, therefore, asked to consider whether the Management Board was the most effective way of developing the collaborative approach.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1= Do Not Agree: 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
The Management Board was the most effective way of developing a collaborative approach to producing the Wales Spatial Plan		1 (2)	9 (2)	4 (2)	

Note: Figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board Stakeholders

Most stakeholders that were members of the Management Board were indifferent to the suggestion that the Board was the most effective way of developing the collaborative approach. As one stakeholder put it '*...I wouldn't say it was the most effective way, no, but it's an effective way...*' Some whilst expressing no strong views either way, some took the opportunity to make comments about the composition of the Board '*...there was quite a strong environmental representation on it and perhaps not so strong on the economic and social sides...*' Another stakeholder recognised that their representative did not attend all meetings and of those, which he did attend, he seemed to be pushing a different agenda than the one his organisation wanted. This acknowledgement led to a reconsideration of the approach and the particular organisation concerned opened up a series of bi-lateral meetings with Assembly officials to ensure that particular viewpoints could not be miss-understood. In time, they resolved their representation issue but still kept open the bilateral route. One Assembly Official pointed out that whilst the Management Board was '*...quite useful it wasn't the key way of developing the collaborative approach...*' This particular official, in his answer, was able to corroborate the point made by the previous stakeholder concerning

effective representation and qualified the point by suggesting the public consultation process was more effective means of securing a collaborative buy-in to the process. Another Assembly official suggested that the Management Board '*...was really about managing process...*' it was pointed out that the Board was a '*sounding board and testing ground*' rather than a decision making forum. It was not about taking decisions because this responsibility lay within the political process. The stakeholder who 'disagreed' with the proposition questioned whether the Board was really a 'Management Board' and suggested that a more appropriated title would have been '*Steering Group*' given that '*...it was by and large presented with a fait accomplis...*'

For those stakeholders that were not members of the Management Board it was interesting to note that two of them (one-third of the sample) felt that the Board supported the proposition by recognising that it was necessary for some group to take on the role. Of those disagreeing with the proposition, there was a feeling that their particular concerns were either not discussed or were being marginalized. One stakeholder felt that the Board should have been more inclusive and cited the Minister's Transport Advisory Committee, established by the former Welsh Office, as a model that could have been adopted to produce the Plan. This particular Committee was established by the Minister and was chaired by him and comprised senior civil servants and representatives (at a senior level) from relevant stakeholders. It was advisory in nature and sought consensus around transport issues in Wales. Another stakeholder suggested that thematic groups would have been a more effective way of engaging stakeholders.

Conclusion

The apparent indifference to the proposition relating to effectiveness of the Management Board as a driver of collaboration conceals a range of views. Indeed, it was suggested that it was not a Management Board per se, but rather a 'steering group'. There was a recognition that a forum had to be established but the composition and means of operating gave rise to various viewpoints. In one sense the role of the Management Board was always going

to be subordinated to the political process as is evidenced by the establishment of a Cabinet Sub Committee to consider the Spatial Plan. This is a point that will be returned to in a subsequent discussion in the following Chapter.

7.2.3 Identification of stakeholders

As Gray (1985 & 1989) points out, the question of who should participate in collaborative actions is important for the outcome of the process. 'The stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the problem under consideration' (Gray, 1985, p.919). The collection of stakeholders should include those whose expertise is essential to constructing a comprehensive picture and essential to the task, both in terms of policy formulation and implementation. It is also important to the eventual outcome that no individual stakeholder should be allowed dominate the process.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION 1=Do Not Agree; 5=Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
The Management Board needs to be representative of the key stakeholders			1	6 (1)	7 (5)
Members of the Management Board should take a wider representational role	(1)	2	3 (3)	5 (1)	4 (1)
The Management Board was balanced in composition & represented the key stakeholders	(3)	6 (1)	4 (1)	3 (1)	1
All the key stakeholders have been included on the Management Board	2 (4)	5 (1)	5 (1)	2	
The stakeholder set is composed of equal players	2 (1)	4 (2)	5 (2)	3	(1)

Note: figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board Stakeholders

Stakeholder representation on the Management Board

As might be expected, given the manner in which the proposition was put, there was general agreement with the statement that the Management Board should be representative of the key stakeholders. As one respondent put it '*...one of the characteristics of the Spatial Plan is that it needs to have a synoptic vision, it needs to be able to bring together an integrated wide range of issues and in a way that's what the Town and Country Planning system in the UK is based on*'. However, some stakeholders qualified their answers by questioning what 'key stakeholders' meant. Another stakeholder used the opportunity to question the fact that the Management Board did not include

any representation from organisations from outside Wales, given the dominance of east-west relationships. One Stakeholder pointed to the fact that the private sector was in the minority; many of the organisations represented on the Board were either public sector or public sector funded. He also pointed to the absence of representation from the Trade Unions, the Voluntary Sector and specifically mentioned the words 'disabled access' and 'social inclusion' in his answer. This was an acknowledgement from one Member that the Board was not necessarily balanced as a representative group of stakeholders and he pointed to the 'social pillar' of sustainable development as being weakly represented, a fact that was subsequently acknowledged by Assembly Government officials. The one stakeholder that expressed 'no preference' justified his answer in the following terms - *'the reason I've parked is, I suppose, comes back to what we were saying about the Management Board really didn't fulfil a key role for us and unless it had a really key role at the beginning of the process. I am sceptical about its overall value because towards the end of the process I think it was by-passed to a large extent, although it was rubber stamping, and it was interesting that the private sector didn't really engage with the Management Board towards the end of the process, I think a lot of it was just done [through] bi-laterals'*

To some extent this comment relates back to an earlier answer in connection with the effectiveness of the Management Board in developing a collaborative approach, where there was some indifference as to whether the Management Board was the most effective way of developing a collaborative approach.

Turning to those stakeholders that were not members of the Management Board, it was not again surprising to find a strong measure of agreement with the proposition. Typical of the responses was the following comment *'...I think certainly I would agree that if it's a kind of a national planning document then it obviously needs to take a national approach and include key stakeholders'*.

Whilst the proposition discussed above presented a position that might invite agreement, another one invited respondents to consider whether all the key stakeholders had been included. The evidence suggests that what may be desirable in theory has not been achieved in practice. Only two members of the Management Board agreed with the proposition that all the key

stakeholders had been included on the Management Board; the remainder were either indifferent or disagreeing with the proposition. One stakeholder felt that the Board '*...was not adequately represented in certain key fields – education, health, social services and transport...*' One Assembly official (not from the health sector) provided corroboration to the point made by the previous stakeholder by referring to him by name and suggesting that his particular observation was influential in the later decision to include representation from the health sector. Another stakeholder referred lack of balance in the Board's composition in the context that the 'social' dimension was not adequately represented by pointing to the fact that social inclusion issues were not 'picked up' and he also pointed to the lack of engagement with young people and communities, although he did recognise that the public participation process provided an opportunity to bring in these groups.

As might be expected, those not on the Management Board disagreed with this proposition. Typically they felt that they should have had representation on the Board. One respondent was not overly concerned because as a major land-owner they had engaged in bi-lateral discussions with officials. Another respondent made the interesting observation that the Assembly could have learned from the experience of the former Welsh Office in engaging stakeholders, referring to the structure of the Minister's Welsh Transport Advisory Committee (which met over an 18 month period in 1998/99). This was a round table group established to provide advice on transport to the emergent Welsh Assembly.

Representational Role

At the first meeting of the Management Board (15 June 2001), the Board were of the opinion that 'they could act as a conduit between the Board and their constituent organisations and that they would consider the mechanisms to achieve this' (Minutes, 15. 06. 01). When the interviews were conducted, in February 2005, nine of the fourteen Members believed this still to be the case (only two felt otherwise and three were indifferent). In most cases Members of the Board engaged in dialogue within their constituent organisations (they acted in the conduit role). When it came to a formal response to the

Consultation Draft then there was a more formal corporate view taken. Those stakeholders not on the Management Board were in the main indifferent. One respondent, who had unsuccessfully sought membership felt that it would have been helpful to have had someone who could have represented their interests but was resigned to the situation; another felt that their request for a bi-lateral meeting met their particular needs. No respondent saw it as their role to seek the views of organisations outside their remit of responsibility.

Composition of the Board

This proposition was again exploring the composition of the Board in terms of balance of representation. The answers to this proposition were congruent with those discussed earlier relating to representation on the Board. Again, there was reference to the fact that the 'social' pillar of sustainable development was absent from the Board. One government official admitted that *'I think we missed some of the social justice side. I think health certainly, whether some more of the direct community interests could have been better represented'*. Interestingly, a business sector interest on the Board felt that the voluntary sector should have been included and one representative from the 'environmental pillar' identified the community aspect as missing. One Member of the Board, representing a large public sector organisation, expressed his position in the following terms *'...there will always be an argument from those not represented around the table that they should be, but I think that the key players were all round the table'*. In many ways this comment provides a rational response to the issue of representation, especially when the size of the group is considered in relation to its manageability. As might be expected, those not on the Management Board disagreed with the proposition and generally felt that it was not balanced in composition and representation.

The inclusion of key stakeholders on the Management Board

This proposition is, to some extent, related to the one posed earlier but differs to the extent that the first proposition sought a view on what 'should be' as opposed to this proposition that seeks a view on 'what is' the actual position. Whilst there was a strong agreement with the proposition that the

management Board needs to be representative of the key stakeholders, the answers to the proposition that all key stakeholders had been included on the Management Board indicated a somewhat different view; in other words the 'actual' situation differed from the 'ideal'. As might be expected, those stakeholders not on the Management Board felt fairly strongly that the Board was not representative of all stakeholders. Of the Board members, half felt that not all key stakeholders had been included on the Board and another five recorded a 'neutral' position. The analysis of the responses suggests that the recorded scores differed from the verbal response. Perhaps typical is the following answer, *'...there will always be an argument from those who are not represented around the table that they should be, but I think that all the key players were all around the table'*. One respondent, who felt emphatically that all key stakeholders were not on the Management Board, made the interesting observation that in any event the Management Board was not representative given that most of the Board were comprised of employees of the public sector *'...virtually everybody around that table, if you look at the composition of it, is funded directly or indirectly by the National Assembly for Wales. There's hardly external consultation ... so you might just as well have an internal private house party.'*

The composition of the stakeholder set in terms of 'equal players' or constituency balance

In reacting to the proposition of whether or not the stakeholder set is composed of equal players, the initial scoring by the respondents perhaps does not reflect the points made in discussion. The purpose of the proposition is to explore the constituency balance of the stakeholder-set rather than the level or status of the representative. However, in discussing the reasoning behind their scoring most respondents felt it difficult to distinguish between the status of the organisation and the status of the individual. In terms of the latter, most of the representatives were at what may be termed as senior 'operational level'; there was no Chief Executive or Director level representation. As one stakeholder representative put it *'...I can't think of anybody around the table who was not capable of holding his or her own in an argument. Nobody sent the tea boy.'*

One Assembly official noted that there were some instances where people sent '*representatives of the representative*', but it was recognised that over a long period it was difficult to maintain a particular level of representation. A closer examination of the scoring in relation to the answers suggests that the score for the 'indifferent or neutral' category should have been higher by two with a consequent reduction on the 'Do not agree' category.

However, it was recognised by respondents that some members of the Board represented a fairly wide constituency e.g. Wales Wildlife Link and Construction Industries Council and there was a suspicion that when it came to the drafting of the Plan '*...it's inevitable that some interests are going to gain more weight than others*'. One stakeholder noted that the Assembly officials tended to say little at Board meetings, the inferences being drawn was that they had another opportunity as the drafting process progressed. Interestingly one Assembly official responded in these terms '*... I think first of all the Assembly people have an advantage in that they know the process it's going through. They've other the opportunities to put their input as well and also maybe people like the CBI tend to get this into a bit more in terms of circumstances - or in some circumstances maybe the environmental groups - it just depends who is doing the listening I suppose. So no I don't think there is a level playing field, there are some stakeholders who are more important than others*'.

An interesting point relating to team dynamics among the stakeholder group was made by one Assembly official, who was actively involved in the process in the early days of the exercise and then had a period of absence before returning in the final stages of the process. It was the contention of this individual that the Board initially began as a group of people representing their particular organisation; over time they began to see their role as delivering a Plan '*... I got that sense that there was very much, this was kind of, round table, and there were people not necessarily representing their organisation but seeking to have a broader view of what their general type of organisation*

was seeing and actually not even being that, feeling part of something new that was developing. I think that actually came across'.

Again, as might, be expected, there was either an indifferent or negative response to this proposition from those stakeholders not on the Management Board.

Conclusion

Most of the respondents agreed with the statement that the Management Board should be representative of the key stakeholders. However, in practice, evidence would support the conclusion that, initially, the Management Board was not adequately representative of key stakeholders, particularly from what might broadly be termed as the 'social pillar' of sustainable development. In particular, the health and social services dimension was cited as being absent as well as representation from the voluntary and community sectors. This was subsequently rectified, to an extent, with the inclusion of representatives from the health and the post-16 education and training sectors on to the Board. The subsequent inclusion of additional stakeholders is consistent with the model of collaboration suggested by Gray (1985,p .920), who recognises that problem domains are dynamic and need to adapt in the light of new and emerging issues.

As a decision-making body the role of the Board was clearly limited (reference to the earlier discussion on the commitment to collaborate) and this probably reflects the fact that use was made of bi-lateral meetings in an attempt to influence the Plan in terms of sectional interests. Whilst it was recognised that the Management Board provided a (but not necessarily the) forum for collaboration, there was a feeling in some quarters that some stakeholders carried more influence than others when it came to having their views accepted. This raises issues relating to the underlying principles of collaboration, especially those relating to openness and trust and the application of collaborative organisational structures to public policy making in a political environment.

In terms of constituency balance, there was a fairly neutral reaction to this proposition when the answers were analysed. An unexpected outcome of the replies to this particular proposition was the view that there were other channels of communication between civil servants and some stakeholders and that over time the Board became less representational and more concerned with delivery of outcome – the actual Wales Spatial Plan.

7.2.4 Legitimacy of stakeholders

As Gray (1989, p.66) points out, 'part of the process of identifying stakeholders is determining which have a legitimate stake in the problem'. 'To be perceived as legitimate, stakeholders must have the capacity to participate. That is they must possess resources and skills sufficient to justify their involvement in collaborative efforts' (Gray, 1985, p. 922). In contrast to the previous step (Identification of stakeholders), this step is focussed on the inherent characteristics of the stakeholders in terms of their ability to play a collaborative role.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=Do Not Agree: 5=Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
The Management Board should only include those whose remit is essential to the task		1 (1)	2 (1)	8 (2)	3 (2)
The Management Board needs to be represented at the appropriate level, i.e. skill, ability to make decisions, etc.	2		(1)	10 (2)	2 (3)
The composition of the Management Board adequately reflected the issues being discussed	(3)	5 (1)	5 (1)	3 (1)	1

Note: figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board Stakeholders

Management Board representation in terms of remit

A critical aspect of any collaborative exercise is the identification of participants. The assembly of stakeholders must include those whose remit and expertise is essential to reaching a solution or meeting the objectives of the exercise. 'The stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the problem under consideration if collaboration is to occur' (Gray, 1985, p.919). In the way that this proposition (i.e. the Management Board should only include those whose remit is essential to the task) was put it is perhaps not surprising that there was a broad measure of agreement in respect of both the

stakeholder sets. However, within that broad measure of agreement some interesting features become apparent relating to the composition and role of the Board.

One Assembly official suggested that it was initially (ex ante) difficult to decide who should be involved in the process given that (in 2000) spatial planning was a new feature on the policy domain '*...this was a voyage of discovery we were on, we are learning what spatial planning was about and how to use the tool. And I don't think therefore that it is terribly easy to decide up front so, therefore, what I say about the composition is very much with some sympathy to those who set it up at the beginning.*' Other stakeholders qualified their answer by pointing to the fact that the Board needs to be manageable in terms of numbers and that it needs to be strategic in terms of its considerations. Some stakeholders again took the opportunity to emphasise their points about the gaps in the composition of the Board in relation to health and social issues and the need for representation from adjoining regions in England.

One answer revealed some interesting features about the operation of the Board in terms of its stated purpose and how it was actually functioning in terms of a political process '*... one purpose of the Management Board could be narrowly just to shape the Spatial Plan itself and contribute to the way in which the Spatial Plan's contents evolved. Another role could be to actually make sure that you've got all the key stakeholders signed up to the concepts of Spatial Plan. Now, I have a feeling the roles fell between two stools at times and at one point it was more about the salesmanship bit than trying to make sure everyone was on board and another point was about getting some content guidance and so forth. My personal view is probably that the Management Board was seen as the mechanism for making sure that everybody knew what was going on, was brought into the process, but over time it was proven that that wasn't the case and they needed to do some extra work beyond the Management Board because of the nature of the people who were on the Management Board and the way in which they went back and disseminated or not - what was said at the Management Board*'

Another member of the Management Board made a similar point in the following terms '*... the word Management, and that's the point I have made, is misnomer for the Board. We were actually a sounding board, advisory board, reacting to the carrying forward of work in the Assembly on the emerging Plan, but we never actually sort of [considered] line by line through the emerging document and discussed in detail and, indeed, we didn't see the final document - there was a gap between the papers - two months before the final document came out and the final document itself, so far from being a Management Board we just saw the final finished product which was quite different from the last thing we'd seen, and much better actually, but a Management Board would have seen the final document and dotted every line and crossed every 'T', but we certainly didn't do that, an advisory or sounding board really*'.

Appropriate skills

As already mentioned, possession of the appropriate skills is a necessary aspect of being a legitimate stakeholder and, obviously justifies their involvement in collaborative exercises. As perhaps might be expected from the way in which the proposition was put, there was little disagreement amongst the respondents, with both Board and non-Board stakeholders generally agreeing with the proposition. Indeed, this proposition drew little comment from respondents. One stakeholder answered in the following terms '*...you need someone who knows enough of the subject they are talking about and isn't just a figure head ...*' There was some questioning about the relevance of the proposition '*... I thought that question was a bit irrelevant really because I don't think the Board is a representational Board: I think it is more of a sounding board*' One Board Member took the opportunity the question the Board's role '*...I have never been clear about what decisions we have been expected to make...*'

The composition of the Board in terms of reflecting the issues being discussed

Whilst there was a general agreement with the proposition that the Board 'should only include those whose remit is essential to the task', when it came

to asking whether 'the composition of the Management Board adequately reflected the issues being discussed' a slightly different picture emerges.

There was some doubt about whether the Management Board was sufficiently balanced in terms of expertise to give the necessary guidance on all the topics covered by the Spatial Plan. Three Assembly officials suggested that discussions might have been assisted with representation from health, social justice and cross border interests. A representative from the environment sector also referred to the absence of any discussion on social issues because of inadequate representation from this sector. One official perhaps obliquely acknowledged the deficiency in the following terms '*...the people who came had something relevant to say. There were times when there wasn't really anyone who had anything to say around the table because they didn't know anything about the particular issues*'.

One stakeholder felt that the Draft Plan was dominated by the economic agenda, being heavily influenced in this respect by Assembly officials '*... my personal view is that the Spatial Plan got sort of hijacked by economic development at one point and certainly up to the consultation phase - the one that came out last summer. I thought that was an economic development driven spatial plan and I don't think there was much representation of environmental interests around the table and that's not being derogatory of links or anything like that - I don't think the environment voice was heard much*'. Whilst there may be some truth in this comment, the environmental sector was well represented on the Management Board with representatives from the Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Wales and Wales Wild Life Link, representing bodies such as RSBP and the Wild Life Trusts. Another stakeholder, from the environment sector, felt that it would have been appropriate to have some input from major infrastructure providers such as transport, ports and energy. He thought that major development projects had to be considered strategically and he was concerned that the Board did not get down to what he referred to as '*technical discussions*'. A major utility provider, not on the Management Board, made a similar point in relation to concerns that they had in relation water and sewerage

infrastructure. Another non-Management Board stakeholder expressed concern that matters of population were considered as part of the plan-making process and South Wales has some of the poorest quality housing in the UK and yet housing interests were not represented on the Management Board.

Conclusion

The discussion of the 'legitimacy of stakeholders' brought out a number of features relating to the plan-making process and brought into question whether the Management Board was indeed fulfilling the role originally expected of it when its original terms of reference were approved by the Minister and accepted by the Board itself on appointment.

Whilst there was broad agreement with the propositions relating to appropriateness of membership of the Board in terms of remit and skill capacity, when it came to consideration of the composition of the Board in relation to the matters being discussed it became apparent that there was concern amongst some members about the adequacy of representation in terms of being able to deal with some of the issues. Indeed, one senior official pointed out this deficiency in relation to the 'social pillar' of sustainable development. Perhaps the most striking comments came from two Board members when they felt that the Board was not a 'Management Board' in the sense that it had a management capacity. Rather it was more of an advisory or sounding board, a means of keeping people on board with thinking. If this was the case then it was not fulfilling the role of facilitating a mechanism for collaboration.

7.2.5 Convenor characteristics

'The identity and role of the convenor are another critical component in the problem-setting phase' (Gray, 1989, p.70). The convenor may or may not be a stakeholder in the problem and may be either an individual or a government department or agency. The role of the convenor is to bring all the relevant stakeholders to the table. According to Gray (1985, p.924) '... it is critical that all stakeholders believe the convenor has legitimate authority to organise the domain'. Convenors, according to Gray, require certain skills encompassing

the need to appreciate the potential mutual exchange of information and appreciative skills and act 'as reticulists to rally other stakeholders to participate' (ibid, p.924).

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION 1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
It was appropriate that the Management Board was convened & chaired by Wales Assembly Government Officials		1	5 (2)	5 (3)	3 (1)

Note: figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board Stakeholders

There was general agreement from both Management Board and non-Board members that it was appropriate for the Welsh Assembly Government to take the lead in the plan-making process. Senior government officials thought that it was appropriate, and one senior official perhaps summed their position up in the following terms '*...because after all it their Minister's plan...*' However, there was comment made in relation to the chair of the Board, in the context that a politician should have chaired it. One non-Board stakeholder suggested that there should have been Ministerial involvement and another felt that an independent chair would have been appropriate in the context of being able to arbitrate on matters. One Management Board member perhaps appositely summed the situation in the following terms '*...who you get to chair it sends a powerful message to the outside world, rightly or wrongly, so I don't think it was essential that WAG [Welsh Assembly Government] chaired it - I think they could have gone to a third party*'.

Conclusion

There would appear to be a consensus that the 'convenor' has a critical role to play in bringing the stakeholders together; there is some divergence of opinion as to whether the convenor should be a politician or whether there should be an independent chair. The critical point was expressed by the comments of the last stakeholder in the context of the messages that the selection of the chairman gives to the outside world. The role of the convenor would appear to be more than marshalling the resources of the stakeholders but also in giving credence to the collaborative process. The status of the

convenor is important because of the signals that it gives to those directly involved in the collaborative process and to those outside and may be influenced by the outcome of the collaborative activities deliberations.

7.2.6 Identification of resources

Gray (1989) identifies resources as being important to collaborative processes because of their relevance to ensuring that stakeholders can participate equally in the proceedings and in terms of funding information search. In the context of the Wales Spatial Plan, two aspects of resource adequacy were explored, the resources committed to the actual plan process and the public participation process.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION 1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate resources were committed to the process for developing The Wales Spatial Plan	1	5 (2)	3 (2)	3 (2)	2
Public participation was adequate in terms of extent and response	1 (1)	2 (1)	5 (2)	5 (2)	1

Note: figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board Stakeholders

Commitment of resources to the plan-making process

Only five members of the Management Board gave a positive indication that they felt that adequate resources had been committed to the plan-making process. With the exception of one, officials of the Assembly Government made all of these comments. One senior official commented in the following terms *'...it was a tight resource team - a very small team - and one could always have argued further for more resource. On the other hand those people didn't have anything else to do but the Spatial Plan - which is a luxury in the public sector because usually we are all juggling lots of different things. So it was a good model for developing something in that however tightly resourced they were they were at least dedicated to it and small team dynamics can be helpful if you've got a focus there.'*

Another senior official, who also had responsibility for managing the process, responded in these terms *'...I will qualify that, to an extent we never have the*

resources we need but actually a lot of resource was put into the Spatial Plan, and when you think, you know, it has taken a good 4 years, that represents in itself a lot of senior level resource, a lot of ministerial levels of resource, cabinet, sub-committee, so they had quite a good research budget and that was very useful and then that converted into a very useful budget really because the budget line was used to support the actual development of the Plan itself and I think the kind of facilitation and the whole process that they went through was a very good'.

This can be contrasted with the comments made by one official (who had more direct line management responsibility) *'...in terms for research and different things there was no problem with having adequate resources. In terms of having adequate bums on the seats here, I think it was under-resourced ... my fear is more for the longer term of sustaining the action.... of first keeping the momentum going in terms of the networks internal to here and externally which takes an awful lot of work and effort and I think perhaps with more people we might have brought more hearts and minds with us earlier rather than now coming on board.'*

Another Board member, who took a negative stance, linked the issue of resources back to the role of the Management Board *'...Well, we don't know what they were. Nobody said we've got a budget - £300,000, how does the Board think it is going to be spent? ... The officers don't go off and spend 200,000, 300,000 quid, without having a direction from the Board... It's not a Management Board, they haven't got a finger on the management of this - they've influenced its direction to a lesser degree, not a greater degree. They've influenced the direction of it by sporadic consultation.'* Two Board members linked the resource issue more directly with the analysis of information in the plan-making process. This concern was voiced in the following terms *'...I suppose that my frustration is the fact that I would like to see some of the data that was analysed behind it collected and stored on a GIS system ... the last two years we've been pushing on this and we've been told that they need to get the Spatial Plan out and this is a secondary factor and they haven't got the resources to do it...'*

Turning to those stakeholders that were not on the Management Board, their responses indicated that they were equally divided on the resource issue. One stakeholder, who had been in contact with Spatial Planning Team, commented in the following terms *'...Yes - I don't know what the resources are... but chatting to the staff it seems quite a small team to develop a huge project like this and to deliver it as well. It seems to me that co-ordination is the main issue ... co-ordination of the whole Plan in terms of developing and delivering it over a long-term period and with a handful of staff doing it...'* Of those agreeing with the proportion that resources were adequate, none felt the necessity to amplify their response.

The resource issue is broad and needs to be considered in terms of what might be termed as 'consumables' (funds for research and analysis) and funds for staffing, particularly in relation to the implementation process.

Adequacy of public participation

A clear view on the adequacy of the public participation exercise did not emerge from the responses given by either the Management Board or the Non-Board stakeholders. Several respondents from both Board and non-Board stakeholders questioned whether the exercise was public participation in the sense that the public were involved. One Board member drew the distinction between public and stakeholder participation, indicating the Assembly had engaged in the latter rather than the former. Another made the same point in the following terms *'...whatever you say about the Wales Spatial Plan it certainly pulls in the public sector punters and voluntary sector as well as to some extent, and the private sector, which was notable...'* It was also acknowledged that it was a difficult document in which to involve the general public and a comparison was drawn with the public participation exercises that County Councils would get involved in as part of their Structure Planning exercises.

In retrospect, perhaps the proposition should have been phrased in terms of stakeholder rather than public participation. Nevertheless, the answers

revealed that the Spatial Planning workshops were reasonably successful in engaging the various stakeholder groups that these groups would probably be involved in the implementation of the Plan.

Conclusion

The Welsh Assembly Government over a period of four years had invested considerable resources, in terms of the actual time expended in the process from both Ministers and officials. Financial resources were committed to funding consultations on an initial scoping exercise, consultation on the Draft Plan and on the Approved Plan. It was evident from the replies to the propositions that some stakeholders recognised that the Spatial Plan Team was under considerable pressure to maintain momentum with the project and meet the timetable required by Ministers. However, it has to be acknowledged that from the perspective of the stakeholders either directly or indirectly involved in the process that no clear picture emerges on the adequacy of the resource commitment to the project.

7.2.7 Conclusion on the Problem Setting Stage

During the Problem Setting stage a number of issues have to be considered, encompassing the following elements: - defining the issue; identifying stakeholders and securing their commitment to the exercise; ensuring the legitimacy of the stakeholders; identifying a convenor; and securing the necessary resources. Success in this phase of the collaboration process clearly has implications for the next phase – Direction Setting.

There was a general agreement about the nature of the sustainable development as expressed in the Vision Statement. This Statement provided sufficient flexibility of interpretation so as not to constrain the actions of individual stakeholders represented on the Board. This may be a reflection of the inherent characteristics of the term, discussed in Chapter 3 and, in particular, to the fact that sustainable development as a policy theme is continually having to balance competing objectives. The concept of sustainable development, as a policy objective, allowed other areas, such as health, not hitherto generally included within a spatial planning framework, to

link into a wider policy agenda. As the plan-making process progressed, there was a recognition that interdependencies existed between stakeholders. However, underlying the explicit objective of the Board in being charged with advising on the scope, form and content of the Spatial Plan was concern that the Assembly would use the Plan for resource allocation purposes. The resource nexus was in the minds of some stakeholders. It would be reasonable to conclude that sustainable development was not recognised as an important driver in the collaboration process.

Although the Management Board was a forum in which the principal stakeholders were able to act collaboratively, in practice the effectiveness of the Board was limited by the political process, where Ministers were able to influence the form and content of the Plan through Cabinet and Cabinet Subcommittee. Also, it became apparent from the detailed interviews with stakeholders, that there was a parallel process of bi-lateral discussion with some stakeholders on aspects of the Plan as it progressed through various stages.

In terms of composition, it became apparent to Board Members that in terms of representation the Board was weakly represented in terms of the 'social pillar' of sustainable development. This was, to some extent, rectified in the later stages of the process with the inclusion of representatives from the health and post-16 education and training sectors. Some Board Members still felt that the voluntary and community sectors were absent from the Management Board.

It was also felt, particularly by one Board Member (from the private sector), that the term 'Management' was a misnomer. He felt that Board was advisory and consultative rather than exercising any management function citing, for example, that it was not an appointed Board following an advertised competition, neither did it have any control over the expenditure of resources.

In terms of resources, there was not a clear view from either the Board or Non-Board members on the adequacy of resources. In so far as resource

commitment from Ministers, Assembly Members and officials over a four-year period, the time expended on the Spatial Plan was considerable when compared to other Assembly policy areas. In many ways this reflected the personal interest and commitment to Spatial Planning taken by the Minister for Environment and later in her role as Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services.

Collaborative models stress the importance of what is termed the 'convenor' to the outcome of the collaborative process. The convenor has the task of bringing the stakeholders together and getting them to work in a collaborative manner. There was a general acceptance that the Assembly Government should have undertaken this role but some stakeholders indicated that the role of chair should have gone to a politician (Minister) or an independent person. The point was made that the status of the chair effectively gives signals to the outside world about the importance of the process.

The evidence from the empirical study suggests that the policy process is highly complex. In addition to the complexity that may be attributable to the world of inter-organisational relationships there is a need to take account of the power relationships that exist in the political environment in which public policy is made. There is also a need to simplify and clarify some aspects of the model as indicated with the 'identification' and 'legitimacy' of stakeholders steps included within the Problem Setting phase. These aspects will be addressed in Chapter 9.

7.3 DIRECTION SETTING

The second phase in the collaboration process, Direction Setting, is reaching a sense of common purpose – 'stakeholders identify the interests that brought them to the table' (Gray, 1989, p.70). This phase is also about getting together the right people, at the right level, ensuring organisational commitment, developing shared interpretations about the future, and about identifying differences and the potential scope for trade-offs (McCann, 1983; Waddock, 1989). As with the Problem Setting phase, the Direction Setting phase can be broken down into a number of steps: - establishing ground

rules; agenda setting; organising sub groups; joint information search; exploring new options; reaching agreement; and dispersion of power. Each of these steps is now considered in turn.

In the analysis that follows, stakeholders that were not on the Management Board were not required to address a number of the propositions because they clearly had no relevance from their perspective.

7.3.1 Establishing ground rules

Establishing ground rules are an essential component of the collaboration process. Ground rules give certainty to the process; they define the way in which the process will be conducted and they reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings. Ground rules help facilitate the development of a coincidence of values, a necessary component in developing a collaborative approach to reaching agreement.

PROPOSTION	EVALUATION 1=Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
Clear procedural guidelines / working arrangements were established	1	2	4	7	
The terms of reference reflected the task	1	1	7	4	1
The aims & objectives were discussed & accepted	1	1	5	5	2
Sufficient time was given to the consideration of key issues	1	4	8	1	
Opportunity was given to provide an in-put into the content of the Plan		4	2	6	2

Procedural guidelines / working arrangements, terms of reference and aims and objectives

In view of the strong relationship between the first three propositions they are considered together. Referring to the first proposition relating to the establishment of clear procedural guidelines, it would appear that there was broad agreement that clear terms of reference were established. Looking in more detail at those responses to this proposition where the recorded score is in the 'do not agree' category, it is evident that where individuals chose to expand on their answers they were unclear about the initial meeting because

they were not on the Board at that particular time. The Minutes of the initial meeting (15 June 2001), record those attending as agreeing with terms of reference subject to an additional item being included, namely, '*to provide advice and guidance on the Framework consultative process*'; the Minister subsequently accepted this addition. This evidence would support the answers given to the third proposition relating to actual discussion of the aims and objectives. However, one respondent who was not on the Board at the time of the initial meeting suggested that a colleague who was at the earlier meetings had expressed concern that the Board '*...skirted around some difficult decisions, difficult issues...*' and that some of these discussions were taking place in other parts of the Assembly. The implication of this comment being that the Board were not being invited to consider difficult decisions and there was a debate taking place between Assembly Government officials and Ministers. However, in spite of these reservations, it would appear that Board members were broadly happy with the terms of reference.

It is appropriate at this juncture to point out that one Board member referred to the change in administrative responsibility for producing the Plan (it was transferred from the Planning Division to the Head of the Countryside & Environment Division and then, subsequently, to the Strategic Policy Division). It is apparent from the comments below and comments made by another Board member, in the discussion of another step in the process, that there was some concern amongst the land use planners that the Spatial Plan was not going to meet their perceived need for strategic planning guidance, which had been a long standing issue in Wales (Jarvis, 1995). It was reported that this decision was taken following a 'stock-take' of work commitments of senior officials (Board Meeting, February, 2002). The line responsibility shifted to the Head of Countryside and Environment Division on a personal basis because of matters of 'capacity' to undertake the management of this process (comment made at a Senior official level). There was also reference to the effect that effort had to be refocused away from '*process towards product*'. One senior official explained the position as follows '*...Yes I think that the animal changed along the way so perhaps whilst some things changed and may be lost a wee bit of clarity ... having said that, I think that*

the process was clearly driven... I think some people didn't actually understand why it had to go centrally. I think there were some difficulties, particularly from planners, who thought of it as a Land Use Plan from the outset and couldn't quite accept that...I think we were clear enough from the outset that this was something different but sometimes it is difficult to get that across and maybe there were a few communication problems.'

There was some indifference to the proposition that 'the terms of reference reflected the task.' One Board member made the point in the following terms '*...I think that the aims and objectives of the Spatial Plan itself were broadly discussed and broadly accepted, but I think that's partly because, as with any process, quite often you can get some consensus on objectives - of vision aims and objectives – because [at a] high level [it is] fairly general, it's when you get down to the specific policies and actions and resource allocation when tension comes in. So these are quite often known as an apple pie statement. It's the next stage down where conflict and difficulties comes in ...'*

Consideration of the key issues

There was a general feeling of indifference in reaction to the proposition 'that sufficient time was given to the consideration of key issues'. When the matter was discussed, one respondent reviewed their answer (which was initially negative) and shifted to the indifferent category. One Board member felt that he could not respond positively because no papers were presented to the Board that required in depth consideration. Another felt that it was not possible to track the thinking of officials because, in contrast to other Assembly working groups, no papers indicating the development of policy thinking had been produced. Another Board member responded in this way to the proposition indicating those issues that he felt should have been put before the Board '*.... from my point of view there were 2 issues ... which were flagged up or not discussed in detail, if at all. One is the [issue that the] Spatial Plan is simply an expression of existing policies and continuation of existing trends; or is it going to be visionary [looking] 20 or 30 years ahead and put in place different alternatives and arguments for moving towards that*

preferred state... The second issue is this conflict between change and continuation, which is sort of there but has not really been discussed'.

Opportunities to provide an input into the content of the Plan.

There was some consensus that the Board had an opportunity to contribute to the Plan, whether within the Board's framework or outside of it. One Board member felt that it was difficult to raise matters of detail within the ambit of the Board because of *'...the limits of what management boards' were enabled to do. If you tried to raise issues in depth it would have bogged the Management Board down totally. It would have been kicked into touch'*. One senior official felt that there was not much in the way of matters for consideration coming from within the Board *'...it was the one disappointment from my perspective that there perhaps wasn't as much coming up, there wasn't as much bottom up as I thought there would be at one stage.'*

There is some evidence, however, that in-put into the content of the Plan was made through bi-lateral meetings. One official referred to the fact that he was brought into the process by being invited to comment on various drafts as the Plan was being developed. Other Board member confirmed that they had also been involved in making comments on draft sections of the Plan and had used this as an opportunity to get their views accepted. One Board member was fairly candid in his views and cast doubt on the whole *raison d'etre* of the Management Board *'...Well as I have said, from our perspective the Management Board became less important to us as the process went through because basically we bypassed it, or WAG [Welsh Assembly Government] to be more accurate bypassed it for us and came to see us direct and did much the same with the other key stakeholders from what I hear. They went and talked face-to-face with CBI and so on. In which case it wasn't really that important for us to go to the Management Board because we knew what was going to come up - I know that we'd seen drafts which Management Board weren't going to see and we were told, you are not allowed to say any of this at Management Board and so I think to my mind, that sort of undermined the role of the Management Board, rightly or wrongly – may be it was something they had to do to make sure that they got the key stakeholders on board in*

their views, but I think they undermined the role of their own Management Board by doing it.'

Conclusion

It can be concluded that, initially, clear guidelines/working arrangements were established to frame the Management Board's work. Over time, however, as the Board's work progressed and as a result of a change in internal (organisational) location of responsibility, the initial agreed modus operandi became blurred. Also, it has to be acknowledged that there were some changes in the persona represented on the Board. There was an indication that some critical issues concerning the direction of the Plan were not (in the eyes of some people) considered in an open manner. Indeed, there is evidence that those involved in drafting the Plan sought to get agreement through a series of bi-lateral meetings rather than through a more open discussion in the context of the Management Board. It was felt that this action undermined the status of the Management Board.

7.3.2 Agenda setting

Agenda setting is an important part of the collaboration process because it has to define the substantive aspects of the collaboration. It would be expected that the agenda has to reflect the breadth of issues being discussed and this would also be reflected in the number and composition of stakeholders

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
All members of the Management Board accepted the scope & purpose of the Wales Spatial Plan	1	2	5	5	1
As the process proceeded the membership of the Management Board should have been increased to reflect new or emergent issues	1	2	1	8	2

Acceptance of the scope and purpose of the Wales Spatial Plan

The scoring by members of the Board did not give a clear view as to whether the scope and purpose of the Plan was accepted. Those agreeing with the proposition did not really amplify their reasoning. However, those recording alternative views made some interesting points, which would indicate that the scope and purpose of the Plan was not accepted by a sizable proportion of the Board. There was a feeling in some quarters that the Plan should address their perceived need for greater spatial or locational guidance, particularly in respect of major projects. One Assembly official explained the position thus *'... even now we have still got some people there who still hanker after a more traditional, comfortable, land use plan that helps direct the specific resources rather than this collaborative model of helping to work better together across a wider agenda. So I still think there are some there who still hanker after all the nuts and bolts.'* In this context, another Board member felt that some people were *'looking for a Local Plan for Wales'*, something that could be used at a Public Inquiry to say *'...in this document housing's got to go here or that this infrastructure project's got to go here.'* Some Board members had other spatial planning models in mind. One official cited the Northern Ireland Spatial Plan, where there was an emphasis on economic development as an alternative to one that is based on sustainable development. This was countered by the fact that, according to the same official, Ministers had decided that the Plan would reflect the Assembly's sustainable development duty.

Another Board member gave further insight to the apparent tension between those who wanted something more specific and those that were content with the style of plan being developed. *'I don't think they all did [accept the scope & purpose of the Plan], or if they did, they all had their own slightly different versions of what the scope and purpose was. CBI were definitely coming at it - or business sector were definitely coming at it - to provide some certainty around investment strategies for sites and so forth and they wanted to be much more specific than it ended up being. And I can remember - I can't remember whether it was actually a Management Board or whether it was bi-lateral meetings with CBI - and WAG ...There was a long debate about the need to be much more site specific and to provide certainty, and obviously*

from our perspective, ... which we were desperate to avoid because it would have looked like the Assembly Government dictated to Local Government about where investment was going, which sites they had to release for developments and took away the freedom and democratic [role] of local government - sort of saying we were never going to sign up to - so I think there was a bit of a difference in how we interpreted the role of the Spatial Plan.'

Increasing Board membership to reflect new or emergent issues

There was some support for the view that the Management Board should have been increased to reflect new or emergent issues. Some of the subject areas suggested were transport, utility provision and social and community matters. Indeed, reference was made earlier to fact that the social pillar of sustainable development was weakly represented on the Management Board. Another Board member felt that transport should have had a more senior level of representation. He suggested that *'...it would have been better to have a big wheel from the transport planning field – such as the Chairman of the Welsh Transport Planning Group ... we clearly early on said we should break new ground involving people like health planners and so forth but it took so long to get that thought process on board politically...'* One senior Assembly official initially thought that the Board was about the right size because it was, in their terms, manageable in relation to the task. They did, however, accept that there were grounds for considering the need to increase the size of the Board to reflect the way in which the Spatial Plan had moved in scope.

Another Board member suggested that as time went on the role of the Management Board became redundant. The project had effectively moved on in terms of the usefulness that the Assembly officials accorded to the Board; views were being taken on a bi-lateral basis as the Plan matured in the eyes of officials drafting the document that was to be submitted to the Assembly for approval. They put this point in the following terms *'...Its coming back to the common theme where I think to some respects I think WAG itself parked the Management Board, or moved away from the Management Board as the key vehicle for engaging stakeholders and the fact that they went out and did bi-*

laterals probably negated the need to change the Management Board. So, if you were just going to continue with the Management Board then maybe it needed a refresh but in which case it all comes back to WAG sending the right signals out by making sure they had high level people on it because if they'd put one of the senior directors in charge of it or they'd said, right, Sue's going to chair this [reference to Sue Essex – Minister for Finance, Local Government and Public Services], they're more than likely to have ended up with say, Chief Executive of WLGA rather than Head of Policy or more often happened policy officer go along. So my personal view is that I think they recognise that the Management Board was of limited value to them and hence did the work around it'

Conclusion

It would appear that the agenda setting phase had been only partially successful. There seemed to be some misunderstanding and differing views about the role of the Spatial Plan; some perceived the Wales Spatial Plan as a land use plan to be used within the planning legal and administrative framework e.g. at Public Inquiries, whilst others saw the Plan as guiding major projects. This, in turn, gave rise to political concerns for the role of Local Government in the land use decision-making process. Sustainable development did not feature explicitly in any of the answers given to the 'scope and purpose' of the Plan, which can probably be partly attributed to some misconceptions amongst some Board members about the role of the Wales Spatial Plan. Indeed, it was evident that the Board was not well represented in terms of the social pillar of sustainable development. There was some support for increasing the size of the Board to reflect new and emergent issues, although it would seem that officials were keen to contain the size of the Board for reasons of manageability.

The answers to the propositions (set out above) drew out some interesting features about the role of the Board in the context of the policy making process. For instance, one respondent felt that the Board's role needed to be re-assessed in the light of the growing tendency of Assembly officials to bypass the Board and meet on a bi-lateral basis. It was also suggested that the

Assembly could influence the role and status of the Board by who they assigned to the chair's role in terms of seniority in the Assembly. This is a point that was made earlier in connection with the identification of stakeholder representation on the Board.

7.3.3 Organising Sub-groups

According to Gray (1989, p.80), 'often it is advantageous to create subgroups or task forces if the number of issues to be discussed is large or the number of stakeholders exceeds the twelve-to-fifteen member limit for effective group functioning'. Sub-groups allow specific and well-defined issues to be considered in parallel with plenary group work. However, creating sub-groups can have resource implications in terms of calling for management and personnel resources as well as having financial implications for the project budget.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
The formation of sub-groups would have been beneficial in dealing with certain issues	2	1	3	3	5

From the initial scoring on the questionnaire no real clear picture emerges on the desirability of forming sub-groups. Assembly officials were clearly against forming sub-groups, mainly because of the resource implications of managing and servicing such groups. As one official clearly pointed out '*...no, sub-groups would just have diverted an already stretched team into more discussion rather than more work, so I don't think groups would help.*' Of those who initially expressed indifference or a neutral view (i.e. scored 3), one clearly (in their answer) was very much in the 'do not agree' category. Turning now to those who felt that sub-groups would have been beneficial, one Board member thought that it would have assisted the '*dynamic*' of the Board meetings in terms of allowing people to develop issues. Another felt that there might have been scope to develop in more detail, strategic issues such

as economic development and the implications for the Water Framework Directive. He felt that there was a need to engage in some more technical detail rather than just '*high-level discussion*'. Another Board member felt that sub-groups would have assisted Assembly officials with some tasks. He cited research around the effectiveness of the existing regional structure as a topic that could have assisted officials in their consideration of implementation mechanisms.

Conclusion

On balance, there was some support for subgroups in the context that they would have been of assistance in dealing with some matters of detail – matters that would not have been appropriate to a body charged with having to take a more strategic perspective. Clearly, there was some resistance to the formation of sub-groups by those officials who were actively involved in the plan making process, generally on the grounds that they were already over-stretched.

7.3.4 Joint information search

One important component of any collaboration'...is reaching agreement on the facts supporting the problem definition and the proposed solutions (Gray, 1989, p.81). In terms of policy analysis, particularly with those policy issues (cross-cutting policies) that involve a number of stakeholders, it is necessary to have a sound information base upon which develop policy. Indeed, the U K Government has set great store to what it refers to as 'evidence based policy'. In the context of the Wales Spatial Plan, considerable resources were expended on studies and reports from consultants to inform the policy process.

Another aspect of joint information search relates to the development of personal interactions that can facilitate and inform policy formulation and development. From the perspective of team building and creating increased trust within a collaborative framework '*...mutually examining relevant data can help the parties develop a common basis for discussion*' (Gray, p.81). The process of joint information search allows parties to get to know one another

and personal interactions create a basis for increased trust and awareness and, indeed, capacity building amongst policy actors. In this context, therefore, it was felt necessary to explore the interrelationships with other policy areas.

Given the key role assigned to the Spatial Plan in implementing the Assembly Government's strategic policy agenda (including sustainable development), it was also felt important to explore the extent to which policy integration had occurred and its contribution to informing the development of the Spatial Plan.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION 1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
Links between WSP & other WAG policies were considered		3	3	8	
The process resulted in a greater appreciation of interrelationships between organisations & policies and the need for policy integration		1 (1)	2 (2)	10 (4)	1
The research reports from consultants and issues raised from public consultation led to informed debate	2	1 (2)	4 (2)	6 (2)	1

Figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board members (Non Board stakeholders were not required to address the first proposition).

Links between the Wales Spatial Plan and other policies

Most Board members (a significant proportion being Assembly Government officials) thought that links had been made with other Assembly Government policies; some responses cited examples but none made any direct reference to the Sustainable Development Scheme. It would, perhaps, be unfair to say that sustainable development was not considered; clearly it was, as is evidenced in the 'Adopted' Plan by the Vision Statement and the five '*Guiding Themes*' that underpin the Plan's intentions. The interviews support the view that the Spatial Plan was instrumental in engaging Assembly Government policy divisions in the plan making exercise. Officials readily spoke about their engagement with the process. One senior official pointed out that workshops were run for Executive Board members (Permanent Secretary and Directors) and for other senior colleagues in various policy divisions. One official described how he had become involved and then explained that he had set up a small team within his division to look at some of the issues relating to other policy areas. Another Board member felt that the Plan had the potential to

change mindsets in the context of seeing a more coordinated and cohesive set of projects rather than as a series of discrete projects that had little relationship to each other. Also, there was leadership at Cabinet level in the context of the Minister emphasising the importance of the Spatial Plan as a driver in the resource allocation process and as a means of implementing the Assembly Government's strategic agenda.

Turning to those Board members who felt that the Spatial Plan didn't provide links to other policies, it was suggested that there was little or no discussion about other policy areas at Board meetings. However, it has to be acknowledged that the officials drafting the Plan certainly recognised the interrelationships as their comments testify in relation to the internal round of consultation that was undertaken. One Board member offered a number of comments on the relationship between the Spatial Plan and other Assembly Government policies. He was fairly critical of the way in which the Spatial Plan was being developed and its apparent failure to make the connections with other policy areas. His comments are quoted at length because of the number of issues raised in relation to a joined up policy approach. *'... I don't think the other policies considered the Spatial Plan in that I think - the Spatial Plan had its own momentum, but by the same token so did other initiatives like, for example, Andrew Davies's [then Minister for Economic Development & Transport] review of transport policy has been going on, and to my mind, although that's a key driver and they sometimes talked about the spatial implications, they haven't dovetailed it into the Spatial Plan at all, not really in any meaningful sense. And I also think you had the whole thing around Health Challenge Wales, and that also continued along its own track and I think the links were only ever made by the Spatial Plan team. It seemed to me, from the outside looking in, that they tried their best to draw the linkages but they were still having to badger other people to get them to recognise the links into the Spatial Plan, whereas really those people should be making the links and its that concern that drives me to say, I don't think the links were made sufficiently nor do I think they are still being made sufficiently but maybe that also comes back to the fact that we've got a Spatial Plan which is a thick document rather than something which is more a working tool around how*

you integrate what the Assembly does. For example, there are no clear messages in the Spatial Plan about how the Assembly will use it to guide investment decisions and the allocation of Assembly resources and there are only slight hints towards the way in which the Assembly's location strategy will be dovetailed into the Spatial Plan ... and yet there are two key drivers that WAG's [Welsh Assembly Government] got - money and the location of its own offices and the ASPBs [Assembly Sponsored Public Bodies] - no clear messages given in the Spatial Plan....'

Interrelationships between organisations and policies and the need for policy integration

There was a general feeling by both Board and non-Board stakeholders that the process led to a greater appreciation of the interrelationships between organisations and policies and the need for policy integration. Some respondents felt that the stakeholder workshops (rather than citing the Management Board) were responsible for engendering a greater awareness. Whilst agreeing with the proposition, two stakeholders added a cautionary note; one felt that stakeholders may recognise the interrelationships, whether they were actually doing anything about it in practice was a different issue and another felt that the Plan was perhaps not addressing some of the critical issues but rather leaving these to be considered in another policy document (e.g. the forthcoming Environment Strategy). One non-Board stakeholder made the distinction between awareness and policy integration and felt that achieving policy integration required an investment of time (he was referring to this being achieved through a process of structured dialogue). Another respondent referred to policy integration being achieved at the highest level and in this context he referred to the Assembly's '*policy integration tool*' as the appropriate mechanism. One respondent felt that there was greater appreciation of policy interrelationships amongst Assembly Government officials but was less sure about the position amongst other stakeholders. The stakeholder, who took a different position than the others, felt that the process had not increased an appreciation of the interrelationships so far and felt that it may be the next phase - the implementation process - that leads to recognition of interrelationships between organisations and policies.

The contribution of research and consultation to informed debate

The spatial plan process was informed by reports from consultants as part of the initial scoping exercise and by reports from consultants who assisted with the workshops. Half the Board felt that the research reports and issues raised by the public led to informed debate and a further four felt were uncommitted; the remainder disagreed with the proposition. Of those who felt that the issues led to informed debate, all were either Assembly government departments or government agencies. It could, perhaps, be assumed that those closely involved directly writing the Plan gained more from this element in the process than those who were less directly involved. Several Board members felt that there were poor linkages between information gained from research reports and the public workshops and discussion about the direction of the plan at Board level. If there were issues of concern arising from research reports or public consultation then it was the feeling of one Board member that officials used the bi-lateral meeting as a means of discussing and resolving matters of concern.

Another Board member felt that neither the reports from consultants or from public consultation had clarified whether *'...the plan is an aid to policy formulation in Development Plans or is it, itself a pseudo development plan'*. This Board member then went on to point out that, from the perspective of the organisations that he represented, the Spatial Plan was very much becoming a plan for development *'... we felt it should have been the former [an aid to policy formulation in Development Plans] and it has kind of `morphed into being very much the latter [a Plan for development]. We feel that the way which it has addressed the major infrastructure projects and major strategic development sites within Wales is regrettable really because it has provided a form of creeping validation for major environmentally damaging projects which if it had been addressed in a different manner those decisions would have been taken at a more appropriate level, so I strongly disagree with that one'*. In some respects, therefore, these comments reflect the concerns referred to earlier that there was an underlying issue (which was not really debated but, nevertheless, of concern to some stakeholders) relating to purpose of the Spatial Plan. There were evident tensions between those concerned with

strategic land use implications of the Plan and those who saw the Spatial Plan in a wider context in its role as delivering the Assembly Government's strategic agenda.

Whilst non-Board members attempted to react to this particular proposition, their answers are couched in terms of a hope that the process reflected an informed input rather than as a reflection of actual experience.

Conclusion

In terms of joint information search, it would appear that the research reports, prepared by consultants, and the reports of the public seminars and workshops informed those officials closely involved in writing the Plan though there was little evidence that the Management Board had felt informed through this source. However, in terms of building relationships and linkages to other policy areas, the Wales Spatial Plan drew in a whole range of policy actors within the Assembly Government. There was not a ready understanding or acceptance of the purpose and scope of 'spatial planning' but the process was driven politically from the centre by a Minister who was strongly committed to spatial planning as an instrument of policy integration. As an aspect of public policy the spatial plan developed its own momentum. Though Board members recognised links to other Assembly government policies, none cited any link to the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme. Over time the Management Board developed an appreciation of the interrelationships between organisations and policy areas, however, it was pointed out that policy integration required time. The Assembly Government, through the development of a policy integration tool, was making attempts to achieve policy integration a high level.

Answers to the propositions within this step of the collaboration model revealed some interesting insights into the policy-making process. For instance, there is some evidence of concern that the Plan became focussed on development issues. It was suggested that the plan '*morphed*' into a plan for development and reference was made to a '*creeping validation for major environmentally damaging projects*'. In many ways this particular comment

reflected the underlying tensions from those who believed that the Spatial Plan should be providing strategic land use planning guidance. There was, perhaps, some support for this comment from another Board member who felt the some environmentally related issues were effectively being shelved for the then anticipated environmental strategy to address. Nevertheless, this particular Board member felt that the Spatial Plan was fulfilling the role of providing for a framework document.

7.3.5 Exploring new options

Exploring new options is an important step in any collaborative exercise. In terms of the scope of collaboration suggested by Gray (Gray, 1989, p.7), collaboration can be used to 'resolve conflicts' and 'advance shared visions'. In terms of the former, exploring new options is important in dealing with multi-party conflicts and is used extensively in conflict-management by practitioners - 'this process forces parties to think in terms of trade-offs among interests and to be creative in recognising a range of possible solutions' (ibid, 1989, p. 84). In the field of 'advancing shared visions', particularly in policy formulation, one of the benefits if using a collaborative process is that it can '...inject new sources of creativity and objectivity into options under consideration' (ibid. p.84).

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
New issues & options were considered & explored	1	2	6	3	2
The policy process generated new policy thinking	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(1)
The Management Board satisfactorily explored any differences	1	8	4	1	
The process led to a better understanding of sustainable development and its implications for WAG policies	1 (1)	1 (1)	4 (2)	7 (1)	1 (1)
The process generated new partnership working	(1)		7 (5)	6	1

Figures in parenthesis related to non-Management Board stakeholders. Non-Management Board were not required to address the first & third proposition

Consideration and exploration of new issues and options

Analysis of the answers to this proposition suggests that the Management Board never really discussed options. It would appear the answers given and from an examination of the Minutes of Board meetings that the Board never received a paper that considered new issues and options, although many would have been aware of emerging issues from their involvement with the workshops. Some Board members could cite instances where new issues had emerged (some as the result of the consultation process) and were considered but in the sense that actual policy options were considered, then this was absent from the Board's focus. However, some members could cite examples of where their representations had been reflected in the Plan. For example, one Board member felt that his concerns regarding aspects of the environment had been taken into account in the published Plan (he referred to issue as the environment being seen from the perspective of fulfilling a particular anthropocentric function); another Board member felt that the Plan recognised a wider geographical perspective (recognition of east-west linkages). One senior Assembly official felt that the work of the appointed consultants and the public consultation process had been innovative in terms of providing a 'creative' contribution.

Three Board members expressed disappointment that the Board did not consider new issues and options. One felt that there was not '*...an explicit option stage as I might like to see in a Development Plan. I don't think options were even explicitly expressed, never mind explored apart from a rather fictitious process of trying to characterise Wales according to some rather superficial little vision statements if you like.*' Another critical perspective was offered in the following terms – '*...I've linked my response to 28, 29 and 30. I don't think the spatial plan process has thrown up any new policy ideas or thinking other than reinforcing the need for more effective integration between the different players. How that's achieved and whether that means a totally different type of policy I don't think that's come out in the Spatial Plan at all. In some respects I think what the Spatial Plan has done is taken existing policy commitment and repackaged them with some form of spatial priorities but the spatial priorities aren't really that clear.*'

Generation of new policy thinking through the policy process

In terms of the policy process, there was some agreement amongst Board members that the process generated new policy thinking; only two members felt that this was not the case although three were indifferent or neutral in their scoring. One Member felt that new areas of policy were highlighted but never really developed because of the Devolution settlement in terms of relative responsibilities between the UK (Westminster government) and the Welsh Assembly. He cited energy and some matters relating to coastal and marine matters as examples. Another Board member felt that the public workshops (as opposed to the Management Board) had been fairly creative in generating new policy thinking; he referred to housing as an issue that had caught his attention (although he was not specific about the details of the issue). The reconsideration of spatial planning boundaries was one aspect that was cited by two Board members. One felt that the Spatial Plan had provided an opportunity to get away from the traditional consideration of policy in terms of the 'Welsh Regions'. The 'Heads of the Valleys Initiative' was cited as an example of shifting away from local authority boundaries and concentrating resources on a spatial area that encompassed settlements that were experiencing similar problems and would benefit from a more strategic or cross-cutting approach. Another referred to the 'spatial vision' that identified key centres within 'socio-economic hubs' as an example of new policy thinking. The consideration of health within a spatial planning framework was also cited as an example of new policy thinking emerging within the policy framework that was being offered by spatial planning. This particular Board member also referred to the policy silo approach that had been characteristic of the former Welsh Office. This point was, to some extent, echoed by another Board member in reference to policies 'cutting across areas and also across sectors'.

Another Board member was definite in his view that no new policy thinking had emerged from the policy process (his view was quoted in full in the previous section). The remainder of the Board were fairly 'indifferent' to the proposition that the process had generated new policy thinking, although their ranking of the proposition should not be interpreted that there was no view

about the process. One official felt that the process was '*...a visionary instrumentalist approach...*' explaining that the process helped '*...to move different people's thinking and it helped challenge particularly old myths ... it helped focus our political leaders on the importance of east-west links*'. Another official thought that the process was '*a bit opaque*' and that '*...may be it's a bit dangerous to propose anything radical*'. Another Board member, not an Assembly Government official, suggested that new policy thinking was not likely to emerge from those engaged in the 'internal' policy process but rather from the political side of the policy process.

Turning to those stakeholders that were not on the Management Board, there was again some feeling that new policy thinking emerged from the process. One stakeholder, representing a major player in the development process, felt that the spatial representation of clustering of settlements into growth areas was a new aspect of policy development, although criticism was made that the Plan expressed no view on the quantum of change. Another felt the Plan was starting to influence (indirectly) other policy documents in relation to, for example, 'sustainable urban drainage systems' and the whole consideration of the treatment surface water issues. Another stakeholder cited the workshops as being particularly productive as a source of new ideas but failed to identify any particular aspect of new policy thinking. Those stakeholders, who could not identify the emergence new policy thinking, felt that their particular interest received a token recognition and another felt that there was a generality about the Plan that it was not possible to form a view upon. This particular individual also felt that the issues were not necessarily well connected, such as the link between the social justice agenda and accessibility.

The satisfactory exploration of differences by the Management Board

In many respects the answers to this proposition reflect, those relating to the earlier proposition, which was concerned with the consideration and exploration of new issues and options. There is a difference, however, in that the earlier proposition is inviting a view on matters arising from the process whereas this proposition is inviting views on the 'quality' of the process. There

was a feeling that the Board never really explored any differences. This probably reflects the fact that the Board was not a decision-making body but rather an advisory construct. One Board member summed up the position as follows '*...No, it was discussions around points, but there were no particular decisions. It was mainly to provide input to Assembly Government officials on different perspectives and to rate them, discuss them, but there was no specific agreed way forward...*' This view was confirmed by another Board member in the following terms '*...I disagreed with the Management Board exploring differences. I think because they were a sounding board - you tend to sort of give your view, other people give their views, they all get scribbled down dutifully, or responded to, but there didn't seem to be a process of actively seeking solutions, or actively trying to imaginatively to reconcile possibly conflicting issues. It was more a sounding board-process*'. Another Board member (who recorded a 'neutral' score) referred to the detailed discussions that had gone on within his organisation about the spatial strategy and how this would impact upon their particular operational policies. One senior official referred to the fact that discussion took place at Board meetings, citing the differing perspectives of those coming from an economic development perspective and those coming from the environmental. He said that discussions were not conclusive and were on-going. This again suggests that issues were effectively 'on the table' but never resolved because the Board was not the appropriate means of resolving differences.

A better understanding of sustainable development

The Wales Spatial Plan was seen as '*...translating into practice our sustainable development duty*' (Wales Spatial Plan, Consultation Report, 2003). In the 'Approved' Plan (November 2004), the link between sustainable development and the statutory sustainable development duty was not so explicitly stated and there seemed to be more emphasis on policy integration rather than more specific links to sustainable development '*...it [The Spatial Plan] aims to ensure the Welsh Assembly Government's policies and programmes come together effectively with the workings of local government, business and other partners across Wales, to enable a truly sustainable future – one that works for all the different parts of Wales and setting a strategic ,*

integrating agenda for the next 20 years'. It was also acknowledged that the Plan is '...based on the key principles of social justice, equality and sustainability' (ibid. p.4). In this context, therefore, it was appropriate to explore with Board members (and those stakeholders not on the Management Board) the extent to which the Spatial Plan led to a better understanding of sustainable development and its implications for Welsh Assembly Government Policies.

Just over half the Board felt that the process had resulted in a better understanding of sustainable development, four remained 'neutral' and two felt that sustainable development was not addressed. There was a feeling that the Plan provided a framework for policy integration and sustainable development, although it has to be acknowledged that it was difficult to distinguish between these two aspects in the minds of some respondents. One Board member commented in the following terms '*...Well, I don't know whether it's an understanding of sustainable development but the process had led people to think about inter-connections and impacts and things like that so obviously they are thinking about sustainable development...*' and another put the position in the following terms '*...I do think it's an attempt to try and translate delivery on the ground, if you like, providing the overarching framework in the planning context, both land use and everything else...*' Links between the Spatial Plan and other Assembly policy vehicles were also recognised, as the following comment indicates '*... I agreed with this one. I didn't strongly agree with it because I think it is early days yet but I think I am encouraged by the fact that there's been moves to link WAG [Welsh Assembly Government] policy making with budget rounds. So that will help to concentrate minds, and its already happening. Elements of the WAG are saying that policy and strategy documents will have to be in conformity with the Spatial Plan so it's started but I don't think it's fed through the system yet by any means*'. One Board member felt that the process had led to '*...a far better understanding of the implications of the Brundtland statement in terms of the operation and the administration and management, if you like of the estate, which is Wales...*' He felt that the process had enabled a 'rehearsal' of what it means in terms of policy implementation '*...you can see the people*

who are going to use it as a flag and the people who are going to use it as a shield.' This respondent also referred to the fact that the Economic Development Minister seemed to be using the Spatial Plan more effectively in the promotion of his Department's work in contrast to the Environment and Planning Minister, who seemed to less visible in linking the Spatial Plan to his Department's work.

Interestingly, three officials from the Assembly cast doubt as to whether a better understanding of sustainable development had been achieved as result of the policy process. One felt that the '*...jury are still out...*'but qualified the comment by suggesting that whilst he was happy with the plan-making process in terms of consideration of sustainable development, but it would be for the examination of other policy areas such as development on land at risk from flooding and waste management that success would be measured. Another two officials (from separate policy divisions) felt that sustainable development as a policy consideration was not '*really worked through*'.

The comment from one of those Board members who disagreed with the proposition, responded in the following terms '*...my personal view is that if it was going to lead to a better understanding of sustainable development why have we had recent decisions about an intra-Wales air service? Why are we having investment decisions on new relief roads? Why are we having the largest open cast coal site in northern Europe in an area where the Assembly says it wants to transform the image from one which is based on 'old industrial' to 'post industrial' - have a great big scar on the landscape for the next 20 or so years doesn't seem to fit with that and yet the Spatial Plan is saying one thing and decision making saying something else. I don't think it's driven sustainable development at all, that's my personal view*'.

Turning to those stakeholders who were not on the Management Board, the responses indicate that they were fairly evenly divided about the plan-making process leading to a better understanding about sustainable development. Some of the comments expressed 'hope' that the Plan would lead to a better understanding of sustainable development. The implication of this comment

was that it would be in the implementation phase that sustainable development would be recognised; the following statement is illustrative of some of the feelings expressed '*...I hope it has, one thing that's slightly worrying me is at the Bangor event [public workshop] we had a presentation from the WDA which was still the same old - 'we need growth and we need it here'. You'd hope it would eventually lead to a better understanding, but it takes time and is not going to happen overnight.* He concluded by suggesting that it was all a matter of '*...time, monitoring and keep saying same message over and over again!*' Two respondents felt that the Plan had ignored consideration of the impacts and interrelationships between various issues such as the economic development, transport and the impact, either positively or negatively, on the position of the Welsh language, heritage and culture. A similar point was made in comments relating to the relationship between economic developments and housing provision. Again, reflecting the apparent lack of consideration for the social pillar of sustainable development, concern was expressed about the need for consideration of spatial planning aspects such as housing and transport and disabled people.

Generation of new partnership working

Opinions were equally divided between those Board members who thought that the process had generated new partnership working and those who recorded a 'neutral' position. In many respects this position is understandable because at the time the interviews were conducted Assembly officials were proposing a series of National and Area level groups to take the Plan forward. Many respondents felt that it was appropriate to reserve their position in the light of the next stage of the Plan. Two Assembly government officials referred to the fact that the process had encouraged them to include other policy divisions in policy issues affecting their particular work – something that they would not have done hitherto. There was also some concern that effective partnership working may be difficult in the forthcoming financial year because budget heads had already been set. Turning once more to stakeholders not on the Board, the responses indicate a similar position of expectation that the process will result in the establishment of new partnerships. It would be reasonable to conclude that, apart from a change in the working practices of

some government officials, there was a general feeling that the implementation phase of the Plan (through the work of the proposed Area Groups) would be a more appropriate place to judge the success or otherwise of the process leading to new partnership working.

Conclusion

One of the stated benefits of collaboration is that the process is supposed to allow new issues and options to be considered in an open and transparent way. In so far as the Management Board was concerned it has to be acknowledged that it never had the opportunity to consider differing issues and options in the manner that might be expected in a collaborative partnership engaged in a visioning process. In one sense such a conclusion might not be unexpected given the Board's terms of reference. There is evidence that officials saw the Management Board as consultative and advisory rather than deliberative and instructive. It was the political process (Cabinet and Cabinet Sub-committee) that effectively considered options and set the policy direction. The wider policy process did allow new issues and options to be explored through a series of workshops and through the input of commissioned research from consultants. For example, the process allowed consideration of a more integrated form of spatial planning (the spatial vision) that was not based on traditional regional and administrative boundaries and it brought in policy areas such as health that had not hitherto been seen in a spatial planning context. There was some concern, however, that the process had not achieved connectivity between policy areas, instances such as those between housing and economic development, the impact of development on the Welsh language and culture and the relationship between access and disability were absent from both the process and the final Plan.

In terms of sustainable development, there was not a unanimous view that the process had led to a better understanding of sustainable development per se. The process certainly led to a greater recognition of 'interconnectedness' between policy areas but full consideration of the implications of sustainable development as a policy objective was absent from the formulation stages of the Plan. Three Assembly officials confirmed this view; however, it was felt

that sustainable development, as an underlying policy theme would still be present in other policy documents. One view suggested that sustainable development was acceptable in 'theory' but in practice other considerations came to the fore; political decisions on certain transport and land use matters indicated that more immediate needs were being met as opposed to longer-term considerations.

Collaboration is seen as a basis for the development of partnerships. In terms of the spatial planning process, the evidence would suggest that these were not especially strong or recognised in the formulation stage of the policy process but there was an expectation that these would develop in the implementation stage of the Plan through the proposed National Spatial Planning Group and Area Groups.

7.3.6 Reaching Agreement

'Reaching an agreement means gaining commitment of all parties to a single option or to a package of options' (Gray, 1989, p.85). It is the final stage in the process and allows all the parties involved in the collaboration process to move forward. According to Gray, it does not necessarily imply that all the agreements should be worked out and settled; it is possible for a general framework within which details can subsequently be worked out to be agreed as the outcome of this stage. In the context of using collaboration as contributing to a 'visioning process' (as opposed to a process for dispute resolution) then it is possible to view this stage as an important phase in what might be termed as the pre-implementation stage.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
The Wales Spatial Plan reflects the views of all of the Management Board	2	4	6	2	
The final product is a realistic assessment of the situation and is a useful policy tool	(2)	1	3 (1)	9 (3)	1
Implementation of the Plan is operationally feasible		1 (2)	3 (2)	10 (1)	(1)
The process will lead to changes in the behaviour of stakeholders	(1)	(1)	4 (3)	9 (1)	1
All the issues have received adequate attention	2 (3)	6 (1)	5	1 (2)	
Difficult & conflicting issues have been resolved through consensus	1 (1)	5 (3)	6 (1)	1 (1)	1
The WSP process has resulted in a higher profile being given to sustainable development in the policy process	(1)	2 (1)	2 (1)	10 (2)	(1)
The WSP process has resulted in recognition of the need to acknowledge interdependencies & interrelationships between organisations	(1)	(1)	4 (1)	8 (2)	2 (1)

Note: figures in parenthesis relate to Non-Management Board Stakeholders

Spatial Plan reflects the views of all the Management Board

Board members had some difficulty in coming to a definite conclusion when reacting to this particular proposition. Whilst they may have scored their answers in one way, their verbal answers revealed less certainty about whether there was unanimity of view. Looking at the two Board members who supported the proposition, one felt that it was a pragmatic document in spite of gaps and particular concerns and the other felt that there was broad consensus about the content. There were some varied answers from those who disagreed with the proposition. One Board member (although scoring as disagreeing with the proposition) felt that the Plan broadly reflected the views of the majority, some stakeholders seeing it as a basis for discussion and taking things forward. However, he felt that there were some people who *'...still hanker after a traditional land use plan'*. Another member felt that the Plan could never reflect the views of the all of the Board because of *'...the varying visions of Wales...'*. He felt that there was a need to *'change ways of looking at things'* in terms of the three elements of the sustainable development agenda. There was some concern as to whether it was realistic

to expect general agreement amongst the Management Board. The following comment, from an Assembly official, perhaps puts the whole issue into context '*... I don't think that our Terms of Reference were that we would actually reflect what they said. It means they [Board members] had input to it... I think it would be difficult to get their organisations to in any sense feel that ownership or signing up of what we are doing. That stayed independent, that stayed the Assembly's business. They [the stakeholders on the Board] put their views in and we, hopefully, took care of them. But it wasn't an expression of their views. At the end of the day it was the Assembly's views*'. This comment in many ways highlights the differences of opinion that have emerged from comments made earlier in relation to the perceived role of the Management Board i.e. its advisory and consultative nature rather than decision-making. It was clearly seen by officials as the Welsh Assembly Government's plan in terms of content; the Assembly Government was merely advised by a range of consultees including the 'Management Board'.

The final product is a realistic assessment and a useful policy tool

Board members generally felt that the Plan was realistic and a useful policy instrument. Indeed, those Welsh Assembly Government officials (who were Board members) were very supportive of the Plan in terms of its use as a policy tool. One official commented that he had found a lot of support amongst participants attending the workshops. Another official mentioned the fact that the Spatial Plan was already being used in government spending reviews. One Board member, whilst agreeing that the plan provided a realistic assessment of the situation and a potential useful policy tool, made the qualification that the Plan '*needed teeth*'. Another Board member felt that the Plan was pragmatic given the fact that this was only the Assembly's second term. It had to recognise the realities of its position vis-a`-vis other major players such as local government where there is a strong democratic base. He felt that '*...the acid test now is how they [Welsh Assembly Government] use it and how they develop it and not see it as the final version. To my mind, the story starts now because you have actually got something which may be you can start to use to influence decision making.... the real work starts in terms of shaking the area reference group prescriptions and making sure that*

they are taken forward by individual stakeholders'. One of the two members who recorded a neutral position felt that the Plan had potential but its success would be judged through the development of project working.

Turning to those stakeholders who were not on the Management Board, there was a feeling that the Plan had potential but much would depend on the next stage (reference intended here was to the Area Groups). One major player in the development sector was, at the time of the interview, in the process of discussing how they could be involved in the working groups and in taking the Plan forward. Another stakeholder made an interesting observation that the Plan was still very much a *'framework document'* and implied that much of the detail may be the subject of other major policy documents. In this context he was referring to a number of policy documents that were yet to emerge from the Assembly such as the environment, economic development and transport strategies.

Implementation of the Plan is operationally feasible

As might be expected, the answers to this proposition correlate strongly with those just given in respect of the use of the Plan as a policy tool. Board members indicated that the feasibility of implementation would very much depend on the availability of resources. One Board member put the position thus *'...I think that there is an appetite to engage the Spatial Plan but some concerns about additional responsibilities and costs that it will put on some of the stakeholders.'* Another Board member felt that the endorsement by Cabinet and the Minister's address to the Executive Board (comprising senior government officials) was an important aspect in giving the Plan status and relevance within the minds of Assembly officials. The one Board member that cast doubt on the implementation process suggested that *'...on its own it [the Plan] is not operationally feasible, it's got to be carried through to the area levels and be continually driven by the Assembly in a positive way.'*

The non-Board stakeholders were equally divided over this proposition. Two respondents in this group referred to their earlier answers relating to the usefulness of the Plan as a policy tool; one felt that much would depend on

the area groups and, the other, on their being invited to sit on the area groups. One of those who recorded a 'neutral' score suggested that the proposed areas did not necessarily accord with what they saw as the issues to be addressed and another simply felt that time would be the determinant of the operational feasibility of the Plan.

The process will lead to changes in the behaviour of stakeholders.

Board members generally agreed with this proposition. Some suggested that it would lead to some stakeholders (e.g. local government) taking a wider perspective than they had perhaps hitherto; one suggested that the Assembly may have to use both the '*stick and carrot*' approach to affect changes in some instances.

Those stakeholders not on the Board were not so inclined to agree that changes in behaviour would be affected. Even those who disagreed with the proposition were expressing doubts rather than citing reasons as to why the process would not lead to behaviour changes. In many ways the following view point probably reflects the position in the minds of everybody in responding to this proposition '*...I think again it depends on the will of the National Assembly and how it will use this document because I think if it's tied to funding and mainstream policy then yes ... it will force people to change behaviour ...*'

All issues have received adequate attention

There was a fairly strong feeling amongst Board members that some issues had not received the attention that might be expected. One Board member felt that '*...the easy ones have, the others probably haven't [received attention]...*' Health and education were policy areas where it was either felt that more work had to be done or inadequate consideration had been given to the issues. However, it was on the issue of the environment where some felt that the implications of particular issues had not been satisfactorily explored; two stakeholders from the 'environment sector' and one from a sector representing 'a wider constituency' identified this gap in the Plan. It was suggested that '*...in the environment sector we are only just scratching the*

surface in terms of how a Spatial Plan can address environmental protection and enhancement in Wales...'. Another stakeholder was perhaps more specific, pointing out that '... I have already hinted at the fact that I don't think the [that] environment is thought particularly strongly through. I think it has improved on what was in the Consultation Document significantly, but if you are looking at some of the hard decisions... decoupling economic growth from traffic growth is one of those...I don't think the Spatial Plan has any key messages about that other than saying it wants to promote integrated transport systems...'

Taking a similar viewpoint, those stakeholders not on the Board generally felt that the Plan had not address issues relating to the Welsh language, social inclusion in relation to access to public transport and housing.

In an attempt to balance the above discussion, it should be pointed out that the 'adopted' version of the Wales Spatial Plan makes reference to a number of other policy documents that were either extant or emerging, for instance, *laith Pawb* (which provides a programme for the Welsh language), the forthcoming Wales Environment and Transport Strategies, the review of the economic development strategy (*A Winning Wales*) and investments in health infrastructure and public health programmes. Marine and coastal issues were other areas that were left for further work to be undertaken. The Spatial Plan acknowledged these issues but left the detailed consideration of the implications to these other policy documents and programmes.

Difficult and conflicting issues have been resolved through consensus

The answers given by Board members to this proposition probably reflects those given above. It was pointed out by one Board member that many of the difficult issues were effectively '*parked*'. Another felt that the Spatial Plan had not resolved any issues and that it was leaving the difficult issues for the 'area reference groups' (c.f. Chapter 6) to resolve '*...I think the decisions and tough choices will have to be made by the area reference groups, which in some respects is quite a neat trick to play*'. In some respects this view was, perhaps, corroborated by an Assembly official when he gave a 'neutral'

response to the proposition and pointed out that '*... I think some people would be happy to leave some issues for us to decide so then they can disagree with the outcomes...*' Several Board members made the point that the Board never resolved any issues because that was not its role; they suggested that it was a 'sounding board' rather than a decision-making forum. Again, this point was made earlier in another context.

Although non-Board stakeholders were not as directly involved in the process, they, nevertheless, chose to respond to the proposition. Their answers indicate that they were not aware of any consensus-building process and, perhaps, they confused this aspect with their attendance at the workshops. Two stakeholders could, however, identify with an attempt at 'consensus seeking' by reference to meetings that they attended with Assembly officials on specific matters.

Plan-making process resulted in a higher profile being given to sustainable development

From the responses given on the 'questionnaire, the Board generally agreed that the process had resulted in a higher profile being given to sustainable development. However, from the answers given at the interviews, this conclusion is less clear-cut. There is a difference between an awareness of sustainable development per se and the implications of sustainable development in policy terms. Those Board members coming from economic sector were aware of the relevance of 'wealth creation' to sustainable communities; there was some concern with the view that it was possible to 'spread prosperity' and that it was doubtful whether some economic development projects would be deferred simply because they were not environmentally sustainable. One Board member (who was more supportive in his view of the proposition) felt that the process has resulted in the environment sector recognising '*...some inter-dependency and links with other sectors and vice versa. I think it has and one of the challenges is to maintain that understanding*'. He also felt that the representative from the 'economic sector' was aware of the need for a change in the 'development path' [my emphasis] over the time horizon anticipated by the Plan, even

though it appeared, to him, that his constituency did not necessarily take this position. Looking at this particular individual's answers to this proposition perhaps gives some support to this interpretation. Thus in his answer, this particular stakeholder felt that the statutory obligations placed on the Assembly with regard to sustainable development was now setting the pace and that this duty had significant implications for a whole range of Assembly Government policy. Interestingly (and in contrast), one Assembly official felt that sustainable development had not increased in profile as part of the policy process. Referring to the workshops he said '*...we keep on mentioning sustainable development but we are the ones that mention it in the environment lobby and then it somewhat gets lost in lengthy discussions. So whether we are helping to move it forward so it is getting mainstream so people don't have to mention it that's fine, but I still think there is more to be done about raising the profile ... about sustainable futures for communities*'. The two members who expressed views against the proposition made reference to the inclusion of a number of what was termed '*environmentally damaging projects*'.

A similar conclusion could be drawn from the answers given by non-Board stakeholders. Those who felt that sustainable development had been given a higher profile could only refer to it as being an increase in general public awareness rather than in any specific context. More revealing, however, were the comments from the other stakeholders who felt that some issues that could arguably be recognised as falling within the ambit of sustainable development policy had not received consideration. Examples cited as being absent included quality housing, Welsh language, health and education.

It would, perhaps, be wrong to leave this discussion with the impression that the Spatial Plan ignored the issues referred to above. Housing and the Welsh Language received attention in the Plan with a number of identified specific actions. Consideration of health and education was limited to the contribution that these policy areas made to the five guiding themes that underpinned the Plan.

Recognition of the need to acknowledge interdependencies and interrelationships

There was some agreement amongst Board members that the policy process had resulted in recognition of the need to acknowledge interdependencies and interrelationships between organisations. It was not possible to determine whether this awareness of the need to acknowledge interdependencies grew out of the aspects of the policy process attributable to the work of the Management Board or through the workshop sessions or, indeed, through other political processes at work in post devolution Wales. However, there was recognition that the next phase of the Plan would certainly cement working relationships as it sought to discuss project implementation. For example, one Board member cited the 'Heads of the Valleys Initiative' as an example of how interrelationships and interdependencies would be strengthened. Another Board member felt that it wasn't the Spatial Plan per se that was responsible for recognising and developing interdependencies but rather '*...because of the way Wales is managed [as a result of] devolution...*' He was seeing Wales as being managed more corporately following devolution and that the Wales Spatial Plan was part of this overall management process. An interesting viewpoint emerged from a Board member who disagreed with the proposition. He felt, like others, that the next stage of the Plan would give greater recognition to interdependencies but he raised another issue that implied that the Plan was not necessarily about delivering an agenda based on sustainable development. His comments are reported in full to give a flavour of what might be concerns as to the eventual focus of the Plan; '*... I didn't think it particularly resulted in a recognition of the need to acknowledge interdependence, but the reason I didn't disagree with it was because I felt that ... hopefully that will come in the future once we roll up our sleeves and get down to work in the Area Groups. I think it was quite telling that the Area Groups – that the officers who were going to be employed to promote and service the Area Groups - are going to be based in WDA offices and you could ask the rhetorical question, well if this is a plan for sustainable development, why aren't they based in CCW [Countryside Council for Wales]*

offices, or indeed in the offices of the social sector, why do they have to be based in the offices of a development corporation company...'

Turning once more to those stakeholders not on the Management Board, similar concerns were being expressed to those on the Board. One stakeholder thought that planners and economic development officers were *'more than adequately represented at the workshops'*. Whilst there was recognition of interdependencies between organisations and policy areas between these groups, he felt that it was not much assistance in matters relating to other policy areas where it is more difficult to establish more direct causal linkages. One stakeholder was more specific suggesting that the Plan paid no attention to infrastructure constraints which, in some areas, were going to be a serious constraint on development. Others thought that there was a growing recognition of the need for a closer partnership approach and that this was a developing situation, again perhaps reflecting the point made earlier in relation to the way in which Wales was being managed.

Conclusion

As mentioned at the outset, reaching agreement means gaining commitment. It has to be acknowledged at the outset that this study has really focussed on the policy formulation stage of the policy process; the implementation phase has yet to come through the outworking of the proposed National Spatial Planning Group and the area level reference groups. Thus it was not surprising that Board members and stakeholders not on the Board were being cautious in their views on such matters relating to implementation. Nevertheless, it was generally felt that the Spatial Plan was a useful policy tool and there was an appetite to engage in the implementation process but there were reservations about the likely availability of resources. Indeed, in terms of changing people's behaviour it was felt that the Assembly Government had a role to play in providing both providing incentives and controls in securing the implementation of the Plan.

The interviews revealed a number of issues relating to the Management Board and the characteristics of the Wales Spatial Plan. The advisory role of

the Board was emphasised in the context that the Plan reflected the views of the Welsh Assembly Government and was subsequently approved by the National Assembly for Wales. The Board was, therefore, not the final arbiter in terms of developing an agreed position. In this context, therefore, the Board was not involved in securing a consensus viewpoint as a result of its deliberations. Indeed, there is a suggestion that the Plan effectively ducked some of the issues by leaving them for the proposed area reference groups to resolve.

Whilst there was some agreement that the policy process had given sustainable development a higher profile a number of qualifications were made in the interviews. There was a feeling in some quarters that the policy formulation process had not addressed some of the policy areas that were within the sustainable development policy agenda; health and education were particularly visible examples, but there were others relating to, for example, the Welsh language, and matters relating to disability and access. It was also felt that more emphasis should have been given to the environmental pillar of sustainable development, particularly in working through those options that result in decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation. There was also reference to certain decisions emanating from the Assembly Government that could be in conflict with sustainable development objectives, such as proposals for a north-south air link.

On the issue of whether sustainable development received a higher profile as a result of the policy process, the answer is yes in quantitative terms (i.e. from the scores given by respondents) but in qualitative terms the evidence suggests a more diverse picture. Those representatives from what may broadly be termed the 'economic' and the 'environment' sectors recognised the need to accommodate differing views and they both acknowledged the Assembly's statutory duty in relation to sustainable development. From the point of view of clarity of direction in relation to sustainable development emerging from the workshop sessions, there is some evidence (from an Assembly official) that no clear perspective emerged. There was also evidence that economic development was still a strong feature in the

workshop sessions. Indeed, there was a telling comment from one respondent concerning the intended location of those officers who would serve the area groups and their location in the offices of the Welsh Development Agency.

There was some measure of agreement that the policy process resulted in recognition of interdependencies and interrelationships between organisations. However, again the evidence gained from the interviews suggests that the picture is not so clear as initially presented in the table. There is a view that whilst the Spatial Plan provided a forum for interrelationships to be explored and developed a parallel process was in operation producing a similar result that reflected the more corporate manner in which post devolution Wales was being managed. Certainly, there were reservations about the extent of inter-organisational relationships in the context that this would be better assessed in the outworking of the area reference groups.

It would be reasonable to conclude that there is stakeholder commitment to the implementation process and that the Spatial Plan has been a vehicle in securing this commitment. Sustainable development is on the policy agenda but the extent of that commitment will very much depend on how much prominence that the Assembly Government accords to this policy and whether the economic development agenda assumes greater prominence in political thinking. In many ways the Spatial Plan has left too much of the sustainable development agenda to other policy arenas. At the time of the interviews, the economic development, environment and transport strategies were yet to emerge and, consequently, it was not possible to assess the extent to which the policy process developed for the Wales Spatial Plan had influenced the content of these more detailed sectoral policy documents.

7.3.7 Dispersion of power

'Central to the notion of collaboration is the concept of shared power' (Gray, 1989, p.112). Gray also points out that 'in any interorganizational setting, some groups hold greater control over critical resources for solving problems than do others' (Gray, 1985, p. 926). Effective collaboration processes,

therefore, require stakeholders to share the power in their participation in any collaborative process. In respect of a visioning process (such as that connected with the production of the Wales Spatial Plan), stakeholders will be anxious to advance their own interests or perspectives. The extent to which they are able to do this obviously has implications for the success or otherwise of the collaborative process. Power can manifest itself in a number of ways. Some stakeholders may believe that they have an important role derived from their part in the public policy process in delivering the subject of the collaboration; others may believe that their representative capacity or specialised knowledge gives them a more central role in the process. Individuals, through aspects of their personality, can also exert considerable influence on any group engaged in collaborative exercises.

The convenor has a key role in selecting participants for a collaborative exercise. They must be able to identify legitimate stakeholders and encourage their effective participation. The power held by convenors is also a consideration because of their effect on the behaviour of stakeholders in terms of their willingness to participate. A convenor's credibility derives from their expertise and experience and from perceptions of objectivity or bias attributed to them by other stakeholders.

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1= Do Not Agree; 5= Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5
The views of one particular stakeholder or group of stakeholders was not allowed to dominate the process		2	3	8	1
The chair of the Management Board allowed a full discussion and sought consensus		2	2	8	2

Note: stakeholders who were not on the Management Board were not required to address these propositions

Domination of the process by one particular stakeholder or group of stakeholders

There was a general feeling that no one stakeholder or group of stakeholders were allowed to dominate the proceedings of the Management Board. As one Board member put it '*...I think everyone was encouraged to put their contribution in and I think all contributions were treated equally...*' However,

another Board member felt that there was a concern to keep local authorities on board '*...I think there was a risk that if they weren't careful, local authority leaders, in particular, would be briefed against the Spatial Plan*'. Another Board member felt that other selected key stakeholders had been involved in bi-lateral meetings in an attempt to ensure that their concerns were being accommodated in the Plan. Of the two Board members who felt that they could not support the proposition, one felt that it was clear that the Assembly were the key stakeholder and the other felt that perhaps it was more difficult for some Board members, in contrast to others who had a more clear brief, to make their point because of the nature of their representative constituency. The answer was given in the following terms '*...it's not because they're more powerful [reference to the CBI] it's just on the environment side it's much more difficult to state your terms if you like, or say what it is you want – you tend to be saying no I don't want that, no I don't want this...*'

The Chair of the Management Board allowed a full discussion and sought consensus

There was general support for the proposition on the role of the chair. One Board member felt that the chair had done a good job at keeping people on board and mentioned, in support of his comments, his awareness of the chair's apparent concern at one meeting when it was noticed that a particular Board member had been missing from a couple of consecutive meetings. Whilst not making a personal criticism of the chair, one Board member felt that some Board members were more vocal than others and that the extent of the discussion was a function of those involved. Another Board member, again not criticising the chair personally, referred to one particular meeting when some more senior officials were present and when there was a broader ranging discussion, which did not appear to lead to a definite outcome other than seeking a general agreement or, perhaps, no significant dissent.

Conclusion

In terms of the way in which the Board was managed there was general agreement that the chair was even-handed and genuinely sought an input to the discussions from all parties. In terms of the manifestation of power and

peoples' perceptions of this it was clearly evident that the Assembly Government was very much in the 'driving-seat' when it came to exercising decisions on outcomes.

One interesting dimension to the power aspect of collaborative processes, which is not evident in the literature, is the extent to which some participants are more able to advocate their case by virtue of the nature of their representative constituency. This point was made when a representative from the 'environment' sector recognised that he was often not able to advocate a positive position in contrast to other Board members who found it easier to present a more positive position. It was far easier to present a 'can do' perspective than one which was based on the opposite perspective and perhaps advancing a more cautionary approach. However, power can be exerted in less overt ways. There is evidence that Assembly officials and Ministers were keen to keep key players such as local government and organisations representing business interests in the policy loop through a series of bi-lateral meetings. As already mentioned earlier, the Management Board was only advisory, it had no decision-making powers. So, where were the key decisions made and who exercised that power?

This issue was explored separately with the three Assembly officials who had responsibility for chairing the Management Board over nearly four years. The Minister for the Environment and later in her role as Minister Finance, Local Government and Public Services was very committed to the Spatial Plan, both in terms of the process and the eventual product. She provided the drive both politically and in pressing officials to maintain momentum with the project. Whilst the Management Board was effectively a sounding board (rather than the sounding board), officials cleared drafts of the Plan personally with the Minister and then Cabinet Sub-committee formally considered these. The Cabinet cleared the final version of the Plan prior to its consideration and approval by the National Assembly.

In the political context in which The Spatial Plan was prepared it is evident that there can be an 'audit trail' in terms of the formal consideration of the

Plan through both the administrative and political channels. However, power is seldom mapped in such a visible way. Clearly, officials and politicians are subject to influence from a number of sources. The extent to which power has been exerted in a more covert way can be seen from the references made to bi-lateral meetings with certain key stakeholders in the Welsh policy terrain. The Assembly were very conscious about securing a degree of consensus amongst the Welsh polity. The extent to which power is a relevant consideration will be addressed in Chapter 9.

7.3.8 Conclusion on the direction setting stage

As has already been mentioned, the 'Direction Setting' phase is about developing shared interpretations about the future, especially about a common sense of direction. The collaboration model breaks this down into a series of stages – establishing ground rules; agenda setting; organising subgroups; joint information search; exploring new options; reaching agreement; and the dispersion of power. Each of these stages has been considered in relation to the policy process involved in producing the Wales Spatial Plan.

In applying the model, the Management Board was accorded a central role in the collaborative process. Indeed, the policy process was examined through the lens suggested by the model. The Board was consultative and advisory in nature rather than deliberative or instructive; it was not the final arbiter. There was a political decision-making process out with the consideration of the Spatial Plan by the Management Board. The Board never considered options or developed new policy thinking. Officials and Cabinet Sub-committee considered these aspects. During the policy formulation process the Management Board metamorphosed into one of a number of consultative organisations. The Assembly officials increasingly used a series of bi-lateral meetings with some key stakeholders to advance progress with the Plan. In this context some of the transparency that may have been evident was lost, although in some respects it was never there in the context of the operation of the Management Board because of the process by which political approval was achieved through the Cabinet Sub-committee.

In terms of content and format, the Wales Spatial Plan is very much a framework document. There were ambitions from the land-use planners to have a strategic all-Wales land use plan. Perhaps some time was used in attempting to define the scope and purpose of the Wales Spatial Plan with the result that progress was lost. In the early stages of the policy process the Spatial Plan was seen as the spatial expression of the Assembly's sustainable development duty. However, as the Plan developed it seemed to take on more of a strategic framework - coordinating role into which other policies and plans would fit and develop in more detail. Indeed, the Plan seemed to meet the need for a policy document to reflect the way in which post-devolution Wales was being managed in a more corporate way. However, there is some evidence that the Spatial Plan effectively 'ducked' some of the issues and left these to be resolved through the proposed area reference groups e.g. matters relating to infrastructure constraints and visions for the countryside and landscape.

There is evidence from the interviews that whilst sustainable development was acknowledged in spirit it was not borne out in practice. Whilst those officials on the Management Board began to appreciate the wider policy relationships, none expressly mentioned links with the Assembly's Sustainable Development Action Plan and Scheme. There was an indication from officials that much of the generally accepted sustainable development agenda would be addressed in a number of more discrete strategic policy documents (covering separately the environment, transport and the economy) that were due to emerge in the near future. There is evidence that the 'social pillar' of sustainable development was weakly represented on the Management Board and, perhaps also weakly expressed in the Spatial Plan. Some respondents pointed to a lack of connectivity between housing, economic development and transport; others pointed to a lack of consideration between access, disability and matters relating to the Welsh language. It would appear that the Spatial Plan never worked through the full implications of sustainable development in policy terms. If sustainable development was not a strong feature of the long-term policy agenda, there is evidence that some of the more immediate decisions taken by the Assembly

Government in relation to transport and development were also not necessarily consistent with the principles of sustainable development.

The exercise of power, whether overtly or otherwise, is an important consideration of any collaborative exercise and will be considered in more detail in Chapter 9. Reference has already been made to the manner in which politicians exercised power through political and administrative processes (Cabinet Sub-committee and more direct Ministerial involvement) and officials through the use of bi-lateral meetings with key stakeholders. Power is also a feature of the dynamic of formal meetings, such as those of the Management Board. Whilst it is generally recognised that some individuals by virtue of their individual personalities can exert considerable influence on the outcome of a meeting, there are other factors relating to the constituency of the representative that can influence the course of a debate. A representative of the 'environment' sector cited this feature in his reference to the difficulty that he experienced in making proactive suggestions rather than having to appear somewhat equivocal to certain matters that were under consideration.

7.4 CONCLUSION

The collaboration model provides a means for gaining an insight into the policy process. In particular, it has brought out the importance of recognising the dimension of power and the implications that this has for the public policy process. There are aspects of the model that are clearly important to the in terms of securing effective collaboration. As the study has shown, there are aspects relating, in particular, to the 'Agenda Setting' and 'Identification of Stakeholder' steps that need to be refined in order to improve the practical application of the model in managing collaborative policy making. These and other aspects are considered in more detail in Chapters 8 & 9.

CHAPTER 8:

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COLLABORATION MODEL, SPATIAL PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN WALES

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

Within the context of Objective 4, to identify the features that have emerged from the analysis of the policy process, their implications for the collaboration model, for spatial planning and sustainable development policy in Wales.

8.1 Introduction

8.2 The Problem Setting Phase

8.3 The Direction Setting Phase

8.4 Sustainable development and the policy process

8.5 The effectiveness of collaboration as a policy process: evidence from the case study

8.6 Conclusion

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The case study has revealed the complexity of policy making in an inter-organisational setting. It has also revealed some interesting features about the policy process that have implications for models of collaborative policy making. This Chapter will, therefore, look at the features that have emerged from the analysis of the policy process (discussed in the last Chapter), their implications for the collaboration model and for spatial planning and sustainable development in Wales. A summary of the collaboration model used in this study is set out in the table below.

Table 8.1 Summary of the collaboration model

PROBLEM SETTING PHASE	DIRECTION SETTING PHASE
• Common definition of the problem	• Establishing ground rules
• Commitment to collaborate	• Agenda setting
• Identification of stakeholders	• Organising sub-groups
• Legitimacy of stakeholders	• Joint information search
• Convenor characteristics	• Exploring options
• Identification of resources	• Reaching agreement
	• Dispersion of power

Source: Derived from Table 5.2

Each phase of the collaboration model relating to the formulation stages of the of the policy process and the steps identified by Gray within these two phases is now examined in the context of their implications for the collaboration model, spatial planning and sustainable development.

8.2 THE PROBLEM SETTING PHASE

As indicated in the previous Chapter, the Problem Setting phase of the collaboration model is about developing consensus – ‘getting to the table’. The Problem Setting phase is important because it gives identity to the task and establishes the basis for joint working based on common understandings about the issues that have to be considered. It is through this phase that stakeholders come to appreciate their legitimacy (in terms of their stake in the issue) and the interdependence that binds them into the process. Each of the steps identified in the model are now considered: -

Common definition of the problem

Conceptually, collaborative models would suggest that there has to be a common definition of a problem that is rooted in inter-dependence. Trust and commitment has to be built around recognition by stakeholders that their actions are inextricably linked to the actions of other stakeholders and the greater the degree of recognised interdependence among stakeholders, the greater the likelihood of initiating collaboration.

The task examined in the case study was to produce a Spatial Plan for Wales that would be the spatial expression of the Assembly Government's policies, including translating into practice the statutory duty in regard to sustainable development. The collaboration, in the form of the Management Board, was established to steer this process. The Plan was to be a collaborative venture in terms of bringing the principal stakeholders into the policy formulation stage of the process.

The Management Board was focussed on producing a Spatial Plan for Wales and was in general agreement that the Plan would be based on a 'Vision' that broadly reflected sustainable development principles. Initially, each of the stakeholders' represented their organisational constituency; over time there was a growing recognition of interdependencies, which became evident when the Board recognised that the 'social pillar' of sustainable development was weakly represented on the Board. It would be naïve to suggest that collaboration was based wholly around the task of the Wales Spatial Plan; there was a hidden agenda that revolved around ensuring that an organisation would not be disadvantaged in any way should the Plan be used for future resource allocation.

In the context of applying the collaboration model to a public policy issue it is important to recognise that working relationships are not necessarily going to be grounded in the stated objectives of the collaborative venture. There are always going to be pressures of representative constituency loyalty to be taken into account, as was demonstrated in the case study.

Commitment to collaborate

The conceptual model would suggest that sharing a common interest and concern is sufficient to induce collaboration. This aspect may be so in the context of an 'advocative collaboration'; however, in the context of public policy formulation it is necessary to look for mechanisms that can deliver a collaborative perspective. This aspect was explored in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan through the operation of the Spatial Planning Management Board.

Collaboration, therefore, in the context of public policy formulation, has to be secured by some mechanism and, as indicated in the previous section, the willingness or commitment to collaborate is likely to be driven by factors such as producing positive outcomes that serve the interests of the organisation. This would seem to suggest that it is more than simply sharing a common definition of the problem or aims and objectives of a particular policy that induces a commitment to collaborate. Rather, it is the desire to secure an interest that serves positive outcomes, be that in terms of policy or resources. This conclusion from the empirical research would tend to support Gray's contention that there are a number of other factors that are necessary to secure a commitment to collaborate. Evidence would also support Gray's contention that is necessary to enter into a collaborative framework or process to secure commitment. Whilst there was an indifference towards the Management Board per se (Chapter 7, Section 7.2.2), it was, nevertheless, acknowledged that there was a need for some form of forum that would bring stakeholders together.

Identification of stakeholders

The 'model' of collaboration suggests that the matter of who should participate in a collaborative negotiation is important in terms of the eventual outcome. The collection of stakeholders should include those whose expertise is essential to addressing the components that the collaboration is required to consider. Bringing together all the key stakeholders provides the potential for collaborative advantage, particularly where the collaboration is formed around

a 'visioning' (plan-making) process. In the context of the Wales Spatial Plan it was evident from the sustainability appraisal of the Draft Plan and comments made by Board members that the 'social pillar' of sustainable development had been underrepresented. This aspect was subsequently rectified in later appointments to the Management Board.

Underlying criteria relating to the question of who should participate in a collaborative forum, are issues relating to balance in terms of the status of those individuals that are participating in the collaboration. This aspect was specifically addressed in the research and, in the context of the case study, it can be confirmed that there was no evidence that power or status differences affected an individuals' ability to participate in discussion. However, whilst the status of individuals was not an issue, the perceived status of the organisation in terms of its representative constituency was an issue. Small organisations often feel vulnerable when collaborating with large statutory agencies (Huxham, 2000), although there was no evidence that this was the case in the Wales Spatial Plan policy process. However, the point was made during the research that it was easier for some organisations to advance their view because they effectively 'brought good news' to the table. It was also noted that a bi-lateral channel of communication was initiated with some stakeholders (perhaps perceived as having greater status or power), thereby by-passing the Management Board.

There are a number of issues that have to be considered in the light of the empirical research in relation to the collaboration model. The model is correct in assigning importance to the fact that the stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the problem under consideration. However, the stakeholder set needs to be balanced in terms of representative constituency – the issue is one of balancing the status of organisations rather than individuals. Although the research was inconclusive on this particular aspect, it did reveal an underlying issue that emerged in answers to other questions that the principal policy actors (the civil servants) did accord more status to some stakeholders than to others as revealed by the number of bi-lateral discussions that took place outside of the confines of the Management Board.

Legitimacy of stakeholders

Part of the process of identifying stakeholders is determining those who have a legitimate stake in the issue by virtue of their particular skills, interests and responsibilities. It has to be acknowledged that while individuals clearly represent their organisations and have their backing they are also there in a personal capacity and can participate in such a manner. This view is supported by the fact that when it came to consulting on the Draft Plan, the consultation replies were made on behalf of the organisation and in the case of some organisations the response was made following consideration by individual Boards of Management.

In terms of the collaboration model as presented by Gray and its development and interpretation in this study, it has to be acknowledged that the boundaries between the propositions contained within the steps covered by the respective headings 'Identification of stakeholders' and 'Legitimacy of stakeholders' need to be made clearer in applying the model to any subsequent situation. Whilst the former step relates to the organisational level, the latter step relates to individuals and their capacity to participate effectively. Nevertheless, the answers to the individual propositions provided an unintended insight into the policy process, particularly in terms how individual stakeholders perceived the role of the Management Board. The title 'Management Board' was being challenged because it was not concerned with managing the spatial planning process per se but rather it had become a sounding board and a means of keeping stakeholders on board with developing thinking. It was certainly not fulfilling the role as facilitating collaboration.

Convenor characteristics

An important step in the Problem Setting phase of the collaborative process is the identification and bringing together of the legitimate stakeholders. Convenors require a legitimacy to exercise 'convening power', which can be derived from a number of sources such as formal office, reputation and experience.

The model of collaboration outlined by Gray (1989) suggests that 'convenors require convening power, that is the ability to induce stakeholders to participate' (ibid. p. 71). The interviews support this aspect of the model and confirm that it was appropriate for the Assembly Government to undertake this role. However, the empirical evidence would seem to suggest that in addition to 'convening power' it is necessary to consider the status of the convenor because of the signals that this gives to all parties directly involved in the collaborative process and to those outside the collaboration but nevertheless having an interest in the proceedings or likely to be affected by its outcome. It was suggested that there should have been Ministerial or third party involvement in chairing this aspect of the policy process.

Identification of resources

The model recognises the importance of resources both in terms of launching the collaborative process and recognising that participating in collaboration will incur costs. In terms of applying the collaboration model to the public policy process it is necessary to take account of the resources employed in managing and administering the collaborative process.

This aspect was explored in the case study in more detailed terms, reflecting the fact the collaboration was based on a public policy process. The resource issue was explored in terms of the resources committed to the policy process and in terms of the extent of the public participation process. In terms of the resource consideration, the staffing levels supporting the spatial planning process were fairly tight, whereas, there was a reasonable budget to spend on research and consultancy services, which assisted with the public participation process (according to one Civil Servant involved in managing the process). The replies also indicated that the term public participation is misplaced; reference should have been made to stakeholder consultation because the wider public were not engaged in the process, although they were not precluded from making representation. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged that the 'consultation workshops' did engage a number of stakeholder groups.

In terms of applying the collaboration model to public policy it is important to recognise that the resource issue extends beyond the resources necessary to enable stakeholders to participate in the policy process, it also requires an acknowledgement that collaborative policy making requires resources to administer and manage the process as well as resources to fund consumables such as research and information.

Sustainable development and the Problem Setting phase

The issue of sustainable development was specifically addressed within the context of the step identified as 'Common definition of the issue' in the model of collaboration. Evidence demonstrates that there was general agreement that the Plan should be based on sustainable development principles and there was agreement, amongst stakeholders (both Board and non-Board), on the meaning of sustainable development. However, it has to be acknowledged that sustainable development was one of many issues that Spatial Plan had to consider.

There was no specific 'champion' on the Board representing sustainable development. Arguably, if the Spatial Plan was to be the spatial expression of the Assembly Government's policies including sustainable development then there should have been representation of this particular policy theme on the Management Board to ensure that the cross-cutting implications of sustainable development are taken into account in policy formulation. As already indicated, the empirical research has revealed that individual stakeholders were keen to protect their own interests and those of the organisations that they represented. There was an underlying concern that the real intention of the Plan was that it would be used for the future allocation of resources.

It is recognised that many of the stakeholder organisations represented on the Management Board had sustainable development strategies and/or action plans. They were clearly aware of what sustainable development meant in policy terms. However, there is no evidence in the Minutes of the Management Board that there was any serious discussion of sustainable

development and the implications that this would have for spatial planning in Wales. This raises the issue of representation and the composition of collaborative fora, particularly where they are engaged in public policy formulation and they have to address cross-cutting policy issues. This aspect will be addressed in the next Chapter.

The issue of sustainable development will be considered again within the Direction Setting phase of the collaboration model.

8.3 THE DIRECTION SETTING PHASE

The Direction Setting phase of the collaborative model is about identifying the issues that will form the basis of the collaboration. In the ideal state, stakeholders will articulate the values and issues that are part of their representative constituency and begin to identify and appreciate a sense of common purpose. Again, each of the steps within the Direction Setting phase are now considered from the perspective of their implications for the collaboration model and for spatial planning and sustainable development in Wales.

Establishing ground rules

Establishing ground rules are an essential component of the collaboration process. Ground rules can remove uncertainty for participants and help facilitate the development of coincident values.

This aspect was explored in the case study through a number of propositions relating to the establishment of the Spatial Planning Management Board. The model of collaboration is correct to recognise the importance of those steps relating to the establishment of ground rules, particularly that group of issues relating to procedural guidelines, working arrangements, terms of reference and aims and objectives. However, in terms of their operation, as evidenced in the context of the Wales Spatial Plan, there is clearly a need to recognise that these should be revisited and confirmed (or otherwise) as the project develops, particularly in instances where changes in administrative responsibility and leadership are concerned. The dynamics of the

collaborative process are such that leadership provided by the convenor may change over time (as happened with the Wales Spatial Plan over its four years of gestation) and this can have implications for the way in which the collaboration may operate.

This particular aspect was evident in the Spatial Plan policy process. The individual acting as convenor changed three times and there were also some changes in the persona on the Board. There is evidence that the terms of reference changed informally or at least became blurred over time with the result that the Board's focus shifted from the original terms of reference and that it became marginalized within the overall policy process with tendency towards selective bi-lateral meetings with some stakeholders.

In terms of the model it is important to clarify and reconfirm the terms of reference in instances where the policy process may be extended over a long period of time. However, this cannot overcome the tendency within a political policy environment to open bi-lateral meetings with those stakeholders where it is anticipated that there are likely to be sensitivities. These factors challenge some of the basic underlying principles embedded in the collaboration theory, especially those relating to trust, openness and transparency.

Agenda setting

Agenda setting is important because it has to define the substantive aspects of the collaboration. It is the basis of agreeing vision and joint purpose.

Empirical evidence suggests that this is a critical step within the collaboration process. In terms of the Wales Spatial Plan, although there was some agreement on the scope and purpose of the Plan, it is considered that more time should have been given to defining the purpose of a spatial plan and the features that make it different to a land use plan (Development Plan). Spatial planning was a new policy concept and its role and purpose were not always made clear or perhaps appreciated by some policy actors.

It was recognised that the agenda setting phase can sometimes be incomplete because new issues can arise as a result of information and research. Whilst there was a general agreement with the principle of increasing Board membership to reflect new or emergent issues, analysis of the answers indicates that more attention should have been given at the outset to the 'Identification of stakeholders' step in making sure that there is appropriate levels of representation to match the scope and content of the collaboration. In terms of the model this does suggest that there should be closer links between the steps concerned with 'Agenda setting', 'Common definition of the problem' and 'Identification of stakeholders'.

Organising subgroups

Sub-groups are a means that can be employed to allow consideration of discrete or well-defined issues in parallel with plenary group work. They were not considered in the Wales Spatial Plan policy process because of the resource implications of servicing them. However, the use of sub-groups could be important in terms of dealing with cross-cutting policy issues and issues of a strategic nature, as the answers to the propositions reveal. Nevertheless, they have resource implications, especially from a management perspective, and these need to be recognised and, possibly, considered at the Agenda Setting step.

Joint Information search

In the context of the model of collaboration, joint information search is an important ingredient in consensus building because it supports problem definition and assists in proposing solutions. It is also seen as part of creating a basis for increased trust amongst the involved parties. In the context of the Wales Spatial Plan, this aspect was explored by looking at links between Spatial Planning and other policy areas and an appreciation of these interrelationships and the need for policy integration. Other considerations relate to the extent to which commissioned research and issues raised from stakeholder consultation led to informed debate.

In terms of links between the Spatial Plan and other Assembly Government policy areas there is some evidence to link the Spatial Plan with various administrative divisions. There was not a ready acceptance of spatial planning as a policy tool but the process was driven positively from the centre by a Minister who was strongly committed to spatial planning as an instrument of policy integration. However, there was no direct reference to the Sustainable Development Unit neither was there any reference to the Sustainable Development Scheme. This again confirms the emerging view from this research that there is a need to have a 'champion' representing cross-cutting policy measures if the subject is to be prevented from being lost in the more detailed policy subject areas.

The Assembly Government commissioned research to support the plan-making process. This research clearly informed the officials, however, it was not shared with the Management Board in terms of informing its discussions. The Board had only seen a draft version of the Plan – and this only related to the Consultation edition and not the final version of the Wales Spatial Plan. Reports on the stakeholder consultation process also informed the policy making process.

Joint information search clearly supports the problem definition step in overall collaboration process because of its role in informing and updating the evidence upon which conclusions are reached.

Exploring new options

The model of collaboration correctly highlights the importance of 'exploring options' in the collaboration process, particularly as the process is supposed to allow new issues and options to emerge and be considered in an open and transparent way. However, in the public policy domain, as the evidence from the case study has shown, the consideration of options often belongs to the political process (not to an appointed Board). From a general perspective in public policy making, it would, therefore, be appropriate for the board to consider options and make recommendations but a decision on the final outcome properly belongs to the political process.

Another aspect considered under the heading of 'Exploring new options' was the extent to which the collaborative policy process generated new policy thinking. There was a general agreement that the process was fruitful in this regard, although a number of qualifications were mentioned with regard to the source i.e. whether it was the Management Board or whether it was the Workshops that had responsibility for generating new issues for consideration. Clearly, collaborative policy fora have the potential to develop and consider alternative approaches; indeed, this is one of the potential benefits of collaborative policy making.

Reaching Agreement

In the public policy context, the 'reaching the agreement' step in the collaborative model is clearly in the realm of the political process. In the context of the Wales Spatial Plan this was achieved through Cabinet and, ultimately, in Plenary Session of the National Assembly. However, stakeholders (both Board and non-Board) were asked to consider a number of matters relating to the Plan. The propositions, presented to respondents to capture their views, were intended to draw out features relating to the finalisation of a public policy statement e.g. commitment, achievability, ability to deal with difficult and conflicting issues and whether or not sustainable development was given sufficient profile or attention consistent with its status as a cross-cutting policy theme and whether or not the Spatial Plan reflected the views of the Board.

The detailed response to these propositions was considered in the last Chapter (Section 7.3.6). However, it can be concluded that the collaboration process established to produce the Wales Spatial Plan did engage a number of hitherto isolated policy silos (Welsh Assembly Government Policy Divisions) into a wider policy forum, achieving a measure of sectoral identification within a spatial planning framework. The process did not secure the degree of policy integration that might be expected of a spatial plan. It left a number of issues effectively on the table for other strategic sectoral plans to address. For example, the relationship between housing and economic

development, decoupling economic growth from traffic growth, marine and coastal issues were never addressed in any detail. The Board were never invited to address or advise on these issues, with the result that one of the benefits of such a collaborative forum was never effectively utilised. Again, answers to propositions raised under this heading point to a by-passing of the Board as an advisory mechanism. The issue of sustainable development is considered separately at the end of this Chapter.

In terms of the collaboration model, the approval of the Wales Spatial Plan concludes this particular step (Reaching agreement) in the process. Approval of the Plan has effectively created a framework within which more detailed proposals can be considered or worked out. This is a matter for consideration under the Structuring or Implementation Phase of the Collaboration model, which is currently underway; it does not fall within the context of this research.

Dispersion of power

The effect of power on collaborative processes was discussed in some depth in Chapter 4. Two aspects of power were singled out for consideration in terms of the collaboration model – the extent to which a particular stakeholder may dominate the policy process and role of the convenor in allowing full discussions. In terms of the latter aspect of power, there was general agreement in relation to the case study that the convenor was even-handed and genuinely sought a contribution from all parties. However, as already referred to above, in the political environment in which public policy is made power is clearly exercised by Ministers. The Assembly Government was clearly making decisions on outcomes. However, the extent to which this power was exercised was determined to some extent by the influence that individual stakeholders had with particular Ministers. Clearly, economic interests and the interests of local government were influential in political terms as exhibited by the reference to bi-lateral meetings that took place between officials and these particular organisations. This aspect confirms the view of power suggested by Faucault (and discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.11) that power is a network spread throughout society and flows from one point or area to another depending on changing alliances and circumstances.

One aspect of power that is not recognised in the literature and became evident as a result of the empirical research relates to the extent to which some participants in a collaborative forum are able to advocate their case by virtue of the nature or size of their representative constituency. Another aspect, referred to above, relates to the extent to which some stakeholders are engaged in the process through bi-lateral meetings. These aspects have to be taken into account in appraising the use of collaborative models in a public policy context.

Sustainable development and the Direction Setting Phase

In the Problem Setting Phase empirical evidence indicated that there was general agreement that the Plan should be based on sustainable development principles. However, there was no 'champion' of sustainable development on the Management Board. In the Direction Setting Phase consideration of sustainable development in the model is raised under the headings ('steps') of 'exploring options' and 'reaching agreement'.

The evidence from the interviews has indicated that there was not a clear view on whether sustainable development had been adequately addressed in the Approved Plan. There was an agreement that the framework had been created, but the extent to which the policy process led to a better understanding of sustainable development was doubted by some Assembly officials and others felt that the implications of sustainable development had not been worked through. Some reserved judgement until the Implementation Phase had been completed.

In spite of there being no 'champion' of sustainable development on the Board, there was an indication from the questionnaire (i.e. from scores given to the proposition by respondents) that the process had resulted in a higher profile being given to sustainable development in the policy process. However, in qualitative terms the answer was less clear-cut. Sustainable development seemed a difficult concept to accommodate in policy terms.

There was certainly an awareness of sustainable development but the full implications were not worked through in policy terms.

This uncertainty in relation to sustainable development and the part it can play in spatial planning can be attributed in some part to the composition of the Management Board. As already indicated, there was no 'champion' of sustainable development in the form of a specific representation on the Board. In addition, for most of its life the Board was weakly represented from the 'social pillar' of sustainable development. Within the political process, at Ministerial level, there is no evidence that the sustainable development aspect was a foremost consideration. This suggests that the Agenda Setting stage was inadequate in terms of scoping the issues but it also suggests that there should be closer links between the Agenda Setting, Common Definition of Problem and Identification of Stakeholder steps within the collaboration model. This point will be addressed in the next Chapter.

8.4 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE POLICY PROCESS

As already indicated, in terms of the overall spatial vision, the Wales Spatial Plan is consistent with the basic principles of sustainable development set out in Chapter 3. However, evidence from the interviews indicates that sustainable development was but one consideration in the policy process. The process never really considered some of the critical choices that would have been necessary if the actions were going to achieve the 'Spatial Vision' set out in the Plan. Evidence, derived from the interviews, suggests that the Plan became essentially a 'framework document', the detailed content of which would be worked out through the Area Groups. Moreover, the detailed strategic considerations that would be applicable to a vision of a 'sustainable Wales' were being left to emerging strategies concerned with the environment, the economy and transportation. This fact gives further support to the contention that the Wales Spatial Plan may well have considered some of the principles of sustainable development at the Workshops but the details were not taken forward through the policy process (including discussions within the Management Board) and incorporated into the final plan. Evidence supports the view that the Management Board certainly recognised the need

to acknowledge sustainable development and were aware of its meaning in definitional terms; they felt that the policy process had given recognition to sustainable development but the implications of this policy theme had not been debated or worked through.

It can be deduced from this discussion that sustainable development almost became a 'side issue' in the policy process. This is because sustainable development was but one element in the context of the wider issues that the Spatial Plan was required to address (although it should be noted from earlier discussions in Chapter 5 that the UK Government regards spatial planning as being at the heart of planning for sustainable development). In the Assembly Government's view there is an intention that the Wales Spatial Plan would be the spatial expression of the Assembly's Sustainable Development Scheme. Indeed, it was originally trailed as the 'Pathway to Sustainable Development' in the Assembly's original consultation document (National Assembly for Wales, 2001), which sought views on the content and issues that the Spatial Plan would be required to address. However, sustainable development became a (and not the) feature of the Plan, as evidenced by the overall 'Vision Statement' and the 'policy actions'. The Plan very much became a framework or coordinating document that reflected the emerging corporate governance of Wales in a post-devolution setting. The Draft Plan Consultation report (Welsh Assembly Government, 2003) was the subject of a sustainability appraisal that gave it 'fair' to 'good' ratings, apart from the social and health topics that were seen as weak. This aspect probably also reflected the weakness of the Management Board in terms of representation from these sectors.

It can be concluded, therefore, that sustainable development was recognised in the Wales Spatial Plan, but it was not the guiding principle in terms of policy formulation but rather one of a number of components that had to be considered in the overall plan-making context. The Assembly Government had the organisational policy framework to deliver sustainable development through the policy making process involved in producing the Wales Spatial Plan but this was never fully utilised. As Brundtland points out '...painful

choices have to be made ...[but]...in the final analysis, sustainable development must rest on political will' (WECD, 1987, p.9). The research to some extent supports the conclusions that emerged from the discussion of sustainable development in Chapter 3, namely that: -

- sustainable development is a broad orientation towards policy rather than a policy in itself;
- sustainable development presents an overarching framework within which individual elements of the policy can be considered and redefined;
- sustainable development involves strategic planning because it involves wide ranging objectives, broad areas of policy and long-range goals;
- sustainable development is a process and involves continuity and adaptation requiring joint action by numerous actors;
- the concept of sustainable development is contestable by its nature and the triune characteristics inevitably produce tensions in policy terms.

It is the nature of the concept of sustainable development that presents difficulties in accommodating it in policy terms. Spatial Planning provides a framework in which to accommodate sustainable development in strategic policy terms but, as the research has shown, attention has to be given to the policy process and, in particular, to the actors involved in that process. The research supports Brundtland's view that it is the way in which the policy process is conducted that makes it an important aspect of sustainable development.

8.5 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COLLABORATION AS A PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS: EVIDENCE FROM THE CASE STUDY

In looking at the effectiveness of collaboration as a policy process it is considered helpful to consider two aspects; firstly, the policy infrastructure and, secondly, the policy process and outcomes.

8.5.1 Policy infrastructure

In terms of the case study, the policy infrastructure comprises the 'Arena', which is the National Assembly and the Welsh Assembly Government manifest in the Cabinet and Cabinet Sub-committee; the 'Forum', which is the Spatial Planning Management Board; and the 'Convenor', which is the Assembly Government in the form of the officials who chaired the Management Board

Thus, as was seen in Chapter 7, members of the Spatial Planning Management Board were used as a means of identifying the principal stakeholders who would be involved in implementing the proposals contained in the Wales Spatial Plan. It was recognised, however, that there might be other stakeholders outside of the 'Forum' who could legitimately claim a place on the Management Board. A small sample of this group was included in the study to provide an alternative perspective of the policy process. The role of 'Convenor' is applied to an individual or organisation and in this study that role was accorded to the Welsh Assembly Government exercised by the official who chaired the Management Board.

In looking at the policy process *ex ante*, the Spatial Planning Management Board was identified as the 'forum' for stakeholder representation and charged with role of considering and advising on the management, scope, form and content of the Spatial Plan. However, the study revealed that the term 'Management Board' was a misnomer to the extent that it was neither a 'Board' nor was it effectively engaged in 'management'. In essence, it was a consultative mechanism or a sounding board. As the policy process progressed, the Management Board was frequently by-passed in favour of bilateral meetings with individual key stakeholders and Ministers. Moreover, it was the Cabinet Sub-committee that gave the overall direction on the form and content of the Spatial Plan. The Management Board never considered options or developed new policy thinking. Officials drafted the Spatial Plan, which was subsequently considered and approved by the Cabinet Sub-committee and the Cabinet before finally being considered and approved by the National Assembly in plenary session.

This analysis shows that in the context of public policy formulation attention has to be focussed on the political dimension. Collaboration did not take place in a 'forum', as postulated in the collaborative model, nor was it evident (or transparent) in the political arena. What is clear is that politicians (and, therefore, Assembly officials) had concerns that were tested out in a series of bi-lateral meetings to enable some sort of consensus to be achieved. There is not one forum for collaboration but a number, where issues are considered. This process, however, cannot be regarded as collaborative in the terms defined in Chapter 4 (Gray, 1985, 1989; Wood & Gray, 1991) because the stakeholders in the 'forum' (the Spatial Planning Management Board) were not totally involved in some of the key stages of the collaboration process, for example, they were never asked to consider options of reframe the problem.

The matter referred to in the previous paragraph also questions some of the underlying philosophy of collaborative approaches to public policy making, namely that the discourse is open and that collaboration is a transparent process based on knowledge and understanding. There are aspects of power that are inherent in the political, social, economic and environmental infrastructure that render an acceptance of public policy making based on collaborative theories and models questionable (these are considered in the next chapter). There was, most significantly, a political process that existed in parallel to the consideration of issues by stakeholders in the context of the Management Board.

The Assembly Government provided support and facilitated the spatial planning process, although there was some concern about the level of resources applied to the direct production of the Plan. The Spatial Plan was based on a considerable amount of research and input from wider policy communities at the Spatial Plan Workshops and these then informed the officials preparing the Plan. However, in terms of stakeholders collectively reaching decisions within the context of the Management Board then this dimension was absent. The point has already been made that the Management Board never considered options or alternatives; it was merely

advisory and consultative in its function. There is no evidence that options or alternatives were considered in any other forum.

The process did, however, generate considerable interest amongst diverse policy communities within the Assembly Government. It created an awareness of interrelationships between various policy areas, although the depth or extent of this aspect was difficult to judge from the empirical evidence. For example, those working in the health sector were certainly becoming more aware of the need to engage on a wider policy terrain. The spatial planning process had also drawn more officials working in diverse policy areas into a more corporate policy framework which was at least, in part, engendered by the Spatial Plan policy making process. The Minister (for Finance, Local Government and Public Services) also assisted this process by ensuring corporate ownership of the Plan both at Ministerial level and in promoting the Plan as a corporate policy tool within the higher echelons of the Assembly Government Civil Service. It was also becoming clear that the Wales Spatial Plan was going to be used in the resource allocation process and this, undoubtedly, created a nexus between various policy divisions and Spatial Planning Unit.

In terms of a theory of policy making, it can be concluded that the collaboration model cannot, however, be regarded as being reflective of the actual policy making process in the context of advancing shared visions (plan-making) because it does not adequately reflect the dimensions of policy making in a public policy setting. More specifically, given the political environment in which public policy is made, it is questionable whether collaboration is, indeed, the correct term to describe the policy process. It is also questionable whether agreement can be reached through consensus; the outcome of the process may represent a less than optimal position where goals and objectives and the terminology and wording may be written ambiguously to reach agreement. For example, reference was made in Chapter 3 that some writers felt that the Brundtland definition of sustainable development represented 'political fudge'.

In spite of the points made above, the collaboration model suggests that it is a useful means by which the policy process can be examined and it is a useful means of operationalising a policy process where consideration has to be given to stakeholder engagement. In many ways it provides another dimension to the 'Stages Approach' by setting out a series of elements that should be considered in the 'Initiation' and 'Formulation' stages of the policy process.

8.5.2 Evaluating the collaborative policy process

In evaluating the collaborative process per se, Innes & Booher (1999, p.419) suggest that the process can be judged by certain criteria. Table 8. 2 below provides an assessment of the policy process used to produce the Wales Spatial Plan set against the criteria suggested by Innes & Booher. Judged against these criteria the collaborative process was only partially successful. Viewed from this perspective again highlights some of the facts identified earlier: - that the Board was not balanced in terms of representation from the 'social' pillar of sustainable development; that the Board was consultative rather than deliberative and it was frequently by-passed as is evidenced from the increasing use of bi-lateral meetings; that the plan-making process was well supported in terms of research information but that this information was not used to generate options that might have been considered by the Management Board, given its terms of reference; and that the Board was not represented at a senior management level.

Table 8.2 Evaluating the collaborative process

PROCESS CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WALES SPATIAL PLAN
1. Includes representatives of all relevant & significantly different interests	The Spatial Planning Management Board was not well represented in terms of the 'social pillar' of sustainable development. It was also suggested that given the importance given to sustainable development in the Assembly's policy hierarchy that this particular policy interest should have been represented on the Management Board.
2. Is driven by a purpose and a task that are real, practical, and shared by the group	The Management Board was given clear terms of reference, which were accepted by the Board. Overtime, however, it became evident that other, less formal processes, including the use of bi-lateral meetings with certain stakeholders, had replaced the Board's formal role.
3. Is self-organising, allowing participants' to decide on ground rules, objectives, tasks, working groups, and discussion topics	The Management Board was neither a Board of really engaged in managing the project. It was a consultative rather than deliberative or decision-making forum.
4. Engages participants, keeping them at the table, interested, and learning through in-depth discussion, drama, humour and informal interaction	Board meetings were well attended. The Board did not include senior management or chief executive levels; representation was generally at the level of senior policy officer. However, the Spatial Planning Workshops, organised for the wider community of stakeholders, provided an opportunity for a wider public engagement.
5. Encourage challenges to the status quo and fosters creative thinking	The Board were not presented with issues that required creative thinking. They received reports on various issues but were never required to consider policy options.
6. Incorporates high quality information of many types and assures agreement on its meaning	The Spatial Plan was based on research and the generation and testing of scenarios undertaken by consultants as part of an initial round of consultation. It was also informed by the results of the 2001 Census of Population. It was intended that the Plan would be evidenced based.
7. Seeks consensus only after discussions have fully explored the issues and interests and significant effort has been made to find creative responses to differences	The Spatial Plan was produced in a political environment and therefore had to reflect the aims and aspirations of the Assembly Government. A measure of agreement with some stakeholders was sought by means of bi-lateral meetings

Source: Innes & Booher, 1999

8.5.3 Evaluating collaborative outcomes

Innes & Booher (1999) suggest that some outcomes of collaborative processes only become evident at the end of the project or, in this case, a certain stage in the policy process. Other outcomes may only be evident in the longer term, outside the immediate boundaries of the project, perhaps in the Implementation phase. As already indicated, this study has only covered the Policy Initiation and Formulation stages of the Wales Spatial Plan, which

in terms of the collaboration model covers the Problem Setting and Direction Setting phases. The Structuring or Implementation phase is outside of the scope of this study because at the time that the research was undertaken these stages of the Wales Spatial Plan had not been initiated. Again, drawing on the work of Innes & Booher, a number of criteria can be identified from which some conclusions about the collaboration process in terms of outcomes can be judged. These are set out in Table 8.3 below.

Table 8.3: Evaluating outcomes of collaborative policy making

OUTCOME CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WALES SPATIAL PLAN
1. Building social and intellectual capital	<p>There is evidence from the interviews with Assembly officials that the process introduced staff to each other and created an awareness of interrelationships between different policy areas. A number of research studies were commissioned at the inception stage of the Plan to inform the process about different spatial planning perspectives (c.f. Chapter 6). A GIS database was created as part of the process, however, there is no evidence that was extensively used in the final plan, although it was used and referred to at some of the workshops.</p>
2. Developing agreements and strategies	<p>Although this aspect of the policy process is strictly outside the scope of this study, Area Groups that were established as part of the implementation process have begun to develop a series of project implementation tools that will effectively become agreements to secure project implementation. The Wales Spatial Plan referred to both the emerging economic and environmental strategies as defining in more detail the matters that would be considered within the context of a more focussed strategy.</p>
3. New partnerships and joint action	<p>One of the stated benefits of collaboration is the formation of new partnerships. Again, this phase lies outside the scope of this study and is really part of the Structuring or Implementation phase. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to consider this outcome of the collaborative process at this juncture because the formation of a national (all-Wales) steering group and regional area groups were the subject of a workshop following the publication of the Approved Plan. The Plan was seen as providing an agenda for integrated working between the Assembly and important policy actors such as local government.</p>
4. Changes in perceptions and practices	<p>The Welsh Assembly Government have been active in developing a policy integration tool to assist the strategic policy process, especially in terms of those policies such as sustainable development that are cross-cutting. The Wales Spatial Plan is also concerned with developing a collaborative policy framework especially for those spatial areas that are experiencing multiple problems, such as the South Wales Valleys. The collaborative approach to policy implementation envisaged in the Spatial Plan is also accompanied by other policy initiatives such as <i>'Making / Delivering the Connections'</i> (WAG, 2004, 2005), where the intention is to derive benefits from the resources of the Welsh public service. This is an attempt to improve service delivery through the scale economies of more effective co-operation and co-ordination between agencies across the whole public sector. Although these initiatives do not directly arise out of the Spatial Plan, they are, nevertheless part of the overall philosophy of collaborative governance that is being developed in the Welsh policy terrain.</p>
5. New collaborations	<p>It is too early to identify new collaborations that could be attributed to the spatial planning process. It would be expected to find evidence of these in the Structuring or Implementation phase. Nevertheless, it was the clear intention of the Spatial Plan that sector collaboration was being sought to drive the Plan forwards.</p>

Source: Innes & Booher, 1999; Author

It is evident from the interviews that there is a will to engage in the implementation phase of the Plan as defined by the proposed National Spatial Planning Group and Area Groups. One of the stated benefits of a collaborative policy making exercise is that the process builds up social, intellectual, and political capital (e.g. Healey, 1997b, p.311). The extent to which this is directly attributable to the outcome of the collaborative policy-making is difficult to say. Indeed, there is some doubt as to whether the Spatial Plan making process was collaborative in the terms described by Gray and other writers. However, in some respects, the desire for collaborative working may reflect the more corporate way in which Wales' is being managed in the post - devolution setting and, in other respects, it may also be attributable to resource dependency on the Welsh Assembly Government.

In addressing the question of whether or not the collaboration could be regarded as a success, it would have to be acknowledged that the process associated with the production of the Wales Spatial Plan was not one of unconstrained collaboration. As already mentioned, the empirical evidence indicates that the exercise of power within the political environment that major policy documents are produced will always have an influence on the process and the eventual outcome of the policy document. In terms of the criteria suggested by Innes & Booher set out in Table 8.2, it would be reasonable to conclude that the collaborative process was not wholly successful. However, collaboration (in the wider sense of the term) is being actively encouraged by the Assembly Government in its desire to deliver public services more efficiently and effectively throughout the combined efforts of the whole of the Welsh public sector.

8.6 CONCLUSION

Looking at the Wales spatial planning policy process through the lens of the collaboration model has revealed a number of features about both the policy process and the structure and operation of the model that have implications in terms of its wider application to similar cross-cutting themes.

The case study has shown that it is possible to use the collaborative model as a means for understanding and gaining insight to the policy process. As discussed in Chapter 5, the methodology involved getting reactions (in the form of a score) to a series of propositions and then asking respondents to explain their reasoning for giving a particular score. In this way a picture has emerged about the policy process that focussed on the interpretation from the perspective of an individual. Collaborative models, therefore, not only allow the focus to be on inter-organisational behaviour but also to focus on the mechanisms of the policy process as well as the substance or content of policies.

In terms of issues relating to the collaboration model that they have implications for the consideration of similar cross-cutting themes in other collaborative policy making forums, the following are relevant: -

- There is a strong relationship between the 'Common definition of the problem', 'Identification of stakeholders' and the 'Agenda Setting' steps of the collaboration model;
- 'Agenda Setting' is an important step because, amongst other things, it defines the substantive aspects of the collaboration and hence the important link with those who will be engaged in the collaboration;
- Closely related to the Agenda Setting step are those steps that are effectively concerned with managing the process, such as 'Organisation of sub-groups', 'Joint information search' and consideration of 'Resources';
- 'Dispersion or more particularly the disposition of power' is another aspect that has to be considered in framing collaboration ventures. In public policy making this is particularly important because of the influence of the political process. However, as shown in the case study, power can make its influence felt in a number of ways and undermine some of the underlying assumptions of the collaboration model. For example, it was shown that some stakeholders had more power by virtue of their representative constituency and that this meant that their views were accorded more status;

- Finally, in the context of cross-cutting policy themes it is easy for this aspect to get lost when the policy process is having to reconcile a number of differing interests. In the case of sustainable development it would have been helpful to have a 'champion' on the Management Board to represent this particular aspect of public policy.

These issues are considered further in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 9:

CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER OBJECTIVE:

To set out the overall conclusions, drawing together the principal research themes and findings arising from the study; to suggest how the model of collaboration can be modified and applied in other situations where the inter-organisational dimension is a relevant factor in delivering cross-cutting public policy; to reflect on the research and the methodology; and to make recommendations.

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Summary of research

9.3 Evaluation of research objectives

9.4 Conclusion

9.5 Reflections on the research methodology

9.6 Recommendations and final conclusions

9.1 INTRODUCTION

This Chapter sets out the final conclusions of the thesis. It revisits the research aim and objectives and evaluates the findings of the research based on the conclusions of the case study against the objectives. A number of recommendations are made in the light of this research both in terms of sustainable development and spatial planning policy and for further research on the subject of collaborative public policy making.

9.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

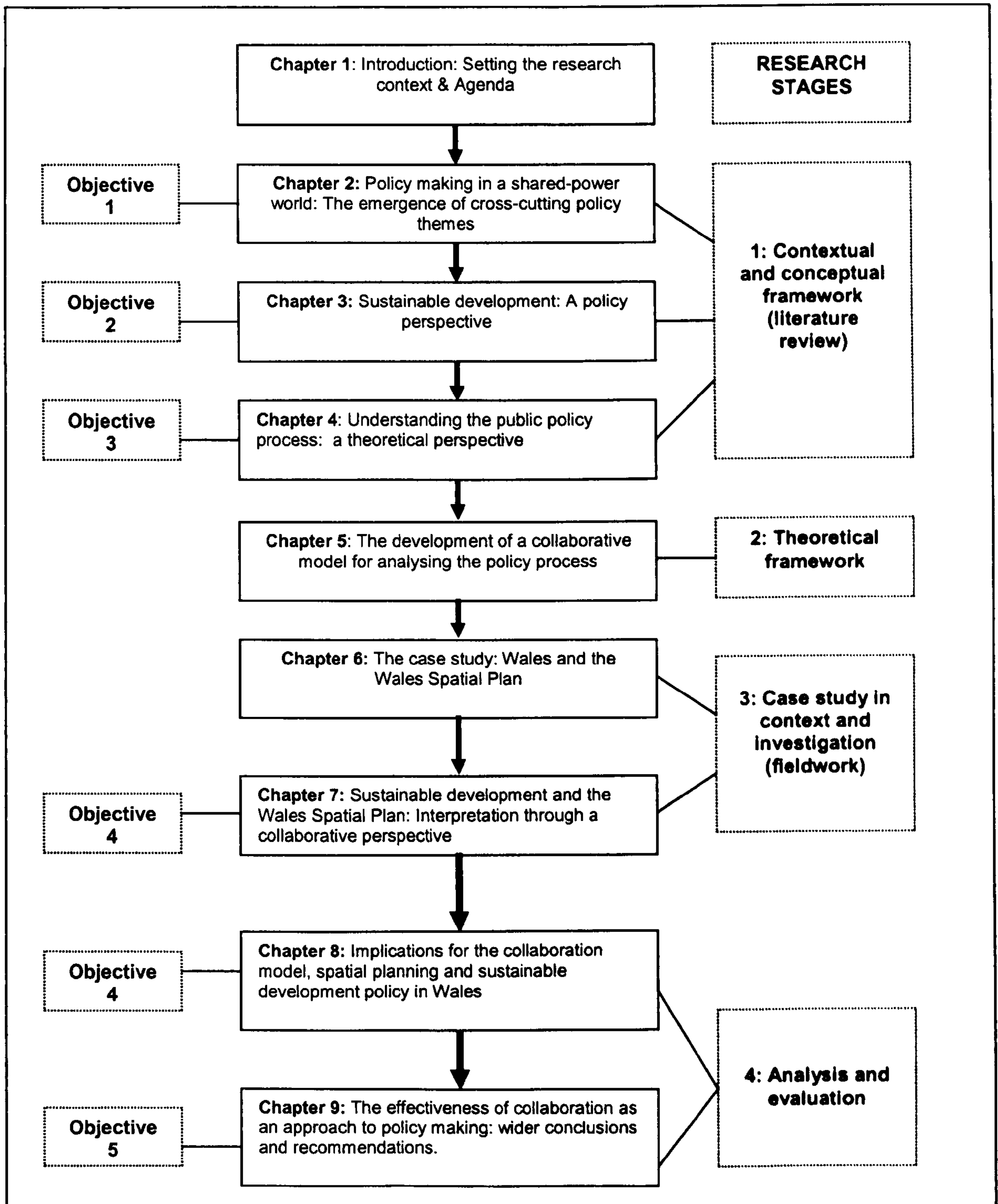
As set out in Chapter 1, the aim of this thesis is **to develop a useful analytical model for understanding the policy process for developing strategic cross-cutting policy themes, such sustainable development.**

The following research objectives support this aim: -

1. To examine why changing structures of government and the emergence of a new appreciation of cross-cutting policy themes are requiring a changed approach to policy development and delivery.
2. To establish why sustainable development can be considered to be an example of a cross-cutting policy theme.
3. To examine theories of policy analysis and, in particular, to identify whether there is a model of collaboration that can provide a suitable framework for considering the policy process in relation to cross-cutting policy themes.
4. To assess the appropriateness and value of the collaboration model in explaining the policy process in relation to collaborative policy making and sustainable development policy formulation in Wales.
5. To assess the effectiveness of a collaborative approach to public policy making in terms of its wider application to similar cross-cutting policy themes.

To provide a context for this concluding Chapter, Figure 9.1 repeats Figure 1.1 set out in Chapter 1. This illustrates the research strategy and relates it to the structure of the thesis. Each of the four stages of the research strategy are linked to the particular chapter outputs and, in turn, these are related to the detailed objectives that support the overall research aim.

Fig. 1.1 Research Strategy and Structure of Thesis



Source: Author

A discussion of the ways in which each objective has been addressed and how the research has fulfilled the research aim now follows.

9.3 EVALUATION OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1: To examine why changing structures of government and the emergence of a new appreciation of cross-cutting policy themes are requiring a changed approach to policy development and delivery.

This objective formed part of the contextual framework for the research and was addressed in Chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 focussed specifically on the structural aspects of government and governance and Chapter 3 on those features of sustainable development that define it as a cross-cutting policy theme. The research context was set by a number of factors, the most important being the changing role of the state and the emergence of new ways of developing and delivering public services, characterised by the term governance; the transfer of powers both upwards and downwards also referred to as 'hollowing out of the state'; globalisation and increasing interrelatedness; and the emergence of a new breed of public policy referred to as cross-cutting public policy themes.

It was seen in Chapter 2 that over the last 50 years the role of the State has changed from that of provider to that of enabler. The boundaries between the public, private and voluntary sectors have become less clear. In addition, this process has been accompanied by the transfer of powers upwards to the European Commission and downwards to devolved administrations. Modern government does not possess all the resources and knowledge to formulate and implement its policies. It is increasingly concerned with tackling broad policy issues and it has recognised the need to ensure that 'policy making is more joined up and strategic'. This emphasis on holistic government requires a shift from departmental hierarchies toward horizontal working between government departments and agencies and, externally, with a wide range of organisations.

The problem solving capacity of governments is now dispersed amongst a number of organisations. Policy formulation and implementation often requires the engagement of multiple actors. Because the formulation and implementation of public policy increasingly involves different levels of

government and agencies as well as interactions between the public, private and voluntary sectors, the focus of attention is on the inter-organisational dimension. The issue is one of securing coordination and control in a highly fragmented and pluralistic policy and decision-making system.

In this context, collaboration is increasingly being seen as a solution to those problems that cut across functional boundaries. Collaboration is one strategy that can be used to improve policy making and implementation in complex organisational settings. Collaboration is clearly a practical concern but the process is not well expressed or understood, '... the collaborative agenda for public purpose has been both under-theorised and overlooked' (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002, p. 10). This research, therefore, was concerned with investigating the use of collaboration theory in a public policy setting where collaborative policy making is a consequence of legislation. In Wales (the specific focus of this research), the Government of Wales Act, 1998, requires the National Assembly for Wales to work in formal partnership with the voluntary sector, local government, and business.

OBJECTIVE 2: To establish why sustainable development can be considered to be an example of a cross-cutting policy theme.

As indicated above, there are two aspects to the contextual setting in which collaborative policy making has emerged as a subject for investigation. The first aspect was in the context of the changing structures of government. The second aspect relates to the emergence of a new breed of public policy often referred to as 'cross-cutting policies'. A characteristic of these cross-cutting policies is that they are inherently complex and that they do not fit easily within the boundaries of traditional government administrative jurisdictions. These policies, therefore, are not amenable to solutions that would emerge from a government organised along departmental lines and required a fundamental change in the architecture of the system of public policy formulation and implementation to deliver effective responses. Collaboration is one means of formulating and delivering policies where there is a requirement to work both vertically and horizontally across a number of administrative jurisdictions.

Sustainable development was identified as an example of a cross-cutting policy. Amongst other things, it is the cross-sectoral nature of sustainable development that puts it at the heart of 'joined-up' or holistic government. Sustainable development requires horizontal integration between government departments as well as vertical integration and coordination between various levels of government. It was noted in Chapter 3 that sustainable development is multi-dimensional in terms of its potential policy impact because it embraces social, economic and environmental dimensions and the interactions between human systems and ecosystems.

Sustainable development is a strategic high-level policy theme and it is also a broad orientation towards policy in a number of different policy areas; it is not a specific policy in itself. It is normative to the extent that it offers a 'vision' of a future based upon certain principles, but it is also prescriptive and process orientated to the extent that it is concerned with legislation, management and organisational matters. It was also noted in Chapter 3 that four key characteristics essentially define a cross-cutting policy: -

- The issues are complex and involve a multiplicity of agencies;
- Responsibility for policy involves different government departments and different levels of government;
- Citizen participation is important both in policy formulation and implementation; and
- There is scope for preventative policy action.

Chapter 3 gave attention to sustainable development because it was necessary to explore the components of this concept in policy terms to provide a context for the examination of collaborative policy making in the case study. The Assembly Government regards the Wales Spatial Plan as the spatial expression of its policies, which include sustainable development. Collaborative working is seen as axiomatic to delivering the Welsh Assembly's duties with regard to sustainable development.

OBJECTIVE 3: To examine theories of policy analysis and, in particular, to identify whether there is a model of collaboration that can provide a suitable framework for considering the policy process in relation to cross-cutting policy themes.

This Objective is the third component of the contextual and conceptual framework of the thesis. The other two components, discussed above, relate to changes in the organisational structure of government and policy formulation and delivery and to the emergence of a new breed of cross-cutting policy. It was noted that collaboration is now becoming more central to public policy making and delivery and it is increasingly being seen as solution to those public policy problems that cut across administrative boundaries. It is also recognised that collaboration provides the opportunity to build an integrated approach not only in terms of the development of policy but also in terms of the management of service delivery and improvements in outcomes (Huxham, 2000; Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002). There is a need, therefore, to identify a useful tool of analysis to understand the policy process in an inter-organisational setting. This component is, therefore, concerned with the theoretical context in which to view the changes referred to above.

Chapter 4 identified a number of theories that have been put forward to explain the policy process. Two approaches were identified as being of some value in addressing the need to find a useful analytical model – the 'Stages Approach' and the 'Policy Discourse Approach'. It was concluded that whilst the Stages Approach provided a useful means of disaggregating the complexity of the policy process into more manageable components it did not offer a useful means of explaining policy making in an inter-organisational setting where policy making involves a number of policy actors and where the policy process is not linear (Hill & Hupe, 2002).

It was noted in Chapter 4 that the Policy Discourse Approach (which includes collaboration theories) is useful in the case of more strategic or cross-cutting policy themes (e.g. sustainable development) where the subject matter of policy and its scope and impact are fairly wide and where the inter-organisational dimension is an important consideration. This approach to

policy analysis focuses on ways in which multi-stakeholder groups conceive agendas and problems and the way in which values are formed and developed. They allow the use of discourse or reasoned dialogue among participants (stakeholders) to be a feature of policy analysis. They also recognise the interconnectedness of problem domains and overcome some of the limitations of the 'Stages Approach', where the focus is on situations where the policy-making and implementation process is dependent upon one organisation.

Collaboration, therefore, is an approach to understanding the policy process that fits within the broad classification of discourse analysis. It provides a framework or strategy for examining problems and searching for solutions. It is a potential tool for analysis and also a framework for action (Harris, 2002). At a fundamental level, the collaborative approach is based on a process of mutual respect between parties based on listening to factual argument and learning through discussion. It is also based on evaluation of facts through discourse, avoiding coercion and allowing parties to gain an insight into the problem or issue. These particular assumptions have been challenged when consideration is given to the influence that power may have on these basic tenets that underpin collaborative approaches to policy making (e.g. Tewdwr Jones & Allmendinger, 1998; Flyvbjerg & Richardson, 2002).

The perceived benefits and value of collaborative policy making have been expressed by a number of writers in the field of planning (e.g. Healey, 1997b, Innes, 1996), however, the actual process of undertaking and developing collaborative policy making has not been examined in any detail. This research is not concerned with collaborative planning per se but rather with collaboration as a means of analysing and understanding the policy process and providing a practical policy tool.

Gray (1985 & 1989) drawing on earlier work by, for example McCann (1983), presents a process model of collaboration that could be adapted and used to analyse the policy process, both in terms as providing a useful framework for understanding the policy process and as framework for practical action. This

research, therefore, is concerned with 'operationalising' the collaborative model of policy-making suggested by writers in planning theory such as Healey and Innes. There is a need to be able to set out the components of the collaborative process and 'test' these in the real world if collaborative policy making (planning) is to develop from being simply a description of a process.

Thus the focus of this research from a theoretical perspective is to use and develop Gray's model (Gray, 1985 & 1989) and then 'test' it in the context of the case study. The development of a methodology for testing the collaborative model was set out in Chapter 5. However, refining the tools of policy analysis is one aspect of this research. From a broader perspective, it was noted (in Chapter 1) that there were calls for attention to be given to the operational processes and procedures used in developing and implementing sustainable development policies, particularly at the regional scale (Roberts, 1994 & 1997; UK Round Table on Sustainable Development, 1999; Rydin, 2003). The means of looking at operational processes and procedures requires attention to be focussed on the tools offered by public policy analysis and to the body of theory and knowledge that has been developed in that field of study. It is within the context of these first three objectives that the research topic is set.

OBJECTIVE 4: To assess the appropriateness and value of the collaboration model in explaining the policy process in relation to collaborative policy making and sustainable development policy formulation in Wales.

In relation to Objective 4, the case study has demonstrated that it is possible to use the framework developed from Gray as a means for understanding the policy process. The way in which Gray's model was developed and contextualised to the Wales Spatial Plan was set in Chapter 5 and summarised in Table 5.2. The methodology allowed respondents to react (in the form of recording a score) to a series of propositions that relate both to the collaborative process and to specific issues that were the focus of the research (sustainable development). Respondents were then interviewed and

asked to explain the reasoning behind their scoring. In this way a picture emerged about the policy process and about underlying issues and concerns.

In looking at the policy process through the collaborative lens it is necessary to identify a 'unit of analysis'. In this study members of the Management Board (for the Wales Spatial Plan) became the 'unit of analysis' along with a sample of stakeholders who were engaged in the process but not represented on the Board. It was reasonable to assume *ex ante* that the Spatial Planning Management Board should be identified as the unit of analysis given its terms of reference in advising on the management, scope, form and content of the Spatial Plan. In practice, as the research revealed, the Management Board never fulfilled this role because the realities of the situation dictated otherwise. As pointed out in the previous chapter, the term 'Management Board' was a misnomer to the extent that it was neither a 'Board' nor was it effectively engaged in 'management'; rather, it became a consultative mechanism or sounding board. Nevertheless, as was demonstrated in Chapter 7, the insight to the policy process provided by Board members and, to a lesser extent, by those stakeholders not on the Management Board gave a valuable insight into the policy process. The collaborative lens allowed conclusions to be drawn about collaboration as a policy process but also about the way in which cross-cutting policies are handled within a public policy framework.

As mentioned earlier, the use of collaboration as a tool in land use planning has been strongly advocated by writers such as Healey in the UK. Whilst this study has focussed on the wider public policy context, it has clearly demonstrated that many of the underlying assumptions that support collaborative planning theories can be challenged because of influences that can affect (both covertly and overtly) the discourse of participants in a collaborative arena. In the context of public policy formulation, where there is a clear political dimension, this research has demonstrated (in Chapters 7 & 8) that the underlying assumptions of openness, trust, inclusiveness and power-sharing are too utopian to apply collaboration uncritically to the policy process. Where there is a political process involved there will always be a temptation to 'recover' those outcomes of the collaborative process where

there is a likelihood of political discomfiture. There is evidence from the case study of 'unease' with the Plan as it matured through the policy process on the part of Assembly Government officials (probably reflecting those of their Ministers) and an increasing use was made of bi-lateral meetings to confirm aspects of the Plan.

The study also revealed another aspect that may not be immediately apparent in a collaborative arena. For example, interests other than the stated aim of the collaborative venture may drive participation in any collaborative exercise. Organisations and individuals may be pursuing different and sometimes conflicting and hidden interests, as was indicated with reference to the fact that the Wales Spatial Plan would be used for resource allocation purposes. The research identified that there was a desire on the part of some members of the Management Board to secure positive outcomes for their respective organisations (or at least ensure that they were not disadvantaged in any way).

Another dimension of power, not recognised in the literature, which became evident from the study, relates to the extent to which some participants in a collaborative forum are able to advocate their case by virtue of the nature or size of their representative constituency. This aspect was evident in the number of bi-lateral meetings that took place between Assembly officials and certain stakeholders. The empirical evidence from this study would support the criticism made of the collaborative process by writers such as Hillier (1993), Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger (1998), Allmendinger (2002) and Flyvbjerg & Richardson (2002) with regard to the influence of power and the distorting effects that this can have, which was discussed in Chapter 4.

In spite of these reservations with regard to the way in which power may be exercised in collaborative arenas in a political setting and the influence that this may have on the outcome of the decision-making process, it is judged that the collaborative model is still a useful contribution to policy analysis because it allows an insight to be gained into the policy process where the inter-organisational dimension is a consideration. Again, from a theoretical

perspective, the use of the collaboration model in the analysis of public policy allows features of the policy process that relate to the inter-organisational dimension to emerge. It also meets one of the criticisms of the 'Policy Networks approach' (outlined in Chapter 4) that this particular approach is essentially about theory construction rather than providing guidelines for practitioners.

Notwithstanding the comments related to the issue of the distorting effects of power, referred to earlier, the model of collaboration not only provides a useful framework for analysis but it is also a useful heuristic device for organising and managing the policy process where it is necessary to engage a wide range of stakeholders. The case study has shown, amongst other things, that there are influences between collaboration as a management technique (getting stakeholders to the table, in terms of the case study this was the Management Board) and collaboration as part of a political process. Collaboration does not happen automatically, as the collaboration model demonstrates; there are a number of important steps that have to be acknowledged in developing a collaborative policy framework. The case study indicated the need to form close links between the composition of the stakeholder set and the setting of the agenda. The research also indicated that the role and status of the convenor is significant in the achievement of the overall objectives of the collaboration. These elements were identified in the Gray's model but the research has confirmed that some steps are more critical than others in determining whether the collaborative policy process is successful.

It was noted that the Wales Spatial Plan never really considered some of the critical choices that would have been necessary if sustainable development had been given more detailed consideration in the plan-making process. Thus, the '*Vision Statement*' was generally accepted by the Management Board as a broad or high-level policy objective; however, the full implications were not fully worked through in the Wales Spatial Plan. The research has also shown the importance of carefully identifying the stakeholder set and relating this closely to the setting of the agenda in the collaboration model

(discussed Chapter 8). One of the fundamental principles underpinning Gray's collaboration model is the fact that 'the stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the problem under consideration' (Gray, 1985, p.919). This aspect could be expected to be evident with any so-called cross-cutting policy.

The research has also suggested that where a cross-cutting policy theme is the subject of a collaborative approach to policy making then it would be appropriate to identify a 'champion' who could articulate the perspective in the collaborative discourse.

Whilst it is accepted that the influence of power can have a distorting effect on the nature of the policy discourse, it is concluded, therefore, that the development of Gray's model of collaboration does provide a useful device in both explaining and understanding the policy process where cross-cutting policy themes are involved. It is argued that the model could have assisted the Wales Spatial Planning process, particularly as it relates to sustainable development, by providing a framework for those concerned with managing the policy process, especially in relation to the composition of the stakeholder representation. It would also be of use in similar situations where it is necessary to engage with a wide range of stakeholders in addressing a matter of public policy that is cross cutting in nature.

Some modifications have been suggested to the collaboration model that would also facilitate its application to the study of other cross-cutting policies and would enhance its use as a practical tool that could be used to organise and manage collaborative public policy making process in a range of situations (these are considered under Objective 5, below).

OBJECTIVE 5: To assess the effectiveness of a collaborative approach to public policy making in terms of its wider application to similar cross-cutting policy themes.

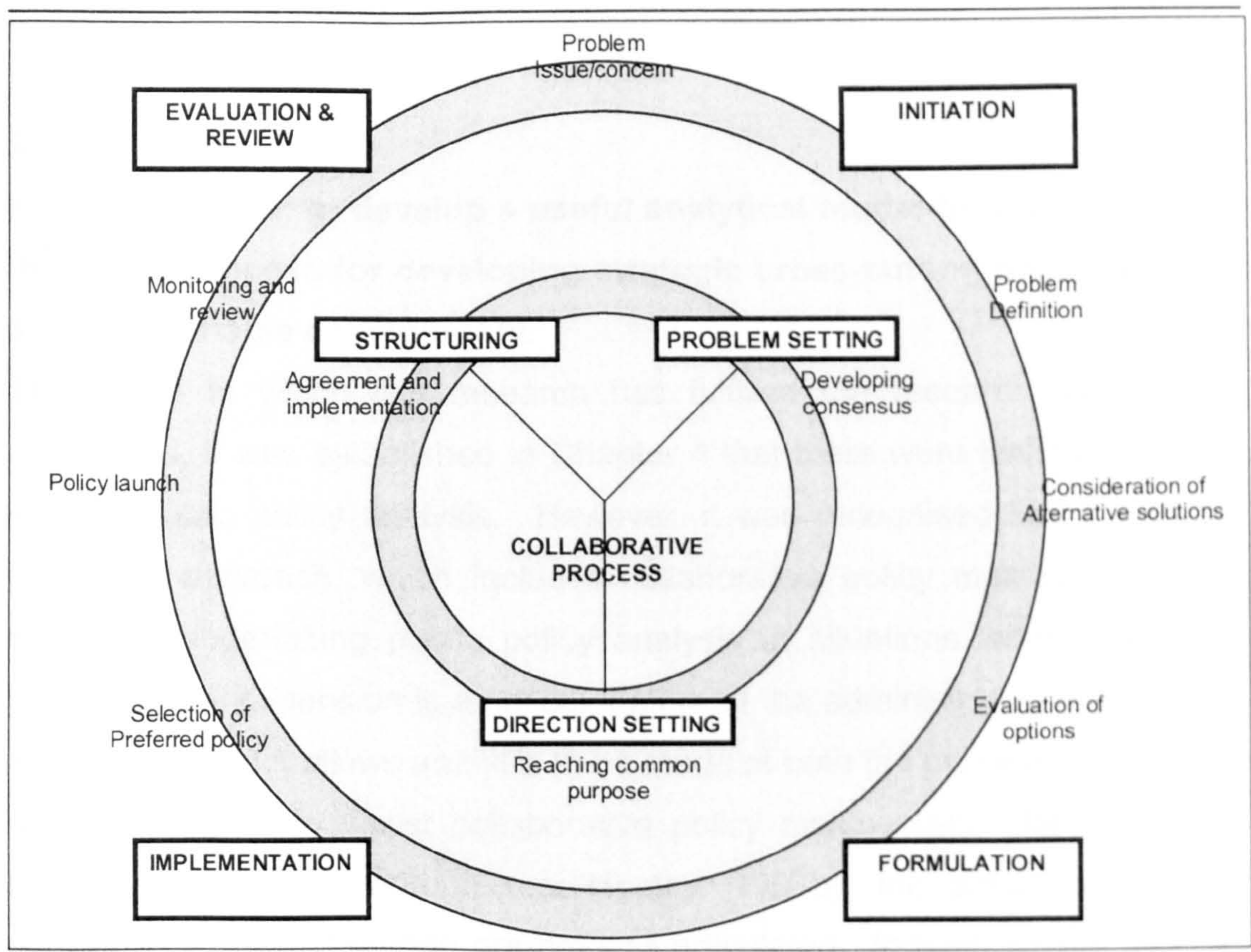
The model of collaboration suggested by Gray (1985 & 1989) and developed and used in this research has been partially 'tested' in the context of the policy process relating to the Wales Spatial Plan. It was pointed out in Chapter 5 that

this research has focussed on the first two phases of Gray's model (Problem Setting and Direction Setting); the third phase 'Structuring / Implementation has not been evaluated because this phase was only just beginning to be formulated at the time that the field work was being undertaken. It is acknowledged, therefore, that it would be necessary to include the third phase of the collaborative model to achieve a complete evaluation of the model in terms of its wider application to the analysis of public policy.

Notwithstanding the caveats set out above, the case study has revealed other features that need to be considered in applying the model to public policy processes where cross-cutting policies are involved. These features include matters relating to power and the way it operates in the public policy arena and impacts upon the collaboration process. There are also matters relating to the structure and components of the collaboration model that need to be addressed. These particular aspects are considered later in this chapter (Section 9.6).

It is considered, in the light of the research, that the model could be modified to better reflect the steps of the collaboration process and relate it to the Stages or Policy Cycle model of the policy process because this model is widely understood amongst those engaged in the policy making process. It is also suggested that these modifications would assist the wider application of the collaboration model to other situations where it is necessary to engage a number of stakeholders to address a cross-cutting policy. It was concluded in Chapter 4 that the 'Stages Approach' provided a useful heuristic device for representing the policy process and, in terms of this research it provides a useful means for locating the collaborative approach within the wider conceptual framework defined by the Policy Cycle. This was expressed diagrammatically in Figure 5.1 and is repeated below for ease of reference.

Fig. 5.1 The policy process and collaboration



Source: Author

This study has demonstrated that the collaboration model allows the policy process to be explored through a collaborative lens. It has taken the debate on collaborative policy-making forward by identifying and confirming some of the elements of the collaboration process and seeking to apply these to the policy process (albeit within the confines of the case study). The collaboration model developed from Gray is capable of identifying the critical features in the collaborative process that are important to the success of collaborative policy-making. However, as already indicated, more work needs to be undertaken in applying the model to other similar cross-cutting policy issues to refine and identify the relative sensitivities of the components of the model. It is only when this comparative work has been done that it will be possible to move from a concept that effectively describes a process to one that has some predictive capability and hence justify the term theory. Indeed, it has to be accepted that this study is only 'partial' in the context of reaching a definitive conclusion on the use of collaborative policy making as a means of

addressing cross-cutting policy themes because the confines of this particular research did not allow the Structuring or Implementation phase to be considered.

9.4 CONCLUSION

RESEARCH AIM: to develop a useful analytical model for understanding the policy process for developing strategic cross-cutting policy themes, such sustainable development.

The extent to which this research has fulfilled the research aim is now considered. It was established in Chapter 4 that there were limitations to the tools of public policy analysis. However, it was recognised that the Policy Discourse approach, which includes collaborative policy making, offered a means of undertaking public policy analysis in situations where the inter-organisational dimension is a critical feature of the administrative and political architecture and it allows analysis to be made of both the process and content of policy. However, whilst collaborative policy making (and planning) were being advocated by writers (e.g. Healey, 1997b), the actual process or components of collaboration are not well articulated. Indeed, writers such as Sullivan & Skelcher (2002) have suggested that collaboration was of practical concern but the process was not well understood from both the practical aspects and from a theoretical perspective.

It has been demonstrated that collaboration is now becoming central to public policy making, management and delivery. As the boundaries between the public, private and voluntary sectors are becoming increasingly blurred, collaboration is increasingly being seen as a model for bringing together major stakeholders to address complex and interrelated issues. The approach is generally justified because the issues affect a number and range of stakeholders and because the issues being considered are complex to the extent that they are beyond the capacity of any one stakeholder acting alone to resolve. Collaborative approaches are, therefore, seen as an appropriate means of encouraging participants to identify mutually acceptable goals, share information, discuss and develop new and creative solutions that are acceptable to all the participating stakeholders.

The research has shown from the survey of literature that collaborative policy making (planning), which is grounded in Habermas's theory of collaborative action, is an 'ideal' situation. It is essentially a normative theory, concerned with 'what should be', rather than 'what is'. It was seen in Chapter 4 that a number of writers have questioned some of the underlying assumptions that under-pin collaborative policy theory and have suggested that insufficient attention has been given to the realities of power and the distorting effects that this can have on public policy making. This research study has identified a number of ways in which power can have a potentially distorting effect on the policy process (e.g. the use of bi-lateral meetings outside of the collaborative forum; the perception that some organisations (stakeholders) are more important than others, or that they are able to always convey a positive message that chimes with political aspirations).

In the public policy arena, where political influence is almost always present, it would be naïve to suppose (as the theory suggests) that uncoerced reasoned debate, with all participants treating each other as equals and working collaboratively could be actually achieved. The 'hidden hand' of politics is almost always present and it can manifest itself in many ways, as the case study has shown. It has to be acknowledged, however, that stakeholder groups or ad hoc policy fora have no accountability for their actions and it is appropriate that the political dimension is acknowledged. In a democratic system accountability requires that a person or body must be able to provide a satisfactory explanation for their choice of direction. In Britain, Parliament holds the executive to account for all its actions. It is for these reasons that any analysis involving public policy making must recognise the influences that politics and politicians exert on the public policy process. It is not possible to isolate collaborative fora from these influences.

This criticism, however, does not negate the use of collaborative approaches to policy making in the realm of public policy making and delivery. Clearly, as shown in Chapter 6, in Welsh polity collaborative working is high on the public policy agenda. Indeed, the recognition given by the Assembly Government to

its cross-cutting policies of Sustainable Development, Equal Opportunities and Social Justice means that collaborative policy working is necessary to deliver outcomes on policy themes that do not fit easily into areas of administrative responsibility.

It is not appropriate that collaborative policy making should be abandoned merely because its theoretical basis is flawed in one respect. This research has confirmed many of the benefits of collaboration set out in Chapter 4. In particular, collaboration provides: -

- an understanding of the policy process and the ways in which public policy actors address policy issues and formulate public policy (Harris, 2002);
- an ability to take into account the inter-organisational setting in which public policy making and implementation is increasingly made (Gray, 1985 & 1989; Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002):
- the potential for building institutional capacity and enhancing working practices, knowledge and understanding (Healey, 1997a & b);
- the potential for ideas and policies to be considered in a strategic way and interrelatedness between them to be recognised and agreements reached (Healey, 1997a);
- the potential to become an effective tool of coordination with the result that stakeholders can achieve shared benefits through joint action i.e. more effective 'buy-in' (Gray, 1985; Deas, 2006)

From the perspective of the theory of public policy making, the collaboration model is useful because it provides a development to the 'bottom-up' approach to policy analysis, thus meeting the point made by Sabatier (1986) regarding deficiencies in the state of the 'bottom-up' approach as a substantive theory (c.f. Chapter 4). This conclusion, however, can only be regarded as tentative because it is dependent upon the outcome of further 'tests' to the model recommended in Section 9.6 below.

This research has shown that it is possible to 'operationalise' the collaborative model by identifying a number of phases or steps and use these elements of the model to analyse and manage the policy process. In terms of detail, it is not suggested that these steps are necessarily sequential but rather they provide a framework in which to consider how stakeholders can be assembled and engaged in public policy making and delivery. One fundamental recommendation arising from this research is that the modifications made to Gray's model (set out in Tables 9.1 and 9.2) should be tested in other fields where cross-cutting policy is involved. One area might be in the context of the rising political and public concern about climate change.

As already indicated, the research has shown that the collaboration model does provide a useful analytical framework in which to place studies of public policy where there are interrelationships between a number of policy areas and policy actors. The research has provided an insight into the policy process, particularly to the way in which public policy is made within a political environment where the intention of government is to reconcile its own policy stance, as far as is possible, with those whom it regards as principal stakeholders. However, the empirical evidence challenges some of the underlying principles of collaboration theory, particularly those relating to the assumptions regarding the influence of power on the communicative or discourse process. As has already been mentioned, this is particularly evident when collaborative policy (planning) techniques are applied to public policy processes where the 'hidden hand' of politics can influence both the process and the outcome.

In spite of the reservations set out above, it is concluded that the collaboration model based on a development of Gray's work is still a useful heuristic tool for the public policy process where there is a need to engage a wide range of stakeholders in a multi-organisational setting. The model provides a framework for organising the participative process by identifying a series of steps that should be considered in organising the process of stakeholder engagement. As such the research would confirm to some extent the point

made by Harris (2002, p.23) that Collaboration ‘... is a framework for understanding process and a framework for practical action ...’ The caveat being that further work needs to be undertaken to test and review the model used in this study.

Writers on collaboration and collaborative planning (Harris, 2002 and Mantysalo, 2002) have questioned whether in its present state we have a theory or merely a description of a process. In setting out a series of phases and steps, Gray (1985 & 1989) allows researchers to ‘operationalise’ the process of collaboration and apply the concept of collaboration to the policy process, particularly in situations where the inter-organisational dimension is important. In this context this research has contributed to the development of a methodology that could be used as a basis for further work involving the application of the methodology developed in this study to other cross-cutting policy themes. The modifications proposed to this model, in the light of this research, are set out in Section 9.6 in Tables 9.1 and 9.2.

In the light of the increasing recognition given to collaborative working in both public policy making and delivery it is important that the process involved should be the subject of investigation. This research has attempted to fill that gap by breaking down the components of the process and examining them in the context of a live situation. This research should be seen as part of a continued process of testing and refining collaborative approaches to policy making.

9.5 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is noted above that further work needs to be undertaken to test and review the model developed and used in this research. It is appropriate, therefore, that some attention should be given to the methodology employed to secure a picture of the policy making process. A number of reflective observations can be made in relation to data capture.

Firstly, having got clearance at Director level (within the Welsh Assembly Government), it was appropriate to make an initial approach to the senior civil

servants and arrange an interview where the purpose of the research was explained and appropriate assurances regarding anonymity were given. A decision was made to administer the questionnaire at the time of the interview rather than post it prior to the interview. This action not only ensured that the questionnaire was completed but it also ensured that a collaborative response was avoided in what is a relatively small policy community.

Secondly, the questionnaire was constructed in a way in which the respondent was invited to respond to a number of propositions relating to the policy process and score their agreement with these in a range of 1 – 5. This particular approach to data capture enabled a quantitative basis to be established against which a qualitative answer was given. It was not intended that a statistic would be derived from this approach but rather it was intended to provide an indication of the relative strength of views, which in the interview would be used to explore in more detail. In this way it was possible to aggregate the responses and make a judgement about the relative strength of feeling about a particular aspect of policy making. This aspect of the research was presented in Chapter 7.

Thirdly, one particular aspect that does present a difficulty in the analysis of public policy in an inter-organisational setting relates to the 'unit of analysis'. Applying the collaboration model requires a stakeholder set or forum to be identified. In the context of the case study the Spatial Planning Management Board was identified *ex ante* as fulfilling this role. This was a reasonable assumption given its terms of reference. However, as the research revealed, this particular stakeholder set assumed less importance as the policy process progressed. Clearly, whether this aspect would present a problem to further research would depend on the particular circumstances of the area of public policy being considered.

It is concluded that this research takes forward the study of collaborative policy making by looking at the actual process or the components of collaboration. The methodology can be used to analyse the policy process and it can provide a practical tool for operationalising collaborative policy

making theory. The components of the model have been identified and a research methodology has been set out that would allow the research to be repeated in other similar circumstances to the extent that further refinements are possible. In this way it is possible to develop from what is essentially a descriptive process towards a theory of collaborative or, perhaps more appropriately termed, participative or discursive policy making.

9. 6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS

9.6.1 Recommendations

This study has developed Gray's model and has demonstrated that it has taken the debate on collaborative policy-making forward by identifying and confirming the elements of the collaborative policy making process (albeit within the confines of the case study). It was noted that the study had to be confined to the first two phases of Gray's model. It was not possible to explore the third phase – 'Structuring or Implementation because of the time limits imposed on the study. However, further work needs to be undertaken in respect of similar cross-cutting policy areas to identify and refine the relative sensitivities of the components of the model. It is only when this comparative work has been done that will it be possible to move from a concept that effectively describes a process to one that has some predictive capability and hence justify the term theory.

In the light of this, three recommendations are made: -

Recommendation 1: further work needs to be undertaken to test the collaboration model in respect of other cross-cutting policy themes. This work should include the Structuring / Implementation phase of Gray's model to permit a more complete test. This would allow the collaboration model to be tested further and refined in the light of this work and also meet the criticism that collaboration is not at present a theory but rather a description of a process.

Recommendation 2: Consideration needs to be given to the term 'collaboration' and whether it is the most appropriate description of the policy process given the conclusions in relation to the presence of power in

collaborative fora. It is, therefore, suggested that the term 'participative' or 'discursive' more properly describes the collaborative process being undertaken in a public policy setting. Whilst it is recognised that this suggestion introduces yet another term in the vocabulary of those approaches embraced within the more generic term 'Policy Discourse', it is considered that attention should be given to this aspect in any re-appraisal of what is currently termed collaborative policy making.

Recommendation 3: in respect of the Gray's collaboration model, it is suggested that the steps within the first two phases of Gray's model (Problem Setting and Direction Setting) could be re-grouped to reflect a more logical process from a policy formulation aspect. The revised configuration of the model is now considered below in the light of the case study findings.

Phase I: Problem Setting

This phase of the collaboration model relates to the first phase in the original model. The Problem Setting phase of the collaborative model is about developing consensus - 'getting to the table'. It gives identity to the task and establishes the basis for joint working. This phase establishes common understandings about the subject matter of the collaboration and it is through this phase that stakeholders come to appreciate their role and the relationship to other stakeholders.

Table 9.1 (below), sets out the steps identified in the Problem Setting phase of the model and suggests a revised structure to better reflect the policy process. The revised headings for each step more readily summarise and explain the process in terms of related actions. The third column suggests a series of propositions that could be applied to further research relating to other cross-cutting public policy themes. In the case study used in this research, the collaborative forum was the Spatial Planning Management Board. Clearly, in applying the model to a study involving a similar cross-cutting public policy theme, it would be necessary to identify the appropriate forum (*the collaborative forum*) as the 'unit of analysis'.

Table 9.1 Proposed modifications to the collaboration model: Problem Setting

Problem Setting (Gray's Steps)	Revised Steps	Revised Propositions
Common definition of the problem	<p>Common definition of the problem / issue</p> <p>Common definition of the problem depends on recognition by stakeholder groups that their actions are inextricably linked to the actions of other stakeholders.</p>	<p>There is an overall agreement with a 'Vision Statement' (or an agreed aim).</p> <p><i>(This would be set out in relation to a particular study and reactions invited)</i></p>
<p>Commitment to collaborate</p> <p>Identification of stakeholders</p> <p>Legitimacy of stakeholders</p>	<p>Stakeholder identification & participation</p> <p>Stakeholders must believe that collaboration will produce positive outcomes. The stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the problem under consideration and stakeholders must have a legitimate interest in the problem, together with the relevant expertise, capacity and skills to participate if a positive outcome is to be achieved.</p>	<p>The <i>collaborative forum</i> is the most effective way of developing a collaborative approach to the policy issue.</p> <p>The composition of the <i>collaborative forum</i> needs to reflect the issues being discussed</p> <p>The <i>collaborative forum</i> needs to be representative of the key stakeholders.</p> <p>All the key stakeholders have been included on the <i>collaborative forum</i>.</p> <p><i>The collaborative forum</i> is balanced in composition.</p> <p>The stakeholder set is composed of equal players.</p> <p>Members of the stakeholder set should take a wider representational role.</p> <p>The stakeholder set should only include those whose expertise is essential to the task.</p>
<p>Convenor characteristics</p> <p>Identification of resources</p>	<p>Organisational support & facilitation of the process</p> <p>The convenor of the <i>collaborative forum</i> must have sufficient authority to secure stakeholders to participate (and for representation to be at the appropriate level). It is important that sufficient resources are committed to ensure that the collaborative forum can function effectively.</p>	<p>It is appropriate that the <i>collaborative forum</i> is convened and chaired by an organisation and person who has an accepted and legitimate authority (and status) to organise the domain.</p> <p>Adequate resources are required to ensure that stakeholders can participate equally in the process.</p> <p>Adequate resources need to be committed to the visioning / planning process.</p>

Source: Author

Each of the revised stages is now considered in more detail: -

Common definition of the problem or issue

There is a need to be clear about the purpose of the collaboration and the role that individual stakeholders will play in that arena. In many respects there are important links between this step and the step referred to later in the Direction Setting phase under the heading of '*organising the process in terms of establishing ground rules, agenda setting, etc*'. Agenda Setting is important because it essentially defines the substantive aspects of the collaboration. This aspect also has close linkages to the decision of who (which stakeholders) should be involved in the collaboration in terms of the ensuring that the stakeholder set is representative of the problem or issue under consideration. In terms of cross-cutting policy themes, there is a need to have a stakeholder who can 'champion' the cross-cutting theme and ensure that this dimension of the policy does not become lost within the overall perspective or wider policy context.

Stakeholder identification and participation

The stakeholder set needs to reflect both the scope of the problem or issue and those who are likely to be affected by the outcome of the policy. Three steps of Gray's original model (Commitment to collaborate; Identification & Legitimacy of stakeholders) are combined under this heading because they essentially relate to characteristics of policy actors.

It has to be recognised, in light of this research, that the commitment to collaborate may be motivated by considerations other than the stated objectives of the collaborative forum. It was clearly evident, from the case study, that some stakeholders were merely involved in the process to secure or safeguard their position. This aspect clearly challenges one of the fundamental tenets of collaborative models that the process of inter-subjective discussion will deepen the understanding of participants (stakeholders) and lead to a change in position.

The stakeholder set should include only those whose expertise is essential to addressing the components that the collaboration is required to consider. In addition, part of the process of identifying stakeholders is determining those

who have a legitimate stake in the issue by virtue of their particular skills, interests and responsibilities. It has to be acknowledged that while individuals clearly represent their constituency (or organisation) there is a need to ensure that issues relating to balance, in terms of those who are participating in the collaboration, are considered in framing the stakeholder set engaging in collaborative policy making. This aspect was evident in the case study where it was found that the Management Board was not well structured in terms of representing the range of stakeholder interest that might be expected to be included in a collaborative forum engaged in planning for sustainable development. As already indicated, where consideration of an issue relates to a cross-cutting policy, the research has shown that it may be appropriate to include someone who could advocate or 'champion' of this particular aspect within the collaborative forum.

From a practical perspective in seeking to apply the model more widely, it is suggested that this step should be closely informed by the step now referred to as '*Organising the process in terms of establishing ground rules, agenda setting, etc.*' and, possibly, revisited in the light of the outcome of this step in the collaboration model.

Organisational support and facilitation of the process

An important step in the process of developing consensus (the Problem Setting phase) is the identification and bringing together of stakeholders. In the collaboration model, this function is assigned to the 'convenor'. The status of the convenor is important in determining the status of stakeholders represented in the collaborative forum. In the planning of collaborative fora that are to be engaged in addressing matters of public policy, this aspect needs to be given careful consideration because of the signals it gives to those outside the public policy process and likely to be influenced it. The case study also highlighted the need to periodically review the terms of reference and make clear the relationship between the collaborative forum and the political process. Another organisational consideration relates to the level of resources that can be committed to the collaboration process. This dimension not only has to include consumables, such as funding for research,

but also the 'internal' level of resources, such as administration, professional support and level of political commitment, that can be assigned to the collaboration.

Phase II: Direction Setting

This phase of the collaboration model relates to second element in of the original model, the phase referred to as Direction Setting. Amongst other things, it is about developing a sense of common purpose and shared interpretations about the future.

Table 9.2 (below) again sets out the steps identified in the Direction Setting phase of the original model and suggests a revised structure to better reflect the policy process. It is suggested that the revised headings for each step more readily summarise and explain the process in terms of related actions and the third column suggests a series of propositions that could be applied to other research studies.

Table 9.2 Proposed modifications to the collaboration model: Direction Setting

Direction Setting (Gray's model)	Revised Steps	Revised propositions
<p>Establishing ground rules</p> <p>Agenda setting</p> <p>Organising sub-groups</p>	<p>Organising the process in terms of establishing ground rules, agenda setting, etc.</p> <p>Ground rules remove uncertainty and lessen the likelihood of misunderstandings. Agenda setting is important because it has to reflect the breadth of the issues being discussed and should parallel the number of stakeholders included, although there is a trade-off between the number of stakeholders and the ease of managing the process. In some instances sub-groups are a way of accommodating a large number of issues without making the <i>collaborative forum</i> unmanageable.</p>	<p>Clear procedural guidelines were established.</p> <p>The terms of reference reflected the task.</p> <p>The aims & objectives were discussed & accepted.</p> <p>Sufficient time was given to consideration of key issues.</p> <p>As the work proceeded, the <i>collaborative forum</i> was given the opportunity to reflect on new and emergent issues (and, if appropriate, membership of the forum increased).</p> <p>Consideration was given to the appointment of sub-groups.</p>
<p>Joint information search</p> <p>Exploring new options</p>	<p>Engaging stakeholders, joint information search, and consideration of options.</p> <p>Reaching agreement on problem definition & searching for the facts is an important ingredient in consensus building. This process also allows parties to get to know one another and personal interactions create a basis for increased trust.</p> <p>An aspect of this step in the process allows the exploration of options in the context of establishing facts and seeking solutions. These aspects inject new sources of creativity & objectivity into the options under consideration.</p>	<p>The process of information search resulted in a greater appreciation of interrelationships & the necessity for policy integration.</p> <p>New options were considered & explored.</p> <p>New policy thinking / directions emerged.</p> <p>The <i>collaborative forum</i> explored any differences of view.</p> <p>The process led to a better understanding of the issues.</p>
<p>Reaching agreement</p>	<p>Reaching agreement</p> <p>Reaching agreement means gaining commitment of all parties to a single option or package of options. the agreement can be in the form of a general framework within which details are subsequently worked out.</p>	<p>The output of the collaborative forum reflected all of the views of the collaborative forum.</p> <p>The final product is a realistic assessment of the situation & is a useful policy tool. Implementation is operationally feasible.</p> <p>The outcome of the process will lead to changes in behaviour of stakeholders.</p> <p>All issues have received adequate attention.</p> <p>Difficult & conflicting issues have been resolved through consensus.</p> <p>The collaborative process has resulted in the recognition of interdependencies.</p>
<p>Dispersion of power</p>	<p>Recognising power relationships</p> <p>In public policy making it is important to be aware of distribution of power within and beyond the collaborative forum.</p>	<p>The views of one particular stakeholder or group of stakeholders was not allowed to dominate the process.</p> <p>The collaborative forum's conclusions are influenced by political factors.</p>

Source: Author

Organising the process in terms of establishing ground rules, agenda setting, etc.

The case study has shown that there are close links between the steps identified in the original model as 'establishing ground rules', 'agenda setting' and 'organising sub-groups'. These steps are effectively dealing with the organisation of the process of collaboration. The 'agenda setting' step is critical in the initial scoping stages of the collaboration process because, as already indicated, it defines the substantive aspects of the collaboration. It clearly has close links with those steps in the first phase concerned with 'establishing a common definition of the problem.' To give the collaboration confidence and transparency it is necessary to pay attention to establishing clear rules for engagement and operation - hence the inclusion of the steps referred to as 'establishing ground rules' and 'organising sub-groups' within this broad heading. It was seen from the case study that, particularly within the context of public policy making, there is always the tendency to relate the outcomes of the collaborative process to what may be politically acceptable and achievable. Recognising that this is inevitable it is concluded that it would be appropriate to bind this dimension into the process through a political appointee chairing the collaboration (acting as convenor).

Engaging stakeholders, joint information search, and consideration of options.

These aspects are closely related in terms of the public policy process because they are necessary to ensuring that the conclusions are based on information that has been received and possibly tested in a wider forum. From the case study, it was noted that the Wales Spatial Plan was based on quite extensive stakeholder engagement. However, as indicated, the consideration of options was not discussed in the context of the collaborative forum (i.e. the Spatial Planning Management Board) but rather outside of it through a series of bi-lateral meetings. The application of collaborative models in the context of public policy formulation clearly have to recognise the limitations of being able to explore options; options can only be considered in the context of a collaborative forum, any recommendations made can only be for the democratic process to address.

Reaching Agreement

Reaching agreement allows all parties involved in the collaboration process to move forward. The details of the agreement do not necessarily have to be worked out in detail; it is possible for a general framework to be established within which details can subsequently be worked out.

In terms of the wider application of the model it would be appropriate to recognise that this step may not necessarily be the conclusion of the collaboration process. In terms of the model presented by Gray, the Structuring or Implementation phase of the collaboration process clearly presents an opportunity for further agreements to be reached. In terms of public policy, however, the reaching agreement step must ensure that a framework can be created within which more detailed policy actions can be worked out. For cross-cutting policy themes that framework must ensure that criteria or 'tests' are introduced to ensure that the cross-cutting policy does not become lost within the wider policy and political environment.

Recognising power relationships

It was noted in Chapter 4 that the issue of power and how it is treated in collaborative models is fundamental to the use of collaborative approaches to problem solving and public policy making. Implicit in the concept of collaboration is the notion of shared power. Stakeholders must share power to define a problem and then initiate actions to address it.

Gray (1985, p.927) has argued that 'collaboration will be enhanced when power is dispersed among several rather than among just a few stakeholders ... some balancing of power is essential for direction-setting'. It is also necessary to recognise interdependence (amongst stakeholders) to ensure that objectives can be redirected towards addressing the problem domain. However, in the context of public policy making, the political process heavily influences the direction and outcome of any collaborative forum.

It was seen that power has the effect of distorting the process of policy discourse and powerful policy actors can have considerable influence on the

policy process, as the research has shown. In a political environment that is characterised by pluralism, power is wielded both openly and covertly by a wide range of policy actors and organisations. The case study has demonstrated the influence that some stakeholders can exert on the policy process through the use of bi-lateral meetings (i.e. outside of the collaboration forum) to resolve certain matters. Power in this instance is related to organisational strength that may derive from access (in the sense of 'having the ear' of government) or from being responsive to the concerns of government. Collaboration, therefore, gives power to those included in the process to influence the outcome through the power to influence agendas and discourse.

Another dimension of power can be manifest in the real or perceived differences between organisations, arising from their role in the public policy process. Again, evidence from the case study suggested that some organisations felt at a disadvantage because they could not always articulate what they regarded as a 'positive (can-do) viewpoint'. They had to advise caution when certain matters were put forward for consideration. In this particular instance, the 'environmental' group of stakeholders felt at some disadvantage when compared with the 'economic' group.

The convenor has a key role to play in effecting collaboration because of the role assigned to the organisation or individual that has to set the collaborative forum in operation. A significant step in initiating collaboration is identifying those stakeholders who have a legitimate stake in the issues that have to be addressed. The power of convenors to select participants (stakeholders) shapes the collaboration in terms of its considerations and the eventual outcome. As already indicated, stakeholders also exert power in determining the agenda and how that agenda is discussed.

9.6.2 Final conclusion

In presenting collaboration as a strategy for developing cross-cutting policy themes, it is necessary to reflect on some aspects of the theory of collaboration and on the work of Healey (Healey, 1992; 1997b) and others

(listed in Chapter 4, Sub-Section 4.4.3) who have articulated collaborative planning as an approach to strategic spatial planning. As was seen in Chapter 4 (Sub-Section 4.4.4), Healey suggests that collaborative planning is comprised of a number of components that reflect Habermas's theory of communicative action. Healey summarises these components under ten conditions (Healey, 1992, pp. 154-155). In essence, these components suggest that the policy process is interactive and interpersonal and involves diverse groups (stakeholders, policy actors) who are 'required' to respect one another's opinions and frame the discourse in an open and transparent way. This discourse takes place in an arena or forum where conflicts are identified, discussed and mediated upon. Within this arena or forum participants need to be able to reflect, evaluate and re-evaluate the information derived from the discourse. The strategic discourses are open to include all those interested parties and an outcome of this process is that new discourses emerge. The collaborative process enables participants to gain new understandings and values. In terms of outcomes, the collaborative process enables participants to recognise interrelationships and initiate change through collaborative action around a set of agreed objectives.

The outcome of this research would support Healey's view that the strategic spatial plan making process is essentially a social process where the policy actors are not autonomous but rather linked into the social worlds of the agencies and firms they work for (Healey, 1997a). However, this research challenges those assumptions that stem from Habermas and relate to uncoerced reasoned discourse based on communication and inter-subjective debate and discussion. The discourse is often influenced by political considerations (as the research has shown), but then spatial plan making is inherently a political activity. There is the potential for participants to form coalitions of interest in an attempt to influence outcomes that are favourable to their viewpoints. Again, this research supports this conclusion from the evidence that Assembly Government officials engaged in bi-lateral discussions with selected stakeholders.

It has to be acknowledged that the dimension of power weakens the theoretical underpinning of the Policy Discourse Approach (of which collaboration theory is part). In this context, the conclusion is similar to those of Flyvbjerg (1998); Hillier (2000); Tait & Campbell (2000); and Tewdwr-Jones & Allmendinger (1998), discussed in Chapter 4. It also confirms the view of power suggested by Foucault (discussed in Chapter 4) in the context that power can be seen to operate in everyday relations between people and institutions. This research confirms that power operates in shaping and controlling discourses, where certain groups have greater opportunities to influence how the forces of power are exercised.

This research also confirms (Chapter 8, Table 8.3) some of those aspects of the components of the collaborative process, suggested by Healey (1992), that relate to outcomes, particularly to the discourse creating new understandings, being able to recognise inter-relationships and building social and intellectual capital.

It was noted that collaboration is high on the public policy agenda in the UK. In Wales, reference has been made to the public policy framework that identifies collaboration as an integral part of public policy delivery through the *Making / Delivering the Connections* agenda (WAG, 2004a; WAG, 2005b; WAG, 2006). Collaboration also provides a vehicle for delivering cross-cutting policies by offering integrated policy development and delivery. Collaboration has been embraced in the modernising agenda relating to public policy because it provides a means of dealing with the change from hierarchical forms of government to a situation which is characterised by 'governance', a term that describes the more horizontal delivery of public services at multiple levels and sites.

In the public policy world characterised by governance policy action is achieved through the actions of a number of policy actors. These actors are operating horizontally rather than vertically (as in the traditional hierarchical form of government) and this gives rise to matters of concern about accountability (Sullivan & Skelcher, 2002; Sullivan & Taylor, 2006). For

example, those collaborations characterised by partnerships that have a strong emphasis on consultation with the public give rise to concerns about political accountability, with the ability of elected members to influence the process weakened.

From another perspective, there are also some collaborative partnerships that are essentially managerial, giving delegated authority to officials with politicians having a more distant involvement in detailed decision-making. Another aspect of accountability relates to those collaborations that are concerned with releasing central control in favour of more locally determined control (for example in Community Partnerships or in the Welsh context with the establishment of Local Service Boards, which are aimed at local service delivery of national policies and programmes). In these instances it is important that the collaborative partnership reflects the diversity of interests, and that a powerful alliance of key local actors is not allowed to dominate the process. Sullivan & Skelcher point out that collaborative partnerships have given rise to tertiary structures on the public policy landscape, which contrast with primary elected bodies (central and local government) and secondary bodies such as the Non-Departmental Public Bodies (the quangos) that are accountable through their sponsor Department and Minister.

As Sullivan & Skelcher point out '...collaborations establish new jurisdictions – functional and geographical domains – for public action. Yet there is little debate about their rationale, nor the implications for existing jurisdictions such as local councils and health bodies, nor the impact on local political systems' (ibid. p. 225). Democratic accountability is a critical issue that will have to be addressed if collaborative governance is to become a feature of the public policy terrain.

In the context of collaboration as a means of developing spatial plans it is important that the issue of accountability is addressed. Whilst it is acknowledged that spatial planning is inherently a political process, which was very evident from the case study, there are other issues of accountability that

have to be considered in the context of stakeholder engagement, participation and representation.

Spatial planning is an important instrument for delivering sustainable development. It involves inter-relating the various dimensions of social, economic and environmental change. It also provides a framework for informed policy discourse and a framework for action and the development of partnerships. An important feature in assigning collaborative planning methodologies to spatial planning is deciding who and how inclusive the collaborative process should be. This research has shown the importance (in the collaboration model) of closely relating the agenda-setting step to the step that defines stakeholder representation. The stakeholder set must be representative of the issues being considered.

Collaborative planning (or policy) theory as set out by Healey (1992 & 1997b) and others says nothing about the size of the collaborative arena or forum. However, this research has confirmed the contention by Gray (1985 & 1989) and others that the stakeholder set needs to reflect the complexity of the issue under consideration. In spatial planning the stakeholder set could potentially be large and unmanageable. Indeed, this may be one of the reasons why the Assembly Government officials made the decision to engage with the more narrowly defined Spatial Planning Management Board rather than the more widely based Spatial Planning Network. In opting for the smaller group it inevitably meant that some stakeholders were excluded from part of the process (i.e. the more detailed consideration of the Plan exercised by the Spatial Planning Management Board) although they were not excluded from the overall plan-making process because they had the opportunity to attend the workshops that were arranged as part of the consultative process and to respond to the Consultation Version of the Wales Spatial Plan.

This research indicates that, in terms of collaborative plan-making, there should be a policy arena or forum that is tightly drawn in terms of its membership to reflect the range of issues under consideration. The membership of this forum can be representational to the extent that it relates

to a membership organisation. Inevitably, there will be some stakeholders that are excluded from the collaborative forum but the policy process should ensure that these stakeholders have the opportunity to be consulted as part of the policy development process. It is contended that this does not invalidate collaborative planning because as a recent study looking at the extent to which participation and consultation exercises actually influence decision-making processes (*'New Localism: Citizen Engagement, Neighbourhoods and Public Services'* ODPM, 2005, p.20) found that '...over half of the public were content with a passive role and less than a quarter wanting more say.'

In terms of the overall research aim it can be concluded that Healey (1997b) describes a process. However, nothing is said about how that process is initiated or managed to achieve the outcomes. This research has attempted to do that through developing the work of Gray and others. Collaborative policy making in the form presented by Gray (1985 & 1989) and developed in this study does provide a framework for analysing, organising and managing a policy process where the nature of the policy crosses organisational and administrative boundaries and where the inter-organisational dimension is a relevant consideration. The collaborative model provides a pragmatic tool for managing a public policy process where it is necessary to engage a number of stakeholders to develop policy that cuts across a number of areas of public policy and administration. Collaboration (or 'participative' or 'discursive' policy making) provides a potentially useful public policy tool in this context but the usefulness of this tool needs to be tempered by the realities of the political (democratic) system in which it operates.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Questionnaire – Management Board

Annex 2: Questionnaire – Non-Management Board

.

ANNEX 1: MANAGEMENT BOARD

POLICY / COLLABORATION PROCESS: INITIATION / PROBLEM SETTING

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>COMMON DEFINITION OF THE ISSUE</p> <p>1. Agreement on the overall vision – <i>‘We will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; we will grow in ways which will increase our competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; we will enhance our natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to our well-being; and we will sustain our distinctive identity’</i>. (People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan. Nov. 2004)</p> <p>2. The Wales Spatial Plan presents a framework for collaborative working and decision making across sectional and functional boundaries.</p> <p>3. Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>4. Stakeholders recognised that interdependencies exist between each other in the sense that their individual actions could impact upon the activities of another organisation</p>					
<p>COMMITMENT TO COLLABORATE</p> <p>5. The Management Board was the most effective way of developing a collaborative approach to producing The Wales Spatial Plan</p>					
<p>IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS</p> <p>6. The Management Board needs to be representative of the key stakeholders</p> <p>7. Members of the Management Board should take a wider representational role</p> <p>8. The Management Board was balanced in composition & represented the key stakeholders.</p> <p>9. All the key stakeholders have been included on the Management Board.</p> <p>10. The stakeholder set is composed of equal players</p>					

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>LEGITIMACY OF STAKEHOLDERS</p> <p>11. The Management Board should only include those whose remit is essential to the task.</p> <p>12. The Management Board needs to be represented at the appropriate level, i.e. skill, ability to make decisions, etc.</p> <p>13. The composition of the Management Board adequately reflected the issues being discussed</p> <p>CONVENOR CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>14. It was appropriate that the Management Board was convened & chaired by Welsh Assembly Government Officials</p> <p>IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES</p> <p>15. Adequate resources were committed to the process for developing The Wales Spatial Plan.</p> <p>16. Public participation was adequate in terms of extent and response</p>					

REFERENCE:

POLICY / COLLABORATION PROCESS: FORMULATION / DIRECTION SETTING

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES</p> <p>17. Clear procedural guidelines / working arrangements were established.</p> <p>18. The terms of reference reflected the task</p> <p>19. The aims & objectives were discussed & accepted.</p> <p>20. Sufficient time was given to consideration of the key issues.</p> <p>21. Opportunity was given to provide an in-put into the content of the Plan.</p> <p>AGENDA SETTING</p> <p>22. All members of the Management Board accepted the scope & purpose of The Wales Spatial Plan.</p> <p>23. As the process proceeded the membership of the Management Board should have been increased to reflect new or emergent issues</p> <p>ORGANISING SUB GROUPS</p> <p>24. The formation of sub-groups would have been beneficial in dealing with certain issues</p>					

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>JOINT INFORMATION SEARCH</p> <p>25. Links between WSP & other WAG policies were considered</p> <p>26. The process resulted in a greater appreciation of interrelationships between organisations & policies and the need for policy integration</p> <p>27. The research reports from consultants and issues raised from public consultation led to informed debate.</p> <p>EXPLORING NEW OPTIONS</p> <p>28. New issues & options were considered & explored.</p> <p>29. The policy process generated new policy thinking.</p> <p>30. The Management Board satisfactorily explored any differences.</p> <p>31. The process has led to a better understanding of sustainable development and its implications for WAG policies.</p> <p>32. The process generated new partnership working</p> <p>REACHING AGREEMENT</p> <p>33. The Wales Spatial Plan reflects the views of all the Management Board.</p> <p>34. The final product is a realistic assessment of the situation and is a useful policy tool.</p> <p>35. Implementation of the Plan is operationally feasible.</p> <p>36. The process will lead to changes in behaviour of stakeholders.</p> <p>37. All issues have received adequate attention.</p> <p>38. Difficult & conflicting issues have been resolved through consensus.</p> <p>39. The WSP process has resulted in a higher profile being given to sustainable development in the policy process.</p> <p>40. The WSP process has resulted in recognition of the need to acknowledge interdependencies & interrelationships between organisations.</p> <p>DISPERSION OF POWER</p> <p>41. The views of one particular stakeholder or group of stakeholders was not allowed to dominate the process.</p> <p>42. The chair of the Management Board allowed a full discussion and sought consensus</p>					

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

ANNEX 2 : NON-MANAGEMENT BOARD:

POLICY / COLLABORATION PROCESS: INITIATION / PROBLEM SETTING

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>COMMON DEFINITION OF THE ISSUE</p> <p>1. Agreement on the overall vision – <i>‘We will sustain our communities by tackling the challenges presented by population and economic change; we will grow in ways which will increase our competitiveness while spreading prosperity to less well-off areas and reducing negative environmental impacts; we will enhance our natural and built environment for its own sake and for what it contributes to our well-being; and we will sustain our distinctive identity’</i>. (People, Places, Futures: The Wales Spatial Plan. Nov. 2004)</p> <p>2. The Wales Spatial Plan presents a framework for collaborative working and decision making across sectional and functional boundaries.</p> <p>3. Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>4. Stakeholders recognised that interdependencies exist between each other in the sense that their individual actions could impact upon the activities of another organisation</p> <p>COMMITMENT TO COLLABORATE</p> <p>5. The Management Board was the most effective way of developing a collaborative approach to producing The Wales Spatial Plan</p> <p>IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS</p> <p>6. The Management Board needs to be representative of the key stakeholders</p> <p>7. Members of the Management Board should take a wider representational role</p> <p>8. The Management Board was balanced in composition & represented the key stakeholders.</p> <p>9. All the key stakeholders have been included on the Management Board.</p> <p>10. The stakeholder set is composed of equal players</p>					

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>LEGITIMACY OF STAKEHOLDERS</p> <p>11. The Management Board should only include those whose remit is essential to the task.</p> <p>12. The Management Board needs to be represented at the appropriate level, i.e. skill, ability to make decisions, etc.</p> <p>13. The composition of the Management Board adequately reflected the issues being discussed</p> <p>CONVENOR CHARACTERISTICS</p> <p>14. It was appropriate that the Management Board was convened & chaired by Welsh Assembly Government Officials</p> <p>IDENTIFICATION OF RESOURCES</p> <p>15. Adequate resources were committed to the process for developing The Wales Spatial Plan.</p> <p>16. Public participation was adequate in terms of extent and response</p>					

REFERENCE:

POLICY / COLLABORATION PROCESS: FORMULATION / DIRECTION SETTING

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES</p> <p>17. Clear procedural guidelines / working arrangements were established.</p> <p>18. The terms of reference reflected the task</p> <p>19. The aims & objectives were discussed & accepted.</p> <p>20. Sufficient time was given to consideration of the key issues.</p> <p>21. Opportunity was given to provide an in-put into the content of the Plan.</p> <p>AGENDA SETTING</p> <p>22. All members of the Management Board accepted the scope & purpose of The Wales Spatial Plan.</p> <p>23. As the process proceeded the membership of the Management Board should have been increased to reflect new or emergent issues</p> <p>ORGANISING SUB GROUPS</p> <p>24. The formation of sub-groups would have been beneficial in dealing with certain issues</p>					

PROPOSITION	EVALUATION				
	1=DO NOT AGREE 5=STRONGLY AGREE				
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>JOINT INFORMATION SEARCH</p> <p>25. Links between WSP & other WAG policies were considered</p> <p>26. The process resulted in a greater appreciation of interrelationships between organisations & policies and the need for policy integration</p> <p>27. The research reports from consultants and issues raised from public consultation led to informed debate.</p> <p>EXPLORING NEW OPTIONS</p> <p>28. New issues & options were considered & explored.</p> <p>29. The policy process generated new policy thinking.</p> <p>30. The Management Board satisfactorily explored any differences.</p> <p>31. The process has led to a better understanding of sustainable development and its implications for WAG policies.</p> <p>32. The process generated new partnership working</p> <p>REACHING AGREEMENT</p> <p>33. The Wales Spatial Plan reflects the views of all the Management Board.</p> <p>34. The final product is a realistic assessment of the situation and is a useful policy tool.</p> <p>35. Implementation of the Plan is operationally feasible.</p> <p>36. The process will lead to changes in behaviour of stakeholders.</p> <p>37. All issues have received adequate attention.</p> <p>38. Difficult & conflicting issues have been resolved through consensus.</p> <p>39. The WSP process has resulted in a higher profile being given to sustainable development in the policy process.</p> <p>40. The WSP process has resulted in recognition of the need to acknowledge interdependencies & interrelationships between organisations.</p> <p>DISPERSION OF POWER</p> <p>41. The views of one particular stakeholder or group of stakeholders was not allowed to dominate the process.</p> <p>42. The chair of the Management Board allowed a full discussion and sought consensus</p>					

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.