

Welfarism Anew?
Territorial Politics
And
Inter-War State Housing
In
Three Lancashire Towns

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No matter what we achieve in life someone has helped us.

Nowhere is this more applicable than in this thesis. I am indebted to so many people for their encouragement, contributions, guidance and cups of coffee. My studies over so many years have been supported by my wife Joan who has endured many hours on her own, prepared meals that have been left and provided coffee which has been consumed in abundance. Words cannot adequately thank her.

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Abstract.

Welfarism Anew?

Territorial Politics and Inter-war State Housing In Three Lancashire Towns.

By William Hudson.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the nature and complexion of territorial politics and central/local relations in the policy field of inter-war state-aided housing policy in the United Kingdom and specifically in the three case studies in Blackburn, Preston and Wigan. In particular, can territorial relations, from 1926, be classified as 'low politics', (Bulpitt 1983) with an operational code of 'mutual deference and frigidity' (Bulpitt) and with an attitudinal complexion of 'mutual deference to local possessive pluralism'? (Bellamy 1988)

The hypotheses are that in the policy field of inter-war, state-aided housing, from 1917/18 onwards, the nature of territorial politics changed. Political, ideological, economic, social and institutional changes were driven by the fear of revolution and were to have a significant impact on the way central/local relations were conducted from 1919. Furthermore state-aided housing policy was the genesis of welfarism anew. Policy emerged as 'path dependant' (Peters 1999) and continued to influence and shape both national and local politics and the way the centre and periphery interacted. The results of these extensive changes, suggests that territorial interaction thereafter, and the nature of policy provision, in the field of inter-war housing policy should be regarded as 'high politics'. It was not a policy field that could be left to peripheral government, or characterised by 'mutual deference and frigidity'. Consequently, the implementation of policy shaped territorial politics, and attitudinal change, at both levels of government, emerged as changing mindsets, in both polities, evolved during the inter-war period.

The questions investigated are: did a fundamental shift occur in politics, economics and welfarism, in 1919? (Hall 1986; Kuhn 1969) Can it be argued that once ideational change had occurred in 1919 policy became 'path dependent'? (Peters 1999) Furthermore, did a structured polity exist in the form of a tripartite relationship in territorial politics? What was the nature and complexion of central/local relations exhibited in the case studies, and, were they more complex, intensive, and interactive than Bulpitt suggests? Finally, how and why did the attitudes of 'mutual deference to local possessive pluralism', and 'local possessive pluralism' itself, (Bellamy 1988) begin to change as the mindsets in central and local government altered. These issues are investigated in terms of their effects upon inter-war state-aided housing policy when applied to the case studies in Blackburn, Preston and Wigan.

List of abbreviations used in this thesis.

AMC	Association of Municipal Corporations.
AMCHCM	Association of Municipal Corporations Housing Committee Minutes.
CCA	County Councils Association.
LGB	Local Government Board.
MOH	Ministry of Health.
BBCM	Blackburn Borough Council Minutes
BMOH	Blackburn Medical Officer of Health
GPHSCM	Blackburn Borough Council. General Purposes etc Committee. Housing Sub-Committee Minutes.
LCC	London County Council.
NHIC	National Health Insurance Council.
PBCM	Preston Borough Council Minutes.
PBCHCM	Preston Borough Council Housing Committee Minutes
PMOH	Preston Medical Officer of Health.
UDCA	Urban District Councils Association.
WBCM	Wigan Borough Council Minutes.
WBCHCM	Wigan Borough Council Housing Committee Minutes
WMOH	Wigan Medical Officer of Health.

Chapter 1.

Welfarism Anew?

Territorial Politics and Inter-war State Housing

In Three Lancashire Towns.

Introduction.

This thesis analyses the nature and complexion of territorial politics and central, regional, local relations when applied to inter-war state housing policy in the United Kingdom based on three case studies in the Lancashire towns of Preston, Blackburn and Wigan.

Bulpitt (1983) saw the period from 1910 to 1926 as a period which was characterised by ‘conditions of territorial crisis’ (Bulpitt, p124) he argued that these territorial crises were either ‘defeated or swept under the carpet’. (Bulpitt, p105) These propositions will be discussed in chapters 2 and 3 and it will be shown that as far as housing policy was concerned these crisis were neither defeated nor swept under the carpet. Bulpitt further argued that the nature of territorial politics changed from what he calls a ‘L’Ancien Regime’ (Bulpitt, p134) in 1926, after which, a new set of territorial relationships were established within the United Kingdom. He contends that the relationships changed to the extent that a ‘Dual Polity’ (Bulpitt, p3) existed on issues which the state considered as ‘high/low politics’. (ibid.) Bulpitt defined dual polity as meaning the: ‘degree of political interpenetration between Centre and periphery was low. In other words, they had

relatively little to do with each other' (Bulpitt, pp134-135). Here, he argued, that concerns such as the defence of the realm, the economy and foreign policy were high politics. All other matters, were relegated to the domain of low politics and these were issues that the periphery could be concerned with little or no intervention or interest from the centre. Central government did not want to be involved in low political salience, or in matters that they felt were too time consuming, mundane or awkward to deal with. Thus low politics was accompanied by a territorial attitude of 'mutual deference and frigidity' (Bulpitt, p135) by the centre and the periphery was left alone. Bulpitt does not suggest that there was no contact, but that contact was minimal and free from interference. However, government did need to constrain the demands which arose from social pressure and interest groups.

The suggestion arose that state-aided housing policy could not be conducted within this deferential framework because of the economic, social and political implications of that policy field and that a more structured polity existed. By this it is meant that there was a more interactive and extensive policy network involved in policy-making. It was a network which involved regional representatives of municipal authorities, the Association of Municipal Corporations (AMC) who themselves acted as co-ordinators and promoters of state-aided housing policy along with other local authority representatives. Territorial politics and central/local relations, it is asserted, were characterised by an integrative and structured exchange of evolving ideas on state-aided housing policy. Furthermore, it is also argued that the motives for, and methods of intervention changed from 1919, through the genesis of change in housing policy established under the provisions of the Housing Act of 1890. The demands for state subsidy were however resisted by central government until the

introduction of the Addison Act of 1919. Policy formulation was based on the promotion of social policy that recognised individual needs, rather than the protection of local property rights. This was especially so after 1919 when, it is argued here, a changed mindset of the actors within both central and local institutions began to emerge. (See below)

The contention is that territorial politics and central/regional/local relations were changing prior to 1919, leading to the suggestion that a structured polity rather than a dual polity existed. Here, it is argued that the nature and complexion of territorial relationships and politics began to change during the First World War. Political, economic, social and structural changes all affected relations between the centre, regional representatives of the localities in the form of the Association of Municipal Councils (AMC) and local government.

This analysis suggests that a structured polity existed within a tripartite relationship, (see Figure 1.1) and I wish to suggest that this provides a more compelling explanation of how territorial politics were conducted. Here, I will argue that interaction within this policy area was conducted on a more interactive and intensive level and at an earlier stage than suggested by Bulpitt. The operational code of court and country or a dual polity, accompanied by an attitude of mutual deference and frigidity, where there was little or no contact in territorial relations, did not properly reflect the nature of this particular policy area.

The discussion concerning the assertion that a structured polity existed, which is a central hypothesis of this thesis, centres around a number of key axes which reflect a

different scenario than the mutually deferent dual polity Bulpitt suggests. The key areas, which, are briefly explained below, and, form the basis of the discussions in the various chapters, are:

- Organisational practices.
- The Changing nature role and function of ideas and mindsets.
- Interest groups.

Organisational Practices.

Organisational practices, and most significantly the institutional changes that occurred in 1919, with the transition of the LGB to the MOH, was significant in the conception and ideology of state-aided housing policy as chapter two analyses and explains. This structural change in central government formed the basis of the central/local and central/regional relationships indicated in Figure 1.1. There was also the fact that localities had introduced into their political arena, a new area of central/local involvement, that of being providers of housing as agents of central government. This was not a role and function they had experienced before. Operational practices then changed at both levels of government, they are central to the argument on the changing nature and complexion of territorial politics and central/local relations and to the concept of a structured polity.

The Role of Ideas.

This is a central tenet of the thesis in as much as it is argued that the transition towards central government involvement in housing policy, and the provision of

state aid throughout the inter-war period, could not have been achieved without a considerable and enduring change in the mindset of those important actors within central government structures. The emergence of policy required attitudinal change at both levels of government. Chapters two and three, will illustrate national changes in ideation. Chapter four, will show how territorial politics were influenced by the changing force of ideas and the case studies will illustrate how these ideational changes affected the localities. The case studies will also show how the role of ideas influenced local decision making processes within local authorities that represented the spectrum of political nature and complexion of what in effect was a two-party political system. It will also illustrate how local mindsets were influenced, on what was a new policy field and welfare provision whereby local authorities became agents of central government in this particular policy field. Ideational change was then a crucial part of the working of a structured polity in housing policy.

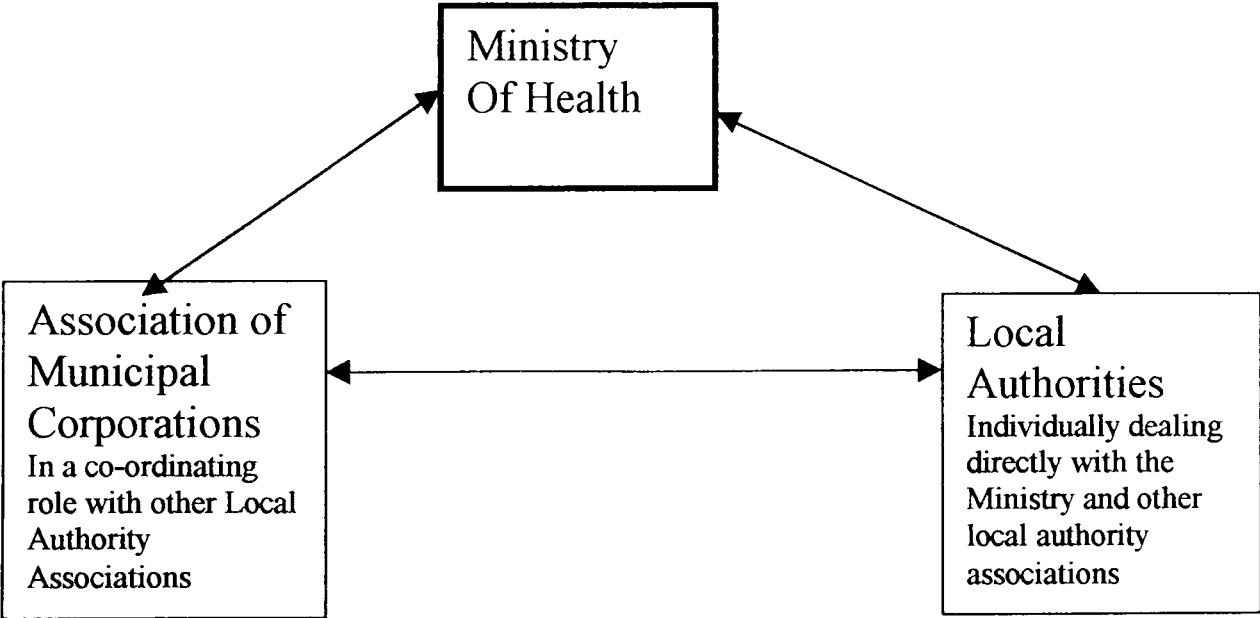
Interest Groups.

The nature, role and function of both national and local interest groups is a significant part of the structured polity relationship it is argued operated in territorial politics and state-aided housing provision during the inter-war years. Specifically, in the case of the AMC, the central role this organisation played in co-ordinating, developing and liaising with central government and local authority representatives and its own municipal authorities. Figure 1.1 illustrates this tripartite relationship. Local authority pressure groups also had a role and function in housing policy as the case studies illustrate especially the role played by working class representatives in the form of trades and labour councils and also local political organisations

especially those representing the Labour party. Interest groups, especially those that mediate relations between centre and periphery, form the third axes in the structured polity.

In sum, the use of such concepts as organisational practices, ideation and interest representation will, it is argued, show how a structured polity existed and operated in territorial politics. Furthermore, they will demonstrate that the nature of territorial relations during the inter-war year's, was much more complex, interactive and intensive than a dual polity thesis might at first suggest.

Figure 1.1 The Tripartite Relationship in Housing Politics and Policy.



The arrows indicate the lines of communication and the direct and indirect interaction in housing policy between centre and periphery.

Two changes of significance occurred in 1919: firstly, the transformation of the Local Government Board (LGB) to the Ministry of Health (MOH). (Bellamy 1988;

Honigsbaum 1970; Addison C 1934; Wilding 1970) secondly, the provision of state-aided housing for the first time, with the introduction of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919, (The Addison Act), (Addison C, 1934a, 1924b; Astor 1917) as a response to the threat to social order and possible revolution in the United Kingdom. These institutional changes marked a significant shift in the way welfare policy thereafter was implemented.

These were crucial institutional changes at the heart of economic, political, social and welfarist orthodoxy that prevailed at the end of the First World War and would fundamentally change ideology, political action and territorial politics thereafter. The transition of the LGB to the MOH was a notable institutional change, the significance of which will be discussed in chapter two.

The development of housing policy and the threat of revolution.

A crucial element affecting change in the area of housing policy was the introduction of state-aided housing provision in 1919 was the perceived fear of revolution from the harsh social conditions that existed in the United Kingdom. A more detailed explanation of why housing policy was selected for study will be given in chapter 3.

There are a number of competing analyses on why state-aided housing policy was introduced after the First World War. Swenarton (1981, pp72-87) suggests that this was introduced as a result of the fear by central government of impending revolution

in the United Kingdom (Astor 1917; Burnett 1986; Barton 1969; Melling 1980; Malpas and Murie 1982; Cockburn 1977). 'Present housing conditions are the real, and in fact the only, reason for social unrest' (Swenarton, p85) Melling (1980), Bedale, Darner, Finnigan and Dale argue that there was a class-based revolution resulting in the 1919 legislation. Bowley (1945) and Wilding (1970) saw the development of housing policy as a natural evolution and one, which would have been introduced in any event, given the prevailing social and unhealthy conditions endured in 1919. Wilding, (1977, pp15-16) suggests that exchequer subsidies to local authorities: 'would almost certainly have arrived before 1919 had the war not intervened'.¹ There is however persuasive evidence (see below) that the fear of revolution was the most powerful reason for the introduction of state aid and the critical social conditions focussed the attention of the centre on housing conditions. Mindsets were crucially altered, ideas, once engendered, would develop and emerge as the various strands of thinking towards welfarism and social provision in housing policy evolved.

Central political figures of the time, Lord Rhondda, Lloyd George, Christopher Addison and Lord Astor (see War Cabinet Minutes 1917 to 1919. PRO CAB 23/3 WC190) were convinced that revolution was not only possible, but probable, given the social unrest that had been growing towards the end of the war. Events in Russia in October 1917 also played a role in conditioning the mindsets of Britain's political elites. Rent strikes in Glasgow and Liverpool lead Darner to suggest that: 'Glasgow in 1919 was probably the nearest that any British city ever came to revolution'. (Melling; 1980, Ch 2)

¹ See also Melling, 1980, p11, for further explanation of both Bowley's and Wilding's views on the possibility of exchequer subsidies for housing given the insanitary conditions that prevailed prior to

A combination of poor housing conditions, a large influx of munitions' workers and, a well-organised labour movement led to a solid and effective rent strike. Evictions for non-payment of rents, court cases, mass demonstrations and the use of force against the civilian population in wartime, put considerable pressure on government to control rents.

The result was legislation in the shape of the Increases of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act, which fixed rents at the levels paid in August 1914. The unrest continued with insurrection in the army, strikes in the police force, and industrial action, all of which fuelled the government's fear of impending revolution. A Commission of Enquiry into industrial unrest was set up and reported in 1917 (Cd.8696 xv) and a Commission on Civil Disturbance (PRO CAB24/44 GT3814 5th March 1918) provide further evidence of the volatile situation towards the end of the war. The Times reported that 'The attitude of the Government is bringing the country to the verge of revolution.' (The Times 1st February 1918, p1) The perception among Britain's political leaders was that revolution was at hand.

Changes in territorial politics and welfarism.

The fear of revolution led to the need for greater social welfare provisions, reflected in the legislation of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 (The Addison Act). This affected the way territorial politics and social welfarism was considered and conducted thereafter. Prior to 1919 there had been limited welfare reforms (See

1919.

Pierson 1991; Thane 1996) but these were not as significant nor did they have the impact upon society than that of the 1919 Housing Act would have. (See Addison C, 1934a, 1924b; Swenarton 1981)

It is argued that this fundamental change in direction required attitudinal adjustment within territorial politics by both the centre and the periphery. Crucially the political, economic and social implications of policy changes and the introduction of state-aided housing for the first time, leads to the suggestion that the relationship between the two polities are not properly characterised by what Bulpitt describes as: mutual deference and frigidity by central government.

Attitudinal change was essential because each of these polities were inextricably linked both economically and socially in state-aided housing provision. This linkage continued throughout the inter-war years up to the abandonment of policy under the Thatcher government with the Housing Act of 1980, (Kavanagh & Morris 1989, p32). For the first time, local authorities would act as agents of the centre in the provision of welfare at a level not previously attempted. The economic impact of the introduction of state-aided housing therefore involved the centre and the periphery operating in an extended economic alliance in a way that had not previously happened.

The transformation of the LGB to the MOH and the enactment of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919, represented significant advances towards the provision of state-aided housing. The 1919 Act however, and the continuing legislation, gave both levels of government a different role and function in territorial politics which

engendered varying levels of consensus and conflict between the centre and periphery as the case studies will illustrate. These issues are discussed in chapters two and three.

Chapter four draws together the emergent themes and introduces a third significant element in the policy community of state-aided housing; the role and function of the AMC. In institutional terms, the AMC was an important structure with influential actors in housing policy throughout the inter-war period. Given that the case studies in this thesis are those of local municipalities, the AMC can be considered as a significant element in the formulation and development of inter-war housing policy as the empirical evidence from their minutes will indicate. The AMC played an important promotional and co-ordinating function on behalf of the municipal authorities it represented and also on behalf of the other local authority associations with whom it liaised.

Chapters five, six and seven present case studies of Preston, Blackburn and Wigan respectively. They will focus on the nature and complexion of territorial politics and central/local relations within the policy field of state-aided housing provision. They will illustrate how the nature and complexion of territorial relationships changed under the various housing acts and how the complexion and colour of local politics affected the implementation of the changing and politically motivated, national housing legislation. These chapters will focus on the issue of consensus and conflict in territorial politics and how this affected housing provision for the working-classes in each of the towns. It is argued that the political nature and colour of local politics

affected relationships with the centre, how policy was implemented and how the resulting territorial relationships affected housing output in the localities.

Chapter eight offers a comparative analysis of the issues raised in the case studies and will compare and contrast the evidence concerning the nature of territorial politics, state-aided housing policy and central/local relationships in each of the towns. It is argued that the nature and complexion of politics varied considerably in each town, as did the level of consensus in, and nature of, their territorial relations and thus the level of provision of houses for the working-classes.

Finally, chapter nine presents the conclusions of the thesis regarding the significant institutional changes that emerged, from the critical social conditions that existed towards the end of the First World War. These two material changes, the initiation of housing policy and the introduction of the MOH in 1919, were the genesis of what can be referred to as welfarism anew. Here, I will conclude that policy choices became path dependent thereafter. It also summarises also the nature and complexion of territorial politics, and central/regional/local relationships, when applied to state aided inter-war housing policy.

The conclusions suggest that this policy area can be understood, in institutional terms, if one adopts the new institutionalist approach. The suggestion here is that the application of concepts such as historical institutionalism, institutions of interest representation and interest intermediation provide a more enriched explanation than by Bulpitt's dual polity thesis.

Theoretical framework of analysis.

Bulpitt used an institutional, theoretical framework for his analysis of territorial politics. An extended form of this theoretical framework is used in this thesis. It is argued that by using some of the concepts contained in New Institutionalism, a more enriched understanding of territorial politics and central/regional/local relations can be achieved. Peters, (1999) outlines a number of variants of institutional analysis in particular the concepts of ‘historical institutionalism’, (Skocpol 1992; King 1995; Krasner 1984; Thelen & Longstrath 1992) ‘interest intermediation’ and ‘institutions of interest representation’. These concepts are employed in this study.

The approach of historical institutionalism, and in particular the concept of path dependency, (Peters 1999, p64) suggests that once policy is incepted: ‘there is an inertial tendency for those initial policy choices to persist’. (Hall 1986; Skocpol 1992; King 1995; Krasner 1984) When policy choices are made, when an institution is being formed, or when a policy is initiated, in this instance the creation of the MOH and the introduction of state aided housing in 1919, the continuation of that policy, even with slight oscillations, can be described as being path dependent. The initial policy choice has a continuing and determinate influence over the policy far into the future.

The introduction of state-subsidised housing in 1919 was, it is asserted, the creation of welfarism anew, in which state support for health and welfare would broaden and deepen future policy choices. Welfarism anew, is defined here as that societal provision which, was the engendering of ideological values and commitment

towards state support for the poorer classes in society and which emerged more fully after 1919. Whilst there had been limited welfare policies in terms of national insurance and pension provisions previously, these were not as significant, nor did they have the impact, of state-aided housing. The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 was the genesis of the welfare programme known as the welfare state, which was created from 1942 onwards under the Beveridge proposals.

The case studies demonstrate a variation in attitudes towards the direction on policy from the centre. For example, it is illustrated that some localities continued to apply for central subsidies and continued to build even though central policy was for construction using private enterprise building only. Thus, having embarked on a policy programme, localities, in some instances, were reluctant to cease construction. This situation led to inevitable conflict in territorial relations, a key issue in this thesis.

The analysis also focuses on the issue of structure and agency and the role ideas play in shaping both policy formulation and the way institutions are created and behave (Hall, 1986 p276). Hall (1986, p277) argues: 'that organizational relations can alter the basic logic of political rationality for many actors.....organizations alter the power of social groups'. The ideational dimension allows historical institutionalists to argue that: 'when an idea becomes accepted and is embodied into a structural form the institution has been created.' (Peters 1999, p67) The argument is that having created a strategy to divert the threat of revolution in 1917 and to introduce what Lord Astor suggested later was an: 'insurance against revolution', (114 HC Debates, 8th April 1919, column 1956, W Astor) housing policy became an

ideational base for future welfarism. Thus, here, an important argument is that policy did not evolve in the way Bowley (1945) or Wilding (1970) suggest. The chapter will also illustrate how both ideas and motives for policy change emerged during the period and how the actors, within central and local institutions, influenced and implemented institutional and policy variation as changing ideas, values and beliefs emerged.

In analysing the way in which policy is initiated, shaped and structured, it is also important to consider what Peters (1999, p112) suggests are: ‘Institutions of Interest Representation’. This refers to less formal structures or institutions who, nevertheless, are significant in the political process and this is evidenced when the role and function of significant actors and organisations, such as the AMC, are investigated. Similarly, what Peters (1999, p116) describes as: ‘interest intermediation’, is a useful concept in terms of the analysis of Bulpitt’s dual polity in territorial relations accompanied by an operational code of mutual deference and frigidity. Interest intermediation enriches our understanding of the linkages between interest groups and the State. (See Finer 1958; Freeman 1965; Latham 1965) It is important to consider in which other aspects of the political world are formed and the way less formal organisations are institutionalised and the way they interact with formal organisations. Interest intermediation is therefore a useful concept to use in analysing the central/ regional/peripheral relationships, the territorial dimensions in politics and a central focus of this thesis, and how this is explained. The extended institutional analysis, using the concepts within New Institutionalism, are therefore considered an appropriate analytical framework for the structure of the thesis.

Methodology.

The principal methodology used is a case study approach which uses empirical material from the three towns selected. The primary sources taken from various records available (see the lists at the end of the thesis) are supplemented with the additional material from Daunton 1983, and Melling 1980. These illustrate various case studies from Leeds, Manchester, Bristol and County Durham. This section will briefly explain the reasons for the selection of the towns concerned and the empirical evidence contained in the case studies. The evidence presented will concern the nature and complexion of the territorial politics of state-aided housing policy within the inter-war years at central/regional and local levels. The breadth and scope of the analysis provides a detailed analysis on the introduction and development in inter-war housing policy in the geographical locations concerned and a thorough insight into inter-war state-aided housing policy.

The case studies centre on the towns of Preston, Blackburn and Wigan, situated in Lancashire. One methodological issue is the extent to which they are a representative snapshot of housing-policy during the inter-war years. In particular, to what extent do they reflect the implementation of national policy at local level, in terms of both housing policy and political behaviour in territorial politics?

It is important to remember that institutional accounts of housing-policy need to take into consideration not only the national scene but also the variations that occur and that are significant in each of the localities even in concentrated geographical areas such as those in this study. These case studies are also complemented by other works

in the housing policy-field from other locations within the United Kingdom. All of the case studies used, and the empirical evidence gained, along with the works from other town and cities, complement each other. They illustrate the nature of territorial politics, the level of conflict and consensus and the impact of welfarism anew at the local level. In many ways, the additional case studies exhibit similar characteristics and relationships to those found in Wigan, Blackburn and Preston.

The analysis here will show that they do provide a representative snapshot of the nature of territorial politics and central/local relationships within the policy field of inter-war housing. Each of the towns displayed differing local political, social and economic variations, which provided varying attitudes to national politics that affected housing policy, territorial relations and housing provision in differing ways. Besides the question of institutional analysis, the three towns were considered appropriate choices on other grounds: -

- The geographical location and size of population.

All three towns varied in population sizes and densities, from almost city sized in Preston and Blackburn to the large town of Wigan.

- The industrial and economic bases.

All three had a history of textiles, more so in Preston and Blackburn. Importantly, Wigan had a large coal mining economy, which indicated the need for special housing amenities. These requirements were a source of conflict between the local authority and both the housing commissioners and the Ministry of Health.

- The health and housing conditions of the towns.

Initial investigations indicated that the housing demands for each of the locations differed. This was because of the nature and levels of housing stock in each of the towns at the end of the First World War. The 1911 census showed that Wigan had 12 per cent of its population living in conditions of more than two persons per room, Preston had 5.6 per cent of its population so housed and Blackburn even less with 4.4 per cent. There was then considerable divergence in living conditions between Wigan and the other two towns. The same situation applied in terms of infant mortality and death-rates which, was a further consideration in the selection process.

- The political nature and complexion of local politics. It is not my intention, at this juncture, to detail the political nature and complexities of the towns. Suffice to say they varied markedly from conservative in nature in politically incorporated Preston, to politically Conservative complexion in Blackburn, and a Labour heartland in Wigan. It will be shown that the varying local political complexions affected the implementation of national housing policy at the periphery.

The aim of the studies is to illustrate how the nature and complexion of local politics could be seen to be either converging but also diverging from the political complexion of the centre. By this it is meant that the nature, colour and complexion of the centre differed from that in the particular local authority: how it affected the nature and complexion of territorial politics; whether territorial politics were consensual or conflictual, and the effect on state-aided housing policy in the localities. The three towns demonstrate different relationships even in a relatively confined geographical area. The contention that a dual polity existed and was

characterised by mutual deference and frigidity insofar as it relates to state-aided housing policy is contrasted in the territorial relationships displayed in these towns.

The empirical evidence from the case studies, in a geographically close proximity, along with evidence from other studies in different areas of the United Kingdom, presents what is a logically theoretical sampling to be significant in this analysis. Geographically, industrially and politically they provide appropriate case studies to analyse the nature, colour and complexion of territorial politics and housing policy during the inter-war years.

In sum, it is argued here that by using an extended version of the institutional concepts employed by Bulpitt a more enriched picture emerges concerning the nature role and function of territorial politics when applied to the policy field of inter-war state-aided housing policy. A mutually deferent dual polity was not the operational code and evidence shows that a more structure polity existed based upon the concepts of organisational practices, ideational change and the influence of interest group intermediation.

Chapter 2.

The Changing Face of Whitehall.

From Local Government Board to the Ministry of Health.

Central/Local Relations 1871 to 1919 and

The Development of Housing Policy.

Introduction.

This chapter is concerned with the transition of the Local Government Board (LGB) into the newly created Ministry of Health (MOH) in 1919 and the significant impact this had on central government, economic orthodoxy, territorial politics and what is suggested was, welfarism anew. The chapter outlines the nature of the LGB, its ideology, role and function in central/local relations and housing policy from its creation in 1871 until its demise in 1919. It is considered that this had a crucial impact on altering territorial politics and housing policy and how central/local relations were conducted during the inter-war period. It was a structural change that affected the fabric of politics thereafter and had a significant impact upon territorial relations. This chapter is therefore a central part of the thesis in terms of the hypothesis that the newly formed Ministry of Health (MOH) and the provision of state-aided housing were essential requisites of a society where a significant shift occurred in welfarism and politics thereafter. The transformation of the LGB to the MOH is one of the features of the organisational practices that formed, what I argue, is one elements of a structured polity in territorial relations.

State-aided housing policy, it is argued, was born from the fear of revolution from the critical social conditions that existed towards the end of the First World War, as chapter three illustrates, the result of which was consequential social and political change in the United Kingdom. The transition was long and acrimonious being described by one author as: ‘The struggle for the Ministry of Health’. (Honigsbaum 1970;¹ See also² Ashford 1886; Bellamy 1980 and 1988; Long 1923; Malthie 1898; Mommsen 1981; Ross 1956; Stacey 1884; Wilding 1970) This chapter examines the nature and complexion of central/local relations and housing policy from 1871 to 1919, during the life of the Local Government Board (LGB).³ It also considers how territorial politics could only be viewed in terms of the fiscal tensions that existed and in which Bellamy (1988, p272) suggests was: ‘The dichotomy between the public and private consumption of publicly produced goods.....(being) crucial to an understanding of central-local relations’. The publicly produced goods in this scenario being state-aided housing provision and financial subsidy to both public and private sector housing. There is very little written on the nature of the LGB in terms of fiscal provision as a central government department and on its role and function within territorial politics in terms of central/local relations and housing policy. This is a deficiency the research tries to redress. Bellamy (1988) provides the major contribution in this area of the history and development of central/local relations and fiscal provision prior to the First World War and on the issue of private and public consumption of goods and services.

¹ Honigsbaum’s work is an excellent portrayal of the transition from the LGB to MOH based on primary material throughout the period.

² These articles concern both the LGB and the emergence of the welfare policies from 1850.

³ The reputation of the LGB is discussed in Simon 1890, Sydney and Beatrice Webb, 1948 and 1963.

The creation of the MOH was the central institutional change that impacted on the locality in a significant way. It required local authorities to appraise their role and function as providers of social welfare at a level not previously envisaged or attempted by peripheral government. It also necessitated attitudinal changes at the local level with a shift from what Bellamy described as an attitude of: ‘local possessive pluralism,’ (Bellamy 1988, pp 11-15)⁴ to becoming the new agents, but not partners, of central government’s state-aided housing policy. This chapter lays the foundation for the thesis providing evidence concerning the changing nature of territorial relations and the way they were conducted under the new MOH, which would have responsibility for housing policy thereafter. It was a structural change in the major institution involved in housing and social welfare provisions and played a pivotal role in welfarism from that time.

This chapter sets the scene for the further development and discussion of the nature, role and function of the central government institution involved in the politics, policies and territorial relations of inter-war state-aided housing in the United Kingdom. The creation of the Ministry of Health was a significant inter-war structural change undertaken by central government that was to affect social provision in general and housing for the working-classes in particular. It was a change that necessarily impacted on the fabric of economic, political and social life in the United Kingdom.

⁴ Bellamy’s work on the nature of central/local relations and fiscal policy illustrates the attitudes of the periphery and how these were characterized by ‘deference’ a term central to Bulpitt’s theory.

The structure, ideology, role and function of the Local Government Board from 1871,

In 1870, one of the prime concerns of the government was the health of its people and the poor conditions in which they lived. This prompted the setting up of a second Royal Sanitary Commission⁵ which reported in 1871 and recommended that the three major departments concerned with the health and welfare of the poor be merged. The LGB was born from the recommendations made. It was considered that the merging of all the major departments concerning health, medicine and welfare would provide a more economic and effective method of dealing with the needs of the poor.

The LGB was the central institution created by government in 1871 responsible for a plethora of functions and services, which concerned both the centre and periphery. It was responsible for the implementation of central government policy in the localities and was therefore very much at the forefront of territorial politics during its existence. The LGB was described as being: 'the first comprehensive client department for the local government system that emerged in British Central Government'. (Bellamy 1988, p1; see also Malthie 1898; Ross 1956) It was as a result of the creation of the LGB that national interest in local matters was established, especially those concerning social welfare and the physical environment. The LGB played a large role in the development and management of the local government system. It dealt with structure, rating, grants, elections, boundaries and audits. It also sponsored the widest range of domestic services ever

⁵ This was the second report. The first report was in 1869 (C.4218) XXXII 469 and the second in 1871 (C. 281) XXXVI.

encompassed by a single, unitary department including the poor law, public health, housing, town planning, vaccination, food and drugs administration, alkaline inspection, highways, traffic management and old-age pensions.

The period from 1871 to 1919 saw the institutionalisation of relations between the central and local administrative systems. The LGB would perform a role of policeman between the factions concerned within local government finance. In housing, this meant ratepayers and property owners. If the LGB was to perform a role as mediator between the centre and the locality, then whilst it remained a department acting on behalf of the organised interests of property holders, and the Exchequer, it could not act in the interests of the most needy in society, the poor. Fiscal provision for housing from central taxation was not the prevailing economic orthodoxy. The hypothesis in this thesis is that such territorial attitudes would, by necessity, have to change after 1919, due to the structural changes that occurred with the creation of the Ministry of Health and the welfarist policies pursued by central government thereafter.

The operational code of the LGB.

Policy emerged from the LGB mainly through casework generated by the exercise of its statutory duties, rather than from proactive research into the needs and demands of the periphery. Such demands were measured against the ability of the centre to provide these and to suggest a changing ideological perspective that would create the political arena conducive to closer and more integrated central/local

relations driven by the demands for social provision. However, the structure of the LGB and its personnel do not appear to be overly sympathetic to the needs of the poorer classes, nor was the economic orthodoxy of the day compliant with such an ideological persuasion.

The problem was that the Boards administrative organisation eventually became so work-bound that it had little time to be proactive and reacted to situations with which it was presented. Such was its nature and construction, not one conducive to an active role in planning or one beneficial to the needs of the poorer classes in society whose voices were hardly, if ever, heard. From the outset, therefore, it appears that the Board's primary concern was to develop and protect its precarious authority.

These fiscal tensions, which the Board faced, were not those that would assist the provision of universal social policies to benefit those to whom it should have been directed, being a construction of the three departments from which had previously existed. Its ideological perspective was to protect the ratepayers on the one hand and the exchequer on the other, an unenviable task. The centre did not have the economic ability, or the ideological persuasion, to supply the periphery with the cash it demanded for universal provision of services. While local authorities considered the development of local government was largely a response to nationally defined interests, the national taxpayer, it was argued, rather than the local ratepayers, should bear the cost.

Alternatively, Gladstonian financial orthodoxy held that local authorities should be disciplined by the establishment of a direct connection between local expenditure and local rates. National politicians regarded with great suspicion any proposal which gave local lobbies an interest in the yield and nature of imperial taxes. This fiscal tension was at the crux of the debate and the relationship between the centre and periphery. It was the principle on which the ideology, nature, role and function of the LGB had been conceived and which pervaded the corridors of its structure and administration at national and local levels. As such, the LGB was conscious that:

The growing awareness of the social problems of Edwardian England.....led to more strident calls for the powers of the centre over local authorities to be strengthened and for more effort to be made to incorporate local authorities into national policy. (Bellamy, p15)

One would have assumed that the thinking within the LGB would have been different and guided towards social provision with a financial input from the centre. As a unitary institution, galvanised from those departments which previously were concerned with the health and welfare of the nation, in terms of poor relief and medical provision, the expectation was that those involved in health provision would concentrate on the greater issues of social welfarism, such as medicine and housing initiatives.

Institutionally, the LGB was the major structure with which local government had to deal and ultimately with which the question of territorial politics arose. It was, however, perceived as being an elitist department acting on behalf of the Exchequer

centrally and ratepayers locally (which in 1871 meant local landowners, landlords and notable elites), not the working or poorer classes. Nor was the LGB promoting or acting in the interests of the working classes or in investigating those policies that would benefit the working classes. The LGB was more attuned to the interests of ratepayers and the Exchequer rather than local service provision and by the early 1900s was organised by established conventions and routines of a unitary rather than federal organisation, within central/local relations.

The LGB was policing rather than being pro-active in policy initiatives. Social provision was not a priority. The dilemma facing the LGB was to promote specific policies that were beneficial to the working and poorer classes in society whilst also pursuing policies that would ensure that the health of the nation was improved. The LGB was not a radical organisation that worked on behalf of, and with, the localities. Rather it can be argued it served the purpose of central government as it endeavoured to keep local authorities at arm's length, and to pursue the peripheries functional separation from the national political system rather than their more complete integration. Here, it can be argued that a dual polity existed during this period and the centre did not wish for involvement on local issues with the periphery.

The LGB, as far as local government and its administration was concerned, was not a department, body or institution which could provide the avenue to finance local authority initiatives in social provision for the poorer classes, despite its overall responsibility for health and housing. The reason was that fiscal tension between the centre and periphery existed and the LGB had little to offer the localities in terms of

financial help. To have provided financial assistance would have opened central institutions to even greater economic demands and involvement in policy issues with which it had little interest.

Yet, it was precisely this type of support that the periphery needed if it was to care for the health of its citizens in general and more particularly provide housing for the working and poorer classes. The territorial relationships suggested by Bulpitt of court and country appeared to be the operational characteristics of central local relations at this time. The issues of central/local relations and territorial relationships will be discussed below.

Institutional relationships between the LGB and those associations representing local authorities were also poor, for example with the Association of Municipal Corporations (AMC). Relationships were formalistic and adversarial rather than mutually influential. The LGB saw the AMC as lobbyists rather than collaborators, which was precisely their function and one that became significant in housing policy with the MOH during the whole inter-war period. There appeared then to be little constructive liaison between the LGB and the periphery and this was the situation throughout the life of the LGB.

The perception of the role and function of the LGB thus depended on the position one occupied in the political arena. From the view of central government it had a specific client department to deal with the issues, policies and needs of the periphery. The areas in which it was concerned covered a multitude of domestic services and areas of social provision and welfarism, and in theory it had the powers

to deal with such policy commitments. The problem clearly was that it did not have the financial muscle to support its role, function or responsibilities in terms of the demands from the localities after 1917. In this respect, the LGB was perceived by the periphery as being both elitist and unable to support the demands of the locality in terms of health, welfare and state-aided housing-provision.

The changing of the relationships, and the actions of the LGB in actually working with and on behalf of the periphery, happened only slowly and almost at the end of the reign of the LGB between 1917 and 1919, and then only in a very limited way. The source of the attempted intervention and its main instigator was the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, who insisted that the views of the periphery be sought and that local authority institutions were used as a method of communication on the needs and demands of the localities. Clearly, this intervention was needed for the views of the periphery to become both known and useful. The intervention of other institutions representing the localities, for example the AMA and AMC were not welcomed and it appears that only after Prime-Ministerial intervention were relationships extended. Even so, the LGB did not consider that these bodies should influence policy-making on national issues especially those concerning economic planning. The influence of the AMC in housing policy is considered in Chapter 4.

The initiative, in using existing structures to assist information provision and decision-making, was not one the LGB considered either useful or necessary, despite the intervention from Lloyd George. It was little wonder that the LGB would not survive and that its usefulness was described as: 'a shadow of what was intended'. (Honigsbaum. 1970, p9) The LGB did not consider intervention from the localities as

a part of its perceived relationship nor did it consider a closer liaison with the localities to be of benefit. Mutual deference and frigidity appeared to be the nature of territorial relationships during the period, the complexion of which will now be examined in more detail.

Central/Local Relations. Territorial Politics and the LGB.

This section of the chapter will attempt to explain how the territorial dimension of politics actually operated from 1871 to 1919. It will also deal with the nature and extent of territorial relationships during the life of the LGB in an endeavour to ascertain whether the overall political relationships as suggested by Bulpitt, confirm the existence of a: 'dual polity' (Bulpitt, p134) and, furthermore, if those relationships could be described as one of 'mutual deference and frigidity'. (Bulpitt, p135) The question raises a number of issues namely, those of agent and partnership in terms of the perception of the role and function of the LGB politically, as well as the role of structure and agency in terms of the institutional framework within which the Board operated and by which its role was shaped during its lifetime. I will also assess the significance of the impact of the actors involved in its workings. It was observed above that the Board operated on the basis of a typical civil service configuration operating a unitary departmentalised structure and was constrained by a set of statutory duties within which it had to act.

Central/local relations were mainly conducted through visits and inspections by the field inspectors and the threat of fiscal sanctions from the centre. The business of the

LGB was that of enforcing local financial discipline and stewardship, and mediating the tensions between collective action and private property rights. The culture of the Board therefore, reflected the values appropriate to an essentially quasi-judicial and bureaucratic business, heavily tempered by a pragmatism derived from its political constraints. This was not a relationship, which engendered closer links between the centre and the periphery nor one, which would be advantageous to the locality in terms of fiscal appropriation.

The relationships would be of a different kind from those that would develop after the First World War. The cessation of the LGB and its transition into the MOH and conjunction could be described as regulatory rather than promotional. Regulation was negative and constrained basically to financial control directed at controlling expenditure on the threat of surcharge from the district auditor. The nature of central/local relations was thus clearly very different from that which evolved after the First World War, but the demands of the periphery had to be just as closely monitored by the centre and for the very same fiscal reasons. The demands became far greater and more complex. They were legitimised by the very real threat of revolution given the critical social conditions that existed in the United Kingdom. A new dimension had entered the political arena, that of social unrest and action by a now motivated, more politically aware and diverse society and one, which had endured the trauma and horror of war. It will be argued that motives and intentions for political, economic and social change began to emerge. Policy that recognised individual need rather than protecting local property rights began to develop and this was due to ideational changes in the minds of the political elites within the structures of the state.

The ideational base for such change was created by a willingness of those at the heart of government during the inter-war years, Lloyd George latterly as Prime Minister, Lord Astor, Christopher Addison as Minister of Reconstruction and Lord Rhondda during his brief time at the LGB, to promote such policies. It is true that the civil servants, were, mainly for economic and ideological reasons, reluctant to embrace change and this is evidenced by the attitude of the LGB and a number of its presidents. There is evidence of this from both the Treasury and the LGB. As far as housing policy was concerned, whilst local authorities had the power to provide local housing under the 1890 Act, they failed to do so. What was required was the incentive to promote state-aided housing: a stimulus that would recognise a duality of purpose within the centre and periphery.

Perhaps the ideal model of territorial relationships would be one of partnership between the two political levels of administration. The centre acting in tandem and as co-equal with the localities, with the latter having discretion in designing and implementing their own policies. The agent model, however, sees the locality implementing policies under strict supervision from the centre. Here, there is little or no discretion with the centre being autonomous in policy formulation and development. The operational code was one of agency in terms of housing policy during the inter-war years with local authorities, in principle, if not totally in practice, as the case study in Wigan illustrates. Never the less the overall model was one whereby the periphery fulfilled the wishes of the centre.

The argument presented in this thesis is that as far as the policy field of housing is concerned, this would be the operational norm throughout the inter-war years. The

policy field of housing rather than being 'low politics', was an issue which was judged on the basis of fiscal provision and intervention alone, a matter of high politics. This is suggested too by Bellamy who argues that: 'the failure of central government to share fully the burdens of Local Authorities brought local finance and politics of central/local relations into "high politics"'. (Bellamy, p11) This illustrates the intensity of territorial relations because, the economic and political implications of state-aided housing policy placed this policy field high on the political agenda. Initially, it was at the forefront of politics and at the centre of the wartime Coalition Government's ideological persuasion that liberal reforms could circumvent any possibility of revolution.

Bulpitt's work is useful, when analysing the territorial relationships during the life of the LGB although he does not specifically mention the work of the LGB in any great detail. He does, however, suggest that the establishment of the LGB in 1871: 'provided the basis for a more systematic relationship with local authorities,' (Bulpitt, p122) and that it was an: 'efficient instrument to control local government in Britain'. (Bulpitt, p121) That was the whole issue the LGB controlled on behalf of a central government whose ideology was shaped mainly by rural/agricultural values. Bulpitt concentrates mainly on the period from 1910 to 1926, which he describes as one of: 'conditions of territorial crises'. (Bulpitt, p124) The reasons he suggests for the crises were: 'both numerous and influential,' (Bulpitt, p129) and it is these critical pressures that I now address.

What were the 'challenges' and 'crisis' and how did they affect territorial relationships? Bulpitt suggests that: 'Five principle challenges emerged (or increased

in salience) after 1870' (Bulpitt, p106) which he regarded as a threat to Britain's economic base in terms of both economic and social upheaval. These challenges were the:

Economic external support system; social change.....the political emergence of mass social groups.....mass party mobilisation.....the development of a new territorial constitution..... and finally, a change in the nature of the centre in terms of its ideology, resolve and power relations with peripheral forces. (Bulpitt, p106)

Despite these challenges to the traditional territorial order, Bulpitt argues that the position up to the mid-1920s remained the same and had: 'been either defeated, emasculated, or swept under the carpet. Territorial modernisation was a conservative process, leading to what can be called a 'suspended revolution'. (Bulpitt, p105) It is argued that as far as state-aided housing-provision was concerned the nature of central/local relations began to change in 1919 and the challenges posed by Bulpitt were not defeated. Significantly, the emergence of mass social groups, party politics and a new territorial dimension developed and were influential during the period.

The underlying central governmental ideology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and the reason for establishing the LGB, was the co-ordination of health and poor relief. The LGB, as we have seen did not have the ability or the financial muscle to initiate policy at central government level to satisfy the demands of the localities. Bellamy (1988 p3), citing Bulpitt (1983 p3), agrees that: 'the official mind of the centre developed an operational code for territorial politics which emphasised the desirability of autonomy from the centre', a dual polity.

Partnership did not appear to be on the national political agenda. The LGB had little to offer the periphery in terms of positive financial or practical operational assistance. This is not surprising given that central government was composed of rural and farming ratepayers, rather than urban or industrial interests.

The structure and nature of local politics, and the attitudes of the periphery, during the period, were not conducive to change or influence from the centre. Local politics and administration were dominated by local elites and landowners that sought autonomy from the centre. Local rates contributed to local issues and the question of social provision was for many in the periphery not a substantial issue on the political agenda. It was the failure of the state to galvanise social policy into a coherent plan and policy for poverty and slum housing that was to change the nature, complexion and perception of what central/local relations should be, rather than what they were under the LGB.

It is to the issue of the historical development of state-aided housing provision that the focus now shifts. This assists in explaining the basis of a required attitudinal change by both the centre and the periphery, if territorial politics were to change and to create an atmosphere conducive to such change after the First World War. The demands upon the centre for enhanced welfare policies intensified from the critical social conditions that emerged in 1917.

Housing policy and the LGB.

This part of the chapter will look at the work of the LGB on the question of housing policy from its creation in 1871 to 1919 when the MOH was established. There were two major pieces of legislation enacted during the life of the Board; these were the Housing Acts of 1890⁶ and 1909⁷. The 1890 Act, especially Part III of the Act, gave local authorities effective powers for the first time to deal with both the qualitative and quantitative aspect of local authority housing.⁸ Where the shortage of housing prevented the closure of unhealthy houses, the Act gave the local Medical Officer of Health, the authority and power to recommend to the local councils the steps to be taken to reduce the housing shortage. In practice, however, it was local political pressure that was exacted on local councils to build. The pressure came from organised labour in general and specifically from local trades' councils.

Responsibility for the sanction of the 1890 Act and the permission to borrow monies to build houses rested with the LGB. It would consider applications from the localities and decide if the building was necessary and within the fiscal limitations imposed by the act. The economic ideology of the localities underlines the poor response and the failure of the Act to actively encourage building by imposing a statutory duty. Borrowings from local authorities from: '1900 to 1905 totalled £1.2 million.....and between 1906 and 1912 £670,000.....in 1910 the LGB sanctioned only 78 houses to be built by 2 local authorities'. (Swenarton 1981, p30) By the outbreak of the First World War, this had risen because of the increasing political

⁶ Housing of the Working-classes Act 1890, especially Part III of the Act.

⁷ PGA 9 Edw VII c44. Housing, Town Planning etc., Act 1909.

⁸ There was also a report in 1885-5 on housing. See First Report from the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working-classes, 1884-5 (C.4402) XXX 1.

demands in the localities to: '2,465 houses to be built by 79 local authorities,' (Swenarton, p30), a considerable shortfall when the need was for over half a million homes. (See Bowley 1945; Swenarton 1981).

There appeared little point in local authorities applying for sanction when they could not afford to fund building, nor did many of them have the political will to do so, while the LGB had no statutory powers to further promote or enforce this. 'It was the issue of housing which, as the century turned, particularly epitomised the difficulties created by contemporary convention of central-local relations for policy development'. (Bellamy, p245) These difficulties needed overcoming, if territorial relations were to change and social issues addressed. Change however would still be resisted at both levels of government.

This frigidity remained for most of the inter-war period and even with the enactment of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1909. The LGB itself recognised that the provisions under the new act were an inadequate response to the severe housing problem at the discussion stage of the act and viewed it as: 'rather an inadequate treatment of a subject which in popular estimation, has become important'. (Swenarton, p32) Thus, the 1909 Act did nothing to address the needs of the poor and the unhealthy state of the nation. Having recognised that the Act did nothing to promote housing the LGB simply confined itself to comments rather than action through its contact with central government. The LGB appeared to have a short memory: having recognised the failures of the 1909 Act its annual report of 1913 spoke of: 'a hitherto and unsuspected need for more and better housing'. (Burnett, p216) Furthermore, having already stated that housing provision needed financial

aid from the centre, the report was suggesting that: 'private enterprise has always been, and, so far as can be foreseen, will continue to be the main source of the provision for the working classes'. (Burnett, p216)

Herbert Samuels replaced John Burns as President of the LGB in February 1914 and it appeared that there was a new ideology emerging when he suggested the need for significant housing reform. Once again this proved fallacious. Samuels predicted that reform would include a statutory duty on local authorities to see that: 'the population of these districts are adequately housed'. (Swenarton, p34) but by the outbreak of War in August 1914, such declarations had not realised any legislative reform.

Whilst recognising that housing was a necessity, neither the government nor the LGB were suggesting anything other than provision of housing at an economic rent. If this principle were applied, for example to rural housing, it meant that housing would only be built for the better-paid rural workers rather than for agricultural labourers. Samuels, as President of the LGB agreed with this as the proposals would allow a filtering-up process whereby the lower-class housing would then be released for occupation by the poorer and lower paid, at a rent they could afford. The process would not allow sufficient houses to become available in order to satisfy demand. New state-subsidised housing, for the poorer classes was not on the mind of the LGB or on the political agenda in early 1914 and by the outbreak of War in August, housebuilding had come to a standstill.

Prior to this, the assumptions underpinning the nineteenth century housing acts were that the local authority had a duty to prevent the habitation of unfit houses but that it should provide housing only in default of, and in ways which minimised interference with, the local market. Local authority building was permitted only where cost would be recovered by selling the development. It was not supposed to subsidise rent and had no powers to establish land banks or to manage housing. Housing, it was believed, was still a local matter and not one in which the centre could or should play a part. Local needs, the centre believed, should be supported by local finance and the LGB was to act as 'referee', as 'policeman' in the nature of such territorial relationships.

The impact of War, the need for munitions, for the co-operation of a workforce dedicated to the defeat of Germany, and the need to house munitions workers, would begin to change the nature, form and political will regarding the problem of housing the masses. Proposals made under the Housing (No2) Act of 1914⁹ to provide housing for the working classes came to nothing; it reached the statute book on the 10th August 1914 but because of the War remained inoperative. This Act was seen by the LGB as: 'an opportunity for a major housing initiative'. (Swenarton, p49) Local authorities were encouraged to submit proposals, without delay, to the LGB for: 'providing and improving the housing accommodation for the working classes'. (Swenarton *ibid.*) The opportunity to improve the status of the poor was lost once again, this time by the hostilities in Europe.

⁹ P G A 4 & 5 Geo V, c52. Housing (No2) Act 1914.

The struggle between the LGB and those in the housing lobby continued throughout the War. Addison, as Minister of Reconstruction, and Lord Salisbury, the chairman of the housing panel, were both pushing for formal housing plans to be announced and for housing commissioners to be appointed in the localities to prepare and adopt a national building plan, with, if necessary, the centre acting in default of the localities. Importantly, they were also asking for housing to be made a mandatory duty of local authorities. The LGB's response to this was that local authorities would abdicate their duty and the state could not manage local housing schemes¹⁰ This proved not to be the case, as local authorities would become agents of the centre when state-aided housing was introduced. This attitude is typical of the LGB's perception of the limited ability of local authorities, and their willingness to undertake responsibility for housing and the ideas of state aid.¹¹

It was the effect of War that would ultimately change the minds of those in authority and place the issue of state-aided housing provision firmly on the political agenda. For obvious reasons, the production of armaments and munitions was vital to the War effort and the alleged shortage of shells on the western front brought about the fall of the Asquith government in 1915. The formation of a coalition government in May 1915, in which Lloyd George was appointed to the post of Minister of Munitions, changed the view of both the Cabinet and Treasury towards state-aided housing provision. 'It was under the most extreme pressure from the War Office that the Treasury consented, at the beginning of 1915, to the erection of a permanent

¹⁰ This perhaps indicates how out of touch the LGB were in this respect and the state would eventually have to provide local housing schemes in partnership with the local authorities.

¹¹ PRO RECO 1/469. Local Government Boards Housing Department statement on Financial Assistance by the State in Relation to Housing of the Working-classes After the War.

housing scheme at Woolwich'. (Swenarton, p51) This housing would be provided by the state, but by the middle of 1915 the Treasury was regretting this decision. Due to the high cost of building the Well Hall Estate at Woolwich, on garden city lines, the Treasury was calling for an abandonment of this policy 'in view of the supreme importance of restricting capital expenditure'. The 1298 houses on the Well Hall estate had cost an average £622 more than twice the cost of the original estimates.¹²

Samuels at the LGB, having seen the provisions of the Housing (No2) Act abandoned at the outbreak of War, saw the: 'opportunity offered by the Woolwich housing crisis to implement those promises of a fundamental improvement'. (Swenarton, p54) Lessons had been learned and it was possible to build quality houses on garden-city lines, in tree-lined suburbs, with a subsidy from central government. In a housing system that depended on the profit motive for construction and rental it was evident that housebuilding would not be continued unless, it received some form of government subsidy to limit the losses to local authorities.

The LGB eventually recognised this, and, in June 1916, it was the subject of a memorandum to the Treasury, at the request of the Reconstruction Committee, that: 'action be taken to deal with the problem in a way that was adopted in dealing with the housing of munitions workers at both Well Hall and in Gretna. (Swenarton, pp 68-73) Subsidised housing was the only answer to the housing problem, but the LGB did not comment on the level or form of subsidy.

¹² PRO T132 (Treasury to Ministry of Munitions, 15th June 1915).

Early in 1917, Lord Rhondda was made President of the LGB. He played a significant role during his short tenure in promoting a subsidised housing scheme. Not only did he support housing, but also the continued demands for a new MOH. The LGB's interest in housing gained momentum and throughout 1917, the Board had meetings with the National Housing and Town Planning Council and the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association as well as those with the Workmen's National Housing Council. The conclusion of the debates and meetings was already evident: that housing would only be built with the aid of central subsidy.¹³ There is however evidence here that ideational change was beginning within the minds of influential individuals in central government. The government's intervention in housing at Well Hall demonstrated that state-aided housing was a political reality and one which radical thinkers were anxious to extend. A number of political elites, namely, Christopher Addison, Lord Rhondda, Lloyd George and Robert Morant were persuaded that state subsidies were now a reality. Whilst the conditions of change were the exigencies of war it is, never the less, an indication that the state, and in particular individual actors within the institutions of the state, were beginning to conceive the necessary change in ideology. That the role and function of the centre on policy issues with which they had previously considered not to be their remit were now a necessary condition for the promulgation of the war effort.¹⁴ A promotion that would be continued, due to the fear of impending revolution, during and after the cessation of hostilities.

¹³ See P.p. 1918. Cd. 9087 xxvi, 'Housing in England and Wales. Memorandum by the Housing Advisory Panel of the Ministry of Reconstruction', p4. Ministry of Reconstruction December 1917.

¹⁴ For information on the Well Hall Site at Woolwich see PRO T161/68 S5222/1. (War Office to Local Government Board, 30th December 1914) This file contains the information about the Woolwich scheme from December 1914 to January 1915. 1298 dwellings were completed.

Lord Rhondda sought permission from the War Cabinet to issue a memorandum to local authorities advising them of the government's intention to provide financial support and requesting local authorities to provide estimates of their housing needs. This indicates the influence of the President of the LGB as a major actor on the political stage and within an institutional framework and will be later emphasised as a contrary view of housing policy, envisaged by Rhondda's replacement in May 1917, Hayes Fisher. This was a blow to Christopher Addison who found an ally in Rhondda for his views on housing and the need for a new Ministry.

Political intervention was now to play a significant role in housing policy at a level not seen before, because of a shift in ideological perceptions and economic orthodoxy that arose from the level and nature of civil unrest, social upheaval and possible revolution. Rent Strikes in Glasgow and Liverpool led to the enactment of the Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act in 1915. Insurrection on both sides of the English Channel, strikes in the police force, industrial disputes in the utility industries, resembled an all too familiar a picture of the unrest and upheaval in Russia. The threat of revolution in Britain, it was believed by senior politicians, was at hand.¹⁵ (See Chapters one and three of this thesis for further explanation.)

However, Rhondda's replacement at the LGB, Hayes Fisher, was very much against housing subsidies and the creation of a Ministry of Health. Political pressure however demanded acquiescence on housing. On the 24th July 1917, the Cabinet

¹⁵ The serious industrial unrest was discussed by the War Cabinet in 1917 and 1918. See PRO CAB 23/3 WC 190 (19th July 1917) Also PP 1917-1918 Cd.8698 xv 'Summary of the Reports of the Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest by the Rt. Hon. G N Barnes p6. See also PP1917-1918

authorised the LGB to issue a statement of its position on housing and to inform local authorities that:

Government recognises that it will be necessary to afford substantial financial assistance from public funds to those local authorities who are prepared to carry through, without delay at the conclusion of the War, a programme of housing for the working classes approved by the LGB. (Swenarton, p71)

The government had now committed itself to state aided housing but not to a specific level of subsidy or numbers of houses to be constructed. The threat of revolution continued and Hayes Fisher reminded Lloyd George in November 1917 of this and: ‘accordingly housing took its place in the governments tactical offensive’, (Swenarton, p73) against the critical threat of social upheaval.

There was conflict between the LGB and Treasury on the housing issue over the nature and extent of central government assistance. Whilst government had committed itself to state-aid, the Treasury would not commit itself to the levels this would require. The Treasury proposed a scheme of its own, supported by the LGB under which local authorities would raise the capital for building on the open market. ‘The subsidy from the Exchequer would take the form for the first seven years of the scheme, of three quarters of the annual estimated deficit’. (Swenarton, p73) The LGB attempted a compromise as the method and level of subsidy was unacceptable to local authorities. It secured an important modification which, would ultimately be the basis of the final subsidy, agreed in 1919. Where the loss faced by

Cd 8622-Cd8669 xv. Also PRO CAB 24/44 GT 3814. (Commission on Civil Disturbance, 5th March 1918). See also The Times 1st February 1918.

a local authority exceeded the produce of a one-penny rate increase,¹⁶ the LGB would have discretion to extend the Exchequer's contribution beyond the seventy-five per cent level. This was agreed and became the basis of the scheme to be put to local authorities, but it did not contain any proposals for government action in the event of default to build by the local authorities. Local possessive pluralism was still an issue and the dichotomy between ratepayer/taxpayer still needed to be addressed. Attitudinal change by the localities was a necessary condition for progress.

Christopher Addison, Minister of Reconstruction, argued that government had to act in default of the local authorities to prepare and carry out a housing scheme and that the LGB should be given statutory powers in this respect. (See Addison, 1934) Furthermore, specific time-limits should be imposed on local authorities to act and to implement schemes at the end of the War.

The Cabinet agreed to all proposals though it still left open the final form of subsidy as industrial and social unrest continued to increase. Local authorities pressed for a level of subsidy which would completely limit them to a loss of the product of a one penny increase on local rates, but the conflict continued between the localities and the proposals in the Treasury-LGB scheme. The LGB had decided to back the Treasury proposals, rather than those by Addison and those from the AMC.

The War was coming to an end, industrial and social unrest escalated. The Bolshevik revolution had also occurred in October 1917 and this brought added pressure on Government to act. The War Cabinet was obviously concerned at the seriousness of

¹⁶ One old penny is equal to 2.4 pence in 2001.

the situation¹⁷ and there was the further threat of five million armed and trained men returning from the war to poor conditions. Local authority demands on housing subsidies remained the same and eventually the LGB agreed with the view that the position was such that government had to act. In October 1918, the Parliamentary Secretary to the LGB, (Waldorf Astor, later Lord Astor) wrote: 'the money we are going to spend on housing is an insurance against Bolshevism and revolution'.¹⁸ Hayes Fisher, a senior politician as President of the LGB, had been charged by Lloyd George, the Prime Minister with the preparation of a housing scheme to be implemented at the end of the War. Fisher failed to do this, his opposition to state subsidised housing being well known, and he was dismissed by Lloyd George (officially he resigned) and was replaced by Auckland Geddes as President of the LGB.

On the 17th December 1918, Geddes wrote to the War Cabinet advising them that only 500 of the 1100 replies from local authorities had replied to the housing memorandum and specified a start date; this out of 1800 authorities. In a Cabinet reshuffle in January 1919, Addison replaced Geddes as President of the LGB becoming the fifth incumbent in a period of twenty-six months. This was perhaps the most significant appointment by Lloyd George in his tenure as Prime Minister. Addison, who was the architect of plans for the MOH, had been Minister of Reconstruction, and would be the first Minister of Health, played a pivotal role in housing, welfare and health legislation at the end of the War.

¹⁷ PRO CAB 24/44 GT3814 (Commission on Civil Disturbance) 5th March 1918. The threat of revolution was increasing in the minds of the War Cabinet and housing was seen as the ideological tool to prevent this.

¹⁸ 114 HC Debates, 8th April 1919. Column 1956. (W Astor).

Addison advised the Cabinet that replies to the Treasury-LGB proposals had resulted in a poor response: 'only fifty two authorities, totalling little more than 10,000 houses.....formal sanction had yet to be given to a single one of these' (Merrett 1979, p35) The proposals would not meet the demands from the periphery. Addison's proposals, to limit the losses to the locality arising from the loss of a one-penny increase on local rates, were finally agreed. Whilst greeted with enthusiasm locally, the Treasury were concerned that the building of the proposed 500,000 houses at a level of subsidy agreed would bankrupt the country: 'the annual charge to the Exchequer might ultimately be £5 to £7.5 million,' (Swenarton, p82), an enormous sum in 1919.

Having committed itself to state-subsidised housing the Government also pledged itself to the concept of a 'dream home'. This was an undertaking given by Lloyd George in his famous 'Homes fit for Heroes' speech¹⁹ at Wolverhampton in November 1918, a promise made and born from the critical social conditions within the country and the perceived fear of revolution. 'Homes fit for Heroes started its career as a pawn in the political game of bribing the electorate with vague promises of social reform'. (Bowley 1945, p3) The standard of building would be that contained in proposals from the Tudor Walters report which was accepted as the: 'quasi-official statement of the government's housing policy'. (Swenarton, pp110-111). Addison had achieved what Hayes Fisher would not attempt and this left a mark on the LGB, whose conservative orthodoxy had apparently been defeated. Officials were concerned that the LGB would pay a heavy price for this when the new MOH was created only months later.

¹⁹ See The Times 13th November 1918.

The Board also had to contend with the serious difficulty of a local possessive pluralism which was at the heart of fiscal tensions and central/local relations. The demand now was for a specialist-housing department within the Board, a demand that would not be met then or in the future. The Ministry as a whole would become the Government's housing department, but would it now address the fundamental problem of fiscal appropriation and attitudinal change to resolve the ratepayer/taxpayer dichotomy? Bellamy (1988, p274) argues that Addison and the new MOH did not address these issues. She suggests that: 'they failed to challenge the ideology of possessive pluralism that damaged the resourcing of local government'.

In sum, housing policy was typical of the way in which the LGB conducted its affairs, regarding the role of the periphery as being to police not to provide. It was not proactive in policy-making, nor could it be described as radical. The Board's nature and function was not ultimately what was required by the changing social structure or by national and local politics. Nor had it any financial inducements to offer the periphery for health or housing, or any other reforms needed for their benefit. The power to deliver such welfarism to the localities would only follow in 1919.

Why, if territorial relations discriminated so markedly throughout the periphery, when housing and health conditions were so poor, when welfarism in general needed addressing, and when the ideological perception of the LGB so clearly needed re-appraisal, did it take so long for the new Ministry to become established? Part of the

answer lies with the question of the individual personalities within the institutional framework, especially during the last two years of its existence.

The LGB and the emergence of the new Ministry of Health.

This section of the chapter will explain the struggle within Whitehall for the creation of a Ministry solely responsible for the health and welfare of the nation, including amongst other responsibilities: the provision of state aided housing for the working classes. (See also Addison 1934; Astor 1917; Brockington 1966; Burnett 1986; Elsas 1942; Gilbert 1970; Honigsbaum 1970; Wilding 1970.)

Whilst the calls for a Ministry came throughout the life of the LGB, it will be sufficient for the purpose of this chapter to concentrate on the period from 1917, as the drive for a Ministry gathered momentum from this period. The creation of the MOH marked a significant shift in territorial politics and in the emergence of a different operational code in central/local relations. The significance of this change cannot therefore be overestimated because of the shift in emphasis in the role and function that the new department would play in territorial politics and housing policy. This section briefly explains the acrimony at the highest level of government, in the creation of the Ministry of Health. It helps explain why there was considerable delay in forming the new department, when clearly, politics and policy demanded such change at a significant time in British history. A time when unprecedented demands were being made in welfare provision in health and housing which were inextricably linked.

Housing Policy, Changing Structure and Agency.

As far as housing policy and the creation of the MOH was concerned, one of the most problematic obstacles to progress was the appointment of William Hayes Fisher as President of the LGB. Fisher was Parliamentary Secretary to the LGB from 1915 to 1917 and its President from 1917 to 1918. Hayes Fisher was described as: ‘a reactionary of the worst sort who at no time in his career did he accomplish anything worthy of note’. (Honigsbaum, p66)

It is surprising to find such a person at the head of the central government department concerned with the health and welfare on the nation, which included housing policy and provision, and his opposition to state-aided housing is well documented. (Addison, 1934) Indeed, his failure to formulate a housing policy when instructed to do so led to his dismissal by Lloyd George. In order to flourish, housing policy would have to change both structurally, with a department responsible for its promotion, and in the minds of those individuals responsible for both its development, as an ideational and ideological concept, and its implementation within the periphery. The climate within the LGB during the inter-war period did not appear to be conducive to such change despite the fact that the Housing Act of 1890, and especially Part III of the Act, gave local authorities the opportunity to build. What was absent of course were the subsidies necessary to encourage building and also the fact that local authorities had to sell any houses they constructed for rental.

By 1917, the conditions for change were emerging, structurally in the shape of demands for a new ministry, also from significant actors within the political arena, and, socially from working class movements. There was the call by significant individuals within central government, for example, Lloyd George, Christopher Addison, Lord Rhondda, Waldorf Astor, Howard Kingsley Wood and Robert Morant, for the creation of a new MOH. (See Addison, 1934; Astor M, 1963; Honigsbaum, 1970; Wilding, 1970)²⁰ The War Cabinet: ‘were inclined to favour, in principle, the establishment of a Ministry of Health’. The Times reported that: ‘the new Ministry is awaited eagerly by all who have the mothers and children, and indeed the welfare of the people generally, at heart’.²¹ The calls for a new ministry and for new housing legislation were inextricably linked through Addison, Lloyd George and other political elites.

The threat of social upheaval placed the issue of housing provision firmly on the political agenda. A punctuation in the equilibrium was evident and the Housing Act of 1890 would not provide the answer to societal demands and neither did the Housing Act of 1909. There was still the problem however that institutional change, within the LGB, would have to be addressed if housing and the health of the nation were to be confronted in a significant way. Figure 2.1²² is an example of the complexity of maternity and child welfare services with three central departments and eight local agencies involved in 1914 and this was only one area within the myriad of responsibilities of the LGB, which, was as stated earlier, an elaborate organisation.

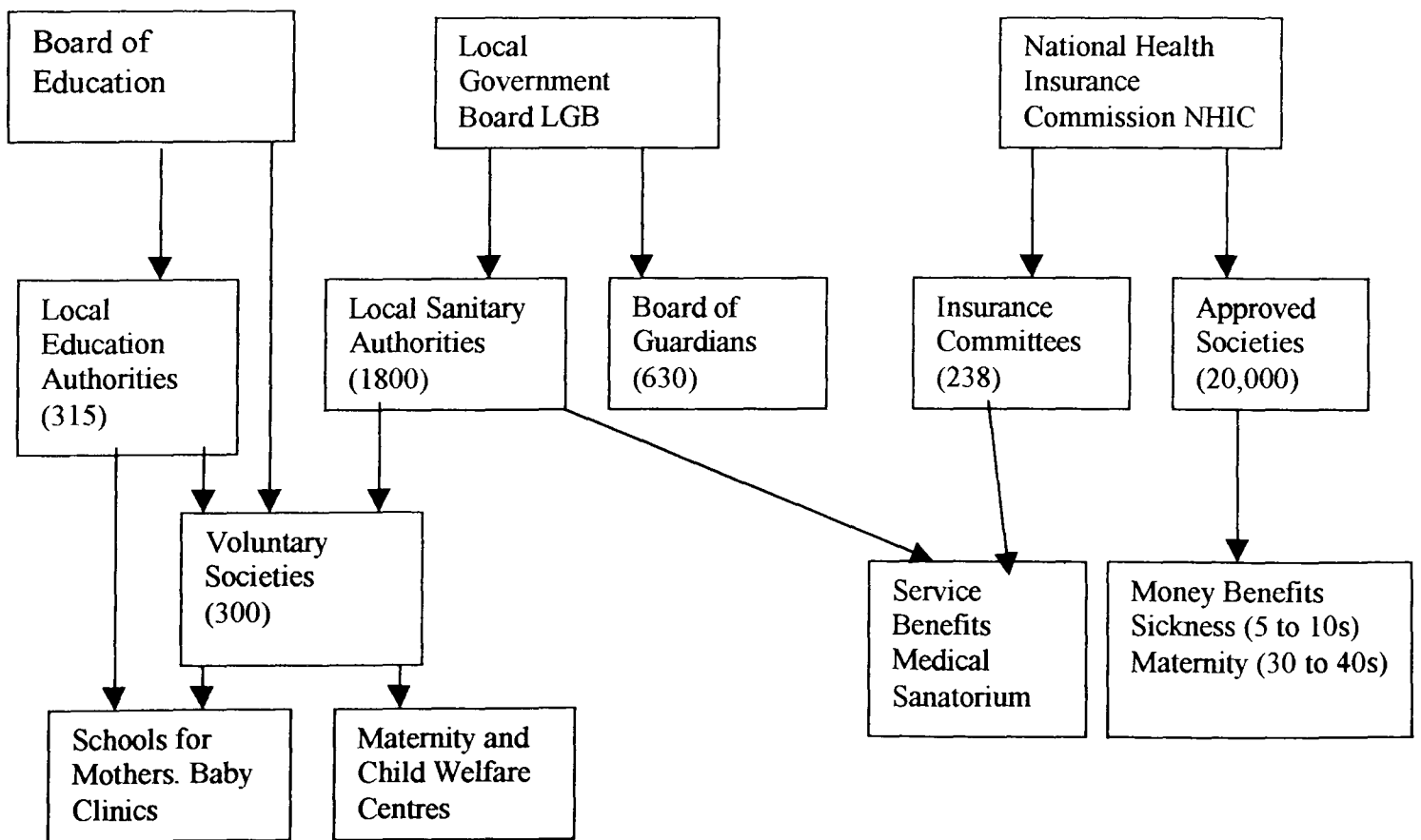
²⁰ See also CAB23/2/115 April 1917. CAB 23/3/156 June 1917; CAB24/14.GT839; CAB24/51.GT4533 as examples of the War Cabinets discussion on the creation of a MOH.

²¹ The Times kept up pressure on the government to act during Baby Week (July 2-9 1917)

²² Source Honigsbaum, 1970 p14.

Institutionally the LGB needed to change and to respond to the demands emanating from a mutable society and from the promotion of alternative ideas on both housing and the welfare of the nation. The clashes between the Board of Education and the LGB and between the National Health Insurance Commission (NHIC) and the LGB continued throughout the period.²³ For example, by 1917 there was still conflict between the LGB and those in favour of a new ministry.²⁴ Hayes Fisher was still proposing that a new Maternity Bill could form the basis of a new ministry but this was rejected by Addison and others. (Addison, 1934) What was evolving was the changing ideas of those central figures within government for both a new MOH and also for a housing policy that would quell the fear of revolution emanating from the social upheaval within and without the country. A change in the official mind of the centre was what was required and that was clearly emerging.

Figure 2.1. The complexity of maternity and child welfare benefits in 1914.



²³ See Honigsbaum, 1970, Chapters 3 and 4.

Source Figure 2.1 Honigsbaum, p14.

The balance between the influences of varying strands of thinking began to change. Ultimately, the MOH would be created from mainly those within the NHIC. As Honigsbaum, 1970 states:

the LGB officials paid a heavy price for Fisher's obstruction. All the key posts in the Department went to N.H.I. figures: Addison became Minister, Astor, Parliamentary Secretary, Wood, Private Parliamentary Secretary and Morant, Permanent Secretary. The LGB's Permanent Secretary (Sir Horace Monks) and its Chief Medical Officer of Health were forced into permanent retirement.

The new ministry was thus created from those whose ideas were akin to Addison's views. These ideas were to shape both the ministry as a structure and the senior personnel involved in its running whose ideas and values gave support to the departments promotion and its subsequent implementation of housing policy contained in the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919. Both the institutional structure and the actors within the institution itself were changed. The argument is that this created a changed mindset for future action, and in this study, for state-aided housing policy.

The British Medical Journal in 1917 reported that:

One working class family might receive care from as many as nine different doctors working under five different departments..... By 1914 three central departments and eight local agencies had become involved in the

²⁴ See CAB23/2/115, CAB23/3/156, Cab24/4, GT839, CAB24/51 GT4533. These records illustrate the discussions by the War Cabinet on the issue of the proposals for a new Ministry of Health.

administration of maternity and child welfare. (cited in Honigsbaum 1970, p13)

As Figure 2.1 illustrates, the LGB was also involved with 630 Boards of Guardians, 1800 Sanitary Authorities and the Board of Education with 318 education authorities. With the national health insurance committee (NHIC) providing benefits by means of 20,000 approved societies and 238 insurance committees plus 530 voluntary hospitals. The health care system clearly needed reorganisation to deliver benefits to those in need. It is little wonder that there were constant calls for one Ministry to look after the health of the nation in a process of rationalisation. Housing policy, as we have seen, was non-existent and the issues of health and housing needed urgent attention.

By 1917, Christopher Addison who was then Minister of Munitions, and a trusted ally of Lloyd George, approached Lloyd George along with Bonar Law to suggest the replacing of Walter Long as President of the LGB with Lord Rhondda. Long had resigned as President in December of 1916, and, as indicated above, Rhondda was to accept the position as the Head of the LGB. Rhondda became actively involved with Addison and others in promoting the idea of the new Ministry to the Prime Minister and Cabinet. A report for Lord Rhondda was hastily prepared. Wilding (1970, p155 citing Beatrice Webb's Diaries) stated that: 'In three or four meetings, she reported we completed a report merging the Local Government Board and the Insurance Commission in a new Ministry of Health'. On the 22nd May, it was sent to the War Cabinet with the view that: 'the recommendations of the sub committee should be accepted in their entirety'. (Wilding, p155) On the 6th June, it was discussed in Cabinet but was opposed by Lord Cornwall who was the representative of the

Approved Societies. Consequently, it was delayed until Lloyd George had seen a deputation from those societies whom he considered had important input to the debate.

This could be seen as a delaying tactic by Lloyd George who had other pressures of War to consider:

British shipping losses were at their heaviest.....food resources low.....fierce fighting on the western front with terrible losses. Against such a background the details of health administration cannot have seemed of immediate importance. (Wilding, *ibid*).

The chance for transition had passed and changes in the Presidency of the LGB were not those conducive to transformation, for Hayes Fisher was appointed President of the LGB to replace Lord Rhondda who was now food controller. It was a reluctant departure from the LGB and Rhondda refused to leave until he had secured a promise from Lloyd George that: 'a Bill would be introduced at an early date to set up a Ministry of Health.....Rhondda made the Ministry a political possibility'. (Wilding, p156) Addison was to describe Hayes Fisher as having: 'a parochial outlook at the LGB'. (Wilding, *ibid*)

Hayes Fisher's appointment was a setback to the promotion of a Ministry and it would take almost a further two years to overcome his opposition. Hayes Fisher was a politician who had: 'opposed every social reform introduced by the Liberals.....at no time in his life did he accomplish anything worthy of note'. (Honigsbaum, p66) His attitude towards a Ministry of Health which he revealed whilst Lord Rhondda's Parliamentary secretary was that: 'a big Ministry might

prove too controversial'. (Honigsbaum, p37) It is not surprising the LGB did not flourish and that Lloyd George would eventually dismiss him.

The appointment of Addison as the Minister of Reconstruction on the 17th July 1917 was a significant appointment. 'In this new office the future shape of health administration became one of Addison's responsibilities, and by virtue of his position he assumed the leading part in the detailed negotiations with interested bodies'. (Wilding, p156) Addison was aware that unless he presented a united front to the Prime Minister then no bill for a Ministry of Health would go before Parliament. He therefore commenced negotiations with the insurance and medical lobbies and eventually secured the agreement necessary to unite the factions. Another significant and influential factor in the health debate was the role and function of the NHIC, which was composed of the 298 insurance committees and some 20,000 approved societies. In June of 1917, represented by Cornwall, the NHIC had been against the MOH and had delayed discussions on the proposals.²⁵ This situation was to change in October 1917 because of the attempt by Hayes Fisher to: 'divide the NHI camp and use the maternity scheme as a springboard at another Ministry Bill'. (Honigsbaum, pp37-38) The NHIC clearly saw this as antagonistic because Hayes Fisher was attempting to split the body. Previously the NHIC had given the impression that it was against the formation of a MOH, but this appeared not to be so, as they now shaped proposals of their own for a Ministry Bill. The LGB had become the most: 'horribly unpopular of all Government departments'. (Honigsbaum, p40) Kingsley Wood, the NHIC secretary, continued with preparations and in October 1917 the approved societies presented Lloyd

²⁵ For full details of the statistics and the ensuing debate see Honigsbaum pp37-42.

George with the scheme. This was to meet the same fate as proposals for the MOH and was considered: 'too controversial to pursue during the War,' (Honigsbaum, p41) so the battle for the Ministry was to continue.

Hayes Fisher was still promoting alternative ideas in the form of a Maternity Bill in the hope that this would kill off the need for a MOH. Addison and other supporters were not to be dissuaded from their convictions that a new MOH was the only way in which the complicated and inefficient health service could be remedied. It was Addison's hope that a Ministry Bill could be enacted before the Maternity Bill reached the statute book and this conflict of interests continued for a further eighteen months. Hayes Fisher continued to spread: 'lurid tales about the trouble the Ministry Bill would cause in Parliament. He even managed to persuade F. Handel Booth (an M.P. associated with the Prudential insurance company) to sponsor a motion blocking the scheme'. (Honigsbaum, p47) The Maternity Bill had a second reading in June 1918 and the conflict continued. Hayes Fisher carried on pressing for the acceptance that the LGB, not the NHIC, was in fact a Ministry of Health itself and that 'the Poor Law must always be associated with local health administration'. (Honigsbaum, p43) One of the most despised institutions in the country was supported by Hayes Fisher who, for his own ends, saw no need for a new Ministry. He undermined the NHIC in an attempt to control the politics of health and destroy any attempts to create a unified department.

It was however Addison's view that:

There is considerable evidence of obstruction from the Board, of attempts to hold up legislation, give negative replies to parliamentary questions and

further confuse the issue by giving local authorities new, wider health powers while the question of the Ministry of Health was under discussion.

(Addison 1934; cited in Wilding 1970, p158)

Throughout the rest of the year Addison promoted the need for a Ministry Bill and this was also resisted by Hayes Fisher despite strong support in Parliament and in the press. By October 1918 Addison was becoming increasingly frustrated at the lack of progress, despite the fact that the War was coming to an end. He wrote to Lloyd George on the 25th October 1918 explaining his dissatisfaction and frustration, complaining of: ‘the lack of support, which I seem to receive from you in this vital matter’. (Addison 1923, p223)

Lloyd George was in Paris at the time, but he authorised Addison to introduce the bill during the following week. Hayes Fisher had been asked to prepare a housing programme, which he failed to do.

Lloyd George’s dissatisfaction with Hayes Fisher came to a head over his failure to prepare plans for a post-war housing programme and for a new parliamentary register. He wrote to Hayes Fisher dismissing him from office.

(Wilding, p163)

However Bonar Law, a trusted political ally of the Prime Minister intervened and Hayes Fisher officially resigned and accepted a peerage. The LGB had not formally discussed the measures needed to promote a housing policy which, it was patently obvious, was becoming the political issue of the time. This was very clear as within a month Lloyd George was to make his famous ‘Homes for Heroes ‘ speech in

Wolverhampton. Whilst the question of state-aided housing provision was firmly placed on the political agenda, the matter of the Ministry had yet to be settled.

Auckland Geddes replaced Hayes Fisher at the LGB but this was almost as problematic an appointment as that of Hayes Fisher in terms of the planning for a new Ministry. Geddes aroused nationalist opposition to the creation of the new Ministry by threatening to include Scotland and Ireland. Furthermore, he proposed a compulsory inclusion of medical examinations and then tried to transfer medical research to the Privy Council. Addison wrote to Lloyd George on the 25th November warning him of his fears that Geddes was again attempting to promote the LGB as the new Ministry. Addison was given permission to introduce the Bill on the 7th November 1918 knowing that it had little chance of success because of the impending election later that month and the ending of the War that occurred only a few days later. On the 18th November, the Bill was withdrawn until after the election when a new Coalition government, with Lloyd George as Prime Minister, would be in place.

Perhaps the most significant appointment in the whole saga occurred in January 1919, when Addison replaced Geddes as President of the LGB, the fifth incumbent in twenty-six months. Clearly this was not the political atmosphere conducive to organised and sensible planning for the future. There were too many bitter recriminations and personal agendas instead of knowledgeable, informed discussion and decision-making. Addison's appointment by Lloyd George signalled his intentions on both the question of housing provision and subsidy, a suggestion

promoted by Addison at the Ministry of Reconstruction, and now, with his Presidency of the LGB.

On the 17th February 1919, the bill was again brought before the House and on the 3rd June received royal assent. The Ministry of Health had at last become a reality at least as far as the Commons was concerned. Hayes Fisher, now Lord Downham, still tried to destroy the bill during its passage through the Lords. 'Too much, he said, has been claimed for this Bill and too high expectations have been formed of a rapid improvement in the health of the people from the mere setting up of a Ministry of Health'. (Wilding, p165) As time proved, his criticisms were ineffective and the Ministry of Health was created.

A most significant change had been made to a central government institution. Political ideology and economic orthodoxy began to change and so would territorial politics: but that change alone would not suffice. What was still required was attitudinal change in the localities and a shift from local possessive pluralism. If the periphery were to become agents of the centre and administer and construct housing with state-aid, then mutual deference and frigidity operating within the pluralistic fiscal tensions described by Bellamy, could not provide the territorial relationships conducive to change. The argument in this thesis is that the operational code did change, the advent of state-aided housing, of welfarism anew, as a result of the threat to the fabric of the United Kingdom, were sufficient forces for such change. State-aided housing policy, and later, in the mid-1930s, owner occupation, would lessen the tensions that had existed with local possessive pluralism.

Conclusions.

This chapter has been concerned with the transformation of the LGB to the MOH, a new central government department responsible for the health and welfare of the nation's poorer classes. It has addressed the issue of central/local government relations and how these were pursued from 1871 to 1919, and also with the ideology, role, function and responsibilities of the LGB during that period. It has examined how LGB functioned within the formalistic and structured operational framework from which it was created and the significance of the institutional, ideational and personnel changes which accompanied the transition. It is argued that whilst central government had resisted the call for state-aided housing up to 1919, the balance between the influence of different strands of thinking, within central institutions and significant individual actors, began to change. Thus the motives for, and methods of interaction also began to shift. (See Chapter 3) Finally, it has been concerned with the issue of one specific area of policy, that of housing provision for the poorer classes and how changes emerged and were placed on the political agenda.

The central question of social policy provision, the dichotomy of what territorial politics should be, coupled with the fiscal tensions of provision by the centre for what was, in many ways, an autonomous periphery determined the nature, role and function of the Board. 'The dichotomy between the public and private consumption of publicly produced goods is crucial to an understanding of central-local relations'. (Bellamy, p272) These 'publicly produced goods' would be the provision of state-aided housing and would be crucial to the changes in territorial relations thereafter.

During the life of the LGB, central/local relations were conducted within a political culture of: high deference to local possessive pluralism. This means there were major problems in the development of collaborative relationships between the centre and members and officers of the local authorities. These problems concerned mainly fiscal tensions between the two levels of government and their perceptions of what social policy should address; who should pay for what and what should indeed be paid for. If the centre and the periphery were to forge closer links of partnership in an expanding area of social reform and provision, then clearly someone had to pay. There were two major problems. Firstly: ‘the failure of central government to share fully in the burdens of local authorities brought local finance and the politics of central-local relations into “high politics”’, (Bellamy, p11) and secondly, local possessive pluralism. These tensions began to change after 1919, with the introduction of the Housing and Town Planning Act and with the other inter-war housing acts. The localities had still not entered a full partnership with the centre and were agents of government implementing policy in line with government legislation. However there was much more of a partnership forged in territorial relations than had previously existed because of the nature, complexity and economic determinism provided by welfarist policies. The nature of that relationship, whether this was consensual or conflictual, is a central theme in this thesis.

On the specific policy of housing-provision, the LGB was not promotional, although it did engage in the housing debate on the two major pieces of legislation during its formation, the 1890 Housing Act, especially Part III, and the Housing (No2) Act of 1909. The LGB appeared to have little will, no financial incentive, and it was bereft of ideas of the needs of the periphery as far as housing was concerned. The

transition of the LGB to the new Ministry of Health was an acrimonious one. On an individual level, it became a battle of political wills principally between Christopher Addison and his supporters and the Presidents of the LGB, mainly Hayes Fisher. Here, it can be argued that the LGB had not moved with the times or the changing political culture. It was precisely the need for co-ordinated health care, housing provision and social progression, which came to the fore and the concept and creation of a new Ministry as the vehicle for this transition became irresistible.

Generally, the Board was in many ways constrained in what it could achieve, given the fiscal limitations in which it had to operate. It should have been able to respond, in some measure, to the changing needs demanded by the new political and revolutionary forces at work within the country. Social upheaval, and possibly revolution were perceived as a reality in 1917/18 by senior politicians and the War Cabinet. One of the ways suggested to allay this fear was to provide homes fit for the heroes returning from the War and to remove the poor from the unhealthy and insanitary conditions in which they existed. The failure to provide a programme of reform, to be proactive, to recognise that the demands of the nation and the locality, as far as housing was concerned, was typical of the nature of the Local Government Board.

Whilst the transition from the LGB to the MOH may have been an important symbolic success it could be argued that at least initially it failed to challenge the ideology of possessive pluralism that damaged the resourcing of local government. Whilst this is true and the old order may have remained partially intact it is argued that a changed mindset began to emerge and strands of thinking changed and in

certain policy areas, progress was undoubtedly made. This thesis takes the analysis further and suggests that from 1919 this situation continued to change. The nature of central/local relations transformed as the centre accepted that, in certain policy fields the locality could not be expected to be the economic provider of many costly social services. The periphery also recognised that local issues could not always be addressed by local action or supported by local economic provision. The task was simply too great an economic challenge and burden on what, in differing localities, especially the deprived towns and cities, was an unequal burden for the periphery to bear. A new social responsibility was necessary and a new department to oversee that provision. The MOH was created for that purpose.

Economic orthodoxy, territorial politics, central/local relations, and the ideology of welfarism anew, emerged in a different form, level and intensity after 1919. There was a sufficient force for change with the threat of revolution, the introduction of the Ministry of Health in 1919 and subsequently the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919. This was the genesis for change and mutual deference and fridity, within a dual polity, could not be the prevailing operational code thereafter. The polity became more structured in key areas such as state-aided housing provision. Local government would be agents of the centre, they would become providers as well as overseers of housing all, of which demanded a different territorial dimension and alliance in central/local relations.

Chapter 3.

Territorial Politics and the Development

Of Housing Policy and Politics from 1914 to 1939.

Introduction.

This chapter examines the principal housing legislation enacted during the inter-war period¹ and the nature and complexion of territorial politics and central/regional/local relations in this particular policy field.

The selection of housing policy.

It will be useful to initially outline the reasons why inter-war state-aided housing policy was used to test the hypotheses in this thesis. Briefly these are;

- In testing Bulpitts ideas on territorial relations using the concepts of dual polity, mutual deference and frigidity, high and low politics, it is an area that questions Bulpitts work and one that is perhaps considered by him as a policy area that does not 'fit' his analytical framework.
- The work also investigates that period in central/local relations, from 1871 to 1926, which he considers was fraught with 'challenges' which he suggests were either 'defeated' or 'swept under the carpet'. It will be

¹ The Housing Acts of 1919, 1923, 1924, 1930, 1933, 1935 and 1938. Are examined. Consolidating or Additional powers Acts are only briefly referred to in the chapter. The Increased Rent and Mortgage Interest (War Restrictions) Act of 1915 was referred to in the previous chapter.

argued that this was not the case and a number of these challenges were met.

- The policy area is considered an important one that allows investigation of the tensions between continuity and change during the period.
- There is little written on the whole of the inter-war period in terms of territorial politics, housing policy, and the nature of central/local relations.
- Housing policy, it will be shown, illustrates how ideas and beliefs changed during the period and how different strands of thinking emerged. It also illustrates how central government managed to resist change from 1890 until 1919 and the ideological, political and economic reasons for such obstruction.
- From 1919 however, the various housing acts introduced marked a punctuation in the equilibrium of housing policy.
- The policy will be used to illustrate how the motives for intervention changed towards a policy that reflected individual needs. State-aided housing provides evidence of a changing mindset of both the centre and periphery from 1917.
- Whilst state-aided housing was not a universal provision, in as much as it did not provide for all those in insanitary dwellings, who were homeless or could not afford to pay rent. It was, never the less, a sufficiently far reaching welfare provision that it affected the ideas on social provision thereafter. Policy, it is argued, became path dependent.
- State-aided housing was a new policy field with which the centre and periphery had no experience.

- Policy formulation and implementation was influenced by a number of structures and actors in what, it is argued, was a structured polity rather than the dual polity suggested by Bulpitt.
- Housing policy was a matter of high politics. Policy affected both the 'economy', and, in a tenuous way, the 'defence of the realm', both policy fields considered by central government as high politics according to Bulpitt.
- Housing was a policy area that the state, it could be argued, had failed to galvanise into a coherent policy prior to 1919, except for its complete resistance of local demands. Subsequently, successive governments adopted the provision of state-aid in both public and private sectors.

The introduction of state-aided housing policy, it is argued, marked a significant change in the motives for intervention in both welfare provision, that recognised individual needs and reflected societal demands, and, in the nature and complexion of territorial relations in the United Kingdom. It is contended that this constituted a crucial shift in the varying strands of influence and thinking on housing policy which consequently altered British politics, territorial relations, economic orthodoxy and it was the advent of welfarism anew. The chapter then argues that the level of control exercised by the centre over the periphery, as agents of housing policy, could not be characterised by an operational code of: mutual deference. Furthermore, these changes, both structural and attitudinal, required a very different political relationship than previously existed.

The chapter will focus on two distinct periods of legislative change, from 1914 to 1930 and from 1931 to 1939. It will illustrate the changing nature of policy from those objectives, which had been envisaged, under the legislation contained primarily in the 1890 Housing Act and the 1909 Housing Act. These two periods are determined firstly by the nature of the housing legislation and, secondly, by the political complexion of central government in office, when the various housing acts were introduced. A chronology of the Acts, and the Government's in power, from 1915 to 1939, is contained in Appendix 1.

The first period, from 1914 to 1930, will investigate the Housing Act of 1919 (The Addison Act) , the Housing Act of 1923 (The Chamberlain Act), and finally the Housing Act of 1924 (The Wheatley Act). The period from 1914 to 1919 was one, which saw critical social conditions raise the question of state-aided housing-provision on to the political agenda and establish this as a form of welfarism anew. This social provision remained throughout the period, despite the changing political ideology. There was a varying emphasis on the nature, and level of housing subsidy, all of which influenced the nature and complexion of territorial politics. Legislation during this period was enacted firstly by a Coalition government in 1919, followed by a Conservative government with the 1923 Act and finally with a Labour government under the 1924 Act.

The second period covers the Housing Acts of 1930, 1933, 1935 and 1938. These acts marked a significant change in housing policy and a shift in emphasis from building anew to one of slum clearance and abatement of overcrowding. The acts also marked a change in the nature and level of subsidy and the ideology of housing

provision. This significant change in social provision was also accompanied by a housing boom in the mid-1930s when owner occupation became an important issue. Whilst building by private enterprise for private consumption assisted the housing shortage it did not address the issue of housing provision for the poor. It was nevertheless an important part of the National Government's² philosophy in the 1930s and will be addressed briefly in this thesis.

One of the major foci of this thesis is the way political ideology and housing policy changed the nature, complexion and intensity of territorial politics and how centre/periphery relations changed between 1919 and 1939. A second focus is on the way institutional change at both local and national level also influenced territorial relations and the way changing central/regional/local structures and the actions of individuals operating within these institutional settings affected policy choices. The third focus is on attitudinal change in territorial politics at both levels of government. Attitudinal change was necessary in order that policy initiatives would be successful. This change required the centre to view the periphery as either their partners or agents in housing policy. It required the centre to move from an attitude of: high deference to local possessive pluralism. Local government needed to accept that in terms of social welfarism, local finance could not meet the demands made by society, a situation they clearly recognised by 1918 as far as housing provision was concerned. Intervention from the centre was a necessity and the introduction of subsidies from central government would be the only way social provision would be created. The attitude of the periphery towards local possessive pluralism would gradually begin to change

² Whilst the government was National in name it was in essence 'Conservative' in nature. (See Addison, 1994; Pugh, 1983).

State-aided, inter-war housing provision was a momentous change and what is clear from the subsequent legislation is that although the form and levels of subsidy changed, the core feature of a state subsidy was still continued. Policy had been initiated and had, by the Second World War, become an established practice. It would be a practice that would be retained after the war and would be embodied in legislation, which remained up to the introduction of the Housing Act of 1980 when policy would once again undergo a critical shift. From 1919 to 1980 policy had evolved in a path dependent manner and attitudes to local possessive pluralism changed.

A number of issues are considered in this chapter:

- How the issue of state-aided housing-provision was raised on the political agenda and why it remained as an essential provision of state welfare policy.
- The development of politics and housing policy during the inter-war years. This will be considered in two separate periods from 1914 to 1930 and from 1930 to 1939.
- The creation of the Ministry of Health and its structure, role, function and influence on housing policy and central/local relations from 1919 to 1939.
- The influence of ideational change and how different strands of thinking emerged as policy evolved on state-aided housing provision.
- Policy development and the mediatory and intermediary role of the AMC in central/regional/local relations, on behalf of the municipalities.
- The notion that a third element or tripartite political entity existed in the politics and policies of state aided housing provision. (see Figure 1.1) Thus, a structured polity existed within this policy field.

1. The Development of Housing Policy and Central/Local Relations 1914 to 1924.

The genesis of welfarism anew: State-aided housing provision.

This part of the chapter will examine the political and ideological struggle for what can be termed 'welfare policy'. It is asserted here that the introduction of state-aided housing in 1919 was a critical step towards a 'welfare state' and marked a punctuation in the equilibrium in British politics. It was a salient factor in social provision and in central/regional/local relations with a structured polity, rather than what Bulpitt asserts was a dual polity in territorial politics.

The nature of fiscal provision by the centre and the ideology of local possessive pluralism virtually assured that there would be little provision of housing for the poorer classes prior to the First World War. Housing was based on the profit motive or, and to a much lesser degree, on some local philanthropy. There was neither the political will, locally or nationally, to provide any form of aid from the state via taxation or from the locality in the form of local rates, and indeed housing aid in the locality was, until the 1890 Act, almost unheard of as a social provision. Centrally, the Treasury was opposed to the idea of a housing subsidy, believing that housing was a local matter. The Housing Act of 1890 gave powers to the locality to act but in the absence of a central subsidy they simply did not do so. They had powers to clear the slums but in the absence of new housing at affordable rents, this was not an economic or social reality. It was better to have an unhealthy roof over one's head than no roof at all. The Housing Acts of 1909 and 1914 came to nothing and the housing situation at the beginning of the First World War was deplorable. (See

Swenarton 1981; Barton 1969; Bowley 1945; Burnett 1986; Daunton 1983; Elsas 1942; Gauldie 1974; Holmans 1987; Melling 1980; Merrett 1979 Wohl 1977)

Not until the question of housing-provision entered the political arena would this situation change. The problem of state-aided housing and slum conditions was only addressed because the demands of the poorer classes were marshalled into action against the state. The conditions for social change arose from a threat of revolution stemming from the critical social conditions existing during and at the end of the First World War and the unhealthy and insanitary slum conditions which, the poorer classes endured at the end of the nineteenth century. (For example see Astor 1917; Swenarton 1981; War Cabinet Minutes 1917-1919, Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest 1917. Commission on Civil Disturbance 5th March 1918, HC Debates 8th April 1919 Column 1956 (W Astor) as indicated in Chapters one and two).

The social conditions of the poor were so bad that: ‘for every nine soldiers killed in the trenches, twelve babies died at home.....it was more dangerous to be a baby in England than a soldier in France’. (Medical Press. 1917; Ii.26) Social conditions needed to change but the economic conditions and economic orthodoxy prevailing at that time did not appear to be conducive to such provision. Housing costs, for example, between 1914 and 1918 doubled, and the rate of interest rose by about one third: it was evident that: ‘rents obtainable for the houses would not match their cost and that some kind of government subsidy was unavoidable’. (Swenarton, p52) It is not surprising, therefore, that with the advent of War, general residential building,

which had previously produced about 75,000 houses a year, had almost ceased and there was a severe housing shortage.

In a housing system that depended on the profit motive, both for the initial construction and for the subsequent letting of houses.....no home would be built unless the government intervened in some way to write off the loss.
(Swenarton, p68)

Various authors have described the conditions in which people lived, the threat to public order and the expectations of the masses. (See above) Burnett (1986, pp215-216) suggests that there was a tacit contract in force between the centre and the masses, especially the soldiers fighting the war, when he argues that:

The other side of an unwritten social constitution.....(was that) modern war was only acceptable if it held out the prospect of a better world and a better life for its survivors.....to let them (our heroes) come from the horrible, water-logged trenches to something little better than a pigsty here would, indeed, be criminal.

The shortage of houses in 1918 was: '600,000 and by 1921 805,000'. (Burnett, p217; Bowley, Table 1, p12; Swenarton, 1981) The soldiers would be expected to return and live in: 'wooden shacks, caravans and railway carriages often totally without sanitary arrangements'. (Burnett, p217) These 'habitations' were clearly little better than the trenches from which they had returned, such were the conditions the poorer classes, the workers and their families, had to endure.

The conditions for social upheaval were ripe. But it was not just the ending of the War that fuelled the unrest. There were various strikes throughout the country based on both social and industrial demands. The Glasgow rent strikes in 1915 were so violent that the government introduced a bill to curb the levels of rents being charged. The Rent and Mortgage Restrictions Act of 1915 effectively fixed rents at the levels existing at the outbreak of war and politically it would be impossible to repeal this until the end of the hostilities. The act represented: 'a class victory.....the culmination of a national class struggle over housing where origins go back to 1885.....Glasgow in 1919 was probably the nearest that any British city ever came to it (revolution)' (Darner in Melling 1980, p75) One of the leading socialists involved in this action was John Wheatley, a Clydesider, who was to become the first Labour Minister of Health in 1924. Private landlords would not build unless economic rents could be charged and profit obtained. The rising interest rates and the 1915 Act therefore effectively prevented any building, a situation that exacerbated the housing shortage and continued to fuel the crisis of impending social upheaval.

On the 12th June 1917, Lloyd George set up a Commission of Enquiry³ to report on the industrial unrest affecting the country. The strikes in May by engineering workers and evidence of: 'war weariness amongst the working classes appeared to amount to a major crisis for the state and a direct threat to the prosecution of the war,' (Swenarton, p71) they convinced Lloyd George that he needed to do something about social and industrial unrest. The Commission had reported that in: 'the eight Scottish areas investigated, seven had mentioned housing as a major

³ Pp 1917-18 Cd.. 8696 xv 'Summary of the Reports of the Commission of Enquiry into Industrial Unrest by the Rt. Hon. G N Barnes p6.

source of unrest'. (Melling, p102) Furthermore: 'it was the strategic importance of the housing unrest in Clydeside, in Belfast, Birmingham, London and elsewhere, that proved their greatest strength since the tenants and workers effectively threatened the whole war machine'. (Melling, p23) As the Housing Journal reported:

On the 17th June Lloyd George was advised that the distribution of food and the question of housing were the two major factors contributing to social unrest. In this respect he appointed Lord Rhondda to be Food Controller, and he ordered that 'arrangements should be made as regards housing'.⁴ Hayes Fisher was authorised to issue a circular to local authorities and on the 28th July he did so, stating that: Government recognises that it will be necessary to afford a substantial financial contribution from public funds to those local authorities who are prepared to carry through, without delay at the conclusion of the war, a programme of housing for the working classes approved by the LGB.⁵

The Government had unequivocally committed itself to a state-aided housing scheme as a direct response to social pressures. It had not however, committed itself to the form or level the subsidy would take. The vagueness of these promises resulted in little enthusiasm from the localities, which were still insisting that their losses should be limited to an affordable level; by the end of 1917 these issues had still not been resolved. In November 1917, Hayes Fisher advised Lloyd George that relationships with the labour movement were deteriorating and that urgent action on housing was necessary to: 'remove the prevailing mistrust of the War Cabinet in the

⁴ PRO CAB 23/3 WC 190 (19th July 1917)

⁵ Housing Journal, vol. cx. (August 1917) p 8.

ranks of Labour'. (Swenarton, p72) In January 1918, the Treasury would remove its veto on housing subsidies but still failed to resolve the issue of the form or level. It did, however liaise with the LGB in the preparation of a scheme suggesting, eventually, a seventy five per cent level of subsidy on the losses borne by the locality. This was still to prove ineffective. The Treasury-LGB scheme was rejected by local authorities as both Addison and the AMC had foreseen.

By February 1918, the industrial situation was still in decline. The Times reported:

At no period during the war has the industrial situation been so grave and so pregnant as it is today.....The temper of the workmen is dangerous and the unyielding attitude of the government is bringing the country to the verge of industrial revolution. ⁶

By the beginning of March, the War Cabinets committee on civil disturbance was reporting 'the serious danger of a general strike'.⁷ This in the middle of a military campaign, a war almost won. The consequences of such an action would have been disastrous, not only for the government, but also for the country as a whole. It was unimaginable that the level of dispute, which existed, between the demands of the localities and the offer contained in the Treasury-LGB scheme, could be the possible downfall of government, social anarchy and defeat in a world war.

⁶ The Times 1st February 1918. This reflected the level of social tension as well as industrial unrest.

⁷ PRO CAB 24/44 GT 3814 (Commission on Civil Disturbance, 5th March 1918.)

Government still promised that it would contribute to a scheme at a level that would be acceptable to the locality. Addison believed that the government still did not recognise the problem fully and warned of the problem:

Which, saw housing within the context of the primary task of making a successful transition from war to peace.....Demobilisation, return of troops, possible mass unemployment: the emergency problem of peace would require handling as carefully as those of war if disaster was to be avoided. (Addison 1934, p414)

The armistice would realise Addisons' fears because:

To the members of the government it appeared that the situation they faced in the wake of the Armistice, with general unrest and.....the presence of strikers (and) demobilised soldiers in the streets resembled in all too alarming a manner that which in other countries - Russia and Germany – had led to the overthrow of the state. (Swenarton p77)

Civil and industrial unrest continued between November 1918, and January 1919 with strikes by the Clydesiders in Glasgow being described as a 'Bolshevist rising'.⁸

There was further unrest in the transport and power industries, the underground was on strike and miners and electricity workers threatened similar action. Lloyd George warned that this was: 'a menace to the whole foundation of democratic government'.⁹ The number of days lost from strikes had increased enormously from

⁸ PRO CAB 23/9 WC 523 (31st January 1919) and WC 527 (6th February 1919)

⁹ War Cabinet Minutes as above. (31st January and 6th February 1919)

5 million in 1918 to 35 million in 1919. There was also concern that the five million men returning from the war and the police, forces upon which the government would normally rely, might not respond to the call for assistance. There had been a police strike in 1918 and several mutinies on both sides of the channel. To assuage the fears the government had given them pay-rises: 'to allay unrest'. (Swenarton, p78) The fear was that soldiers would form the force of a revolutionary movement and that: 'for the first time in history the rioters will be better trained than the troops.....it was ideas rather than guns that would decide the outcome of the crisis'. (Swenarton ibid.) In March 1919, Lloyd George was to warn the Cabinet that in a very short time, Europe might be consumed by Bolshevism so it was absolutely necessary that government give an undertaking on social reforms, especially housing, and that: 'even if it cost one hundred million pounds what was that compared to the stability of the State?'¹⁰ Government would have to buy off the threat of revolution. Consequently, the Government made promises of substantial social reforms on unemployment protection, welfare reforms, hours of work, industrial democracy and, significantly on housing. The government argued that this would give the people a: 'sense of confidence.....prove that there was no need for revolution to improve their lot.....*the money we are going to spend on housing is an insurance against revolution*'.¹¹ (my emphasis added.) This insurance was described by one author as: 'a pawn in the political game of bribing the electorate with vague promises of social reform'. (Bowley 1945, p3)¹²

¹⁰ PRO CAB 23/9 WC 539 (3rd March 1919).

¹¹ 114 HC Deb. 8th April 1919 Col. 1956 (W Astor).

¹² Bowley also argues that housing legislation was inevitable given the prevailing housing conditions and was not necessarily the result of the critical social conditions at the end of the War.

There was, as can be seen from the foregoing evidence, a real fear of social upheaval and possibly revolution. The working classes had made an attempt to bring housing to the fore as part of their struggle against the ruling class and clearly it was now on the political agenda. Eric Halevy suggested that the 1919 Act was an instrument in the class struggle from which: 'capitalism emerged the victor from a crisis that had lasted for two years'. (Halevy cited in Webb 1967, p151) This might be so in terms of the spending and overall social provision by the state. However, it was a significant achievement in ideological terms and in the continued effects these arrangements had, specifically, on future housing provision, and in general on welfarism for the working classes. It marked a significant change in the equilibrium of politics and welfarism and indicates that different strands of thinking were beginning to emerge. It would be ideas that prevented revolution and thus the motives for intervention began to change and the necessary and sufficient incentives and conditions for such change emanated.

What is also important is the nature and quality of the houses constructed and the locations and ambience in which housing was built. The progress made in this respect was very clearly a victory for the working classes who lived in the slums, certainly at the outset, and even when the plans were diluted because of economic constraints after the first rush to build. The homes suggested by the Tudor Walters Report were qualitatively different from anything that had been produced previously for the working classes; they were to remain: 'a standard throughout the inter-war years and, arguably, for much longer'. (Burnett, p218) 'The new houses built by the state - each with its own garden, surrounded by trees and hedges, and equipped internally with the amenities of a middle-class home would provide visible proof of

the irrelevance of revolution'. (Swenarton, p87) The homes, according to Lloyd George, were: 'the unavoidable premium on the insurance against revolution'. (Swenarton, p111) The class struggle in pursuit of better housing had succeeded and a housing transformation had begun. As we shall see, this insurance against revolution was short-lived. As working class militancy started to subside and the economy went into decline so the need for the insurance lessened. By 1921, the situation changed dramatically.

The Housing and Town Planning Act 1919. (The Addison Act.)

This section explains the introduction of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919, its impact on social deprivation, social provision and welfarism for the working-classes.¹³ It also examines how the act was to be administered from the centre and the nature and complexion of central/local relations the new Ministry now being the body responsible for housing. It considers the continuing territorial relationships up to the introduction of the Wheatley Act of 1924 under the first Labour government.

Housing administration and central/local relations.

Chapter one indicated that there were a number of significant influences on the changing nature of territorial politics: firstly, the impact of feared social revolution, secondly the introduction of the Ministry of Health, thirdly, the influence of the

¹³ See Swenarton, Burnett, Bowley and Wilding for the Housing Act of 1919. Pierson, Thane, Flora and Heidenhamer et.al for welfarism and the welfare state.

AMC in housing policy,¹⁴ and finally, the need for attitudinal change by the centre and periphery from: local possessive pluralism and the need for effective co-operation to ensure welfare provision was implemented.

Central government could not attempt to construct 500,000 houses itself and it needed the co-operation and agreement of the local authorities, which had previously been reticent to build. Its new and powerful tool was of course massive subsidy and in this respect it could command the 'agreement' of the periphery to endorse and undertake the housing programme. The locality was still to act as an agent rather than a partner in the arrangement and a new administrative structure was introduced to deal with the question of central/local relations in respect of housing and the implementation of policy in the periphery. A system was also needed to ensure that the locality was compliant with the wishes of the centre and also for the protection of central government and Treasury against any possible economic excesses by the locality beyond that stated in the act.

The administrative framework was actually begun under the auspices of the LGB and its President Auckland Geddes in December 1918. A three-tier system was constructed that would:

- Create an expanded housing department at the LGB in Whitehall.
- Have a centralised department within the housing department with a chief commissioner for housing.
- Have a system of regional housing commissioners in the localities.

(See Swenarton 1981, Burnett 1986, Merrett 1979)

¹⁴ See Chapter four for a more detailed explanation of the history, role and function of the AMC and

Unlike its predecessor the LGB, its structure would change in as much as the new department would have a base of technical expertise rather than just an administrative one, as the LGB had previously used. Institutionally the structure changed and so did its main actors, several of whom were drawn, as technical experts, from the Tudor Walters Committee¹⁵.

In the field, the regions would have housing commissioners appointed in each of the major areas of the country and eleven commissioners were initially appointed in England and Wales. This was to have a major impact on the nature and complexion of central/local relations, as the government insisted that the localities were each to have a separate housing department responsible for its house building programme.

Regional Relations. The AMC and the Housing and Town Planning Act 1919.

The AMC, as representatives of the municipal local authorities, with which the case studies are concerned, was involved in the discussions and debates prior to and during the life of the 1919 Act. On the 12th February 1919, the President of the LGB Christopher Addison met with the AMC and gave details of the circular sent to the local authorities on the 6th February concerning the proposed housing act.¹⁶

Addison iterated a number of important features regarding what would be expected from local authorities stating that they would act as: ‘agents for the Government’

its ‘interest intermediation’ role (Peters 1999, p16)

¹⁵ The Tudor Walters Report. Pp 1918 Cd 9191 vii.

and that he wished to remove: 'any uncertainty as to the extent of local authority responsibilities'.¹⁷ He pointed out that those areas which could meet their housing needs within the proceeds of a 1d rate, should not require assistance and that time was of the essence in the submission of schemes. The regional scheme was explained and the function of the housing commissioners in the locality discussed. It was pointed out that the commissioners would have: 'a small staff, the object being to speed up machinery of sanctioning schemes'¹⁷ and that they would deal with matters: 'on the spot'.¹⁸ Addison concluded his address by suggesting that there ought to be an: 'organisation whereby, as difficulties crop up which concern the local authorities generally, we can turn to your important bodies to give us advice readily and quickly act upon them'.¹⁹

Sir Robert Fox, on behalf of the AMC, expressed reservations about the appointment of regional commissioners and felt that this might be another tier of bureaucracy to delay matters. He also expressed doubt as to the possibility of completing the schemes in two years because of the nature of the task facing them and further suggested that the Board might make use of officers in the locality such as borough engineers.²⁰

Representatives of the County Councils Association (CCA) and Urban District Councils Association (UDCA) also addressed the President on the question of

¹⁶ Extensive use is made of the AMC Minutes throughout the period as a primary source of information on the significant meetings between the MOH and the AMC. See AMC Minutes 27th March 1919 for full details of the circular.

¹⁷ AMC Minutes 12th February 1919 p78.

¹⁸ AMC Minutes 12th February 1919 p78.

Housing Commissioners and feared that they might act as: ‘a sort of buffer state between the local authority and the Local Government Board’.²¹ These representatives were also concerned with the time limits and the nature of houses to be built. The Law Committee of the AMC reported on the 30th April 1919 raising various issues from the appropriate clauses of the proposed new housing act. These were mainly financial and historic consequences of previous failure by government to act. It was confirmed that the subsidy would be that as demanded by local authorities, but there were severe reservations expressed as to the ability of these local bodies to raise the capital to build. It was resolved that the law committee should make representations to the LGB urging government: ‘to arrange to lend the requisite sums in case of necessity’.²²

The AMC also had influence in Parliament and arranged to put down a number of amendments to the new bill and to lobby Parliament on behalf of its members on issues with which it was concerned, especially those relating to financial provision.

The AMC was thus to play an important intermediary and advisory role as representatives of the locality throughout the development and implementation of the act and in some respects it influenced the local authorities, in both their ideology and attitudes, towards the policy of the centre in housing provision. It has to be said that the AMC was a conservative organisation that would pursue objections and amendments to policy initiatives from the centre by persuasion and lobbying rather than by direct political challenge. It was not a working-class organisation but one,

¹⁹ AMC Minutes 12th February 1919 p78.

²⁰ AMC Minutes 12th February 1919 p79.

²¹ AMC Minutes 12th February 1919 p79.

²² See AMC Minutes 30th April 1919 p101.

which represented a wide range of political views among the local authorities it represented in the municipalities.

Structurally, both centre and periphery changed because of the demands from the centre in dealing with the method of application for housing subsidies and all other matters. In order to ensure compliance by the periphery to the centre's instruction and the requirements of the 1919 Act, this would have an impact on the nature of relationships and the construction output under the act. This was a part of the shift which occurred and continued to change policy direction. Government was now inextricably linked with the periphery in state-aided housing and in the provision of substantial financial aid, administration of housing matters, and in territorial relationships. Localities, according to Addison would act as: 'agents of the Government'²³. This was a fundamental shift in territorial politics and central/local relations. Influential and substantial new ideas on housing policy, fiscal provision and welfarism would become established. (See Hall 1986; Kuhn 1969) Thereafter, policy and fiscal provision in the form of state subsidies would be established, in one form or another, to local authorities and/or private enterprise builders. From this point on the policy that had now been established subsequently evolved in a path dependent manner in historical institutionalist terms.

This new administrative set up was at the heart of the operations in Whitehall and would be the way the localities would seek approval for their schemes and the avenue through which relationships would be conducted as regards housing policy.

²³ See AMC Minutes 12th February 1919 p78.

‘Under the system adopted for the implementation of the 1919 Act a local authority had to obtain the approval of the Ministry of Health (either at central or regional level) for every aspect of the scheme..... there were seven distinct stages.....a Ministry official stated, without exaggeration, local authorities were subjected to a large degree of control from the Ministry at every stage’. (Swenarton, p137)

This was an about turn on previous housing control by the centre for, as noted earlier, the LGB and central government considered the type of housing in question a local issue and did not intervene. Economic orthodoxy demanded that central taxation was not intended for local consumptive provision in housing.

The stages of approval therefore concerned: -

1. The number of houses needed by the authority and the type of house to be constructed.
2. The selection and acquisition of suitable housing sites.
3. The layout-plans of the site.
4. Obtaining of loans for the construction of streets and sewers.
5. The actual house-plans, fixtures, fittings and materials to be used.
6. Obtaining of loans for the actual erection of houses, this on the basis of approving the tenders received for house construction.
7. The provision for rents to be charged as part of the estimated receipts and expenditure of each scheme.

Under the new Act the local authority had to seek approval from the MOH at either local or national level, depending on the size of its house-building proposals, at every stage of development, planning and implementation. This is not surprising given the economic implications of the act and the impact this could have on the economy of the country. Good fiscal management was not entrusted to the localities nor was it the perception of the centre that they were capable of this. Mutual deference was not entirely possible within such an administrative framework, rather it was total control by the centre over the actions of the periphery. This again was a fundamental change in territorial relations and would begin a learning process by both centre and periphery towards a more structured polity after 1919, in the tripartite relationship suggested earlier. (see Figure 1.1).

The new MOH had both the administrative structure and technical expertise to ensure the direction and conformity with national guidelines that the periphery would adopt and a new housing department was set up to deal with local authorities. (See Wilding 1973, pp307-326) The territorial relationships, from the centre's perception could be described as being formal, bureaucratic, technical and focussed on a single issue, that of housing policy. From the periphery, the perception was slightly different, in as much as the local authorities, despite the formidable controls, still had to implement the policy and were the local arm, the focal point of policy-delivery on behalf of the centre. Implementation of central policy was not always in accordance with central directions, as the case studies will illustrate. The locality was still responsible for obtaining land, materials, and labour, the tendering process, and, as they owned the houses, the rents to be charged under instruction and approval of the centre. There were many areas of concern and debate at both levels

of government. These concerns led to conflict in central/local government relations, all of which, suggest a considerable level of control exercised over the periphery and the economic implications for the country. The lack of trust on fiscal policy at the periphery, the scale and size of the envisaged housing programme and the implementation of national policy in the locality, were all significant factors, when suggesting that housing policy at this time, and throughout the inter-war years, should be considered as a matter of high politics.

Central/local relations had significantly changed in respect of housing policy with the introduction of the 1919 Act and this is best reflected in attitudinal changes. The degree and intensity of control by the centre was formidable and the use of the applications procedure was used by the Ministry to control the actions of the periphery. These controls were the source of conflict between the two levels of government as the localities quickly recognised that they were being manipulated by the MOH with their plans being delayed just when the momentum for housing in the localities was being increased. This was a deliberate ploy by central departments, especially the Treasury, as it wished to protect the economy despite the political rhetoric.

By 1921, the political focus changed with the spectre of mass unemployment becoming an increasing concern to the working-classes. The impact was to change the nature of their concerns changed, unemployment was now the enemy of the working classes. Little was done in respect of housing from the mid-1921 period up to the election of the Conservative government and the introduction of the 1923 Act. The principles of sound conservative finance were imposed on housing, as was the

conservative ideological belief that the locality should provide housing and that such provision should be made by private sector builders. There was a transformation of policy from 1919 to 1924 as the following section will indicate. It was evident that from the actions of the Treasury that a more gradualist approach was necessary in what was a complex policy issue and one they had not experienced before. Never the less, state-aid would continue at a later time as a perception of policies that recognised individual need, a need that would only be addressed by incentives from the centre, emerged. Clearly state-aid would still be a requirement of housing policy and the official mind of the centre recognised this fact. Economic depression however placed this on hold, until the 1923 Act.

Housing policy 1919 to 1921.

The one settled feature of policy was the fact that, in one form or another, subsidies were to continue, whether this was made to local authorities directly or via the localities to private and speculative builders, and from 1923 onwards to both groups. This was an indication of the path dependent nature of housing policy and the centre's commitment to state-aid. The struggle to change political thinking and the ideology of state involvement in housing provision still survived. Although housing provision was a sop to the masses there nevertheless were a considerable number of houses built in a relatively short period. Just under 176,000²⁴ houses were built after the 1919 Act, but as early as Winter 1919, the Treasury was calling for an end to subsidies. Housing was, however, still a significant feature of government

²⁴ See Bowley (1945) Statistical Appendices pp269-272 for further information.

propaganda, even though building was slow, and the target of 100,000 houses in the first year was only achieved in March 1922. By March 1920, local authorities had constructed only 1,250 houses. Costs were high; the estimated cost of £600 per house in 1918 had doubled to £1200 by 1920. Earlier in 1919, the Housing (Additional Powers) Act had introduced a government subsidy of £150 per house to private builders who completed houses within one year. This was necessary to increase output to stimulate the flagging building progress.

By the Winter of 1920, the balance of industrial power, and consequently political power, was changing. The Cabinet's perception of the changing complexion of political power was that: 'the trade unions were no longer in so strong a position as they had been.....the crucial contest with labour was that with the miners. By the summer of 1921 this was a battle that the government had joined and won'. (Swenarton, pp130-131 citing the Cabinet minutes) The united front of miners, transport workers and railwaymen had failed and the miners eventually capitulated, wage cuts of forty per cent being not uncommon. The threat of a mass national strike had passed and a new era of political and industrial relations were now in place. The balance of power had significantly changed by the middle of 1921. Homes for heroes were no longer the political priority and the threat of revolution had, in governments eye's, passed.²⁵

The changing nature of political power was reflected in housing policy and announcements of curtailment were made after the collapse of the triple alliance. Addison had been removed from the MOH in March 1921 and by May the

²⁵ See the various Cabinet Minutes. PRO CAB23/25 c23 (21) (18th April 1921. PRO CAB23/26 c55 (21) (29th June 1921) PROCAB23/26 c58 (21) (11th July 1921.

announcement was made. What was previously insurance against revolution was now seen as: 'unnecessary and unjustifiable extravagance' (Swenarton, p132) Despite the fact that there were two million unemployed in June 1921, the fear of revolution had disappeared and replaced by fear of unemployment. In part, the government's ideological ploy to provide homes for heroes, even though this was only approximately one third of the envisaged 500,000, had illustrated that it was possible to provide dream homes. There was still, however, a need to pay rents for such houses, or indeed any home. The necessity was, therefore, employment to provide the income to families to support that provision. The threat of further revolution could not be sustained given the failure of the working-classes in industrial action, the triple alliance had failed. The government had indeed joined and won the battle.

Principles of sound monetary management replaced what was seen as: 'squandermania'. (Swenarton, p132)²⁶ On the 21st July 1921, the Government announced that due to the grave financial situation, it had, for the time being, decided that housing expenditure would be limited to the 176,000 houses currently under contract. The 'homes for heroes' campaign was over. Working-class power dissipated and was replaced by economic decline and unemployment. This marked a significant change in ideology, policy, housing standards and central/local relations, (see below). What was significant though was the fact that central government did not return to the Gladstonian economic orthodoxy of non-intervention in local matters and that Imperial taxes should not be used for local provision, a situation which existed prior to the First World War under the LGB. Policy direction had

²⁶ See PRO CAB24/126 CP3133 (Amended Draft Statement of the Minister of Health) 144 HC Deb, 14th July 1921. Col 1483-5 (Mond) Mond was now the new Minister, Addison having been replaced.

changed and would continue towards welfarism with a 'middle way' in the 1930s and the creation of 'the welfare state' under the Labour Government in 1945. (See Aldcroft 1970; Richardson & Aldcroft 1968; Bellamy 1988; Chapman 1997; Jenkins 1998; Lipsey 2000; Mowat 1955) The evolution of state-aided provision was to continue.

The removal of Addison from the MOH, to Minister without Portfolio, and the appointment of Sir Alfred Mond on the 1st April 1921 marked a change in housing policy, standards of accommodation and central/local relations. Economic prudence and the reduction in public spending sealed the end of the post-war boom and a sound economy became the political priority. Housing was seen as a severe economic burden that needed relief to satisfy both the political needs of the government and the demands of the Exchequer and capital in the city. The ending of the housing programme affected the nature of the central/local relations that had existed since 1919. Housing standards were the first to suffer. The new standards were not greeted with derision in all quarters. As the Municipal Journal noted approvingly in July 1922:

These smaller houses showed that the government and local authorities were no longer: 'led by visionaries,' but were simply getting on with the job of supplying the cheapest form of housing which will actually provide accommodation for the poor.²⁷

²⁷ Municipal Journal. Vol. xxxi.9th July 1922, p487.

The 'heroes' were now simply the poor. The insurance premium was now an unnecessary expense. Never the less, central ideas on subsidies still remained and were still a focus of peripheral demand.

Central/local relations suffered too. For many local authorities, especially those where there were strong labour movements and where local Labour parties were active and had achieved political dominance, this presented a fundamental challenge to the ideals and ideas of welfarism. The 'dream home' standards of the Tudor Walters Report, applied only two years earlier were forgotten by the centre, but remained at the heart of left-wing class consciousness. (See Cockburn 1977; Malpas and Murie 1982; Melling 1980) Inevitably, conflict arose with the periphery who wished to retain the standards that had now become the norm. The economic conditions and the slump of the mid-1920s necessitated fiscal management and curbs on public spending, conflict was inevitable and territorial relationships declined. The Ministry was to use its powers under the new act to delay and divert the demands of the locality. They could slow down housing output, and thereby the amount of monies needed by the periphery, by delaying approval of plans, ensuring the local authorities had to wait their turn for materials and labour, and by general administrative delays.

Local authorities also unwittingly slowed progress by insisting that the particular demands of their locality be met, for they considered it important that the peculiar needs of their areas be incorporated in housing design, layout and internal organisation of rooms and placement of fittings. Examples of this will be shown in the three case studies. Nevertheless these demands placed a strain on relationships

with the centre, especially in the initial stages of euphoria on housing stemming from the 1919 Act. One of the central issues in this thesis is how the demands of the localities actually affected the level of housing provision achieved and how detrimental this was to the overall provision for the working classes.

Central/local relations shifted from being formal, technical and bureaucratically administered from the housing inspectors in the field, to relations by subsidy approval and administration directly from the centre. The local housing inspectors appointed under the Addison Act were disbanded and the Ministry's housing team reduced from: '1100 in 1921 to 238 in April 1923'. (Merrett 1979, p43) Regional approval and knowledge in the field were now to be replaced by direct control from a small housing department in Whitehall. Significantly, the provision of the 1923 Act relieved the centre of the need to exact fiscal economy, as there would no longer be any burden on the Treasury concerning excesses by the locality. The subsidy on housing was now to be fixed, but the underlying principle of state subsidy would still remain.

Housing Policy from 1921 to 1923.

From the abandonment of the 'Homes for Heroes' campaign in 1921 no new housing policy was attempted until the Spring of 1923. The 1919 Act had seen 213,828 houses constructed. (See Table 3.1. below) These were erected by local authorities, utility societies and under delegated powers.

Table.3.1. Housing Provision under the Housing Act of 1919.

Local Authorities.	170797
Utility Societies.	4,545
Under Delegated Powers.	39,186
Total.	213,828

Source. Bowley, 1945. Statistical Appendices pp272-278.

All but 15,000 of the local authority houses were completed by March of 1923. A further 54,000 were built by private enterprise from 1919 to 1923, giving a total of almost a quarter of a million houses under the act. This was half the amount envisaged in 1919, when the plan was to build 500,000 in three years with a housing shortage of over 610,000.²⁸ There was obviously a considerable need for further state-aided housing to relieve the poor, living in slum conditions and in unfit and unhealthy areas.

A Conservative government had been elected in 1922 and, not surprisingly, it attempted to implement a policy that would prevent the permanent establishment of the principle of local authorities as suppliers of housing for the poorer classes. Housing in the Government's view, and especially those who supported Neville Chamberlain, the new Minister of Health, would not become the sole responsibility of the state nor would it herald the era of developing welfarism suggested in 1942 by Beveridge. The Chamberlain Act of 1923 was significantly different from the proposals in the 1919 Act. The important element however, was the fact that a central subsidy for housing, having been established in 1919, was to remain part of the new act and of government ideology because the problem of slums and housing

still needed to be addressed. The important feature was that private enterprise, not local authorities were now to be the builders. However, it is difficult to imagine how government could believe that private builders could relieve the housing crisis. It had failed to do so before the War and was unlikely to cope with the demand again, a fact accepted by Chamberlain in his discussions with the AMC. (See below)

The whole strategy under the new act was based on the assumption that private enterprise would cope, hence the exclusions under Section 6 of the Act preventing local authorities from building, a complete reversal of the 1919 Act. The fact that houses could be sold for any price or let at any rent would inevitably preclude the poorer classes from occupying, them, as the profit motive had now again returned to housing. Housing provision for the poorer classes would require a substantial filtering-up process, whereby new houses were occupied by the better-off workers and middle classes, which would eventually release housing at the lower and cheaper end of the market. The issue of ‘universality’ in housing provision was discussed earlier in the chapter, the 1923 Act did nothing to address the problem of housing those who simply could not afford a rent at all.

Central/local relations, the AMC and the 1923 Act.

Neville Chamberlain, Minister of Health, in the new Conservative government of 1923, was also a Vice President of the AMC. It is suggested that his position within the AMC was to influence the outcome of negotiations²⁹ between the Ministry and

²⁸ See Bowley p12 for details of housing requirements and her calculations as to housing needs.

²⁹ See AMC Minutes, Appendix D, 12th April 1923 pp96-98 for full details of the discussion.

the AMC in respect of the provisions under the new Act. This was especially so with those matters concerning the level of subsidy for house-construction for it was his personal intervention and insistence that subsidies be increased from £4 to £6 which were subsequently embodied in the act.³⁰ Neville Chamberlain reported at length on the discussions that had taken place over a number of meetings but stated that he could not regard the issue as being one for a fifty-fifty proposal but that the subsidy:

Must be on this basis that we have agreed and that you have agreed to accept a flat rate..... the thing that I am most concerned with is that you and we should work together in this matter wholeheartedly, and if possible, enthusiastically. We have got to get houses. Those houses cannot be erected by private enterprise without assistance in present conditions.³¹

Clearly the government recognised that subsidies would have to continue and at a level to achieve production. The problem was who would pay, the taxpayer, or the ratepayer? This issue became the main focus again in central/local relations and was a continuation of conservative thinking for a Conservative administration. The dichotomy in fiscal provision was still very evident and remained a problem in central/local relations.

This was not so much of a problem for the AMC, which was somewhat conservative in character, but the nature of fiscal provision, and who was to pay, remained a central issue in territorial relationships. It was a barrier in ideological terms between those authorities controlled by a labour administration and those that were not.

³⁰ See AMC Minutes Appendix D, 12th April 1923 pp96-98.

³¹ See AMC Minutes 12th April 1923, Appendix D pp96-98. This illustrates the protracted nature of the discussions that had taken place from January to March and the intensity of discussions on the form future policy and subsidies should take.

Subsidy was still a class issue and housing of the poor still a major feature on the political agenda, despite the reduction in political agitation, social unrest and working-class power. (See Cockburn, 1977; Malpas and Murie 1982; Melling 1980; Merrett 1979) As Chamberlain acknowledged, and as the continuation of state subsidy under a Conservative government indicated, houses would not be built unless promoted in a serious manner from the centre. So whilst there was an attempt to return to an economic situation that had existed prior to 1919 it had been demonstrated that subsidies were necessary. This continuation was politically justified by allowing subsidies only for private enterprise construction. The decision to continue subsidies however underlined the fact that even in a very short period of time the ideas emanating from the centre were evolving around this principle and clearly different strands of thinking on welfare provision were emerging. The minutes of the AMC meeting³² illustrate this, the Conservative government, via the Minister of Health, were advocating continued subsidies and that:

You and we should work together in this matter wholeheartedly and, if possible, enthusiastically. We have got to get houses. These houses cannot be erected by private enterprise without assistance..... The question between us is roughly this: whether that assistance shall be provided by in this or that proportion by the ratepayer and the taxpayer.....I have not haggled with you or attempted to beat you down....I am offering you too much, I give you that extra figure for the sake of goodwill I expect you will give me in return..... I shall have to undergo severe criticism.....I shall not mind these criticisms, and I shall feel I have done the right thing.³³

³² The committee included Mr Lewis Beard the Town Clerk of Blackburn who was at this time playing an important role and later became chairman of the Law Committee of the AMC, housing came under its remit at that time.

³³ See AMC minutes 12th April 1923, Appendix D pp96-98.

Thus, the government has moved their position on subsidies from £4 per house for twenty years, a fifty-fifty split with local authorities, to a £6 subsidy for twenty years a two-thirds split in favour of the local authorities requested by the AMC.

The motives for intervention were changing also. In 1917/19 the motive had been the prevention of revolution as well as recognising the insanitary conditions of the poor. By 1923, and later in 1924, it was recognised that the policy of providing both a better quality home and with some form of state-aid was becoming an expectation of society although the problems of the poor had not specifically been addressed. The actions of the centre never the less indicated that an evolutionary change was possible and an incremental approach to both the quality and quantity of housing provision continued.

The AMC, with Chamberlain's personal intervention, had thus achieved a significant increase in the level of subsidy. They had achieved an increase to £6 per house from the proposed £4, which would save the localities considerable amounts of money in terms of increases in the rates. What the AMC did not achieve was the right to build by local authorities, to be housing-providers, which had been given to them under the 1919 Act. This was a significant loss and local authorities would only be allowed to build as specified under Section 6 of the Act, where it could be shown that it was more efficient to do so than by private enterprise. Fortunately, for local authorities, the Chamberlain Act would be succeeded in 1924 by an Act introduced by the incoming and first-ever Labour government. It was an Act that would last for nine years and would run in tandem with the provisions made by Chamberlain. The next section will investigate the introduction of the Wheatley Act

of 1924 and the political situation leading to the election of a minority Labour government. As stated above the motives for intervention were changing, this was clear from the AMC minutes and Chamberlain's statements. These motives became more distinct during 1923 and in the early part of 1924 as discussion continued on housing provision and subsidies.³⁴ under the Labour government in 1924.³⁵ The motive was of course that there was a serious shortage of working-class houses. This problem could not be tackled by private enterprise alone, nor, without the assistance of local authorities. The method of intervention, state subsidy, had once again been confirmed as the only way progress would be made in providing houses in sufficient quantities. Housing, it is argued, had been firmly established on the political and social agenda's of the local authorities.

The Minister called a meeting of all interested local authority representatives from England, Wales and Scotland and outlined the government's policy on housing. Subsequently it was re-affirmed that:

Arrangements should constitute a true partnership between the State and local authorities and that two-thirds of the approved expenditure of the local authorities should be borne by the State.Exchequer subsidy £9 for 40 years. Local authority subsidy £4.10s for 40 years.³⁶

³⁴ See AMC Minutes on joint meetings with the UDCA, CCA, and LCC on the 25th April and 8th May 1924.

³⁵ There was a significant meeting between John Wheatley, the new Minister of Health, and the AMC, UDCA, RDCA, LCC, the ACC of Scotland, the ADC of Scotland on the 15th April 1924. See AMC Minutes, Memorandum, 15th April 1924, also AMC Minutes on Housing, 25th April 1924 PP 1-3.

³⁶ See AMC Minutes, 5th May 1924, Housing, p1-4.

This was indeed proof positive of the Labour government's commitment to provide the working-classes with houses in large numbers. (see below)

The Wheatley Act of 1924.

The Wheatley Act was generally regarded as the most successful of inter-war housing measures for dealing with the accommodation of the working-classes. (See Bowley 1945, Burnett 1986; Cockburn 1977; Lyman 1957; Malpas and Murie 1982; Melling 1980; Merrett 1979) Some 508,000³⁷ houses were constructed in the nine years the act was in force. The main objective of the act was to restore the powers to local authorities to again operate as housing-providers.

The General election in 1923 saw the Conservatives returned to office with the largest Party in Parliament but with a minority government. The Conservatives had 258 seats, Liberals 159 and Labour 191. The Labour Party was active during this period in expanding its political base, and by 1924 had only 19 constituencies without a local branch. The Liberal Party was consigned to the sidelines of politics with only 40 seats, with Labour reduced to 151 seats and 33 per cent of the vote. Pugh (1982, pp230-238) argues that it was the intention of Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister, to surrender power for the short period from January 1924 until the election on the 29th October 1924: 'to let Labour have a taste of power knowing that they really could do no harm to the country or economy as they needed the support of the Liberals'. The reason for this was the view of Baldwin that the country should

³⁷ See Bowley (1945) pp272-278.

return to a two-party political system, rather than three operating with the Liberals and an enhanced Labour Party. This:

Completed the joint-objectives of Baldwin and MacDonald by squeezing out the Liberal party and raising Labour to the status of a government-in-waiting on a permanent basis. The return to two-party politics after the confusion of wartime was almost complete. (Pugh 1983, p40)

If these views are valid then there was perhaps 'method in what at first appears madness by Baldwin in surrendering a comfortable majority' (Pugh, p230) but with, what Churchill described as the: 'second eleven' Cabinet. (Pugh, p230) Baldwin's view was that he was able to: 'steady the party while it came to regard Labour's entry into minority government as a safe and temporary experiment between two Conservative ministries'. (Pugh, p231) Never the less, a minority Labour government took office and its Cabinet contained both:

'experienced figures from Liberal backgrounds.....and from Conservative ranks. The rest of the posts were filled by known moderates, apart from Health and Works which went to two socialists, John Wheatley and F.W.Jowett'. (Pugh, p230)

Wheatley was offered a position of under secretary at the MOH but he refused. It appears that political expediency and pressure from the left of the party brought Wheatley in as Minister. (See Pugh pp229-231 also Howell pp229-286) Political change had been achieved but would social change necessarily follow?

As noted above, the 1924 Act was perhaps the most significant piece of housing legislation throughout the inter-war years, but even Wheatley had to accept that there were constraints and boundaries to what he could achieve. Important areas concerning housing were left intact, for example:

- The capital market would still fund local authority building rather than direct from taxation.
- Land was not nationalised.
- The construction industry was not nationalised.
- Rent-controls still remained in force.

What Wheatley did was to put local authorities permanently in the business of residential construction for the working classes and continued the ideology contained in the spirit of the 1919 Act. According to Lyman, (1957, p110) the Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald described the 1924 Act as: ‘our most important legislative item. It is really the biggest piece of constructive industrial organization which, has probably ever been attempted’.

The first important feature of the act was to accept social responsibility for housing once again as a right to be provided by local authorities. Wheatley’s Act had once more placed the function of providing housing, as a welfare provision, on the political agenda and no government during the period would reverse this policy. The policy can be regarded as having developed a path dependent nature. The idea of social provision in housing policy, and local authorities acting as housing providers, was encompassed in political will. This provision was now, and would later continue to be, accepted by politicians as an established societal requirement and one that

would remain until the Housing Act of 1980. The radical policy introduced in 1919 was sustained, subsidies were directed to both private enterprise and local authorities. (Hall 1986; Kuhn 1969)

The second major feature of Wheatley's actions was his agreements with the building trade unions. The only prospect of building reasonable numbers of houses lay with the employment of sufficient labour to actually construct the houses. Wheatley's famous 'gentleman's agreement', which allowed the rapid expansion of the employment of men in the building trade, was a landmark in industrial relations. By increasing the number of apprenticeships and shortening their duration, a skilled labour force would be developed in a much shorter time. This also held out the prospect for an expanded building industry that would remain in employment for many years.

The third focus of the act concerned perhaps the most important part of the legislation, the level of subsidy for housing. As stated earlier, Wheatley did not attempt to repeal the 1923 Act by Chamberlain, nor would Wheatley's successor repeal his act. This was significant during the whole inter-war period for the actual number of houses provided. This again illustrates the evolution of policy and the acceptance by the centre, and the new Labour government that policy should be geared to individual need with central incentive to the localities to act. State subsidies, if not a firmly established criteria in housing policy by this time were certainly a major ideational change in political will.

Wheatley's subsidy was to be £9 per house for forty years in urban parishes, and £12.10s per house in rural areas for forty years. This varying subsidy was the only concession made that would reflect the varying needs of different areas. The important point, however, was that this subsidy would only be available if the houses were let and not for private purchase or use, a complete reversal of the 1923 Act. The private consumption was to come from the Chamberlain Act that was still in force but houses could be built by local authorities and private or speculative builders on condition they were for rent. Thus, for the first time there was a Labour government in office running two housing programmes, one from a Conservative Minister and one from a socialist thinker in the first Labour administration. By 1935, according to Bowley: (1945, p271)

Output under the 1923 and 1924 Acts was, 579,800 houses which in theory realised a surplus of houses but with demolitions and conversions left a shortage of 127,000 by the end of 1934. This was a significant improvement on the 822,000 shortage anticipated in April of 1923.

The Housing (Financial Provisions) Act of 1924 did not by any means solve all of Britain's housing problems. It did mark an important shift in social policy and in liaison between organised labour and the government, as an attempt to secure a sufficient supply of a basic human need for decent housing for the working and poorer classes.

In September 1924, the Liberals withdrew their support from the Labour government and the result of the October General Election was a landslide victory for the Conservatives who were returned to power with 419 seats, Labour winning

only 151. The Tories would remain in office until the next Labour government in 1929 who would again enact legislation this time specifically for the anti-slum campaign discussed below. The subsidy under the Wheatley Act was continued by the succeeding Conservative administration led once again by Neville Chamberlain. It appeared that the provisions under the 1923 Act and Wheatley's 1924 Act were satisfying demands. Other than modifying instruments, for example in 1927 when the Chamberlain subsidy was reduced, from £6 to £4, and the Wheatley subsidies from £9 to £7.10s., no further major legislation was enacted until 1930, when the first of what were to become known as the 'Three Acts' of 1930, 1933 and 1935, was introduced.

The AMC, Central/Local Relations and the 1924 Act.

The AMC was to play a significant role in the formulation of the terms under which the Wheatley Act would operate.³⁸ The association also co-ordinated meetings between the MOH, the Minister himself, his representatives, and also the representatives of other local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland. This central role covered the negotiations concerning subsidies, levels of rents to be charged, the role and function of both the centre and locality in housing provision. Those local authority associations represented at the meeting were: the AMC, the Urban District Councils Association, the Rural District Councils Association, the London County Council, the Convention of Royal Burghs, the Association of

³⁸ See AMC Minutes 15th April 1924 p1, 25th April 1924 p2, 9th May 1924 p1. These minutes give a full account of the debate between the MOH and the AMC and the principal officer involved. It also includes the debate with the new Minister John Wheatley and indicates the part he played in securing the subsidies requested by local authorities through the AMC

County Councils of Scotland and the Association of District Committees of Scotland.³⁹

The negotiations began on the 15th April 1924 with a meeting at the Ministry. When John Wheatley, outlined his proposals for the new act to the representatives. They were not met with approval. The English representatives met on the 25th April and a number of resolutions were made. The committee fully considered the Ministers address and stated that they had: 'grave doubts as to the sufficiency of the proposals'.⁴⁰ The local authorities were also concerned with the number of houses to be erected, the purchase of building materials, the level of contribution to be made by government towards the losses and the fixation of rents. The committee also resolved to initiate its own detailed examination of what it felt the probable losses would be under any housing scheme. Subsequent negotiations became detailed and protracted with several meetings over the next two weeks.⁴¹

John Wheatley advised a subsequent meeting⁴² that he had secured the agreement of government to a flat-rate subsidy of £9 in urban areas on condition that the local authorities contributed £4 10s, a half. The joint committee's representative continued to press for greater subsidies of £10 but upon insistence by the Minister they had to accept £9. 'At 6.10 p.m. the Minister of Health again attended.....he hoped the committee would accept his original figure of £9, as he wished to keep

³⁹ The negotiations concerned England and Wales only. The Scottish Authorities are not covered by this thesis.

⁴⁰ See AMC Minutes 25th April 1924, p2.

⁴¹ See AMC Minutes 25th April 1924 and 9th May 1924 for full discussions on the issues raised by local authorities regarding their concerns for a new housing act.

⁴² See AMC Minutes 9th May 1924 p4.

something in hand for the purpose of dealing with special cases'.⁴³ It was subsequently reported that following negotiations it was: 'no longer necessary to satisfy the Minister that the needs of their areas cannot otherwise be met'.⁴⁴

Thus, the conditions under the Greenwood Act preventing local authorities from building had been removed. The intervention and negotiating power of the localities had been forcibly expressed through the joint committee's representatives and they were to secure a significant contribution from the Exchequer on the basis of a fifty-fifty split on losses incurred on the provision of state aid under the impending act.

The 1924 Act increased subsidies to local authorities, assisted and speeded up house-construction with the aid of the liberalisation of the rules imposed by trades unions and the corresponding increase in materials. Furthermore, it placed the social provision of housing firmly on the political agenda and differentiated between urban and rural needs in housing provision. Left intact was the Chamberlain Act allowing housing to be built with subsidies that could be sold or rented for any purpose and at any price, the free market as well as social provision being catered for.⁴⁵

It is evident from the foregoing evidence that the AMC played a significant role. In institutional terms, it was one of interest intermediation, the AMC was one of the organisations in the tripartite relationship. It is therefore necessary to appreciate the way these less formal organisations, in terms of a strict polity is concerned, are

⁴³ See AMC Minutes 9th May 1924, p4.

⁴⁴ Ibid. This was a significant concession and would allow local authorities to construct houses once again. This had been stopped under the Greenwood Act of 1923 and was an important victory for the AMC and local authorities.

⁴⁵ This was the first time that state subsidies were available for both local authority and private enterprise building.

institutionalised, and the way in which they interact with formal organisations such as central and local government. Clearly, the AMC played a significant role in negotiations and policy formulation. It is argued that the concessions gained were significant in terms of economic, welfarist and social provision.

Central/Local Relations and Housing Provision 1919 to 1924, a summary.

The nature of central/local relationships and the advent of welfarism anew, as far as housing policy was concerned, changed discernibly in both nature and context during the period from 1918 to 1924. From the outset, the nature of politics changed structurally and ideologically with the rise in working-class action and the threat of social upheaval, if not actual revolution. This changed the concept of what welfarism and social provision ought to be, for the masses were no longer prepared to suffer the deprivation that was their lot. Having fought and won the War the: ‘unwritten social constitution’ (Burnett 1986, pp215-216) was expected to be upheld and consequently the expectations of the masses, to be rid of the hovels from whence they came, was anticipated by the five million armed men returning from the War. The advent of mass democracy was also a significant factor, as was votes for women. The nature and complexion of politics changed although the underlying political force was that of conservatism: when Labour came to power with the aid of the Liberals they had little time, inclination or opportunity to introduce socialist policies. An environment developed in which welfarism could at least begin to flourish some twenty-five years before the 1942 Beveridge Report. It was as Pierson suggested: ‘an historical transition towards more complex and developed societies’.

(Pierson 1991, p21 See also Thane, 1996) It was a: 'product of the increasing differentiation and the growing size of societies on the one hand and of processes of social and political mobilization on the other'. (Flora and Heidenheimer 1987, p175)

Central/local relations changed in a number of ways:

- Initially, the perceived threat of revolution, or at least the critical social conditions in 1917-1919 had presented a challenge to government. Mass democracy, the rise of working-class power and agitation in the workplace and the threat of social upheaval had led to government of a different complexion with Labour replacing the Liberals as the second force in politics. Thus, in many ways, the attitude of the centre towards the locality, and its needs changed.
- This change facilitated welfarism, which necessitated a means of control over the locality and would be at the point of delivery in terms of housing provision.
- The introduction of the MOH under the progressive leadership of Lloyd George and Christopher Addison whose ideas on social reform, in terms of medical and health provisions, were different in nature and complexion from those expounded by the LGB.
- Fiscal control demanded close scrutiny by the centre of the locality. The standard of houses expected to be erected and the standardisation of materials, design, layout and construction all needed close scrutiny by the centre to avoid both delays and excesses in spending.
- The changing economic climate and the reversal of working-class domination in the workplace during 1921-22, changed the nature and level of

housing provision. This change, in 1922, saw local authorities stripped of their central role in housing provision and subsidies were only allowed where houses were constructed by private enterprise under the 1923 Act.

- Equally as important as the introduction of the 1919 Act, was the introduction of the 1924 Act. The first Labour government, with a socialist in the MOH, introduced what was perhaps the most enduring piece of housing legislation during the inter-war years. For the first time, the introduction of the 1924 Act created a situation whereby the nation had: ‘two workable government supported housing schemes.....local authorities were now in the business of house building for good’. (Gilbert 1970, p201)

From 1919-1924, housing was a central government issue politically, socially and economically. Whilst it is accepted that other issues would attract the attention of government, the changing nature of politics and societal demands focussed the government’s attention on the actions of the working classes and of politics in the periphery, with housing policy being a central focus. It was not an issue that could be relegated to the sidelines nor one which could be ignored. It was, therefore, a matter of serious political attention; a matter of high politics. The attitude of local possessive pluralism had begun to change and whilst the localities were agents of the centre, social welfarism, as a principle, had now been significantly achieved.

State-aided housing-provision, having risen to a political and social necessity and the genesis of welfarism anew, was to remain on the political agenda throughout the rest of the inter-war period as the next part of the chapter will illustrate. The Wheatley Act of 1924 would remain in force until 1932 and its provisions, though

altered by successive governments, would provide the localities with the economic means of providing the houses needed for its poorer classes.

2. The Development of Housing Policy and Central/Local Relations 1925 to 1939.

Introduction.

This part of the chapter will be concerned with housing policy from 1925 to 1939 and the nature of central politics and central/local relations during that period. It will illustrate how attitudinal changes continued to evolve in what was a significant period for both state-aided housing policy and owner occupation. It will concentrate on what became known as the 'Three Acts' of 1930, 1933 and 1935. It was in Bowley's view the: 'Third Experiment' (Bowley, p135) in housing during the inter-war years when priorities changed from building anew to an anti-slum and abatement of overcrowding priority. Housing policy had not changed since the introduction of both the Chamberlain Act of 1923 and the Wheatley Act in 1924. Despite the fact that 611,344 houses had been constructed from 1919 to 1930 there was still a need to provide: 'sufficient houses for the poor who were living in insanitary and unfit houses'. (Bowley pp 135-6) What was essential was the need to remove the poor from the slums. Despite this miserable existence, there was a reluctance on the part of some of those residing in the slums, to move. This disinclination, or tenant resistance, was due to the policy of re-housing slum dwellers in out of town areas and suburbs. This meant that the occupants incurred greater costs in terms of transportation to work and shopping, and in many instances, the loss of contact with established communities.

The focus, under the new Labour government of 1929, would shift from just building anew in garden city environments to clearing the slums and rehousing all those displaced in the anti-slum programme and the attendant problems that this would create. One of the significant features of housing during the 1930s was the growth of owner- occupation and the rise of building societies as a means of funding housing for the middle and lower-middle classes. It was also important in that this process allowed a 'filtering up' within the housing market making the homes abandoned by those who previously rented them, and who were now mortgagees, available for the working-classes who could afford the rents, but not necessarily for the poor who could still not afford the rents. Owner occupation was also significant in the political process of: local possessive pluralism.

In considering the nature, complexity and intensity of central/local relations this part of the chapter will also consider the question of the changing nature of these relationships. Bulpitt (1983, p134) contends that: '1926 can be taken as the beginning of a new territorial era, one which was to last for nearly forty years'. His argument being that: 'the period of challenge and crisis had come to an end'. These challenges arose from threats of economic competition, mass-party mobilisation, and the demands for institutional change allowing a new territorial constitution to operate. One of the hypotheses in this thesis is that this change commenced much earlier, during the inter-war years, and that the challenge was initially born from the fear of revolution. Furthermore, that because of the political and institutional changes that were made, territorial politics in the area of state-aided housing were not characterised by the operational code Bulpitt suggests.

Central/local relations, politics and housing policy 1925 to 1939.

One of the major foci of this thesis is the changing nature, complexity and intensity of central/local relations with regard to housing policy throughout the inter-war years.

This part of the chapter is concerned with:

- The arguments by Bulpitt that the period marked a significant shift in central/local relations from 1926 onwards.
- A response to Bulpitt. Why housing policy and welfarism were a high political issue in central/local relations.
- The changing political complexion of central government from Labour to National government.
- Changing housing policy under the 'Three Acts' of 1930, 1933 and 1935, the anti-slum campaign and the Housing Act of 1938.
- The Ministry of Health in the 1930s, its role in housing policy and central/local relations.
- The role and function of the AMC in housing policy and central/local relations.
- The rise of owner-occupation and the building societies in the process of 'filtering up'.

In setting the scene it will be useful to outline why and how Bulpitt (1983) considers the nature of territorial relationships changed and how this affected politics between the centre and the periphery.

The changing nature of territorial relations and Dual Polity.

Bulpitt (1983, pp160-1) contends that:

The United Kingdom entered the second half of the twentieth century (from 1926) operating, in the territorial arena, a Dual Polity; a structure of territorial politics in which the Centre and Periphery had relatively little to do with each other...Some policy fields, such as town and country planning in Britain, do not easily fit the duality thesis. Although it could be argued that the Centre's peculiar willingness to interfere in those matters stemmed from a desire to maintain political tranquillity within the periphery. Overall...political activity at the Centre and in the periphery were separate worlds.

Earlier, he argues that the relationship between these worlds was one of mutual deference and frigidity. He does not suggest that there was no contact but that this contact was infrequent and concerned only issues of low politics on matters of little concern to the centre.

The contention here is that social provision in general and welfarism in particular, specifically state-aided housing policy, does not easily fit the thesis. The width and breadth of social change is such that because of its political, social and economic

impact, and its institutional implications, housing policy was 'high politics'. It was not an issue consigned to the realms of peripheral obscurity. Furthermore, the centres willingness to introduce housing, and other social reforms and welfare provisions into the political arena was not 'peculiar' or just designed to bring 'tranquillity within the periphery'. Instead it was an inevitable consequence of social upheaval and, initially, possible revolution with the threat of the overthrow of the state. These provisions having been introduced onto the political agenda, became embedded and can retrospectively be regarded as path dependent and, as time has shown have considerably increased in both scope and economic cost.

Society was being transformed and as such the modern world was changing, the welfare state being part of that changing situation. As Flora and Heidenheimer suggest, the welfare state is: 'a general phenomenon of modernization,' (cited in Pierson 1991, p21) a point not considered by Bulpitt. It was this process of modernisation, the process of demand for welfarism under macro political and economic control that takes social provision in general, and housing in particular, into the realms of higher political control and priority than Bulpitt suggests. The evolution of the welfare state amounted to what Flora and Heidenheimer (1981 p23) suggest was: 'a basic transformation of the state itself, of its structure, functions and legitimacy'. This was a process developed and evolved during the inter-war period and it was sustained by state-aided housing provision from the centre.

The control was from the centre, by economic and administrative constraint and control. Such control took this policy field into the realm of 'high politics' and was not one simply left to the devices in the periphery or to those who represent the

locality at a higher level of authority, such as the AMC. On the one hand local authorities were the agents of the centre in economic terms, on the other hand they were partners in a process of modernisation and welfare provision in housing. As the policy and level of state aid changed over time, so did the contributions by both the centre and periphery. Housing was then a strange alliance and formed a different level of peripheral relationships than might at first seem apparent. Housing could be seen as maintaining 'political tranquillity', but so can all forms of welfarism. It should be remembered however, and as Flora and Heidenheimer (1981, p28) suggest, that: 'up to 1914 and to a large extent through the inter-war period, the social forces most relevant to welfare state development were those of the working class'. The demand for housing came from the working-classes⁴⁶ and from those who represented them including urban local authorities whose demands had been met before this welfare policy would be adopted. It is to the issue of continuing political and social changes during the inter-war period that the focus now moves.

Housing Policy, Political and Social Change from 1925 to 1929.

⁴⁶ Bowley argues that the idea that the state should take active responsibility for bringing about general improvements in working-class housing emerged from the Report of the Royal Commission of Housing in Scotland set up in 1912 and reporting in 1917.

From the abdication of the short-lived Labour government in October 1924, the rest of the period to 1929 was dominated by a Conservative government which continued housing policy under both the Chamberlain and Wheatley Acts. House-building from 1924-1929, saw some 367,073 houses constructed in six years. This was sufficient to reinforce the belief that an active housing policy was being pursued by government, from both private enterprise and local authority building.

Between 1924-1929, there were only two minor amendments to housing policy during the period from 1924 to 1929, these in 1925 and in 1929. The 1925 Act was a codifying measure which re-affirmed the 1923 Act's pre-condition of non-competition with private sector house-building would not be restored, it had been removed by the 1924 Act in effect if not in essence. The second measure was the Housing (Revision of Contributions) Act 1929. In 1928, the Conservatives had decided that the Wheatley subsidy would be reduced after September 1929 from £7 10s per year to £6 per year. The act annulled the decision taken in 1928 and subsidies would remain at the 1927 level. In 1927, the subsidy had been reduced to £7 10s from £9 agreed in 1924 and would only be repealed in 1933 with the introduction of further anti-slum legislation. The Wheatley Act and its subsidies were in force for nine years.

The Conservative government from 1924 to 1929, pursued a number of significant social reforms and a dual purpose housing policy.⁴⁷ Industrial unrest and militancy had not provoked the threats of revolution seen earlier in the century, but the political tide had turned in favour of Labour. The ideological aspirations of the

⁴⁷ The Conservative government had introduced the Widows, Orphans and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act in 1925 and the Local Government Act in 1929 abolishing the hated Poor Laws.

labour movement had been galvanised by the General Strike in 1926 and their political aspirations realised in 1929, when they took office nationally and were in control in the majority of local authorities. Territorial relationships, at least between those of the same political consciousness, centrally and nationally, could be expected to be in favour of those policies to be pursued, which were to the benefit of the working and poorer classes in society. The focus of the three case studies is to examine this proposal and ascertain if, in fact, this was the reality in respect of one of the major social services of the time, that of housing provision.

The anti-slum campaign 1930 to 1939.

This part of the chapter will be concerned with the three major housing acts of the 1930s, which addressed in some measure overcrowding and the anti-slum campaign. (See Bowley 1945; Brockington 1966; Burnett 1986; Elsas 1942; Garside 1987; Gauldie 1974; Holmans 1987; M'Gonigle & Kirby 1937; Merrett 1979; Simon 1929a, 1933b and 1945c; Wohl 1977; Young & Garside 1983) This marked a shift in central government policy and subsidies were directed to relieve the problems of overcrowding and insanitary conditions in which the poor still lived. It has already been shown that the problem of overcrowding had existed since the latter part of the nineteenth century, as was recognised by the introduction of the housing legislation in 1890.

During the Summer of 1928, the National Housing and Town Planning Council set up a special committee to further investigate and report on the slum problem with specific reference to the housing of the lowest paid workers. The report concluded that although over 1.2 million homes had been constructed from 1919, the pressure of overcrowding had not been relieved and in many respects conditions now were worse than they had been as the slums were fifteen years older. (See Simon 1933, p32 for a summary of the report) The report concluded that a further 1.5 million houses were still required but the vital task: 'is not to destroy old slums but in the first place to build one and a half million houses during ten years to be let at from 7/6d to 11/- inclusive rent.'⁴⁸ (Simon, 1933 p32)

The size of the task, and problems facing future Governments were well known and the anti-slum campaign was a central feature in the General Election of 1929. All the major parties were promising reform and subsidies to alleviate the unhealthy and insanitary conditions in which the poor still lived. The Conservative Cabinet discussed the matters as part of the strategy for the general election campaign. Chamberlain suggested that there were three major areas of concern, those of finance, procedure and compensation. He commented that:

There would have to be some increase in Exchequer contribution, some speeding up of procedure, perhaps with additional powers to the Ministry, to put pressure on local authorities, and a recasting of the method of compensation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ The term inclusive rent means that the whole rent paid would include an amount in respect of local rates which could be as high as 3/- to 4/-. (In Manchester the amount was nearer 4/-) See Bowley pp208-213 especially p210 for further information on the effects of rates on the poorer classes.

A minority Labour government was elected and a similar commitment was in its manifesto as perhaps would be expected from a movement sympathetic to the needs of the working classes.

Housing policy and development, the Housing Act 1930. (The Greenwood Act.)

It is significant that the next piece of housing legislation was again enacted by a Labour administration but it was not to have the dramatic effect on housing provision than that enacted by the previous Labour administration in 1924. The 1924 Wheatley Act had brought generous subsidies to housing provision and was one of the most important and successful pieces of housing legislation during the inter-war period. After 1929, Greenwood, the new Labour Minister of Health, would introduce a shift in policy which changed the nature of housing provision and subsidy yet it was a policy that was slow to start and didn't meet the needs and aspirations of the localities.

This section of the chapter will deal with the provision of the 1930 Act. Why it was slow to take effect and why it failed, in some measure, to respond to the needs of the poorer members of society. Furthermore, why it was virtually ignored by the localities, causing conflict in territorial relations because of the nature and level of housing subsidy.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ See CAB24/202 Chamberlain for comments in Cabinet discussion on the question of housing policy.

⁵⁰ See Simon 1933 for full details of the provisions of the act and which were also outlined earlier in this chapter.

For the first time, an Exchequer subsidy was introduced specifically for the purposes of slum clearance. Importantly, the legislation would relate the subsidy to the number of persons actually re-housed, the idea being to discontinue pre-war practice, whereby slums were demolished but the people not re-housed because previously there was no binding legislation to ensure those displaced received another house. The act was complex and not easily understood, nor was it simple in operation, which in terms of implementation, can be seen, perhaps one of its downfalls. (See Bowley, 1945; Simon, 1933)

The method of subsidy allowed for easier re-housing of the larger family, for it catered for an extra subsidy for families of more than four and made allowances for each person over that number. For the first time, recognition had been made regarding the type and size of family to be catered for. The subsidy was more generous than those available under the reduced level of 1927 for the Wheatley Act but not as generous as those under the original terms of that act or indeed the Addison Act of 1919. Greenwood still left the Wheatley legislation on the statute, thereby allowing both building anew and slum-clearance. There was now in effect: 'a system for providing additional houses, in part a system of replacing old houses'. (Bowley, p135)

Why then was building so slow and the local authorities reaction and support for the change in housing policy inadequate, when at first it appears that the terms on which to build and re-house were as generous as could be expected given the economic climate in 1929? By 1931 only: '11,796 houses had in fact been built with the Greenwood subsidy'. (Bowley, p148) When compared to the 96,944 houses built

between 1919 and 1921 under the Addison Act, this was a poor response to the anti-slum proposals made by government. Simon, (1933 pp33-36)⁵¹ stated that it appeared that this campaign, and previous ones, had failed: 'From the point of view of the slums, the housing campaign, including all the work done under the Wheatley Act, had failed'.

The contributory factors and reason for the failure to commence building and improve the slums with any vigour appeared to be: -

- The attitude of the new Minister and the actual provision under the act itself.
- The level of subsidy and the complexity of the act.
- The attitude of the Ministry of Health and its overpowering influence on the Minister.
- Local authority dissatisfaction with the policy proposals.
- Tenant dissatisfaction.
- The influence of private landlords with vested interests.
- The impending economic collapse of 1931.

John Wheatley's agreement with the building-trades unions and his subsidies had proven that 225,000 houses could be built each year. The target actually set by the new administration and by Greenwood was, by contrast, much more conservative in nature. He based his estimates of need on a building programme to commence at under 60,000 houses per year working up to 90,000 houses. This was not a huge

⁵¹ Simon was an insider at the Ministry of Health being Parliamentary secretary to the Minister in 1929. He was also chairman of the Manchester housing committee from 1919 to 1924 and very much attuned to housing policy needs.

total, nor one that it would appear would alleviate the problem or one that displayed the vigour needed by a Labour Minister. 'One would have expected a Labour Minister to show some of the energy displayed by Dr Addison in 1920 and by Mr Wheatley in 1924. I have never been able to understand this attitude on Mr Greenwood's part'. (Simon, p35) Simon also suggests that one reason for this might be the fact that, like many of his Cabinet colleagues, he was socialised into the political culture of Westminster and Whitehall. He comments that the Ministry of Health: 'seemed to completely capture Mr Greenwood'. (Simon, p35) The minutes of the AMC also indicate the position of the Minister who, unlike Addison, Chamberlain and Wheatley before him, was unwilling to go the extra mile in securing provisions for the poorer classes.⁵²

The complexity of the legislation also had a detrimental effect on implementation. By the time the localities understood the act and its implications the Labour government was almost out of office. This was an act, it was suggested, that few people understood including the Minister. Simon comments that he was: 'frequently confident that the Minister did not understand it himself' (Simon, 1933, p34 Commenting on the Parliamentary Debates on the act.) There was also the problem of tenant dissatisfaction. It is perhaps unbelievable that those residing in the slums would wish to remain, but there was no doubt that they had very real fears for their future in terms of economic rents, relocation and health issues. These were issues that faced local authorities when they were to re-house those poorest of families living in the slums. Whilst rental policy was a matter for the locality under the legislation, the overriding factor was that their housing accounts had to balance.

⁵² Examples of the Minister's attitude can be found in AMC Minutes 10th July 1929. pp179-180. His attitude appeared to antagonize the representatives of the localities.

There was little room for manoeuvre in terms of subsidised rents as the localities were already giving subsidy to building. There was a need also for those re-housed to be put in out of town locations where new houses had been erected. This caused problems for the tenants as they would then have to bear the burden of extra transportation costs to work as well as extra rent, they were also to be relocated away from friends and family, a situation many would not want. The economic consequences of moving were however the major factor in some tenants reluctance to move.⁵³

To summarise, it is not surprising that there was a lack of enthusiasm on the part of the local authorities to build under the act and to clear the slums. They were faced with divergent pressures both from within their own localities and from the Ministry itself, in the form of the provisions under the act. It is an understatement when Bowley says: 'Conditions were not entirely favourable for a great advance in slum clearance.....They were however highly favourable on the other hand for local obstructionists including those with vested interests in slum property'. (Bowley, pp49-150)

The question of private property interests again enters the local political arena. It may be recalled that one of the significant features in central/local relations under the LGB was the question of local possessive pluralism. With the slums being cleared local landlords could see their incomes rapidly diminishing as local authorities received rent for properties. In this respect, they were perhaps aided by

⁵³ A study was conducted in 1937 by M'Gonigle and Kirby on the economic consequences and the effect that high rents had on food provision for poorer families. The results showed that malnutrition was more evident and although the poor were living in better houses their health was deteriorating due to having less food available.

the position of the local authorities and their reluctance to build. According to Bowley (1945, pp135-6) the subsidies under the Greenwood Act would be 6d a week more than the Wheatley Acts revised subsidies in 1927 for a family of four persons. This subsidy would increase, by almost 1/- per week, for each additional person re-housed in that family and was therefore a substantial amount.⁵⁴ Even so, the level of subsidy was still considered insufficient by local authorities if they were to build anew, re-house slum dwellers and maintain and repair the property, the costs of which were at a higher level for larger families.⁵⁵

In terms of housing provision, and importantly from the local perspective, there was little incentive to re-house the poor and in this respect the act could be viewed as a failure. House constructions by local authorities from 1930 to 1933 inclusive, under the 1930 Act, were 12,300. Under the 1923 and 1924 Acts, with Chamberlain and Wheatley subsidies they were 226,400, the figures bear no comparison. In contrast, too, the houses constructed by private enterprise under the 1923 and 1924 Acts, amounted to 543,500 with a further 210,700 being built in 1934 and 287,000 in 1935.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ See Bowley pages 135 and 136 for explanation and calculation of subsidy levels.

⁵⁵ See AMC minutes during February and March 1929 especially 28th February and 1st March Appendix on page 201.

⁵⁶ See Bowley p271.

Political change and housing policy development, The Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1933.

The political and economic crisis of 1931 produced a change in the political environment the mid-1930s towards a 'Middle Way'. (Marwick 1964, pp285-298) (See also Addison 1994; Aldcroft 1970; Gilbert 1970; Greenleaf 1984; Macmillan, 1934a 1938b; Next Five Years Group 1935; P.E.P. Reports 1934; Pierson 1991, Pugh 1983; Thane 1996 Young & Garside 1982) This signalled a shift from two opposing ideological positions towards some form of consensus on such issues as planning the economy and social welfarism provision. There needed to be a middle ground between capitalism on the one hand and socialism on the other. The depression of 1931 was to begin to place this ideological development on the political agenda. As Harold Macmillan (1933) observed:

Planning is forced upon us, therefore, not for idealistic reasons, but because of the old mechanism which served us when markets were expanding naturally and spontaneously is no longer adequate when the tendency is in the opposite direction.

The opposite direction was the middle way. These views were later to be developed by others who claimed some form of economic planning was essential. Political and Economic Planning (PEP) and The Next Five Years Group were just two examples of professionals, progressive centrist politicians, academics and progressive capitalists joining together to seek this 'middle way'. (See below)

By 1933, the Labour Party was reviewing its policies, in particular, debating a more gradualist approach towards socialism and left-wing policies. The moves towards Keynesianism in 1936, (See Marwick, 1964, Addison, 1994; Macmillan, 1933; Next Five Years Group Report 1935; PEP Reports 1934), as a means of planning the economy, were supported by the trades unions, and especially by Bevin. By 1933, there were: 'specific commendations by the T.U.C. of the New Deal programmes of President Roosevelt as worthy of emulation'. (Pugh 1983, p271) The prospectus for change was by public works programmes, a forty-hour week and raising the school leaving age to 16. Progressive or not, they were seen by left-wingers, as a seduction of the working-classes by reforming capitalists. It was their view that:

Capitalism had plunged the working class into mass unemployment.....brought a Labour Government to its knees.....the only way forward would lie through a sharp and decisive transformation to Socialism, at some risk of upper class sabotage and even civil war; (Addison 1972, p48) was revolution was again at hand?

There were, however, other progressives in the Labour Party ranks such as Dalton, Morrison, Gaitskell, Durbin and Jay who devoted their energies towards: 'the objectives and machinery of socialist planning'. (Addison, p49) The 1930s saw a consolidation of what it is suggested was 'welfarism anew'. This is an illustration of how institutional choice after the First World War configured later options. Welfarism had become path dependent.

The Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1933.

The changing nature of politics affected the character and ideology of housing policy during the 1930s and much of what happened resulted in a housing boom from 1933 onwards. This would, however, be in the private sector rather than public provision for the working-classes.

As we have seen the important issue of clearing the slums had not yet reached any significant level or made any serious progress by the time the National Government had taken office in 1931. Economic crisis consumed the attention of government and housing was essentially sidelined until discussions began in 1932 as to the nature and complexion of any new legislation that might be enacted. The 1933 Act, although short-lived, was a significant and bold piece of legislation as far as the localities were concerned. It was important because it addressed the problem of the slums and it was prominent because it now removed the subsidies under the Wheatley Act. According to Wilding (1970, p34) the act was for a: 'definite and limited purpose. It meant a change in direction in public housing policy *by forcing the local authorities to concentrate on slum clearance*'. (my emphasis added) Would Sir Hilton Young the new Minister of Health succeed where Greenwood had failed?

Sir Hilton Young had taken over at the MOH after the Election of 1931.⁵⁷ Prior to the introduction of the 1933 Act, Hilton Young had issued a memorandum to local authorities, circular No.1238, and immediately acknowledged the need for: 'houses which can be let at rents within the means of the poorer members of the working

⁵⁷ Sir E D Simon was to lose his seat at this election and would no longer be an insider at the Ministry on housing affairs. He had little admiration however for the new Minister.

class..... A general review of housing conditions.....shows that the needs of the poorer classes are not in fact adequately met'. (Simon 1933, p51) Despite this rhetoric, (and he would later be accused by the AMC of promoting this rhetoric), he was accused of having: 'no inclination to push forward the building of houses by local authorities'. (Simon, p51) This would prove to be so. There were considerable discussions between the Ministry and the AMC in planning the act as will be outlined below.

The AMC, Territorial relationships and the 1933 Housing Act.

In January 1932, the Minister was reporting that he had made contact with local authorities. He advised them that they should concentrate on: 'the provision of a type of house which can be built at a low cost and can be let within the means of the more poorly paid workers'. (Simon 1933, p51)

The Minister sent a draft of a further circular to the AMC for consideration prior to issuing this to local authorities and it was considered by them and reported at a meeting of the housing committee in July of 1932. Significantly, it contained comments which would greatly concern the AMC as it hoped that:

The concentration by local authorities on the provision of the small house will widen the field in *which private enterprise can operate and that private enterprise will be induced to provide houses of other types both for sale and letting in substantial numbers.*⁵⁸ (My emphasis added)

⁵⁸ See AMC Housing Committee Minutes Item 6, July 1932.

Preparation continued for the introduction of a new housing bill, which, it appeared would curtail, if not completely stop, building by local authorities. To compound the anxieties of the local authorities, the Chancellor of the Exchequer appointed a committee to look at the major question of local expenditure, especially on housing. The report was published at the end of November 1932.⁵⁹ The AMC was considered as an institution of interest intermediation and its role and function in housing policy explained as part of, and operating within, a tripartite relationship. (see Figure 1.1) There was now to be a break in this link and for the first time since state subsidies had been introduced, the AMC was not consulted prior to the formulation of housing policy.

Relationships between the AMC, CCA, UDCA, and LCC and the Ministry became strained. The Ministry did not even advise the AMC that a bill was to be put to Parliament in such a short time and the usual course of debate and discussion over proposed provisions, which had always previously taken place, did not happen. The Ministry wrote to the AMC on the 8th December 1932 advising them that a bill had been introduced in the Commons on the 7th December and that: 'owing to the exigencies of time it was not possible to take the course which has usually been taken of consulting your Association before the introduction of new legislation in regard to housing'.⁶⁰ This was a complete reversal of previous understandings and practice in the co-operation between central government and the representatives of the local authorities at central level. At a meeting on the 6th January 1933, the AMC

⁵⁹ The report was to suggest, amongst other observations, that Local Authorities should no longer have subsidies under the 1923 and 1924 Acts available to them. These had been the mainstay of their building programmes previously.

⁶⁰ See AMC Housing Committee Minutes 15th December 1932 p7)

expressed several reservations and concerns regarding the proposals under the new act.⁶¹ Having stated their concerns, they now resolved to write to the Ministry and seek an interview with the Minister to voice those concerns.⁶² These concerns were raised directly with the Minister at a meeting on the 2nd February when Alderman Miles Mitchell, in addressing the Minister, stated:

If I may deal in the first place with the proposals under the new Housing Bill. I must say that the Association of Municipal Corporations has viewed with very grave alarm the suggestion which I made in that Bill that the subsidy should be cut out immediately.You should take into consideration a scheme of gradual reductions.

The Minister was not to be persuaded to risk this, his answer to the proposition was: 'I will not!'.⁶³

The Hilton Young Act was a significant change in housing policy in terms of state provision although the underlying ideology and path dependent nature of subsidies continued. It marked the birth of the mid-1930s building boom and of private ownership, but it did little for the poorer classes, despite the number of houses constructed throughout the 1930s. From 1933 to 1935 the number of houses constructed by local authorities and private enterprise are given in Table 3.2.

⁶¹ See AMC minutes of the meeting of the 6th January 1933 for a full list of concerns. These included the withdrawal of subsidies. Changes in policy from those stated in January 1932. Inability of private enterprise to provide housing. Inability of the scheme to provide the type of house required and the cost of houses.

⁶² Details of the meeting are fully minuted in AMC minutes February 1933 page 11. The frustrations of the locality were obvious but it was clear the Minister would embark on a housing campaign which was based almost entirely on provision by private enterprise. Owner occupation too was a significant issue at this time and was an influence on the Conservative Minister and government.

⁶³ See AMC Minutes of the meeting dated 2nd February 1933. Appendix pp10-12.

Table 3.2. Houses Constructed from 1933 to 1935.

Year.	Private Enterprise Building	Local Authority Building
1933	144,500	55,900
1934	210,700	56,000
1935	287,500	40,200
Total	642,700	152,100

(Source Bowley 1945, p271)

It is clear from these figures that housing provision, though not state subsidies, was virtually abandoned by local authorities as was the Ministers want. This was a situation that would continue throughout the rest of the inter-war period. The figures, however, do not provide the whole story. The question still remains would this legislation, and that following in 1935, provide the houses for the poor in sufficient quantities and at affordable rents, and would this be any better than that provision by local authorities?

The 1935 Act was the final piece of legislation in what Bowley describes as the ‘Third Experiment’ in housing. (See Bowley pp135-147. The purpose of a sanitary policy she suggests:

Is based on a decision that particular types of housing conditions cannot be tolerated. It implies state, or social, responsibility for preventing any family living in houses involving these conditionsin practice, this means that

the state becomes responsible directly, or indirectly, for providing alternative accommodation at rents within the reach of the families concerned. (Bowley, p186).

But who are these families? They are those families who actually fall into the poverty trap, those who cannot afford average rents or anything approaching these.

They are:

those who are unemployed or unable to earn a full adult wagefamilies where the main earner is a woman those dependant on state organised systems for providing supplementary income in the last result the poor laws. (Bowley, p214)

In sum, they are those families to which the universality of housing provision should have been addressed throughout the inter-war period. They are those families who escaped the state-aided housing net.

Housing policy and Political change from 1935 to 1939.

This section of the chapter will be concerned with political change, housing policy and territorial relationships during the period from 1935 to 1939. It will briefly examine: -

- The changing political ideology towards a 'middle way' (Marwick 1964) in national government and politics.

- The tensions arising between fascism and communism and the need for political change arising from the threat of extremism.
- The Housing Acts of 1935 and 1938.
- The role and function of the AMC as regional mediators in housing policy.
- The rise of owner-occupation in overall housing provision and the role and function of building societies in this escalation.

Pugh (1983, p293) argued that: ‘on the available evidence one is bound to conclude that any General Election leading up to 1939 would have resulted in a further term for the National Government; the seeds of the 1945 landslide still lay dormant’. Although government was ‘National’ in name it was, in overall complexion, Conservative, such was the political climate in Britain during the latter half of the 1930s. It should be remembered, however, that there were considerable political tensions between those on the left and right in British politics, between fascism and communism. There was also a groundswell towards what Marwick (1964, p285) describes as the:

Middle Way.....It was an ideological structure which took Britain safely through the forties and brought her to rest in the fifties.....The mixed economy.....all party acceptance for the welfare state, all party rejection of the nineteenth century vision of state planning as a horrible evil, were concepts which received their vital nurture in the nineteen thirties.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Other groups sharing this ideological view included P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning) The Next Five Years Group and the Council of Action for Peace and Reconstruction formed by Lloyd

It could perhaps be argued that at this time the issue of local possessive pluralism was not as significant a fiscal problem given the changing nature of central/local relations and the growing local authority landlord base and the rise in home ownership. It is accepted that the situation locally would depend on the attitude of the locality and its housing situation. For example, in the case studies Blackburn's housing situation was not as dire as that of Wigan, nor was its local council as militant or tenacious. These, and other factors affected central/local attitudes and relations, as the case studies will illustrate. Some local authorities had also begun to address the problem of a more 'universal' provision of housing by extending grants from local rates to the poorest families. These grants were provided from amalgamated housing accounts which were now a requirement of all local authorities.⁶⁵ The influences of a mixed economy and the advancement of welfare policies, also loosened the fiscal tensions that constrained the LGB and central/local relations prior to 1919. These changes continued principally with the introduction of the Housing Act of 1935 and, to a lesser extent the Housing Act of 1938.

Housing policy 1935 to 1939.

This section will look at the two major pieces of legislation enacted between 1935 and 1939, the Housing Act of 1935 and the Act of 1938. Whilst the former is the

George. See also Harold Macmillan 1938, pp7-8. Refer also to the list of authors cited earlier in the chapter regarding this political shift.

⁶⁵ The complexities of such provisions, especially in the calculation of subsidies and rebates, are described further in Bowley pp219-221

more significant the latter was a recognition by the MOH of its failure under the former policy of not providing subsidies to the local authorities to assist in achieving the objectives of the act. I shall outline both pieces of legislation and then discuss them in the context of the whole period,

The Hilton Young Act of 1933 stimulated the growth of housing for private ownership but did little to clear the slums or provide housing for those with the greatest need. Nevertheless there were significant numbers of houses constructed, as indicated above, and they did in some small measure allow for some filtering up with the properties abandoned by the middle classes or the higher paid workers eventually becoming available for those less well off. By 1933, with interest rates at 3.5 per cent and houses being constructed for £350 the argument was; would circumstances have allowed rental of such houses under the Wheatley subsidies for 7/6d per week inclusive of rates? As Simon observes: 'At last we were able to build the 7/6d inclusive house'. (Simon, p32) Yet Hilton Young abolished the Wheatley subsidies and this preferred position of the local authorities was not to be.

Because of the lack of enthusiasm for the 1933 slum-clearance proposals local authorities did not build in significant numbers for obvious reasons. In short, they were not allowed to do so. The introduction of a further act in 1935, that proposed to tackle both slum clearance and overcrowding without subsidy to local authorities, would receive the same attitude from the localities and it appeared to most observers as nonsensical. Attempting the twin objectives of slum clearance and decrowding at

the same time had the same effect at local level; they were perceived as being part of the same problem.⁶⁶

The major provisions of the act were designed to tackle the dual problems of slums and overcrowding. The act was heavily criticised, as the problems were in effect one and the same. 'People are obliged to live in overcrowded houses as well as slums for the same reasons'. (Bowley, p141)⁶⁷ The cost of re-housing a family from a slum or from overcrowded conditions was just the same if relocated to the outskirts of a town. To clear built-up sites, acquire the land and pay compensation could often result in higher costs than building anew. This fact was eventually recognised in 1938 by the Ministry and: 'the differences between the subsidies abolished and a uniform scale established by the Housing Act of that year'. (Bowley, p142) By that time, however, Hilton Young had left the Ministry, after the election in November 1935 but the new Minister, Kingsley Wood, with Baldwin as Prime Minister, would not attempt to change the policy at that stage. Kingsley Wood had been involved in the discussion on the creation of a Ministry of Health in 1917, as secretary of the National Health Insurance Commission. (NHIC) and was therefore well versed in housing/health issues. (See chapter two)

The 1938 Act introduced a subsidy for slum clearance and decrowding, urged under the 1935 Act by the AMC, when government realised that its policies for these twin objectives would not succeed without assistance from the state. Overall, policy was

⁶⁶ See Bowley, pp140-141. Also PEP Reports and Next Five Years Group.

⁶⁷ See Bowley pages 140 to 168 for full details.

directed towards that end from 1935 to the beginning of the Second World War. In some respects the 1935 Act was progressive as overcrowding was now legally defined and both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of housing provision were legally enforceable. The definition of overcrowding, however, did little as it simply indicated a level, which allowed only those living in the worst conditions to be classified as overcrowded. For example: 'the separation of sexes standard was so worded as not to apply to any house with more than one (bed) room'. (Bowley, p143)⁶⁸ The act also failed to tackle the problem of an 'inclusive rent' which was vital, if the question of a more universal provision on housing was to be addressed.

Territorial politics, the AMC and the Housing Acts of 1935 and 1938.

The Ministries view of the 1935 Act was expressed in the MOH annual report of 1934/35.

As a whole, the Bill represents the most important legislative contribution to the housing question since the war.....it proposes new and generous subsidies which are so conditional as to be focussed directly and effectively upon essential needs, *it would free the local authorities from all unnecessary restrictions in the handling of their estates and housing finance.....if enacted and properly administered, should prevent the recurrence of the evils*

⁶⁸ See Bowley page 143 for details of how overcrowding was defined and calculated. Also page 144 note 3.

of the slum and overcrowded conditions in the future.⁶⁹ (My emphasis added)

The Minister was still of the belief that housing would be provided by private enterprise and not by local authorities, despite evidence to the contrary.⁷⁰ In making preparations for the act, he would meet with representatives from the localities and a number of issues were raised, which concerned the locality in these discussions, with the Minister and his advisors.⁷¹ Negotiations between the AMC and the MOH continued throughout the period from 1936 to 1938. It was only when the government realised that local authorities were not that interested in promoting the dual attack of slum clearing and overcrowding and that it was, in practice, an attack on the same problem.

During the course of 1937 and 1938, it became obvious to the Ministry that subsidies to local authorities would once again have to be reconsidered if the slum and overcrowding problem was to be firmly undertaken by them. The local authorities were still contacting the AMC and requesting the issue be taken up with the Ministry and that subsidies should be: 're-introduced for general housing

⁶⁹ The Sixteenth Annual Report of the MOH 1934/35, p150, my emphasis added.

⁷⁰ Unlike the preparations for the 1930 Act the Minister made arrangements for a housing conference to be held between the AMC and the Ministry to discuss the differences between the two bodies on the ideology of future housing policy. See AMC minutes throughout 1934 and 1935 which give full details of the discussions and the intensity of feelings on the governments proposals.

⁷¹ The major areas of concern were definitions of overcrowding, rentals payable, availability of subsidies, the dual nature of the act which considered overcrowding and slum clearance, rehousing in out of town rather than central town areas. The final draft of the act illustrates that the Minister virtually ignored the AMC.

purposes'.⁷² There had been a conference of local authorities from the West Midlands who resolved that: 'a satisfactory solution of the housing problem depends on the construction of a further supply of good standard dwellings to let at rents within the means of the lower paid wage earners'.⁷³ The issue of subsidies for general building then would continue and eventually would be the subject of a special meeting with the Minister.⁷⁴

The major issue once again concerned the level of subsidies and the request by the local authorities that these should be of the order of about 3 to 1. The Minister would not budge from this and stated: 'he could not however hold out much hope of any improvement in the main financial proposals. The proposed division of subsidies between the Exchequer and rates in the proportion 2:1'.⁷⁵ On the question of subsidies for general housing needs, the Minister stated: 'there was no hope of a change of Government policy in this direction at the present time'.⁷⁶ The subsidy level of 2 to 1 would be the best that could be achieved. It should be borne in mind, at this time, that the potential for war was once again in the minds of the government and consequently the war effort was a greater priority than housing.

The last act of the Conservative administration in 1938, with Neville Chamberlain now as Prime Minister, was to substantially cut slum clearance subsidies and as a

⁷² See AMC Housing Committee Minutes 12th March 1937, p2.

⁷³ See AMC Housing Committee Minutes 21st July 1937, pp1-2.

⁷⁴ The meeting was held on 15th December 1937 and a number of significant concerns of the Local Authorities were outlined. These concerned the levels of subsidies for flats and cottages, the proportion of the subsidies to be borne by the locality and the need to make the subsidies available for general housing and not just for slum clearance. See AMC minutes 4th February 1938 pages 11 to 13.

⁷⁵ See AMC Housing Committee Minutes 4th February 1938, p13.

result rents rose by a massive 2s 9d on average per week quite beyond the reach of the poor. Slum clearance and overcrowding were placed in limbo, as the drive for rearmament took place and the preparations for war gathered pace. There would be no restrictions placed on private house-building or on private enterprise when building continued at a high level still reaching 236,900 output in 1938. This was not altogether surprising with Chamberlain in office, given his previous record at the Ministry of Health in 1930. (see above) It was however the end of the inter-war housing provision by local authorities.

The 1930s. A Building boom for owner occupation.

Whilst not a significant part of this thesis, it would be remiss not to include a brief overview of housing-provision by private enterprise for owner-occupation during this progressive time. In particular, effects of owner occupation affected the issue of local possessive pluralism a vital concept in explaining central/local relations up to 1919. It is argued, that this phenomenon, coupled with the output of local authority building, clearly had effects on the attitudes of both the centre and the periphery towards territorial relations and the fiscal tensions that existed prior to the First

⁷⁶ Ibid.

World War. The tension remained in part as the issue of 'inclusive rents', and the use of subsidies and grants by local authorities to supplement the poorer families, placed a burden on local taxation. The argument is that this should have been funded from the centre in a universal provision.⁷⁷

The period from 1933 to 1939, contributed a considerable number of houses towards family needs and did, in some small measure, allow a filtering up process in housing by releasing housing for rental from those who had now moved into owner occupation. It did not however address the needs of the poorer members of society for housing provision as they still could not afford the rents on offer. This section will briefly describe the phenomenon of owner occupation after the depression of 1931.

The period, 1933 to 1939, was a most productive time in the provision of housing for owner occupation and would see 1.535 million houses built by private enterprise.⁷⁸ Building was to reach a peak in 1935 with 287,500 houses being constructed in that year and with an average of 263,000 per year from 1935/6 to 1938/9. Even in 1939, with the onset of war, 230,000 houses were constructed. 'It was obvious that private enterprise had proved capable, with and without subsidy, of providing houses which more than made up for the withdrawal of the local authorities'. (Bowley, p169) My own research counter's Bowley's and leads me to conclude that as there was still a considerable need for housing the poor. The housing boom had failed to provide for those with the greatest need who were still

⁷⁷ See Bowley pp216-233 on the issue of social provision where slum clearance and overcrowding were being abated.

⁷⁸ See Bowley, p169.

living in slum conditions and in overcrowded areas and houses. The cost of purchasing a house had fallen from 12s per week in 1925 to between 7s 6d and 9s per week between 1934 and 1939. The facts appear quite simple, in terms of the economic reality of the day.⁷⁹ The building society movement began to grow,⁸⁰ as did the demand for owner occupation fuelled by house construction in significant numbers. The question still remains, that overcoming the problem of the initial deposit on a home, a problem not insurmountable by government subsidy, why was housing not provided in sufficient numbers for all inclusive rental at the price of around 7s 6d per week?

The major part of the answer seems to lie in the problem that had dogged housing provision from before the First World War. It had been the source of central/local authority discontent under the Local Government Board from 1871 and was now the same problem in 1935. It was the question of profit versus rent in one form or another, whether this was from investment, rental income, or remuneration from house construction. The profit motive had not changed and only state provision at this time would be capable of increasing housing provision at levels, in terms of numbers and rents, that could be afforded by the poor. The major building boom after the Second World War would continue this provision, policy was determined and the path dependent nature of subsidies, and construction by local authorities, would continue thereafter.

⁷⁹Deposits were typically 5 per cent of purchase price with repayment periods of 20 to 25 years. Interest rates were 4.5 per cent in 1935. There was a greater security of employment at this time and there was a lower cost of living. Attractive interest rates for savers in building societies were available. Conditions were conducive to a growing owner-occupation in the housing market.

⁸⁰ See Bowley (1945, p279), Table 7a, *The Growth of Building Societies 1924-37*. The total number of borrowers increased from 553,900 in 1918 to 1,392,100 in 1937.

Housing policy and provision from 1925 to 1939, an analysis.

From 1925 to 1939 local authorities produced a total of approximately 942,000 houses. Private enterprise, on the other hand produced approximately 2,716,700 houses, both with and without subsidy, a ratio of almost 3: 1. Local authorities had failed to provide sufficient houses for economic rental by the poorer classes in society. This was due firstly to high building costs and the accusation that as subsidies increased so did building-costs. Secondly, it was due to the reluctance of the local authorities to encompass building programmes where they felt it was inopportune or uneconomic for them to do so depending on the level of subsidies available under the appropriate acts. Thirdly, it was due to economic conditions, both nationally and globally, especially in 1931. Fourthly, it was due to ideological persuasion and the nature and complexion of central government. As Simon pointed out:

Labour believes in subsidies and almost likes them for their own sake; the Tories heartily dislike them and only tolerate them under exceptional conditions.....if the country should be governed by a two party system of Socialist and Anti Socialists, each when it comes into power, reversing the plans of the other. (Simon 1933, pp58-60)

Burnett termed housing policy in general during the inter-war years as being a: 'political football'. (Burnett, p243) However, the significant and path dependent nature of policy was the continuation of state aid to both local authorities and private

enterprise. My research shows that the oscillation in policy was not as significant as Burnett suggests and in these terms housing was not a 'political football' despite the shifts in policy.

Those who had maintained that private enterprise was more than capable of providing the houses needed were justified. (See Table 3.3) Those who suggested that it could go further and provide houses at rents within the reach of ordinary working and poorer classes 'were wrong'. (Bowley, p171) They were wrong because private enterprise did not construct houses at sufficiently low costs. We saw earlier that only 15 per cent of houses constructed and available for rental were in the rateable value group of under £13. The majority of houses in the building boom, and especially from 1934 to 1939, were of rateable values between £14 and £36.

These were more akin to the provisions required by the higher paid workers and middle classes with 59.1 per cent being constructed in this category. Lower rateable value houses, although in large numbers and constituting 40.9 per cent of the total built, were not available for rental. The majority, (40.9 per cent less 15 per cent) 25.9 per cent were built for an immediate profit and for owner-occupation by lower paid workers. Table 3.3 illustrates the number of houses provided from 1919 to 1939 under the various housing acts and it can be clearly seen that housing provided by the private sector outnumbered that by local authorities by almost three to one. Housing was not being provided for those with the greatest need, despite the number of houses erected totalling almost four million.

Table 3.3 Houses constructed from 1919-1939.

Housing Act	Local Authority	Total	Private Enterprise	Unsubsidised
1919 Act	170,100}		43,700}*	
1923 Act	73,300}	{749,900	362,700}*	
1924 Act	504,500}		15,800}*	2,455,600*
Slum Cl. Acts	265,500]			
De Crowd Acts	23,600]	[361.800	8,200*	
General Bldg.	72,700]			
<u>Totals</u>	<u>Local Authority</u> →	<u>1.111.700</u>	<u>Private Enterprise</u> →	<u>2,886,000*</u>

Source. M Bowley 1945, Statistical Analysis pp269-271.

Table 3.3 illustrates that whilst the Wheatley subsidy continued from 1924 to 1927 at their original level, local authorities constructed houses at a high rate given their previous output. As the subsidy reduced in 1927, the building slowed but was still at a significant level. Under the 1930 Act, as we saw earlier, local authorities continued to build under the Wheatley Act, but not under the slum clearance act. Under the 1930 Act, 265,500 houses were built. But by 1935, and throughout the rest of the inter-war period, a total of 5 years, construction by the local authorities was 96,300 as opposed to 1,324,900 by private enterprise, Hilton Young's subsidies had stimulated building in the private sector.

Despite the increase in building and the actual surplus of all types of houses available for families by 1939, there was still a shortage of houses for the poorer classes. They simply could not afford the rents of new houses constructed without subsidy by private enterprise and local authorities were no longer building. This was to change slightly in 1938, when subsidies were again introduced yet, this was too late to affect the provisions prior to the second world war as subsidies were again cut by the Conservatives, later in 1938, with private enterprise still being permitted to build without restriction.

If rents were considered uneconomic for the poor under the Wheatley subsidies, then the rents required under private enterprise provided little opportunity for housing the poor: it was a question of simple economics – unaffordable. Thus, whilst private enterprise constructed sufficient homes in the massive boom of the mid-to-late 1930s, they had still failed in the objective of providing these at affordable rents, the same problem encountered by the local authorities. ‘Private enterprise then, it seemed, failed in just the same way as the local authorities’. (Bowley, p79) Housing construction, and provision for the poor, was no better under private enterprise than it had been under local authorities earlier. By the outbreak of the Second World War: ‘Housing issues were therefore far from resolved’ (Burnett, p243)

There had, however, been a shift in ideological perception that was in some ways influenced by those in favour of Marwick’s (1964) ‘middle way’. This would be reflected in social policy and issues after 1945. There was still a need to remove the poor from unhealthy, overcrowded and insanitary conditions in the slums. Besides the housing issue other matters of social concern would need addressing.

Improved public health required democratic social reform, coupled with improved welfare services and large-scale reconstruction to enhance the physical environment of towns. The Welfare State, the New Towns Programme and the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act were the mechanisms by which control over the social, economic and physical environment was to be exercised. (Garside, 1987, p23)

Housing provision during the period from 1919 to 1939 was the birth of welfarism anew, of the social provision and physical environment that Patricia Garside speaks of. It was the beginning of social provision in a meaningful way, the beginning of the welfare state prior to 1945. Along with other significant welfare reforms, housing would continue to be a momentous part of social provision by the localities after the Second World War. Over 1.6 million houses were constructed by local authorities from 1945 to 1955, reaching a peak output of 229,305 in 1953, and a further 2.6 million houses erected between 1956 and 1975. Gilbert , p148, points out that successive governments in England and Wales: 'spent £208,412,183 to subsidise the building by either local authorities or private enterprise'. The revenue expenditure by local authorities in England and Wales in 1910 was £50,000, by 1920 £1.4 million, by 1930 £35.1 million and by 1940 £47.5 million. (Source: Annual Abstract of Statistics)

Conclusions.

This chapter has examined the significant housing legislation throughout the inter-war years. The introduction of state-aided housing policy in 1919 marked a crucial

shift in politics, territorial relations and welfarism anew. Economic orthodoxy changed and so did the attitudinal aspects of what previously was described as local possessive pluralism. The transformation that occurred both changed and dissipated such attitudes at both levels of government and the institutional change made, as earlier chapters illustrated, saw an evolution and partial erosion of such a dichotomy.

It is argued, that the nature of territorial politics and the operational code of mutual deference and frigidity, within territorial relationships of dual polity, could not properly describe the territorial dimension in inter-war state-aided housing provision. A structured polity existed and inter-war housing, as a political, ideological and social policy, was at the centre of governments' attention and not an issue despatched to the sidelines of politics. Housing was an issue that demanded the attention of the centre, the periphery and regional representatives of the local authorities in the form of the AMC. Policy, in the form of state-subsidies, having been initiated, developed a path dependent course from 1919 and into the late 1970s. Policy significantly changed, only with the introduction of the Housing Act of 1980 under the Thatcher Government, when it could be argued that another fundamental shift occurred in housing policy and provision. From 1919 to 1939, state subsidies were substantial, almost £208.5 million, state-aided housing policy was welfarism anew and it was conducted within a structured polity in terms of territorial relations. Housing policy and provision was, it is argued, high politics and not a policy field characterised by a mutually deferent dual polity.

Chapter 4.
Territorial Politics:
Regional Relationships, Institutionalism and
Inter-War Housing Policy.

Introduction.

This chapter draws together the themes of chapters two and three in terms of the nature of inter-war housing policy, the role and function of regional relationships between central government, as represented by the MOH, and regional representatives of the municipalities, the AMC, and how this provided a more structured polity than that of a dual polity suggested by Bulpitt. Concepts taken from new institutionalism, especially those of historical institutionalism, interest intermediation and institutions of interest representation, are used to outline the arguments. The chapter will focus on a number of key areas concerning:

- How the operational code of mutual deference and frugidity, within a framework of dual polity in territorial politics was more complex, interactive and had a different intensity to that suggested by Bulpitt when applied to the policy field of inter-war state-aided housing provision.
- In contrast to the ideas of dual polity and mutual deference and frugidity the concepts of a structured polity, welfarism anew, the emergence of attitudinal change, and the path dependent nature of policy will be argued.

- The chapter will illustrate how attitudinal change, from mutual deference to local possessive pluralism by central government, and local possessive pluralism itself within local government began to emerge.
- The research from the AMC will give contemporary evidence of how housing policy emerged over time and will reinforce the argument that a changing mindset began to occur. How the balance between the influence of the different strands of thinking and ideas emerged within both central and local government. Furthermore, that motives for, and methods of, intervention changed. Policy was directed towards a social policy that began to recognise individual need.

New Institutionalism, especially the concept of an historical institutional perspective, is particularly useful in explaining how political structures, and the actors involved in housing-provision during the inter-war years, can help explain policy outcomes and the politics of housing. This provides a more enriched understanding of the structuring of territorial politics. The theory is used to explain how territorial relations operated from an earlier time and how, it is argued here, this runs contrary to Bulpitt's dual polity thesis, territorial relations functioning in a more structured form. Territorial relations, it is argued, were more structured and fiscal tension and provision began to move away from the dichotomy that previously existed with a closer liaison between institutions and the actors within those institutions. The evidence shows a more complex and interactive scenario in housing policy within territorial politics. Ideational, motivational and methodological balance and incentive in housing politics and policy changed from 1917 as illustrated in chapter three.

The LGB, Institutionalism and Central/Local relations.

Chapter two showed that the LGB was the forerunner of the MOH. It was an institution which, was structured in a bureaucratic nature and in many ways provided a tutorial and role and support for local authorities. It was an advisory body rather than one which provided, for example, direct financial help. The LGB operated within fiscal tensions and constraints in the political arena and functioned in what was described by Bellamy (1988, p272) as: 'mutual deference to local possessive pluralism'.

What was important as far as the LGB's role and function regarding housing was concerned were the status and influence of the President of the LGB during its life, particularly from 1916 onwards. The question of the role of individuals within the LGB was perhaps equally as important as the function of the institution itself. This can be seen in terms of the development of welfarism as a macro political issue and housing provision as part of that issue, as well as the challenge to early twentieth century political ideology of 'laissez faire'. The lack of action by the LGB on housing, despite the growing demands of society, demonstrates the value of institutions of interest group representation such as the AMC. The work of the labour movement, the Labour government, and the working class groups associated with those intent on political and social change in the early part of the twentieth century, is a good example of this type of institutional representation. It illustrates how the level of political consciousness can be raised, and how matters not formerly considered as political issues, can be introduced, via pressure group action, onto the formal political

agenda and how they can hence become a major point of focus for political and social action. As Peters (1999, p15) suggests, these actions, by such informal groups can play: ‘a significant role in shaping preferences of the participants’. They shape the role of participants, of actors within all the structures involved and from all sides of the political spectrum.

In theory, the LGB should have been able to advise government by providing sufficient feedback from the localities on the demands for policy-needs and for the levels of economic aid required. It should also have been able to ensure that such policy proposals were both practical and viable for the localities. And, to advise generally on the way forward in both housing provision with state-aid as a new form of provision and on the advent of welfarism for the poorer classes in society.¹ But, the LGB failed to do this. As an institution of central government, the LGB failed to provide the support from an institution of central government, despite the constraint imposed by the periphery of an operational code of local possessive pluralism. It is accepted that the LGB played the role of referee and the nature of the centre’s authority over localities was less clear than that which developed after 1919 in the dichotomy over fiscal provision. There were a number of reasons for this situation. First, as we have seen, it was out of touch with the needs of the locality. Second, the ideological perceptions of the major actors involved, and in particular some of its Presidents were not conducive to the changing political demands that arose during the period. Third, there were too many changes in the Presidency for the structure to have any stability or continuation in policy. Fourth, the institution was not structured internally to deal with the changing demands of society and it could not react to the

accelerated demands of a society on the brink of revolution. Fifth, it was constrained by the attitudes of those representatives within Parliament itself, which were from rural/agricultural rather than urban/industrial backgrounds. Finally, the fiscal tensions and political dichotomy were not conducive to social change in challenging the existing economic orthodoxy. In sum, the LGB was heavily constrained in what it was able to do.

The role played by a number of the Presidents of the LGB influenced and shaped both the nature of the institution itself and how that perception ultimately moulded the institution's understanding of what its policy objectives should be. This affected the advice the department gave to central government in the form of ideas on future policy. For example, in housing policy, the conduct of Hayes Fisher was particularly significant. There is the further consideration of the influence of individual actors, outside this structure.² In this respect, I refer to the role played by the Prime Minister in appointing and dismissing the various Presidents during this relatively short period, and, to the political motives behind those actions. The power and authority of Lloyd George between 1917 and 1919 is a good example of this behaviour and predominance.

For example, Lloyd George appointed Dr Christopher Addison who had been Minister for Reconstruction, to the Presidency of the LGB and later to the MOH.

¹ Bellamy argues that this was not necessarily the role or function of the LGB, see Chapter Two.

² Paul Wilding provides detailed and conclusive evidence of the debate within Cabinet on the housing issue and the eventual subsidies that would be granted. The debate concerns the duration, form, scale of subsidy rather than the principle of the introduction of subsidies themselves. Ideas, and individual and collective 'minds' towards a different housing policy, were beginning to emerge. See also Merrett p33.

Addison saw state-aided housing policy, not only as a necessity of life but also as a political requisite in avoiding possible revolution in Britain. (See Addison, 1934; Honigsbaum, 1970; Swenarton 1981; Wilding, 1970) For Addison, housing and welfare were the price that would have to be paid for the exigencies of war. It was part of the unwritten social contract that was the 'Homes fit for Heroes' campaign. Addison was appointed to transform the LGB into the MOH and to formulate the policy on housing that his predecessor Hayes Fisher had failed to do. Addison's promotion of a Ministry was to bear fruit after many years of campaigning. Despite his short time in charge at the Ministry, and because of the impending economic crisis of 1921, his views were no longer politically or economically practical at that time. He was removed from office having achieved a significant change. What Merrett (1979, p31) describes as a 'watershed in the history of British municipal housing', in politics, territorial relations, welfarism and the prevailing economic orthodoxy. (See Addison, 1924; Addison, 1934; Burnett, 1986; Honigsbaum, 1970; Johnson, 1968; Malpas and Murie, 1982; Melling, 1980; Merrett, 1979; Newsholme, 1925; Richardson and Aldcroft, 1968; Swenarton, 1981)

Nevertheless, his influence on the LGB and MOH, and his influence upon other significant participants in the housing debate, i.e. Lloyd George and Lord Rhondda, played a significant role in the development of both the MOH and in state-aided housing policy. What Addison was able to do was transform the physical entity that was the LGB, transform its ideology and personnel, and formulate legislation acceptable to government, given the emergencies of war and the social conditions that prevailed. Welfarism, and state-aided housing provision as of right were therefore

placed firmly on the political agenda by a significant personality within this newly developed institution. A good example of this is the way he influenced the change in policy from what was formerly the Treasury-LGB scheme of subsidies which were unacceptable to the localities to persuading the Treasury and the rest of Whitehall of its political necessity. This was a significant change in economic policy. (Addison, 1934; Swenarton, 1981)

The proposals of subsidies, the ideational change, and the structural change required, in the transition from the LGB to the new MOH, both introduced by Addison, are an excellent example of the significant influence an individual actor can have on policy. The Ministry of Health remained a significant institution throughout the inter-war years and housing subsidies continued and subsequently policy developed in a path dependent manner. It is true that policy changed during the period regarding the nature and level of subsidies and who would be responsible for construction, whether this was the local authority or private enterprise. What would not change was the fact that state-subsidised housing was now firmly on the political agenda and would remain so for the rest of the inter-war period. During the existence of the LGB, and for the purpose of this analysis, to the end of that body's duration, the institutional effects would not be as significant as the influence of the various individuals upon the structure.

The AMC, Institutionalism, Housing Policy 1919 to 1939, and Central/Regional Relations.

Chapter three illustrated the extent and involvement of the AMC in policy formulation throughout the inter-war years and the role it performed as an intermediary for local authorities with central government. The next section of this chapter examines the structured nature of the AMC and why/how it can be considered as an institution of interest representation. In order to appreciate the institutional position of the AMC within the political framework and its role and function, it is useful to outline briefly the history of the AMC from its formation on the 27th February 1873. (Gardiner; 1973)

A statutory provision already existed under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 for such organisations to be formed. It took almost forty years for the municipalities to be galvanised into action in forming an association to represent them at the very highest level of government. It was an issue of social reform and the question of unhealthy and insanitary conditions that were to be the catalysts for action by the locality.

Unreasonable and unjust, in violation of the spirit as well as the letter of the Municipal Corporations Reform Act.....to discourage all attempts to provide water for the inhabitants or to carry out sanitary and other improvements, which (were at that) time imperatively required. (Gardiner, p4)

This was the description given to the suggested provisions under the Borough Funds Act of 1872 and had been the result of a legal case (Queen v Sheffield Corporation). This Act limited the locality's obligations to provide a constant supply of water in their districts, despite the contrary wishes of the Sheffield Corporation.³

The AMC consisted of two representatives from each of the 35 county boroughs and 35 non-county boroughs in England and Wales, plus one from Ireland and one from the City of London. The wide-ranging powers it had under its rules allowed it: 'to watch over and protect the interests, and rights, and privileges of municipal corporations'. (Gardiner, p3) The AMC could, and did, represent those localities on all major issues affecting them. This representation grew in nature and intensity as the association gathered momentum and eventually began to specialise in various policy fields via the use of sub-committee. Throughout its history, the AMC used a variety of methods to secure promotion of the policies of local government and, in this respect, was influential in Parliament.⁴ Political manoeuvring by the AMC was a tactic used to ensure its voice, and that of the localities, would be heard.

³ This arose from a disaster in 1864 when a reservoir wall burst and a large number of residents died in the subsequent flooding. It was considered necessary by local authorities that they needed to organise themselves formally to prevent action by the Crown in this unprecedented way restraining their ability to act in the best interests of their citizens.

These were ways the AMC would have two opportunities to influence policy and were a perfectly legitimate action to take. The relationship with central government was, overall, a consensual one but the mediatory function of the association allowed for the promotion of policy issues by the localities directly with central government. On the question of housing, Gardiner adds that: ‘during the past century there has been a growing body of legislation on housing with housing subsidies forming a recurrent topic of debate with Central Government’. (Gardiner, p11) Again, this is evidenced in the minutes, where the AMC played a central role in negotiations on issues concerning the localities and, in this instance housing provision, as indicated above.

The AMC was a formal forum for debate and action on behalf of the municipal authorities. It had the power and authority to act on various issues concerning the locality one of which was housing policy. The development of the significance of housing as a political issue from 1919 onwards, and the fact that it was a priority on the political agenda at this time, raised the profile of housing issues within the AMC. Whilst the AMC was the overall body responsible for policies and representations made by the localities, in practice it was the housing sub-committee that conducted negotiations on behalf of the localities from 1929. Prior to this, the law committee and the general council of the association were involved in negotiations and as mediators.

⁴ For example it used M.Ps. to introduce Private Members Bills and to propose amendments to legislation in Parliament. This was an extra channel of parliamentary representation for the localities.

The AMC also played a significant role in the co-ordination of housing policy with the other local authority bodies concerned, for example with the UDCA, RDCA, CCA and representatives of the city of London. There is ample evidence of this role and function throughout the inter-war period and the impetus this had on shaping policy in discussions with the individual Ministers and senior civil servants within the MOH.⁵ The argument is that this role and function provided the forum for a more structured approach in territorial politics and housing policy⁶.

⁵ There is extensive detail of this role and function in the various minutes from 1919 to 1938. For example 1919 Housing Act. AMC minutes 27th March 1919, pp.77-80, Conference on Housing also pp. 97-101.

1923 Housing Act. 15th March 1923 pp. 97-98, Appendix D. 12th April 1923 p21.

1924 Housing Act. 15th April 1924 pp. 1-2. 25th April 1924 pp. 1-3, Joint Meeting with UDCA, RDCA, LCC and CCA dated 8th May 1924 pp. 1-4, especially Appendix C, also 9th July 1924 p110, Conference of Local Authorities.

1930 Housing Act. Housing Conference 28th February to 1st March 1929. Pp. 201-202. Deputation from MOH and AMC, p179. See also AMC minutes 1929, pp. 15-18 for evidence of changing mindset of Minister and senior civil servants. See also Appendix to Minutes 'Deputation to Ministry of Health', 10th July 1929 pp. 178-80.

1933 Housing Act. 2nd February 1933 pp. 99-102. Also Appendix B to minutes p15, and on the attitude of the Minister on pp.160-18, pp. 41-48, and p104.

Evidence also of the MOH acceptance of further subsidies under the 1938 Act contained extensively throughout the AMC minutes of 1937 and 1938.

⁶ There is also evidence of the work of the AMC and its mediatory role in HLG 29/13 with various dates and especially during the period where Hilton Young, the least approachable Minister of Health, on housing policy but even he accepted the financial necessity required by the localities.

See for example HLG 29/13. Sir Hilton Young Cabinet Memorandum, 'Housing Policy' January 1934. Also see HLG 29/213 Conference Hilton Young and Miles Mitchell of the AMC. 'Conference with Representatives of Local Authorities'. February 1934, also Notes of Conference. Minister and Representatives of the Association of Municipal Corporations'. 13th April 1934. HLG 29/13 Notes on Departmental Conference, 12th March 1934.

Internally, the AMC would use its expertise from local government to assist in formulating policy and would use the forum for debating issues raised by the Ministry. This would be done in both an advisory and promotional role taking information and advice from the local authorities concerned. Its role in mediation was important, as was its guidance for the benefit of members. There is little evidence that the organisation acted on party political lines and its main objectives were to ensure that the local authorities obtained the best deal from whatever government was in power at the time, irrespective of its political complexion. The AMC was however mainly conservative in nature as we have seen.

A good example of its overall political neutrality was the attempts it made during the inter-war period to co-operate with governments of whatever political complexion in securing the most advantageous subsidies for housing provision. This is not surprising given that the negotiations on housing policy were the result of the suggestions from the localities from which it was composed and who shared a whole range of views on state-aid. It would therefore not be surprising if the relationship was more consensual with, for example, John Wheatley, who gave the localities what they wanted. This was also true to a degree with Neville Chamberlain, who acceded to their wishes at the expense of political popularity within his own party. On the other hand, the relationships with Sir Hilton Young during the 1930s were not as productive because of his attitude towards the role of local authorities in housing provision.⁷ Nevertheless the AMC still attempted to influence policy to the best advantage of its members.

⁷ There is ample evidence in the previous chapters illustrating the attitude of Sir Hilton Young towards the views of the localities on housing and his almost antagonistic attitude towards the AMC. The minutes of the AMC during the period 1933 to 1935 illustrate this fully.

In terms of territorial politics and central/regional relationships on housing policy, the role and function of the AMC was critical throughout the whole inter-war period. It was the major organisation representing the municipalities and the nearest forum they had to influence the housing issues at central government level. It was the body that would be directly involved in the broader policy-making debate. It was involved in face to face negotiations between the Minister and his civil servants. Only once did central government fail to negotiate the details of any proposed housing policy prior to finalisation and actual legislation. It could be argued that the association was part of a tripartite relationship in inter-war housing politics. The AMC had a unique role in relations as both a mediator for national policy and as a pressure group directly composed of local authority representatives. It provided, in effect, two avenues for pressure group-politics. The AMC could negotiate both the macro and micro political needs of the localities whilst the latter still had the options of negotiating directly with the Ministry on specific issues after legislation had been enacted.

The AMC in an institutional context.

The AMC played an important part in policy strategy and in conveying to central government the wishes of local authorities in the development and implementation of housing policy in their areas. The AMC, it appears, was the co-ordinating body for meetings and conferences with the Ministry, which included the UDCA, RDCA, LCC, and CCA. (See above) The association played an intermediate role in territorial politics and in the relationships which, are normally perceived as being the direct connection and interaction between central and peripheral government. It was a role

of: interest intermediation which, according to Peters: (1999, p116) ‘implied a formal and persistent interaction of groups and government’. This was precisely the role played by the AMC.

The argument here is that housing policy was so important and complex, and of such concern to central government, that directly dealing with individual local authorities on policy issues would have been both too time-consuming and unproductive. To obtain a consensual view of what was needed on the one hand and, as an appropriate method of communicating decision making at the highest level to the localities on the other, would have been impractical and ineffectual using the normal political process in central/local contact. Without some form of mediation and representation to aid the process of deliberation and decision-making, the task of implementing housing policy and obtaining the localities views might well have been impossible.

The AMC fulfilled this intermediary role and function and can be considered as an institution of interest intermediation. Furthermore, this process of intermediation overcame what Bulpitt describes as a situation of mutual deference and frigidity, whereby there was little communication between the centre and the periphery. In this respect, the AMC played a central role in the process of communication on housing policy during the inter-war years and articulated the feelings and wishes of local government.

The extra-constitutional nature of the AMC, and by this it is meant the structural relationships that exist within a policy community, (See Marsh and Rhodes, 1992)

does not prevent it from being conceptualised as an institution. Its particular role in political life and housing policy emphasises that: ‘extra-constitutional structures that link states and society are indeed institutions’. (Peters, p113 citing Jordan (1990) pp477-8)) The AMC played an important function as a territorial go-between and points to the necessity of considering such structures in specific policy-sectors within central/local relations.

What is useful for this examination is the fact that such relationships: ‘exist within individual policy-sectors rather than as relationships that span the range of Government activities’. (Peters, p113) The contention here is that housing policy during the inter-war years was such an individual policy sector, that the role of the AMC in policy formulation was a crucial one as far as territorial relations were concerned. The AMC was a good example of what Peters describes as: ‘carriers and promoters of ideological values’. (Peters, p114) The ideological value, in this instance, were the promotion of the concept that all housing provision by the locality should, in some way, be aided by subsidies from the state. This was a position of conflict with the centre depending on the complexion of the government in office and of course the perspective of the individual Minister. This was illustrated in chapters two and three, which discussed the relationships between the AMC and the MOH.

As the AMC was not an elected body, and because it was composed of local authority representatives, it could not be considered as a ‘polity’ in the true sense of

the accepted wisdom.⁸ It was composed of representatives from the whole of the political spectrum of municipalities representing the largest towns and cities and not a directly elected body in British politics. This in some ways assisted its liaison with the centre and was to some extent a stabilising factor and one which given the stable relationship between the groups (AMC) and government (MOH) could be seen to be rational for both sets of actors. It created mutual constraints on the possible behaviour of the participants in the interaction so that defections from agreements are less likely. This was most evident in the relationship with the first Labour Administration during the inter-war period when there was greater consensus and stability. This was because the Administration was promoting proposals made by the AMC in conjunction with the Minister concerned. This was also evident in relationship with some of the national governments where policy was still made within the broad context of the overall political objectives of the localities negotiated by the AMC. The nature of this regional relationship is a good example of structural relationships between government and interest organisations, and also an example of a formal and persistent interaction of groups and government.

Territorial relationships were thus conducted at a different level than might otherwise be considered as the 'norm' as far as housing policy was concerned. The nature of the relationship involved not only the centre/periphery perspective but also the intermediate function, at a higher level than the locality, an aggregate level between the two polities. It was a centre/regional relationship, an intermediary level in politics and territorial relations.

⁸ In terms of Bulpitts' analysis the accepted 'dual polity' was central and local government rather than one of regional representation composed from local representation.

The hypothesis is that there is a significant and influential other structure, the AMC, involved in the issue of inter-war housing policy and politics. It is also contended here that the level of relationships between this local government pressure group, this 'extra-constitutional structure' and advisor to the localities, and central government constitutes an 'institution of interest representation'. This institution plays an important role in the understanding of housing policy during the inter-war years and further that the organisation had an important relationship in the process of decision making and in central/local governmental relations in this specific policy-field.

Territorial relationships: Institutionalism and Tripartite Relations.

The MOH was the most important institution in housing policy, one which, was created in 1919 from an amalgamation of bodies concerned with health care, the NHIC, and from the LGB. It was the most significant institution in the politics of inter-war housing and one from which all housing policy emanated.

State-aided housing became a significant policy issue only after 1919, and, therefore, in terms of central/local relations there existed, a unique set of circumstances not previously encountered in this specific policy-field. The institutions involved were in some respects new, and certainly unfamiliar with the promotion, discussion and implementation of a new area of policy not previously undertaken by central government.

The actors within these structures, too, had roles and functions that presented new challenges to previously accepted and conducted territorial relationships. So, whilst Bulpitt suggests the old order changed in 1926 (Bulpitt, p105), there existed a new set of circumstances in territorial politics in 1919. An intermediary institution, the AMC, which consisted of representatives from the localities, also entered the political arena of housing politics in a meaningful and substantial way. It played a leading role in discussions with and on behalf of the localities with central government and had influential actors within its structure.

The question of ideology and the requirements of what was needed by local authorities significantly differed. This depended on the perception of the Ministry, of the personality and strength of leadership of the Minister and the influence of his civil servants on policy direction. One of the criticisms of the Ministry was that they had never actually been into the field, into slum or overcrowded housing areas, and consequently had little perception of the problem it was supposed to be confronting.

Those representatives of the localities within the AMC were also from different political persuasions although mainly conservative in attitude. They nevertheless represented the spectrum of local authority politics, within and beyond the municipalities, and the changing nature of local political parties and institutions during the major periods of national and local political change, for example in 1924 and 1929. What the AMC did was to galvanise the views of the localities into coherent policy objectives. They negotiated with central government institutions on

behalf of the periphery in a different way than the localities themselves would do on issues of more local concern within the general policy framework.⁹

What is clear is that institutional structures, and actors, within the tripartite relationship played a significant role in both shaping policy at the centre and implementing policy objectives in the periphery. This is true of the MOH and its predecessor the LGB, the AMC and local authorities. It is therefore important to understand the relationship between these bodies in general and in the central/local, central/regional and regional/local context. Territorial relationships in housing policy were not just at the level of court and county, nor could it adequately be described as operating within a code of mutual deference and frigidity.

This brings into question the role of what might be termed an inter-institutional relationship, where, it is suggested, regional/local institutions co-operate nationally, in a political context, to obtain a policy objective agreed by the majority, if not all of the members. The central/local dimension, however, functions at different level and the nature of relationship and the two policy objectives, at the micro-level, are not always the same. The regional/ local institutions would therefore appear to have this inter-institutional relationship which is conveyed in their discussions with the central organisation.

⁹ The AMC would negotiate both macro and micro policy issues with the MOH, The macro policy having been determined the minutiae would be debated locally although the case studies do give examples of where macro policy issues were challenged by the localities especially in Wigan.

Peters (1999, p116) describes a 'good' institution as: 'one that is effective in doing what it is supposed to do'. The MOH, the AMC and local authorities can therefore be accepted as effective institutions in this respect and all played an important role and function in housing policy. But there are other groups to consider, especially in the earlier formulation of policy and the demands for welfarism, of which housing could be seen as the forerunner to a full-blown welfarist policy. In this respect: 'many aspects of politics usually conceptualized as being less formal are highly institutionalized...e.g. single political parties or interest groups'. (Peters, p112) Thus local and national pressure groups, focused on the interests of the working class and also on what they considered the way forward in politics and policy. (See Macmillan 1934 and 1938; Marwick 1964 and 1965; PEP Reports; Next Five Years Group) These pressure groups also affected policy and political agendas to varying degrees: from a threat of revolution in 1918/19 when housing ideas, and later housing policy, appeared with a major impact on the political agenda. All of these institutional structures and agents played an important role in the politics of housing policy and in territorial relationships in this extended form during the inter-war years.

Conclusions. The Role and Function of the AMC within a Structured Polity.

Bulpitt suggested that the relationships between the centre and periphery after 1926 were those of a 'dual polity' in which the centre was interested only in matters of high politics and further, that the periphery was almost left alone: a mutual deference and frigidity. Whilst Bulpitt may put the case clearly in this respect, it would seem, however, that the regional relationships in politics, especially in housing policy, might

very well exhibit a different relationship when analysed from the context of an institution of interest representation. As Griffiths suggests: 'It is difficult to exaggerate their importance in influencing legislation, government policies and administration and in acting as co-ordinators and channels of local government opinion'. (Griffiths 1966, p26) This is precisely the role and function performed by an institution such as the AMC. It was an intermediary in the politics and policies of housing, a significant element in a tripartite relationship, (See Figure 1.1) which ensured that housing would be a major concern of the state and high on its political agenda. The policies and politics of state-aided housing provision, and welfarism anew, was high politics.

This is exemplified by the fact that expenditure on social services in the United Kingdom had risen from 4.7% in 1918 to 37.6% in 1938. Furthermore, spending per head of population increased from 2.4% in 1918 to 12.5% in 1938, and, the total expenditure rose from £114.3 million in 1918 to £596.3 million in 1938 on social provision.¹⁰ Spending on housing between 1919 and 1939 totalled almost £208.5 million (see Gilbert 1970, p148). The capital expenditure on housing by local authorities had risen from £0.4 million in 1910 to £42.8 Million in 1930. (Source: Abstract of Statistics) This level of social provision could only be achieved where the official mind of the centre had changed from the economic orthodoxy that prevailed in pre First World War years. It is indicative too of the attitude of local authorities towards housing provision and the necessity to provide subsidies from the ratepayers also.

¹⁰ See Peacock and Wiseman, 1961, pp. 184-191 for further statistical evidence.

As far as the AMC was concerned the evidence suggests that this representative of the major municipalities was clearly active in housing policy and as a mediator between other representatives of local authority associations, the successive Ministers and the MOH. It also illustrates how policy emerged over time and that ideational and motivational change occurred. Research evidences that the motives for, and methods of intervention changed. Policy was directed towards a social policy that began to recognise individual needs, and, belatedly towards a sanitary policy that commenced to cater for the poorest members in society. What Thane, p282, describes as: 'material benefits for all its members', what Bowley, pp186-7 argues was a sanitary policy that was: 'the application of this principle in housing'.

The changing relationships between the centre and the periphery, aided by the AMC in its intermediary role within the tripartite relationship which it is argued existed, began to change the structure of territorial relations in such a way that 'local possessive pluralism' commenced a transformation. The centres response, previously displaying high deference to local possessive pluralism, by necessity, shifted and a closer co-operation was forged. Only once during the inter-war period was the AMC excluded from the discussion on housing policy. The role and function of this institution was clearly both significant and influential in what, it is argued, was a structured polity, with a path dependent nature, in housing policy and politics during the inter-war years. The case studies, of Preston, Blackburn and Wigan, in the following chapters clearly illustrate these arguments.

Chapter 5.

'Proud Preston'.

Inter-War Housing, Political Incorporation

And Territorial Politics.

Introduction.

This chapter analyses inter-war housing in Preston and the nature and effects of both national and local politics and policies in housing provision for the working-classes. The discussion centres on: the various inter-war housing acts; how ideas and motives for change on housing policy emerged: how these acts were interpreted and implemented in Preston; and how they affected the provision of houses for working-class people and the poor in the town. It will also analyse the nature, complexion and interactions in local politics and the relationships that existed between the centre and periphery. Finally, it illustrates how this policy field was central to government involvement and the focus of political attention during the inter-war years in what was a structured polity. Central government control over the localities shifted from non-intervention in housing policy prior to 1919, to one of changing incentives, by way of state-aid that began to recognise individual need. The local borough were of course grateful for any assistance that would provide housing for the working-classes and thus the mindset of the localities changed also. This is evidenced here in a number of ways, mainly Preston's desire to provide aid from the rates for housing subsidies, its rental policy and its willingness to co-operate with central government on housing issues throughout the whole inter-war period.

It will be argued that Preston had a local political style that was different to the other case studies in as much as it was driven by assertive civic pride, which was responsible for political incorporation in Preston. By assertive civic pride it is meant that the overriding political consideration was a strong civic pride that imbued party politics and further, that local politics were influenced by extra-political social relations rather than strict political dogma. Local politicians were assimilated into a non-combative political culture that put 'Proud Preston' first.

The local council was nevertheless part of the structured polity that existed in territorial politics and is an interesting example of how varied local structures operate in the central/local political arena. Preston provides a contrasting approach to local politics when compared to either Blackburn or Wigan.

The chapter looks at the local political arrangements and how these fitted into the overall assertion that a structured polity existed in territorial politics rather than a dual polity and how regional representation, in the form of the AMC, was made by the localities within these structural arrangements. It will also investigate how the implementation of national housing policy at local level became path dependent, with increasing demands for housing from the localities, and how those demands contributed towards welfare provision in the form of welfarism anew. The attitude of the local authority towards central policy issues and policy direction will be examined, especially fiscal provision for housing, and how that dimension of political interaction affected attitudinal behaviour towards local possessive pluralism by the periphery, and high deference to local possessive pluralism, by the centre.

Historical institutionalism, provides the framework for analysis in order to explain the nature and complexity of territorial politics and central/local relations. This chapter will also focus on national and local institutions, as outlined above, the actors within those structures as well as those local political pressure groups concerned with housing. These local groups or structures are assessed as institutions of interest representation, and carriers and promoters of ideological values, especially the Preston Trades and Labour Council (PTLC).

The chapter focuses on:

- A brief survey of pre World War-One development in Preston, its social, demographic, industrial and geographic evolution.
- The development of politics throughout the inter-war years.
- The introduction of the various housing acts during the period.
- Preston Trades and Labour Council, politics and housing.
- The nature of central/regional/local relations and housing policy.

Early social and industrial conditions in Preston.

‘Proud Preston’ is what the town’s motto says and this very clearly represented the feelings and traditions of the borough. Over the centuries, Preston developed into an important town in Lancashire. According to the Journal of Contemporary History (Vol 15 p217, taken from Rawlinson, 1988), it was: ‘one of the earliest and greatest centres of the Lancashire cotton industry, and owing to its commanding position in the centre of the country, became a chief centre of industrial organisation’. By the early 19th century it had three main railway stations, it was served by the Lancashire

canal, and had a main arterial road. The main difference between Preston and the other two towns in the analysis was that Preston had a port from 1806 and which was owned municipally from 1913.

At the turn of the early 20th century, Preston was a textile town and only began to move from this traditional employment base during the 1930s when it developed engineering and service sector occupations. By the 1950s, employment in textiles was only about one quarter of that in 1921. (See Table 5.1) For example as can be seen in Table 5.1, the numbers employed in textiles in 1921 totalled 50.47 per cent of the occupied population, by 1931 this was 27.80 per cent, and by 1951 13.44 per cent.

Table 5. 1. Preston's Employment base 1921 to 1951.

Employment Base	1921	1931	1951
Occupied Population	64,594	66,115	62,023
Textile Industry	32,607	18,383	8,336
Engineering	5,420	4,386	8,369
Transport	4,772	5,195	5,051
Commerce and Finance	4,993	6,676	5,653
Clerks	2,024	3,085	5,183
Personal Services	3,885	4,993	5,329

Source. Preston Medical Officer of Health Annual Report. 1951.

The majority of workers during the period of this study were, however, in the declining textile industry and it is of little surprise that the majority of the houses of the workforce were situated among the major cotton factories in densely populated terraced houses.

Table 5.2. The Percentage of the population with more than two persons per room in Lancashire. Extract from the 1911 census.

Towns.	Percentage of overcrowding.
St Helens.	17.0
Wigan.	12.9*
Warrington.	10.6
Liverpool.	10.1
Salford	10.0
Burnley.	9.5
Bootle.	9.2
Manchester.	7.2
Preston.	5.6*
Blackburn.	4.4*
Blackpool.	4.2
Accrington.	3.8

* These are the towns under analysis. Source 1911 Census.

Housing conditions in the town, according to the 1911 census were reflected in the percentage of the population with more than two persons per room. Table 5.2 gives an indication of the conditions in Lancashire. Preston, when compared to Wigan and Blackburn, fared well, being slightly worse off than Blackburn but considerably better than Wigan.

By the outbreak of War in 1914 Preston had an unknown number of unfit houses. By the end of the War, housing conditions in the town were described as intolerable and: '50 per cent of the workers dwellings were not as good as stables for racehorses'.¹ Building was at a standstill and only one house was constructed privately in 1919 according to PMOH. (See Table 5.2) The death rate in the town was 13.55 per 1000 of the population and the infant mortality rate was 105 deaths per 1000 infants with an estimated population of 117,277.² Death rates remained fairly constant during the inter-war period whilst infant mortality rates significantly improved, reducing to 71 deaths per 1000 infants in 1938.³

By 1920, the PMOH was reporting that 6,111 houses were not 'in all respects fit for human habitation'⁴ although this had dropped from its peak in the 1921 census of 6,723 to 980 in 1938. By the end of the First World War, Preston, like the majority of towns and cities, had an uphill task in providing sufficient houses for its working-classes.

¹ Preston Guardian 4th October 1919.

² PMOH Annual Report 1919.

³ PMOH Annual Report 1938.

⁴ PMOH Annual Report 1920.

National, Local and Party Politics in Preston.

This section will be concerned with the nature of politics in Preston and will examine both national and local representation in general and municipal elections. It will also examine the party political situation in the town and the influence of a major local pressure group, the Preston Trades and Labour Council. (PTLC). The PTLC retained its links with the local Labour Party in the town and given its prestige it is surprising that it did not have the power to radically alter the political acquiescence and conservatism which dominated Preston's politics throughout the inter-war years. When the Labour Party in Preston had the opportunity to take overall control of the council in 1929, by seeking elections for the aldermanic seats on the council, it failed to do so.

National Politics during the Inter-War years.

Firstly, I will examine the nature of national politics in Preston and the General Election results in setting the scene, complexion, character and substance of politics in the town. Preston was one of the last 'two member constituencies' in the United Kingdom only becoming a 'single member constituency' in 1945. Throughout the inter-war period, Preston had two Members of Parliament. Prior to 1906 it had always been a Conservative town. In 1906, one Liberal and one Conservative Member of Parliament had been returned.

The Labour Party and the Liberals had an electoral pact in General Elections from 1918 to 1935. The reason for this was that the United Textile Factory Workers

Union, who sponsored Tom Shaw the Labour candidate and M.P. from 1918 to 1931, would not agree to a second candidature. The Liberals had ceased to be a real force in national politics, but in Preston, they still had one candidate in these elections because of the electoral pact. From 1918 to 1931, both the Liberal and Labour Parties had one candidate each whilst the Conservatives always had two.

Table 5.3 shows the General Election results between 1918 and 1939. It can be seen that the nature of elections in Preston did not fully reflect national trends. There are two distinct phases from 1918 to 1929 and from 1931 to 1936. Preston's Labour Party had a resounding success in the 1918 election. In what had previously been a two-member Conservative-held constituency, Labour now had an M.P with Tom Shaw being elected and the Liberal candidate only 485 votes from taking the second Conservative seat. The Preston Guardian reported that

The election has had many features that will repay consideration. In some constituencies decisions have been taken which seem to go dead against the tide running so strongly elsewhere and are an indication of influences that are likely to manifest themselves more plainly in the future. Preston provides a significant example, for here in a straight fight between two Unionist Coalition candidates and a Liberal and Labour, Labour has achieved a striking victory on which it is to be congratulated.⁵

This marked a significant national victory and Tom Shaw became one of only 57 Labour M.Ps. elected to the House of Commons.

⁵ Preston Guardian 4th October 1918.

There was a considerable shift in political allegiance in 1918 which remained in force until 1931. The Conservatives regained the seats in the 1931 elections in line with national trends and after the economic collapse and resignation of the Labour Cabinet. Despite national success in the General Elections and the unprecedented success in 1918, Preston could not however be described, unlike other towns, such as, Wigan, as being a Labour town. In fact, as will be shown, local political acquiescence was the key factor of Preston politics.

Table 5.3 General Election Results in Preston 1918 to 1936.

Year.	Result.	Vote.	Comment.
1918.	Tom Shaw. Labour	19123	
	Col. Stanley. Conservative.	18970	
1922	Tom Shaw. Labour	26259	
	J Hodge. Liberal	24798	
1924	Tom Shaw. Labour	27009	
	Mr Kennedy. Conservative	25887	
1929	Tom Shaw. Labour	37705	
	W H Jowitt. Liberal	31277	Resigned to join Labour.
1929	W H Jowitt. Labour	35608	Bye election result.
1931	W Kirkpatrick. Conservative	46276	
	A Moering. Conservative	45843	
	Tom Shaw. Labour	25310	Not elected.
1935	A Moering. Conservative	37219	
	W Kirkpatrick. Conservative	36797	Resigned in 1936.
1936	Mr Cobb. Conservative	32575	Bye election result

Source. Preston Guardian, 1918 to 1936.

Local Politics during the Inter-War Years.

One author describes the Labour group members in Preston as being ‘indistinguishable from Conservatives and Independents in their views and actions.....civic pride being more important than party politics’. (Rawlinson 1988, p186) This observation clearly reflects the nature and complexion of party politics in the town and the attitude displayed by the Labour group members, who, it could be said, were socialised into local politics and were politically acquiescent.

Preston’s electoral system was composed of twelve local wards each electing three councillors, one third of the council being elected each year, a total of 36 councillors. It also elected 12 aldermen to the council chamber, making a total of 48 representatives. Traditionally the aldermen of the borough were the most senior local politicians and were elected unopposed. This was a significant number and could, and did, hold the balance of power on the council. It was a source of discontent within the Labour movement in Preston when, in 1929, the Labour Party refused to oppose the senior aldermanic councillors for election when they would, for the first time, have control of the council in Preston.

Immediately after the First World War, there was an upsurge in support for Labour. In the November 1919 election they won six out of 10 contested seats. It was a short-lived victory as support for Labour, despite its popularity at General Elections winning both seats in 1922, declined in the council chamber. Table 5.4 shows the number of seats won each year by Labour during the inter-war period.

Table 5.4. Municipal Election Results in Preston 1919 to 1938.

Year	Seats Won By Labour	Seats Contested	Seats Held No Election	Total Labour Council Seats
1919	6	10	0	8
1920	0	3	6	8
1921	1	2	3	9
1922	1	3	3	11
1923	4	8	1	10
1924	1	6	0	10
1925	6	9	0	9
1926	5	7	2	16
1927	2	6	1	18
1928	7	9	0	20
1929	4	8	3	22
1930	3	6	1	20
1931	1	8	0	14
1932	4	7	1	15
1933	3	4	3	16
1934	6	9	1	20
1935	4	8	1	18
1936	5	11	0	17
1937	2	7	1	14
1938	3	10	1	15

*Source. Preston Trades and Labour Council Minutes 1919 to 1938.

Labour support continued to decline, despite the 'election' of the first Labour Government in 1924 and by 1925 Labour was almost at an all-time low of 9 seats. From 1926, however, the situation began to change and by 1929 Labour had its highest total of seats of elected councillors. They had a majority of councillors in the town from 1928 to 1930 but failed to take the initiative in acquiring control of the council and hence political power in the town. The conservative nature of politics in Preston was self-evident and appeared to be of complete assimilation: 'the views of the Trades Council and Labour leaders.....was an attitude of moderation verging on Liberalism.....(it) was a consequence of Labour's civic assimilation'. (Rawlinson, p186) It is argued that this process: 'acted as a brake on concerted action, and inhibited attempts to get to grips with the problems'. (Rawlinson, p187) An example of this process of socialisation of Labour politicians was the appointment, when elected, of Councillor W E Morris, the town's Labour Party agent, as chairman of the important and influential housing committee by a Conservative-controlled council. It was Conservative control only exercised by the failure of Labour to oppose aldermen in elections. It was almost as if a trade-off had taken place behind closed doors for the sake of political acquiescence.

Nationally, it was suggested, the Conservatives had little to fear from the short-lived Labour government in 1924. The same could be said locally in Preston. Given the consensuality of local politics the appointment of a staunch Labour Party member to the chairmanship on an important committee was perhaps just an indication of the complexion of politics in Preston.⁶ Locally the Conservatives had little to fear from

⁶ Councillor W E Morris, the local Labour Party agent, was elected chairman. This was a shrewd nature of politics in Preston.

someone who would work with them on housing and who would take responsibility for working-class housing in the town:

Labour politics in Preston sought accommodation within the existing civic and political framework rather than to change or control it.....the nature of Labour's opposition on the Council was such that it facilitated their absorption into civic society. (Rawlinson, pp189 -190)

It could be said, that the town expected consensus politics for the betterment of all, this in preference to antagonism that would perhaps have worked against the interests of the town and its civic pride.⁷

The most striking example of this process of assimilation, of socialisation, of consensus politics and of civic pride was evidenced in 1929. For the first time, Labour had a majority of councillors in local elections but they refused to break with tradition by continuing the process of selecting aldermen for the aldermanic bench whereby councillors due for promotion to aldermen were returned unopposed. The PTLC was of the view that the Labour group should break with tradition and that the group should have pushed for its own aldermen rather than the basis of seniority applying.⁸ Tradition, the existing political ideology and the civic pride of: 'Proud Preston' almost 'forced' them, 'moulded' them, into what was expected of politicians in the town. It was as if Labour politicians: 'ran into the almost welcoming arms of the town's established civic and political elites'. (Rawlinson p209) The nature and complexion of Preston politics was, according to Rawlinson

⁷ It was suggested by Rawlinson p197 that it would be difficult for the Labour group to criticise policy when they themselves were involved in the running of it.

(ibid), 'politics with the politics taken out', the allegiance being to the town rather than to strict party-political demands.

Inter-war Housing in Preston.

This section of the chapter will examine housing policy in Preston under the various housing acts and will focus on:

- Preston's housing provision up to the end of the First World War.
- Housing policy and politics under the inter-war housing acts.
- How policy evolved locally in response to national direction.
- How local actors contributed to housing issues.
- How changed ideation locally affected the implementation of policy.
- Preston Trades and Labour Council and inter-war housing policy.
- The nature of territorial relationships and housing policy.

The chapter will argue that as far as housing policy was concerned, territorial relations were consensual and policy implementation was in line with central government direction. State-aided housing policy became firmly established during the inter-war period. Thus, this policy could be regarded as 'path dependent'. The nature of political interaction could not be seen as deferential in either contact with, or attitude from, the centre. Policy was implemented locally in accordance with national direction. The changing ideation of the Conservative controlled council, on

⁸ Rawlinson describes the politics of Preston as 'Politics with the politics taken out'. p185. There is also evidence of consensus in the number of contested seats at local elections where Labour contested only 59.1 per cent during the inter-war period whereas Salford Labour group contested 95.6 per cent.

a number of issues to be outlined, is evidence of a shifting peripheral attitude, to both central policy and the idea that working class housing should receive both state and local aid. Furthermore, that local rates, should be used to supplement rents in the public sector and both mortgages and building subsidies in the private sector in Preston.

Preston's housing provision prior to the First World War.

Like many other towns and cities prior to the First World War, Preston was not in an enviable position as regards housing provision. Whilst there are no figures available of actual housing needs prior to the war, it would be shown later that Preston certainly had a significant requirement when in 1920 it was reported that 6,111 houses 'were not in all respect fit for human habitation'. (PMOH Annual Report 1920) The 1911 census indicated that the overcrowding level stood at 5.6 per cent of its population living with more than 2 persons per room. (See Table 5.2)

Table 5.5 indicates the number of houses erected prior to the war by private enterprise; the council had not entered into housebuilding provision. In 1919 only one house had been completed that year and this reflected the position in the vast majority of towns in the country.

Table 5.5 House completions in Preston 1911 to 1919.

Year.	Number Completed.	Total by Private Enterprise.
1911	193	
1912	143	
1913	142	
1914	118	596 Pre-War.
1915	95	
1916	85	
1917	19	
1918	2	
1919	1	202 In Wartime.
Total	798	

Source. Preston Medical Officer of Health Annual Reports 1911-1919.

Housing Provision in Preston 1918 to the introduction of the Housing Act of 1919.

The first intimation from central government on the question of housing provision was contained in a circular from the LGB in March 1918. The circular asked local authorities to identify areas which could be used for building purposes and gave some assurances as regards subsidies available to local authorities. Preston borough council discussed the circular at its meeting on the 11th April 1918 and immediately formed a housing committee.

An area of land adjacent to Moor Park and Preston North End Football Club was selected as being available and appropriate for building. The land was on the edge of the town and had good transportation services, and whilst it was a new site for

council provision it contained significant numbers of terraced working-class houses nearby. The indications were that the council wished to co-operate fully in the proposed housing schemes and they complied in all respects with the wishes of the LGB. However, no final decision on the level of subsidy had yet been received, only the details under the Treasury-LGB scheme. Preston was one of the 1,300 out of 1,806 local authorities replying by the deadline date of the 1st December 1918.⁹ As indicated earlier in this thesis, the commitment to housing provision, would not be made by local government without further consideration of the terms of subsidy by central government.

By the early part of 1919 there did not appear to be any move towards house construction in Preston but it was reported that:

The Local Government Board was seriously considering details of the proposals for a government housing scheme and that they expect commencement of local housing schemes almost immediately. The Local Government Board was awaiting the submission of schemes from various towns and cities for approval and was placing the onus on the various local authorities.¹⁰

The report went on to point out that local authorities had the intimate knowledge to deal with housing in their own areas and they had the responsibility to do so. By April 1919 little had been done either locally or nationally and responses were awaited from government as to the final level of subsidy. Prior to the Housing Act of

⁹ See 48th Annual Report of the Local Government Board, Housing, Returns from Local Authorities.

¹⁰ See Lancashire Daily Post 10th January 1919 p2)

1919 the Town Planning Review (April 1918, p1) was suggesting that the LGB needed disbanding.

To avoid delay and to prevent a waste of time by criticising schemes before they had reached the final stage..... it has actually been hinted in some quarters that the half a million houses might be designed and built by a much larger Government department – the extravagance and foolishness of this suggestion requires no comment. The country requires, nay, is clamouring, for the houses, the Local Authorities (with few exceptions) are ready to take their risks, architects are prepared to design them, demobilised labour to build them. It is only necessary for the Government to play the game.

The Town Planning Review urged: ‘a partnership between the Local Authorities and the State’. (ibid.)

Clearly, there were problems nationally in commencing the housing schemes, and there and were problems locally, which were perhaps surprising given the apparent consensus in local politics. By March 1919, the borough surveyor had submitted plans which were approved at the housing committee meeting and referred to the full council for approval. They were however not agreed and were referred back to the housing committee which was: ‘instructed to advertise and offer prizes for competitive designs’.¹¹ The committee saw this as a vote of no confidence and resigned. The council was later to reconstitute the committee with five of the original members still serving on it. The pressures nationally and locally were being exerted on the question of housing and the Addison Act had still not been

¹¹ See PBCM 27th March 1919)

introduced. The council, a Conservative-controlled one, now had the added difficulty of a local pressure group, the PTLC, exerting its influence on housing issues.

Preston Trades and Labour Council and Housing Policy in Preston to 1919.

Being aware of the circular from the LGB on housing proposals the PTLC was to make contact with the council at an early stage regarding the formulations of local policy on housing for the working-classes. The Labour group on the council had only two councillors at this stage neither of whom was on the housing committee.

They viewed with regret the inaction of the Town Council in the matter of housing. We demand that the new Housing Committee take immediate action in the matter, and claim the right on behalf of organised labour for representation on such committee.....to get more housing, better housing and cheaper housing.¹²

These demands, according to one commentator, were to run into difficulties caused by 'government legislation, vested interests as well as the weaknesses in the Trades Council's own political power and resources'. (Taylor 1978, p78)

The PTLC formed its own housing committee in 1919 to look into the whole question of housing in Preston and decided to hold a housing conference in May. Prominent labour officers, local trades-unionists and townspeople were invited.

¹² See PTLC Minutes 27th February 1919. See also CBP 32/1 p9.

They also formed a tenants protection bureau to help tenants with housing problems such as rents for private, and later, council housing.¹³ In April 1919, the PTLC housing committee members met, they decided that they needed to be conversant with the actual housing situation in the town. Unlike the town council, they conducted a survey of housing needs and organised: 'a systematic canvass of the town on the question of housing shortages'.¹⁴ The secretary Mr W E Morris was asked to prepare the document for canvass and to obtain 40,000 copies for distribution.¹⁵ The housing survey was arranged for June 1919 following a meeting in the various wards to discuss this.

By this action, the PTLC were putting pressure on the local authority to act and in May 1919 it was calling for a fifty per cent representation on the Preston housing committee and furthermore that these should be: 'co-opted onto that Committee without delay'.¹⁶ The town council invited two representatives from the PTLC and one from the majority, but not all of the other groups. Housing had suddenly become an issue in the minds of all concerned.¹⁷

The PTLC was unhappy at the town council's response and wrote to the LGB: 'enquiring as to the exact position of co-opted members of the Committee, (and) should decline the appointment of two representatives to sit in an advisory capacity'. The PTLC still wanted a fifty per cent representation, one which they were not actually entitled to according to statutory powers at that time. This was however

¹³ See PTLC Annual Report 1919 p6 and p60.

¹⁴ See PTLC Minutes 28th April 1919, p6.

¹⁵ Ibid. Morris was involved in housing issues from the very beginning of developments.

¹⁶ PTLC Minutes 22nd May 1919.

¹⁷ Eight groups in total requested representation on the housing committee including Preston Master Builders, the Architects Association, Building Trades Council and a number of women's groups.

allowed under the 1919 Act but would not be in force for a further six weeks. Subsequently the PTLC would accept the representation of two members, and Mr W E Morris and Mrs Cooper were co-opted.¹⁸

In short, the actions of the PTLC prior to the implementation of the Housing Act of 1919 were very positive and they clearly had been proactive. They had formed a housing committee, arranged a canvass of the town, organised a housing conference and sought representation on the town's housing committee. The PTLC also called a conference of all trades unions in the town on the housing issues arguing that the arrangements made by the council: 'are inadequate to deal with the shortage of houses in the Borough'.¹⁹ The actions of the PTLC had placed the issue of housing provision for the working classes firmly on the political agenda in Preston by mid-1919 having been galvanised into action by the proposals made by central government as a result of the fear of impending revolution towards the end of the war.

¹⁸ See CBP 32/1 p21, 14th May 1919 for further evidence of the concern of the PTLC on membership of the Housing Committee. Correspondence was also received from the Labour Advisory Committee of the Preston Conservative and Unionist Association. The Preston Women's Unionist Association, Preston Women's Citizens Association and Preston property Owners and Ratepayers Association, for representation on the Housing Committee.

¹⁹ See PTLC Minutes p21, 14th May 1919 in CBP 32/1.

Housing policy in Preston prior to the Housing Act of 1919.

The new housing committee met for the first time in April 1919. The town clerk was authorised to seek an early interview with the local housing commissioner in Manchester: 'seeking out his suggestions or criticisms on the plan of the layout of Holme Slack proposed by the Surveyor'.²⁰ This was the first contact made with the new housing commissioner under the Homes for Heroes Campaign. The commissioner's surveyor visited the town on the 15th May and viewed the Holme Slack and other sites suitable for housing. There was a clear need for housing but the council had not yet completed a survey or decided how many houses were required although the PMOH was suggesting that the borough needed approximately 1,000 houses.²¹

Garside (1987, p12) suggested that the reason a full survey was not conducted throughout the country was because of the:

Unprecedented and unacceptable demands that this would place both locally and nationally. This, when the actual intentions of government were to place very strict limits and controls on Local Authority programmes during the operation of the Act.

Despite the absence of a full survey the borough council decided that its requirement was 1,000 houses. The first 250 would be built on the Holme Slack site and the council was recommended to approve the plan, which it did.²²

²⁰ PBCHCM, 30th April 1919, p1. First Meeting of the Committee.

²¹ PMOH Annual Report 1919, p209.

²² See CBP 32/1 pp2-4.

The borough surveyor was asked to look for other suitable sites in the Ribbleton, Greenbank and Ashton areas of the town. During the course of May the borough was actively pursuing the purchase of land at Ribbleton Lane Farm, opposite Holme Slack, for a further 230 houses.²³ Permission was sought to build these houses in accordance with the Tudor Walters standards with one minor exception, this being the height of ceilings which it was felt should be higher than the 8 feet recommended.²⁴ Preston would eventually agree to these standards and 8-foot ceilings were accepted. This acceptance is an example of the consensual nature of relationships between the centre and periphery as far as Preston was concerned and was indicative of the continuing relationships between the two levels of government.

It should be remembered that the Housing Act of 1919 had not yet been passed, nor had the Ministry of Health been created or final subsidies for housing agreed yet Preston had gone ahead with its proposals to build. The introduction of the 1919 Act on the 31st July was to finally end speculation and delays. Subsidies were agreed and a firm commitment from central government was now given. 'The pledge was honoured, the great development begun, the whole standard and quality of housing for the people raised.....in it (the Housing Bill) the empirical social liberalism which arose in 1906 had its greatest social triumph'. (Mc Callum 1970 p420)

Housing provision would now proceed at an unprecedented pace nationally and: 'the speed or response of the Local Authorities was astonishing.....in 9 months after the passage of the Addison Act the Councils had made firm proposals to build 162,000 houses which the Ministry of Health had sanctioned'.(Merrett 1979, p38)

²³ See PBCHCM 14th May 1919.

Preston Housing and the Housing Act of 1919.

The Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 was brought to the attention of the housing committee at the end of September along with a circular requiring the town to complete a survey of its housing needs.²⁵ It was decided that a housing survey must be completed to ascertain needs. The report was completed and presented by the borough surveyor and the medical officer of health on the 8th October but the results are not noted in minutes. It was reported in the Lancashire Daily Post that between 1,900 and 2,000 houses were required.²⁶ This seemed a low figure when one considers the result of the PMOH survey presented in 1920 when it was suggesting that 6,111 houses were required in the town.

Approval had been given for the erection of 470 houses in July, yet, by the end of October not a brick had been laid or a sewer constructed. The delay was blamed on the attitude of the MOH²⁷, which was accused of delaying matters by querying the plans already approved by the LGB. In Preston: ‘objections (were) being made by the Ministry which had thrown the scheme back, objections which might have been dealt with at the inception.....but for these hindrances.....they would have been putting up houses on the Holme Slack and Ribbleton sites’.²⁸ The delays were not the fault of the borough council, yet it was being criticised by the PTLC and this played an important part in the local elections in November 1919. The PTLC politicised the issue. It was suggested that: ‘the emphasis on housing in the 1919

²⁴ Preston wanted ceiling heights of 9 feet and suggested that local needs should take precedent over strict design standards proposed in the Tudor Walters report.

²⁵ See PBCHCM 3rd September 1919.

²⁶ See Lancashire Daily Post 30th October 1919, p3

²⁷ This would accord with the views of a number of commentators, for example Garside, Wilding, Swenarton, Burnett and Merrett.

elections almost certainly helped them (the Labour Party) make 6 gains, 3 of them in the worst housing wards – Trinity, Christchurch and St Peters and 2 in Deepdale and Ribbleton, where much of the new housing was planned'. (Taylor 1978, p65)

Having previously refused representation on the housing committee the PTLC now accepted the positions, having seen how the question of housing had been politicised and how this had apparently helped the Labour Party in Preston gain seats. The housing issue had been further politicised and was now at the forefront of the council's mind.²⁹ Mr W E Morris³⁰ and Mrs Cooper were appointed.

The development of the two sites continued and tenders were sought, approved by the housing committee and submitted to the local housing commissioner in Manchester. This situation continued into 1920 and by early January the tenders had still not been approved.³¹ The tender price in Preston was £845³² and for a three-bedroomed parlour house was £910, whilst a four bedroomed parlour house was £930.³³ The Ministry later accepted the tenders and gave sanction to borrow £500,000 for the erection of 497 houses.

Preston was fortunate enough to have a local brick-works in which the materials for its houses could be obtained. It was located in the area planned for housing and there should have been little problem with supply. This was not so. Availability of both

²⁸ See Lancashire Daily Post 30th October 1919, p1.

²⁹ See PBCHCM 8th October and 10th November 1919.

³⁰ Personal conversations with his niece gave full details of his background, political and religious beliefs and his commitment to social justice for the working-classes. His appointment was significant as he would later be elected as a councillor and chairman of the housing committee in a Conservative council.

³¹ PBCHCM 7th January 1920.

³² The average price in England and Wales for a three bedroomed non-parlour house was £881.

³³ See PBCHCM 19th April 1920. Statistics for average house prices taken from these minutes.

labour and materials was a problem and, in May 1920 the borough was complaining to the MOH that the shortage of coal for the brick-works was hampering progress. The housing committee: 'strongly protested at the continued delays in supplying coal for the local brick-works in question, and urges the Minister of Health, the housing commissioner and the coal controller to take immediate action to provide the necessary coal'.³⁴ The problem of labour shortages was also acute and a sub-committee was formed to investigate the problems. By June 1920 local builders were still using labour on other more profitable work. The housing committee therefore called a meeting where: 'all contractors who have undertaken work in the housing scheme be asked to attend a meeting of this committee.....to consider the question of interference on the housing scheme by reason of builders being engaged on other work in the town'.³⁵ The press also began to voice concern at the delays, especially those by the Ministry, when it reported on the: 'red tape officialdom'.³⁶ The article continued by stating that it was hoped to report considerable progress soon. That was in January but by June no progress had been made. Pressure was also being exerted on the borough council by the PTLC, which was unhappy that not a single house had yet been built. It wrote to the borough council requesting that a: 'town meeting be held to consider the whole question of housing'.³⁷ The borough council did not welcome this move which, it regarded as an intrusion, the mayor considering that no useful purpose would be served by this and he wrote accordingly to the PTLC.³⁸ The slow progress in Preston was mirrored throughout the country

³⁴ See PBCHCM 31st May 1920. This is a further example of the delay tactics introduced by the Ministry to restrict the output of houses now that the fear of revolution had partially subsided.

³⁵ See PBCHCM 23rd June 1920.

³⁶ See Lancashire Daily Post 29th January 1920, p2.

³⁷ See PTLC Minutes 25th March 1920 and also 29th April 1920.

³⁸ See PTLC Minutes 29th April 1920.

(See Table 5.6) With only eight months left before the act was finally abandoned, the number of houses under tender was less than one third of the 500,000 sought.

Table 5.6 National Progress on the Housing Schemes
under the 1919 Act by July 1920.

Schemes forwarded to the Ministry	10,907
Acreage applied for	71,976
Scheme layouts approved	5,222
Applications approved	5,512
Houses approved in schemes	249,767
Homes included in tenders	155,984
Houses in signed contracts	101,643
Houses commenced	37,944
Houses completed	5,231

Source. Town Planning Review Vol.8, p162 28th August 1920.

It seems that the local authorities had done their work in identifying sites, in gaining approval for schemes and in obtaining tenders for the work to be completed, yet the evidence is that only 5,231 houses had been completed of the 500,000 envisaged. Preston had planned 2,000 houses, had permission to build 497 houses and yet not one house had been completed. It would be mid-1921 before the houses were constructed and occupancy began. Nevertheless the borough council continued to plan further housing schemes during the course of 1920, identifying sites in Deepdale Road, New Hall Lane and Stanley Street and the borough engineer was asked to prepare plans for these houses.³⁹ Building continued on the selected sites

³⁹ See PBCHCM 9th June 1920.

and in June 1921, just as Alfred Mond the new Minister of Health was taking office and effectively terminating the 'Homes for Heroes' campaign.

In effect, the Ministry was saying to Preston, and to the country as a whole, that the 'Homes for Heroes' campaign was over and only those houses currently in tender would be completed and would receive subsidy. Preston supposedly had 497 in tender but the actual figure was 480 according to the PMOH, which reported completions of 236 in 1921 and 244 in 1922. From 1919 to 1922 only 55 houses would be constructed by private enterprise.⁴⁰ The delaying tactics of the Ministry reflected the new political situation, the threat of revolution was overtaken by mass unemployment and economic decline. Nevertheless housing subsidies would be continued under the two pieces of legislation to follow, thus continuing welfarism anew and the 'path dependent' nature of this policy field. It also illustrates the interaction by the periphery and the AMC⁴¹ to retain the issue of housing subsidies on the political agenda. Clearly, Preston had accepted the challenge at an early stage. Local pressure groups had raised the issue on the political agenda and there appeared to be a considerable involvement in local politics and in the community.⁴²

⁴⁰ See PMOH Annual Reports 1919 to 1924.

⁴¹ See Chapter three for details of the work of the AMC and local authorities in shaping legislation.

⁴² For example a housing association had been formed by tenants in the Ribbleton area and in the Holme Slack area, see CBP 32/1 p219.

Preston Housing and the Greenwood Act of 1923 and the Wheatley Act of 1924.

The Greenwood Act of 1923.

Elsewhere, as we have seen, the Greenwood Act (Appendix 1) prevented local authorities from building. It is not surprising then that Preston did not build any houses under the 1923 Act and housebuilding as far as the council was concerned simply ceased in accord with central government policy. They were however to comply with government policy regarding subsidies to private enterprise and to individuals.⁴³ In July 1923, the housing committee resolved to recommend that: 'Grants be made towards the cost of constructing houses within the borough completed before the 1st October 1925'.⁴⁴

The council agreed to make advance under the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act not exceeding 90 per cent of the market value.....which does not exceed £1,200. This on condition that the proprietor resides in the house for a period of 3 years'.⁴⁵ Whilst the borough did not construct houses under the 1923 Act they did make application for grant subsidies for housing grants made to individuals or to builders,⁴⁶ the application was refused by the Ministry and further applications were not considered at this time. Never the less the borough council continued to apply for permission to build 50 houses and for sanction to borrow £25,000 for further

⁴³ Examples of subsidies to individual builders can be found in the PBCHCM 13th June 1923.

⁴⁴ Details of the generous subsidies afforded to private builders can be found in PBCHCM 19th July 1923.

⁴⁵ Full details are given in the PBCHCM 26th July 1923.

⁴⁶ Application was made to the Ministry to borrow £25,000 for this purpose. See PBCHCM 12th December 1923.

advances under the 1923 Act,⁴⁷ and they also applied for sanction to have subsidies for 350 houses to be constructed by private enterprise.⁴⁸ Table 5.7 indicates the number of houses constructed by private enterprise and the local authority from 1921 to 1938.

Table 5.7. Houses constructed in Preston from 1923 to 1938.

Year.	Construction. By Borough Council	Private Enterprise Construction.
1921	236	55}
1922	244	- } Two years 1921/2.
1923	Nil	50
1924	Nil	186
1925	190	367
1926	253	248
1927	110	409
1928	420	278
1929	117	224
1930	280	128
1931	112	135
1932	428	244
1933	130	274
1934	99	277
1935	Nil	347
1936	104	327
1937	14	306
1938	Nil	300

Source. Preston Medical Officer of Health's Annual Reports 1921- 1938.

Bowley, p105, Table ix, also states that from 1919 to 1928/29 Preston's Capital Expenditure continued to expand. The local authority constructed 1,570 houses in the period and private enterprise a further 2,175, a total of 3,745 houses during that period.

⁴⁷ See PBCHCM 10th October 1923, 14th November 1923 and 12th December 1923.

⁴⁸ See CBP 32/2 p44 16th January 1924, also PBCHCM pp 67-68 15th may 1924.

The Wheatley Act of 1924.

Preston borough council had given generous subsidies to private enterprise under the 1923 Act as indicated earlier. It would be difficult for a Labour Group or the Trades Council to challenge this when clearly the council was not only complying with, but also exceeding, government's legislative demands.⁴⁹ This had clearly stimulated supply from private enterprise but the 1924 Act also stimulated the council's construction from 1925 as Table 5.7 illustrates. There would be little argument from a Conservative council towards the generous subsidies from a Labour government, subsidies, which continued until 1932. The borough council therefore demonstrated its commitment to housing programmes from both private and public sectors and its willingness to offer local aid. This was in contrast to financial arrangements that had existed prior to 1919 for house-building, ideas had clearly changed from the previously existing economic orthodoxy in the town.

The significant difference in emphasis under the Wheatley Act was on the long-term commitment Labour made towards housing policy, both in the involvement of peripheral government in that policy field and its confirmation that the localities would continue to act as 'agents' of central government. Labour re-established provision in terms of both quality and quantity of houses to be provided for the working classes and, most importantly, the level of subsidies to be made available under the Wheatley Act.⁵⁰ The negotiations, prior to the act, also emphasise that there was a structure in territorial relations, which was being used by all those

⁴⁹ See PBCHCM 19th July 1923 p8 regarding subsidies of up to £120 to both private enterprise and individual builders.. (The national recommendation was £100). The borough council also decided to offer mortgages of up to 90% to individuals. PBCHCM 19th July 1923.

⁵⁰ Details of the subsidies of the act were given in chapter 3.

elements contained in the tripartite relationship discussed earlier. Preston was to use the availability of subsidies and constructed 1,910 houses between 1925 and 1932 and private builders constructed 2,033 houses, this was the most productive period during the inter-war years.

Politically, it would be difficult for the Labour group or the PTLC to disagree with the borough council's policy. The Labour Party agent and the secretary of the PTLC, Morris, was chairman of the housing committee. This political integration was a significant part of the politics of Preston's housing policy.⁵¹ What was significant is that the politics of housing in Preston thus far were consensual, in accordance with central government's policy and working in the perceived interests of the working classes. Whether this was despite, or because of, Conservative control on the council, or, the influence of a co-operative Labour politician in a position of influence within the province of housing policy, is another interesting question. It is one that appears to be answered by the consensual nature of Preston's political behaviour which worked for the benefit of the town. It should be remembered too that this was a politically lean time for the Labour group in Preston, as Table 5.4 illustrates, with only 9 Council members on the council. Yet their influence on housing was significant because of this individual.

⁵¹ It was both a shrewd political move and an example of the consensual nature of Preston politics.

Preston Housing Policy and Politics from 1925 to 1929.

Between 1925 to 1929, Labour politics became ascendant in Preston. Would this affect the nature and provision of housing for the working classes in the town? Moreover, why, with a majority in the council chamber, did the Labour group not take control of the council?

With only ten seats in the council chamber in 1924, Labour gained seats to reach their peak in 1929 when they held 22 out of 36 seats on the council. Labour were never again to reach this height of popularity during the inter-war years, but their failure to take control of the council by seeking elections to the aldermanic bench seems difficult to explain. The PTLC, effectively the Labour Party in Preston, could not agree to stand against the prevailing political convention and oppose the senior politicians who were aldermen. A 'gentleman's agreement existed' that they were not prepared to break and Labour councillors would not seek election to the bench. Labour was awarded various chairmanships on influential committees, for example, the transport, electricity and housing committees. The Labour Party seemed to be assimilated by what could perhaps be termed as extra-political social networks. For example, the Tories fraternised with their Labour colleagues in other social circles, the influence of freemasonry in the town is cited as one method of socialisation that existed.⁵² The 'gentleman's agreement' then would hold from the very strong and fraternal relationships between individuals on the council. 'Civic pride' and 'fraternalism' were more important it would appear than political ideology, party

⁵² Further reference is made to this particular form of social contact in the reference section of this chapter. It was not intended to fully investigate this influence but was an issue raised by Morris's niece in interview on the question of the political co-operation by, and influence of, her uncle in Preston politics, as a Councillor, Labour Party agent and as chairman of the housing committee..

politics or personal gain and there appeared to be a number of external influences on political behaviour in the town.

As far as PTLC were concerned housing issues appeared to take a back seat during the period and an examination of the minute books throughout the period reveals little information on housing progress in the town. It is, of course, entirely possible that there was satisfaction with the progress made and comment was therefore unnecessary. It should be remembered that a total of 2,616 houses had been provided by either private enterprise or local authority building from 1925 to 1929.⁵³

It was only in 1928 that the issue of housing was raised by the PTLC, when Labour were in the ascendancy and it was considered that the Labour group might achieve overall control. It was resolved that the Labour group would formulate a 'municipal programme on housing which would outline the probable activities and aims of the Labour Group on the Town Council'.⁵⁴ Even so, this proposal was only carried by a majority of one, hardly overwhelming support. This obvious reluctance evidences the fact that the Labour group appeared happy with their twenty-two council seats and chairmanships of important council committees. A view can be advanced then that the Labour Party were truly socialised, fraternised, non-radical and 'Proud Preston's civic pride' more important than politics.

No further major national housing legislation was introduced between 1924 and 1930 despite a new Conservative Government in office after the General Election in October 1924. (See Appendix 1) This was a period of stability in housing policy and

⁵³ See CBP 32/2 for reports on house-building progress and subsidies applied for. This covers the period from 1924 to 1929 and indicates the considerable progress made.

output was in line with expectations from both private and public building in Preston as Table 5.7 indicates. From 1924 local authorities were seen as:

Being part of the permanent machinery for providing working-class houses; they were not mere intruders. No government since had dared to try openly to alter this: in fact, the position was reaffirmed in the codifying act, passed in 1925 when the Conservatives were back in office. (Bowley 1945, p249)

Neville Chamberlain, as Minister of Health in the Conservative Government, left the Wheatley Act alone and building from both sectors continued unabated and output remained high. Just as there was apparently co-operation nationally on housing so too was there co-operation locally in Preston. Relationships certainly were consensual in terms of central/local relations and within the council chamber. The only issue of contention had been the question of rental policy, discussed below, where Preston were to put local demands in rental policy before the policy dictated by the MOH. By 1930 the PMOH was reporting that 2,845 houses were still required as this was the total number of unfit houses in the town. Whilst the infant mortality rate had dropped to 73 deaths per 1000 infants, almost its lowest level, the death rate was still high at 12.24 per cent of the population.

Housing provision in Preston under the Housing Acts of 1930, 1933 and 1935.

Housing output under the Wheatley Act, even with reduced subsidies in 1927, continued until 1932 when Hilton Young, the Minister of Health would abolish the

⁵⁴ See PTLC Minutes 23rd August 1928.

Wheatley subsidies because they were interfering with his plans to tackle slum housing, and later under the 1935 Act, slum clearance and overcrowded conditions. The new housing act was first discussed in Preston on the 15th October 1930,⁵⁵ when details of the new Act were given with local authorities being urged to 'prepare and work to a definite plan which will co-ordinate clearance and rehousing under the Act of 1930'. The borough reacted to this directive by making application to the Ministry to build 342 houses in Greenland's farm near to the Ribbleton estate on which they had already constructed houses. The sanction was sought for 272 houses under the 1924 Act and 70 under the 1930 Act.⁵⁶ A further request was made for 46 houses to replace unfit houses in Salt St., Bennets Court. Hanson Sq., and other areas within the town. It was clear that the borough were concentrating on housing subsidy from the Wheatley Act. To have two subsidy levels in operation, one with far superior subsidies, was fraught with danger and Preston, like many other towns in the country, concentrated on housing with the higher subsidies while slum clearance would not be tackled in any serious way.

Between January and March 1932, the MOH were contacting local authorities asking them to concentrate on 'low cost housing that can be let at rents within the means of the more poorly paid worker'.⁵⁷ (No mention of the unemployed or unfit workers) The Ministry were also pointing out that rents to be charged should be in line with current day costs, interest rates having been reduced after recovery from the depression of 1931, rather than at levels relating to the costs of houses already built by the local authority. The borough council seemed to take little notice of this

⁵⁵ See PBCHCM 15th October 1930.

⁵⁶ See PBCHCM 10th March 1931.

⁵⁷ See PBCHCM 13th January 1932 and 9th March 1932.

and continued their policy of building under the Wheatley Act which, was still in force.⁵⁸

The Housing Act of 1935 was seen as illogical by many local authorities and by commentators on housing policy during the inter-war years.⁵⁹ The act called for both slum clearance and overcrowding to be treated with priority when it was clearly one and the same problem. Under the Act it became the duty of local authorities to survey the extent of overcrowding and to prepare plans for providing sufficient accommodation to meet those needs. Overcrowding was defined in the act for the first time.

A survey was carried out by the PMOH in Preston at the end of 1935 and the early part of 1936, it was reported to the housing committee in May 1936.⁶⁰ The PMOH was also reporting that: '1,399 houses in total were not in all respects fit for human habitation'.⁶¹ The borough council acted on this information and proposed to build a further 298 houses when they applied for sanction in 1937. The borough did not receive final approval for these houses until 1937 and had not completed any of these proposed houses by 1938. What is evident however is that the borough wished to carry on building houses for its population. Private enterprise building continued unabated throughout the 1930s and there is no doubt that the building boom was just

⁵⁸The borough council continued to make application for housing subsidies despite this opposition from the Ministry and subsidies were finally agreed for 104 houses, which were constructed in 1933 and 1934.

⁵⁹ For example see Bowley (1945) and also Garside (1987).

⁶⁰ Details of the numbers of overcrowded dwellings and numbers of families affected can be found in the minutes of the 13th May 1936.

⁶¹ See PMOH Annual Report 1936.

as evident in Preston as elsewhere with 2,135 houses being constructed by private enterprise from 1932 to 1938.⁶²

It is evident that Preston still wished to build anew rather than refurbish and clear slum areas in the centre of the town. By 1938, the PMOH was reporting that there were now 980 houses not fit for human habitation. This had reduced from 6,111 in 1920 and the population had decreased from 121,950 in 1920 to 113,200 in 1938. According to the PMOH the towns housing situation had improved considerably by the provision of both local authority construction of 2,837 houses and 4,155 by private enterprise. What cannot be ascertained is the number of houses constructed by private enterprise, which were for rental by the lower paid workers or the amount of houses released for the working-classes as a result of filtering up.

Rental policy and Central/Local relations in Preston.

Rental policy was a good example of the depth of interaction and level of control exercised by the centre over peripheral government. The major source of contention in Preston, and in many other areas of the country was the important question of house rentals. The high cost of building after the war, compared to, for example, the 1930s, meant that although economic rents would not be charged because of government subsidy, the rents required would still be too high for the poorer classes to afford. Bowley suggests that:

⁶² A local builder Mr. F Irvine applied to construct 340 houses and 14 shops in 1937. These were eventually constructed and finished after the Second World War.

There is really no doubt how rent policy would work out in practice. The market for Local Authority houses was largely confined to a limited range of income groups, that is in practice, the better off families, the small clerks, the artisans, the better off semi-skilled workers with small families and safe jobs. (Bowley p129 also Swenarton p75)

Government policy under the 1919 Act was that rents should be fixed at the level of those controlled rents of similar houses. The difference between that level and the economic or true rent being the difference of subsidy provided by central government. A great deal of debate, it will be recalled, took place between the government and the AMC on this subject. It was suggested earlier that this regional representative feature of housing policy formulation allowed local authorities to have a dual channel for action on policy issues. Housing rentals was just such an issue whereby the AMC would, in broad terms, attempt to set the level of rents, but then local authorities would attempt to have these reviewed in the light of prevailing local needs. This was no different in Preston and was the major area of disagreement on housing policy with government during the inter-war years.

Whilst the MOH wanted rents charged at economic rates in relation to building costs and levels of subsidies, local authorities priorities were that rents should actually be affordable by the persons for whom the houses were intended, the lowest paid workers and the poorest classes in society. Initially the rents proposed by Preston and those required by the Ministry are indicated in Table 5.8.

Table 5.8 House Rentals in Preston under the 1919 Housing Act.

Description of house type.	Preston Rents.	Ministry Rents.
Type A 2 Bedroom non-parlour house.	8/-	8/-
Type A 3 Bedroom non-parlour house.	10/-	10/-
Type B 3 Bedroom parlour house.	12/-	12/6d
Type B 4 Bedroom parlour house.	14/-	15/-

Source. PBCHCM 9th June 1920.

As can be seen in Table 5.8, the rentals were agreed on the non-parlour houses but on the parlour type houses the figure was not agreed initially. The housing committee, advised the local housing commissioner:

That the Committee had arrived at the rents after full consideration of local conditions, the cost of respective types of houses, the prevailing rents in the town, and the fact that with regard to the houses with 4 bedrooms that such houses are intended to be tenanted by large families with young children, and that under the circumstances the committee must adhere to the rents fixed by the resolution of the 31/5/1920.⁶³

This disagreement continued in July when the commissioner advised the borough that he was not prepared to accept these proposals and that their levels should be charged. The borough would again write to the commissioner and the Ministry and the town clerk was advised to put the borough views: 'most forcefully'.⁶⁴

⁶³ See PBCHCM 9th June 1920.

⁶⁴ See PBCHCM 14th July 1920.

The borough council was also being subjected to other pressures also from the PTLC. They had set up a tenants protection association, which was responsible for overseeing rental policy in the town on behalf of council as well as private tenants. They had successfully negotiated reductions in the private sector and this fact placed pressure on the borough council who were mindful of what was happening with locally prevailing rents. For the remainder of the inter-war period the issue of rents did not conflict with directives by the centre and overall the relationship was a consensual one with no disagreement on fiscal issues. Preston, it appears was grateful for any subsidy they could obtain for housing whether this was for council built homes or private enterprise construction. There is evidence also of the Conservative councils willingness to use local finance from the rates to subsidise both rents and to 'top up' central aid to private enterprise thereby encouraging local building. This local application of rates was evident under the various housing acts of 1923, 1935 and 1938.⁶⁵

It is not unreasonable to conclude that the nature and complexion of local politics in Preston, and the relationships that existed territorially, were consensual. When advised to build, Preston did so, when subsidies were withdrawn they left housing alone, and when re-introduced, they once again complied with both the spirit and legislative requirements of the various inter-war housing acts. In many ways Preston was a 'model' local authority, its political culture was very evidently one driven by assertive civic pride with an incorporation of all parties in housing policy and politics.

⁶⁵ See CBP 32/1 pp 122-206, especially p122, p199 and p206. See also PTLC Annual Report 1919, p6.

Conclusions.

The central questions in this chapter concern the nature and complexion of territorial politics and central/local relations within the policy field of state-aided housing provision during the inter-war years in Preston.

This chapter addressed a number of significant issues:

- The nature of local politics in the town and how centre/periphery relations were conducted.
- The nature and complexion of central/local relations and how these could be described as being conflictual or consensual.
- The use of the AMC within a tripartite relationship in territorial politics.
- The evidence of a structural relationship in territorial politics.
- The influence of ‘extra-political social relations’, for example within freemasonry and outside of the established political arena of the council chamber and committee structures.
- The influence of external factors in housing policy, for example local ‘institutions of interest representation’.
- How central policy was implemented locally and how this affected central/local co-operation.
- What evidence was there of attitudinal change by both polities.

This investigation was completed in relation to the core questions posed in this thesis with regard to:

- The nature and complexion of territorial relations and how these were conducted within a structured polity rather than the dual polity thesis suggested by Bulpitt.
- How territorial politics began to change earlier than those of the ancien regime in 1926. The contention being that these began to transform much earlier.
- The nature and implementation of national housing policy in the periphery, the continuation of state subsidies and evidence of path dependency in this policy field.
- That the impact of state-aided housing policy in 1919 marked a significant shift in welfarism anew and marked a major change in politics, welfare provision and economic orthodoxy. Housing provision was high politics.
- Attitudinal change began and central/local relations changed. Territorial politics was not characterised by mutual deference and frigidity but was more interactive.
- Central/local relations were conducted within a framework of diminishing fiscal tensions and high deference to local possessive pluralism, and local possessive pluralism itself began to change. This fundamental change, was assisted by state-aided housing provision and subsidies to both the public and private sectors in housing especially from the mid-1930s.

- That motives for intervention in housing changed and individual need recognised in an emerging policy as the different strands of thinking marked punctuation's in the equilibrium of state-aided provision.

What evidence was there in Preston to support the core hypotheses?

Preston politics, Central/Local Relations and the Inter-war Housing Acts.

It was earlier seen that Preston was willing to build houses for the working-classes on the basis of a subsidy that was not acceptable to many of the local authorities within the country. They were prepared to obtain land and build under the terms offered under the Treasury-LGB scheme, which were not as favourable as those eventually agreed under the Housing Act of 1919. In effect, the borough council was a willing partner to the earlier proposals from the centre. One author who looked specifically at the implementation of the Addison Act of 1919 in Lancashire suggested that there was:

A clash of interests generated within local government/central government partnership.....(this was) a major factor in the delays that dogged building under the Act. The difficulties met by Local Authorities in finding adequate labour, building materials and finance. (Beattie 1986, p186)

This was evident in Preston and one has to question whether or not this was deliberate policy by central government, once the fear of revolution had subsided.

What is significant in terms of the core questions addressed in the thesis is that Preston immediately began construction, obtained subsidies and continued to build

throughout the inter-war period. Welfare provision created a significant number of houses from both the private and public sectors as Table 5.7 illustrates and provision continued in accordance with central policy direction.

There is then evidence that a significant shift occurred in economic provision by the centre, that welfarism was generated in a substantial way by state-aided housing provision, welfarism had been initiated and policy became 'path dependent'. Motives for intervention changed, ideas on the involvement of the state in local government affairs transformed, as housing policy evolved towards ideas that recognised individual need. Such ideational modification in central and local government, and especially with the significant actors within the institutions concerned, needed attitudinal change acceptable to, and within, both polities. This change was encompassed by a structural relationship within territorial relations.

'New institutionalism': Politics and housing policy in Preston.

Housing policy and politics in Preston is a good example of the way in which the concepts of historical institutionalism can be applied in explaining policy choices and political behaviour during the inter-war years. Historical institutionalism suggests that: 'policy choices made when an institution is being formed or when a policy is initiated will have continuing and largely determinate effect over the policy far into the future,' (Peters, p63. Quoting Skocpol 1982; King 1995), policy is seen to be path dependent. It is the nature of this path dependency which enriches the

understanding of inter-war housing policy at both central and local levels, and in this chapter, the local level. Table 5.7 illustrates the path dependent nature of policy.

The nature of Preston politics and the interaction between local pressure groups and local government illustrates the usefulness of institutions of interest representation, is also a significant concept in explaining political behaviour and the process of political socialisation and ideation in the politics of the town. The implementation of national policy at the local level and the interaction between the: ‘less formal’ organisations which are ‘themselves highly institutionalized.....single parties or interest groups.....(or) party systems..... Structures that link state and society are indeed institutions’. (Peters, pp112-113) Preston politics exhibits these institutional relationships that exist within its political community: ‘Political parties are one of the dominant players in the political arena and like any organizations can be conceptualized as institutions’. (Peters. 113) These concepts can be equally well applied to local institutions. ‘Most of these organizations do impart to their members a sense of what they should and should not believe in, and how they should behave politically’. (Peters, p122) These institutions are also capable of socialising the personnel within their structures and within the political community as a whole, a feature that was clearly evident in Preston politics and housing policy.

What is also evident in Preston politics and housing is the effect of inter-institutional relationships and the concept of institutions of interest representation. The borough council and the PTLC constitute institutions in the practical sense and structures that link the local state and society via a local interest or pressure group. The relationships also exhibit the nature of the underlying ideology of the nature of local

politics and the way in which this ideological perceptions shaped the attitudes, values and beliefs, of local politicians, interest groups, and significant individuals, within the political structures and process. By this it is meant that the way in which, for example, the chairman of an important committee was not of the political persuasion or colour of the council and yet he remained in office for the majority of the period in question.

It shows too that the existing political ideology, played a significant part in Preston politics as did other outside influences, non-political institutions in themselves, on the political process and organisation in the town. Individuals were socialised to the extent that inter-war politics in Preston was the politics of assertive civic pride. Civic pride was the assimilation process, the institutional ideology, it was a: 'structural relationship' (Peters, p113), used: 'as (a) means for explaining policy choices'. (Peters *ibid*) It was a significant process in Preston's inter-war housing policy and in political behaviour. There is evidence of external influences on policy and especially those, which might be considered as extra-political social networks, for example freemasonry.

Local Possessive Pluralism and, High Deference to Local Possessive Pluralism.

Finally, there is the issue of local possessive pluralism and housing policy and territorial relations in Preston. It was argued earlier that as the nature of central/regional/local relations changed and there would be a change in the emphasis and consequently the appropriateness of this concept, which was clearly evident

under the LGB up to 1919. It was evident in Preston that there had been a change in the nature and complexion of territorial relations. This had happened as a result of the closer relationship between the centre and the periphery. In the case of Preston the relationships had, overall, been a consensual one. This is not surprising given the politically incorporative nature of politics in the town. There is no evidence of a continuing dichotomy between urban/rural and industrial/ agricultural issues, if indeed this ever existed in the town given its political nature and civic pride. The momentum was towards a policy of co-operation with the centre.

Fiscal provision by the centre, dominated local and national policy making and in this respect the localities acted only as agents of the centre. But, economic orthodoxy had changed and fiscal tensions reduced. There was now an: 'ability to promote a general or community interest' (Bellamy, p13), and a: 'pursuit of public policy', (Bellamy, p14) state-aided housing policy was the pursuit of public policy and community interest in overcoming local possessive pluralism and mutual deference and frigidity. It is accepted that the ability to promote general or community interests depended on the level of central government subsidy, the nature of political ideology, and how this was applied by the centre and in the periphery. What is evidenced however is that there was sufficient economic, political, ideological, ideational and social change affecting territorial relations, changes which marked a transformation, in territorial politics during the inter-war years. The economic provision by the centre, whether this was to the borough or via the borough to private enterprise, saw significant numbers of houses constructed. (See Table 5.7) It also saw local authorities become landlords in a meaningful way.

In sum, Preston demonstrated that the relationship between the centre and the periphery was interactive. It was consensual and, in terms of housing policy, Preston followed central direction almost to the letter of legislation and conflict in fiscal provision was not an issue. There was no evidence of any deference by the centre towards the town's operation of, and attitude towards housing policy. This would have been surprising given the political acquiescence displayed and a dual polity with mutual deference and frigidity was not the operational code in central/local relations. Nor was there any evidence that local possessive pluralism was an issue in territorial relations. The town had a particular style of local politics that encompassed a non-combative, party-political, organisation that was influenced by extra-political social networks that appeared to work for the benefit of the town in terms of housing production. Housing policy was clearly path dependent and territorial relations were productive and integrative.

There was, however, evidence of ideational change within the locality. Local Conservatives accepted the principle of both state-aid, and aid from local taxation, as a means of providing housing for the working-classes, whether these were constructed by private enterprise or the local authority itself, and also for assistance to those most in need, with assistance towards rents actually charged in the borough. Housing policy and provision very evidently had transformed during the inter-war period in Preston.

Chapter 6.

The Politics of Consensus.

Inter-War Housing Policy in Blackburn.

Introduction.

This chapter analyses inter-war housing in Blackburn and the nature and effects of both national and local politics and policies in housing provision for the working-classes. The discussion centres on the various inter-war housing acts, how these acts were interpreted and implemented in Blackburn and how they affected the provision of houses for working-class people and the poor in the town. It will also analyse the nature, complexion and interactions in local politics and the relationships that existed between the centre and periphery. It illustrates how this policy field was central to government involvement and the focus of political attention during the inter-war years. The issues raised in the case study in Preston concerning the changing ideation of policy, methods of intervention, motives for change and local reaction to becoming a provider of working class housing as agents of central government.

It will be argued that Blackburn had a local political style that was different to the other case studies in as much as it was driven by conservatism. There is evidence of the operation of party politics in the town and the Labour group in Blackburn were more active and assertive than Preston, but far less so than their counterparts in Wigan. The local council was part of the structured polity that existed in territorial

politics and is an interesting example of how varied local structures operate in the central/local political arena. Blackburn provides a contrasting approach to local politics than that displayed in either Preston or Wigan. One problem encountered in Blackburn was the lack of original source material from both the local Labour and Conservative Parties and the Trades and Labour Council. Consequently, the depth of analysis for Blackburn was not assisted by this lack of information on political activity.

The chapter looks at the local political arrangements and how these fitted into the overall assertion that a structured polity existed in territorial politics rather than a dual polity and how regional representation, in the form of the AMC, was made by the localities within these structural arrangements. Blackburn had an active member of the AMC with its Town Clerk Mr Lewis Beard eventually becoming chairman of the AMC's Law Committee. It will also investigate how the implementation of national housing policy at local level became path dependent, with increasing demands for housing from the localities, and how those demands contributed towards welfare provision in the form of welfarism anew. The attitude of the local authority towards central policy issues and policy direction will be examined, especially fiscal provision for housing, and how that dimension of political interaction affected attitudinal behaviour towards local possessive pluralism by the periphery, and high deference to local possessive pluralism, by the centre.

Historical institutionalism, provides the framework for analysis to illustrate the nature and complexity of territorial politics and central/local relations. This chapter will also focus on national and local institutions, as outlined above, the actors within

those structures as well as those local political pressure groups concerned with housing. These local groups or structures are assessed as institutions of interest representation and carriers and promoters of ideological values, there is evidence of an employers association being active in local housing policy with influence from the Master Builders Federation.

This chapter will focus on:-

- A brief survey of pre-World War One development in Blackburn, its social, demographic, industrial and geographic evolution.
- The development of politics throughout the inter-war years.
- The introduction of the various housing acts during the period.
- Local pressure groups in Blackburn and their influence on housing policy and politics.
- The nature of central/regional/local relations and housing policy and how these could be described as consensual or conflictual.
- The use of the AMC within a tripartite relationship in territorial politics and the evidence of a structural relationship.
- The influence of 'extra-political' social relations.
- Evidence of attitudinal change by both politics.

Early social and industrial conditions in Blackburn.

During the nineteenth century, Blackburn it developed into an important administrative and textile area. By 1901 the population had reached 129,210, the highest population was recorded in 1915 when it stood at 134,716.¹ The expansion of the cotton industry meant that ‘more than 100 mills were built during that period’. (Baggoley 1996, p5) The opening of the Leeds/Liverpool canal made transportation of goods easier and the opening of the railway network aided the prolific expansion of the town. Brewing also played an important part in employment and Blackburn had several famous breweries.

By the early 20th century Blackburn was a major textile town in Lancashire with many of its workers being housed in terraced houses, in homes with a rateable value of less than £12.² By 1917 Blackburn had a housing stock of 26,793 houses with a rateable value of £12 or under, and 3,578 houses between £12 and £20, a total of 30,371 houses for the vast majority of its 131,722 population in 1917.³

¹ See BMOH Annual Reports 1901 and 1915.

² Bowley suggested that the rateable value for working-class houses was £13 This is the level used as a benchmark for working-class dwellings and gives a good comparison with the national picture.

³ Appendix 1 gives a full breakdown of the housing stock and rateable values.

Table 6.1 Percentage of the population with more than two persons per room in Lancashire. Extract from the 1911 census.

Towns.	Percentage of overcrowding.
St Helens.	17.0
Wigan.	12.9*
Warrington.	10.6
Liverpool.	10.1
Salford	10.0
Burnley.	9.5
Bootle.	9.2
Manchester.	7.2
Preston.	5.6*
Blackburn.	4.4*
Blackpool.	4.2
Accrington.	3.8

Source 1911 Census.

* These are the towns under analysis.

As we can see from Table 6.1, Blackburn fared well in terms of number of overcrowded houses with 4.4% of its population living in more than two persons per room. The average death rate in the town throughout the inter-war period was 13.9 deaths per 1000 of the population. In 1914, it was 14.9 and in 1938 14.6, so it did not vary significantly throughout the period. Birth rates dropped from 20.8 per 1000 of the population in 1914 to 12.2 in 1938, the inter-war average being 13.3 births per

1000 of the population. The conditions in which people resided were better than in most other Lancashire towns.

Blackburn also seemed to be in a satisfactory position as regards housing in 1917⁴ the borough council were suggesting 'that whilst no houses are required now, the number to be built at the end of the war should be 500'.⁵ (See below) Blackburn did not appear to be in a poor position as regards housing conditions and housing supply in 1917 because private enterprise construction had continued to a higher level of output than either Wigan or Preston with 2,306 houses being constructed between 1905 and 1917.⁶ (See Table 5.4)

National, Local and Party-politics in Blackburn.

This section will be concerned with the nature of politics in Blackburn and will examine both national and local representation in general and municipal elections. It will also examine the issue of party-politics in the town and the influence of local pressure groups.⁷ Unlike Preston, Blackburn Labour Party would attempt to take control of the local council at the earliest opportunity and had a different nature than party politics in Preston.⁸

⁴ The owner of the Blackburn Times, Mr T P Ritzema was suggesting otherwise in a pamphlet he published and distributed in the town in August 1917.

⁵ See BBC Minutes 21st September 1917 Appendix B p4.

⁶ See Medical Officer of Health Annual Reports 1910 to 1917 also BBC Minutes 21st September 1917.

⁷ Despite extensive national and local searches the minutes of the local Labour Party and the local Trades and Labour Council were not found and sources suggest that these may have been destroyed.

National Politics in Blackburn throughout the inter-war years.

Firstly, the chapter examines the nature of national politics in Blackburn and the general election results in setting the scene, complexion, character and substance of politics in the town. Blackburn, like Preston was one of the last two-member constituencies in the United Kingdom. From 1885 to 1900 Blackburn had elected two Conservative Members of Parliament, in 1906 one Conservative and one Labour Member were returned with Philip Snowden being elected for Labour. Snowden was later to play a significant role in the Labour government. He was again returned in 1910, when, for the first time, the Conservatives lost both seats.

Table 6.2 shows throughout the inter-war years Blackburn returned a Liberal and Conservative Member until 1929. In 1929, for the first time, and in line with the political mood in the country, they narrowly returned two Labour Members. This political shift was also reflected, as indicated earlier, in local politics. From 1931, and for the rest of the inter-war years, two Conservative members were elected, again in line with national trends. Blackburn, like Preston, but unlike Wigan, could not be described as a town with Labour influence or Labour politics at its heart.

⁸ The Labour group removed the Conservative aldermen at the first opportunity in November 1929.

Table 6.2 General Election Results in Blackburn 1918 to 1945.

Year	Result	Vote
1918	Rt. Hon. Sir H Norman Bt. Co Lib	32,976
	P T Dean Co Con	30,158
1922	Sir H H Henn Con	28,280
	Rt. Hon. Sir H Norman Bt. Nat Lib	27,071
1923	J Duckworth Lib	31,117
	Sir H H Henn Con	28,505
1924	J Duckworth Lib	31,612
	Sir H H Henn Con	31,347
1929	Mrs M A Hamilton Lab	37,256
	T H Gill Lab	35,273
1931	Sir W D Smiles Con	50,105
	G S Elliston Con	49,952
1935	G S Elliston Con	37,932
	Sir W D Smiles Con	37,769

Source. Blackburn Year Book 1945 Page 92.

Local politics during the Inter-war Years.

After the ward boundary changes in 1918, Blackburn had 14 electoral wards each with 3 councillors and 1 alderman making a total of 56 seats available on the council. Unlike Preston, it could not be said that local politicians in Blackburn were indistinguishable from their Conservative counterparts and party-politics in Blackburn was evident in the town. In November 1929, it was reported that: 'Labour made history at Blackburn. Five seats were gained at yesterdays Municipal Elections,'⁹ and furthermore, the Labour group immediately stated that: 'We are going to have half the Aldermanic seats. This will allow us to have power'. They also elected the first Labour Mayor Alderman L Bates. J.P., This was very much a short-lived victory as Table 6.3 indicates when the Conservatives once again won the majority of council seats in 1930.

In a number of ways Blackburn politics mirrored Wigan, rather than Preston. The power on the council changed hands at the first opportunity that the Labour Party had. This was also true in Wigan, where the difference was that having gained control in 1925, they were to retain it throughout the inter-war period by a massive majority, despite the national political scene during the period. Blackburn had a Conservative council during the inter-war years and exhibited what could be called the more traditional nature of adversarial party-politics.

⁹ See Blackburn Times 2nd November 1929 p1.

Table 6.3 Municipal Election Results in Blackburn from 1919 to 1938.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>Independant</u>	<u>Comments</u>
1919	37	11	5	3	
1920	37	11	5	3	
1921	35	11	7	3	
1922	38	8	7	3	
1923	36	10	7	3	
1924	38	8	7	3	
1925	41	7	6	2	
1926	35	12	5	4	4 Labour Gains
1927	34	13	5	4	4 Labour Gains
1928	29	17	6	4	4 Labour Gains
1929	22	28	3	3	5 Labour Gains
1930	28	24	2	2	6 Cons Gains
1931	34	19	1	2	5 Cons Gains
1932	36	16	2	2	2 Cons Gains
1933	30	18	4	2	2 Vacancies
1934	23	24	5	2	6 Labour Gains
1935	24	25	5	2	
1936	26	22	6	2	3 Labour losses
1937	27	20	5	2	2 Vacancies
1938	29	20	5	2	

Source. Blackburn Times after November elections in the first week of November in each year.

Inter-war Housing in Blackburn.

This central section of the chapter will examine the nature of housing policy in Blackburn under the various housing acts and will focus on: -

- Blackburn's housing provision up to the end of the First World War.
- Housing policy and politics under the various inter-war housing acts.
- The nature of territorial politics, a structured polity and housing policy.
- Welfarism anew and the path dependent nature of housing provision.
- The territorial relations and the nature of local possessive pluralism.

Blackburn's Housing provision prior to the First World War.

Blackburn borough council did not consider that its housing needs were that great prior to the First World War. From 1905 to 1918, Blackburn, like the majority of towns and cities in the country, was reliant on private enterprise to construct houses in the town and the borough council did not erect houses. Table 5.4 gives details of the houses constructed from 1905 to 1919. Surprisingly there were a reasonable number of houses constructed considering this was during the First World War.

Table 5.4 Houses constructed in Blackburn 1905 to 1918 by Private Enterprise.

Year	Number Constructed
1905	217
1906	246
1907	239
1908	266
1909	223
1910	284
1911	150
1912	129
1913	175
1914	195
1915	139
1916	46
1917	2
Total	2306

Source. County Borough of Blackburn. Housing of the Working Classes. Report of the Housing Special Sub-Committee, 21st September 1917. Appendix B, p4.

It is evident that house constructions had left the borough in a reasonable position and this was perhaps why a report in 1917 stated that 'no houses are required now, the number to be built at the close of the War should be 500'.¹⁰ There were a considerable number of unoccupied houses also which the borough council decided

¹⁰ See BBC Minutes 21st September 1917 and also Appendices A and B. Appendix A is a full report of housing in the town.

to ignore because 'amongst those who have fallen there are a good many householders'. The report was commissioned as a response to the LGBs circular requesting local authorities to ascertain their housing needs at the end of the War and to prepare plans to build.¹¹

In August 1917, the circular from the LGB had captured the imagination of the local press and suggested that: 'Private enterprise have failed to properly house the working classes who are too poor to carry out the work for themselves the state though, through the municipalities, must come to the rescue'. (Blackburn Times August 1917, p2) Various suggestions were made, for example:

Closure of unfit houses without compensation to owners.....at least 3 bedroom houses with bathrooms should be provided.....all local rates should be abolished and monies required raised by Parliament.....Notwithstanding the trade in liquor traffic such taxation would pay for all housing schemes.

Housing was firmly on the political agenda and a Conservative council was preparing schemes in compliance with the instructions from the LGB.¹² There is evidence here of central/local co-operation at an earlier time than the 1919 Act but this was as a result of central discussions on housing policy as a result of the fear of revolution during 1917. Never the less there is this early indication that a Conservative council were looking for state subsidies to assist in house-building. They were prepared to build: 'provided the financial assistance revealed by the

¹¹ The report contained information concerning correspondence from the BTLC on the question of housing provision and the areas to be addressed in their opinion.

¹² The committee would now become the General Purposes and Housing Sub Committee.(GPHSC)

Government is adequate and satisfactory'¹³ Previously, all building in the town (See Table 6.4) had been constructed by private enterprise. This is local evidence of early changing ideas on housing policy and is worthy of note given the political nature of the town and also the changing nature of central/local relations which were evolving. It is evidence also of the changing nature of territorial relations illustrating that a dual polity with mutual deference and frigidity was not the operative code in central/local relations as far as housing policy was concerned.

Housing in Blackburn from 1918 to the introduction of the Housing Act of 1919.

The LGB's circular dated the 18th March 1918 was received and it was agreed that the borough engineer and the chairman be empowered to: 'negotiate for sites and report to this committee.....The Chairman be empowered to appoint an architectural assistant in the Borough Engineers department'¹⁴ A site had been selected in October 1918 at Green Lane and it was decided to seek tenders for this site for 40 houses. Blackburn decided from the outset to seek tenders on the basis of houses constructed in blocks of four. The tender process in Blackburn was different also and these were sought from individual builders, and individual tradesmen. Advertisements were placed in the local newspapers and in trade journals. In June 1919 it was being reported that three sites had been selected in: -

- Green Lane, 13.5 acres.
- Intack, 13.25 acres.
- Brownhills, 25.5 acres.

¹³ See BBC Minutes September 1917 Appendices A and B.

These sites had been offered to the corporation: 'at a price somewhat in excess of the valuation.....that the District Valuer be requested to negotiate with the owners on behalf of the corporation for purchase.....that the sub-committee be authorised to submit them to the LGB for approval'.¹⁵ By July 1919 it was decided to build 136 houses on the Green Lane site situated in the South West of Blackburn in the Cherry Tree district.¹⁶

Blackburn Housing and the Housing Act of 1919.

The 1919 Housing Act was first mentioned to the borough council on the 19th August 1919. The town clerk, Mr Lewis Beard, explained the new act and especially the level of subsidies now agreed with the MOH. Blackburn had already made arrangements to purchase land at the Green Lane site, in Intack for a second site and finally at Brownhills. The council were advised that 'the negotiations for the Green Lane, Cherry Tree site, have failed and recommend that an order for compulsory acquisition of the said piece of land'.¹⁷

The committee was also advised that agreement had been reached for the Intack site and the price agreed. Detailed plans had been submitted by the borough engineer and these were approved. By September 1919, agreement had also been reached for the Brownhills site and the BMOH had approved all three sites. The Green Lane site

¹⁴ See GPHSCM 16th December 1918 pp11-12)

¹⁵ See GPHSCM June 1919, p16.

¹⁶ It should be remembered that subsidies had not yet been agreed, and the 1919 Housing Act of 1919 was not yet in force.

¹⁷ See GPHSCM August 1919, p15.

was to prove problematic and the Ministry was querying the layouts of type A south-facing houses. The council sought a meeting with the local housing commissioner in Manchester so that they could discuss them with him. Ultimately the council would resolve to: 'apply for the deletion of the modifications and conditions' suggested by the ministry. The borough council clearly wanted their own choice on the matter which is perhaps surprising given the conservative nature of the council. This is however an indication that even where centre and periphery were in phase the localities considered local needs more important than national directives. Furthermore it is also illustrative of the evolving ideas of the locality on local political issues even where state subsidies were involved.

In late October 1919, the committee were advised that the order for compulsory purchase of the Green lane site had been confirmed by the MOH and the housing commissioner had now approved the plans for building of 40 houses on the site. It was also: 'recommended that a Clerk of Works be engaged'.¹⁸ Again, this is a shift in ideational thinking as the town had previously not been involved in housing issues to any significant extent. It is noteworthy that at this early stage in state housing programmes Blackburn were prepared to invest monies from the local rates in the payment of salaries for housing officers. This had also been evidenced by the fact that the borough also employed an architectural assistant.

Significantly, the committee also approved the: 'erection of 576 houses, and recommended that such schemes be submitted for the Ministry of Health for

¹⁸ See GPHSCM November 1919, pp27-30.

approved'.¹⁹ The tenders for Green Lane were considered as the tender from John Cronshaw and Sons (Blackburn) Ltd., for the erection of 40 houses in blocks of 4, at the price now mentioned be accepted'. The borough council received confirmation of the proposals to build the 576 houses. It was reported in the press that; 'Dr Addison had written to Blackburn confirming approval of the housing scheme' and stated: 'I desire to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the earnestness of your Council submitting a scheme for housing for your district'.²⁰

Two issues were now to be raised concerning the method of construction of houses and also the type of material to be used in the construction. Tenders had been received by the council for the erection of 100 houses built of concrete rather than the traditional brick construction it was resolved that the 'construction of 100 concrete houses not be accepted'. The issue of building, using direct labour, was considered rather than using local building companies. It was reported that a local authority in Newbury had used its own building department and the borough decided to investigate this further: 'the Borough Engineer and Councillors Brierley and Kenyon were to visit Newbury and inspect houses'.²¹ The sub-committee was to visit Newbury on the 23rd April 1920 and reported to the meeting in June 1920 and recommended that houses be constructed by direct labour.²² Houses were constructed in blocks of four with a central passage. They contained a living room, parlour, scullery with pantry, and three bedrooms and a bathroom. The houses in Blackburn were 2534 Superficial feet and in Newbury 2497 Superficial feet.

¹⁹ See GPHSCM *ibid.*

²⁰ The price was not minuted but according to the Blackburn Times of the 22/11/1919, p1, this was £883.15s per house.

²¹ See GPHSCM April 1920, p17.

²² Estimates in Newbury were £684 and the actual cost was £700, in Blackburn the lowest tender was for £875.

Full details of construction costs were given in detail. The meeting concluded: 'in view of what we have seen at Newbury and the unsatisfactory progress that is being made at the Green Lane site, we recommend that the Housing Committee have a scheme prepared for building houses by Direct Labour in Blackburn'.²³ The meeting were advised that: 'there would be a saving of £58 4s per house by direct labour'.²⁴ This compared with the reported savings of £175 per house in Newbury. It was however a substantial saving nevertheless and one worthy of serious consideration.

Not everyone was pleased at the move towards direct labour. The Master Builders Federation sought a meeting with the sub-committee in August 1920 because of their concerns with the effect that this policy would have on skilled trades and local independent building contractors in the town. The sub-committee decided to recommend that the report be accepted. It was noticeable that the December minutes of the committee were to refer to the direct labour issue as: 'Direct Employment of Labour',²⁵ they agreed to build: '40 houses on the Intack Site.....and to report further when sufficient progress had been made to enable information to be given as to results, financial and otherwise'.²⁶ This was a significant proposal by the council, who, although they were not prepared to engage in the creation of a direct works department, as Wigan would do, they were prepared to directly engage in the employment of labour and thereby cutting out any profit element that a private enterprise intermediary would receive. It is accepted of course that individual

²³ Wages were higher in Blackburn also. Skilled workers in Blackburn earned 2/4d per hour, in Newbury this was 1/11d. Unskilled workers earned 2/- per hour and 1/8d respectively.

²⁴ The prices were confirmed in the GPHSCM of June 1920.

²⁵ This was perhaps a significant ideological change given that the council was Conservative.

²⁶ GPHSCM 20th December 1920, p17

builders and firms would be able to apply for the work, and indeed the tenders would include an element of profit, it was however thought that this would be less than that which would normally be charged. There was no evidence of the existence of building rings in Blackburn as there had been in Wigan. The significant point is that the local council were prepared to fundamentally control the possibility of profiteering, something, which was perhaps alien to conservative ideology and free enterprise. It was a further indication of the shift in local thinking on local housing policy.

It was now 16 months since the passing of the 1919 Act and Blackburn was ready to display its new houses to the public and proceed to let them. The borough engineer reported that four houses were now ready for occupancy and had been completed and on the 4th December 1920, the Blackburn Telegraph reported that:

A furnished house in Green Lane was opened for inspection and over 12000²⁷ people visited the house and several deputations from other towns have been conducted around the houses, people from Newcastle, Leeds and Preston have made the journeys. The Housing Committee have a waiting list of 50 would-be tenants'.²⁸

On the question of lettings, the BMOH reported that despite the fact that no advertising of the houses had been undertaken, there had been 276 applications for housing and that a preference was shown for non-parlour type houses 'Probably because the rent was less'.²⁹

²⁷ This number could have been a misprint in the newspaper but that was the figure reported.

²⁸ See Blackburn Telegraph 4th December 1920 p1.

²⁹ See BMOH Annual Report 1921 p16.

Building in the town continued and the borough engineer submitted plans for the Brownhills Site. The site was described as: ‘ a splendid area at the disposal of the authorities, who are taking advantage of the opportunity to erect what will be a miniature garden city with a handsome park in its midst’.³⁰ As the site plan shows it was effectively a miniature garden city built on the outskirts on the town and was within the spirit of what the Tudor Walters Report was endeavouring to procure as the standards of accommodation that should be achieved.

By April 1921, the question of housing subsidies was becoming less important to central government as has already been shown elsewhere. The effect this had was felt just as much in Blackburn as it was in Preston and Wigan and the tenders submitted for the Intack site were being queried and delayed. These were the houses that were to be completed by direct employment of labour and the tenders had been rejected by the MOH. The sub-committee resolved that:

They beg to report they have considered the question of the refusal by the Ministry of Health to approve the plans and estimates for the erection of houses on the Intack site by the direct employment of labour, and that they have appointed Mr Alderman Fielding and the Borough Engineer to visit London and interview a responsible official at the Ministry of Health with a view to obtaining the necessary approval of the plans and estimates as already submitted.³¹

³⁰ See Blackburn Telegraph 15th January 1921 p1.

³¹ Tenders were rejected by the MOH throughout the period April to October. This was a deliberate ploy by the Ministry to slow production of housing given the economic climate. See GPHSC April 1921 p16.

The borough engineer was advised to obtain new tenders by the Ministry. These were submitted on the 22nd August and again rejected as too costly, the borough were advised to draw up plans for smaller houses and to obtain tenders. The sub-committee resolved that: 'they are not prepared to proceed with the erection of houses of an inferior type to those previously approved by the Ministry and erected by the Corporation'.³² The situation remained unresolved and in September the press reported that: 'the housing Sub-Committee were fed up with the attitude of the Ministry'.³³ The Ministry of Health were asking the Corporation to submit plans for a smaller type houses, the response was an emphatic: 'No!'.³⁴ The culmination of the issue was reported on the 7th October when:

As a result of an interview between the Mayor, the Borough Engineer and Sir Charles Ruthen, Head of the Housing Department at the Ministry of Health, permission had now been given for the erection of 20 additional houses on the Intack site provided that fresh tenders were obtained.³⁵

The original designs were accepted and a process of re-tendering undertaken although there is no evidence of the final outcome save to say that building would continue on the site until 1923 when an additional: '97 houses were proposed'.³⁶

By the end of 1922³⁷ the BMOH reported that a number of smaller type cottage flats would be erected on the Intack site that would be suitable for: 'old couples or widows with only 1 or 2 children'.³⁸ This is an excellent example of the change of

³² See GPHSCM 26th June 1922 pp14-15.

³³ The ministry were also refusing to allow the closure of unfit houses in the borough. GPHSC August 1921, p15.

³⁴ See Blackburn Telegraph 2nd September 1922, p1.

³⁵ See Blackburn Telegraph 7th October 1922 p1.

³⁶ See GPHSCM 26th June 1923.

³⁷ See BMOH Annual Report 1923 p26.

³⁸ See BMOH Annual Report 1923 p26.

attitude locally towards housing issues in the borough. It was a change from non-involvement prior to 1919 to almost a role of social provision accepted by the locality which, was being promoted by the obvious concerns for the less well off families and older members of the community. The considerations by the council were that: 'There appears to be a demand for smaller cottage flats. These would supply the needs of those who can't afford the rent of the existing municipal houses'. This was recognised by the BMOH in his annual report of 1922.³⁹ It was also reported that there was: '322 Applicants on the Corporation waiting list'. There was clearly still a need for housing in the town and the borough would continue to build and to encourage building under the provisions of the 1923 and 1924 Housing Acts. Table 6.5 indicates the building progress in the town from 1919 to 1938.

Table 6.5 illustrates the slow progress made in Blackburn under the 1919 Act and the borough completed only 172 houses in the period to 1922, whereas Preston constructed 480 and Wigan 135 with only 70.9 per cent of the population of Blackburn. Preston's output was far in excess of the other towns. Private enterprise had not done much better with only 64 completions in Blackburn, 55 in Preston and 20 in Wigan. Housing provision started slowly when the target by this date was half a million homes constructed by local authorities by the middle of 1922. Three major towns had constructed only 787 houses with state-aided provision and only a further 139 houses constructed by private enterprise. The target of 'homes fit for heroes' was indeed fading fast by 1922 as economic recession hit hard.

³⁹ See BMOH Annual Report 1922, p15, also Annual Report 1923, p26 which illustrate the concerns.

Table 6.5 Houses Constructed in Blackburn 1919 to 1938.

Houses Constructed by

<u>Year.</u>	<u>Private Enterprise.</u>	<u>Local Authority.</u>
1919	1	Nil
1920	23	Nil
1921	10	83
1922	20	89
1923	16	Nil
1924	59	20
1925	150	97
1926	131	170
1927	156	174
1928	41	94
1929	84	194
1930	89	190
1931	Nil	254
1932	82	376
1933	114	Nil
1934	220	Nil
1935	258	52
1936	328	18
1937	388	18
1938	338	40
Totals.	2508	1869

Source. Blackburn Medical Officer of Health. Annual Reports 1919 to 1938.

Blackburn Housing and the Housing Acts of 1923 and 1924.

The introduction of the Housing Act of 1923 by a Conservative government met with approval in Blackburn with a Conservative local authority in power; the political nature and complexion at central and local level was the same.⁴⁰

A special meeting was arranged in the town during August of 1923 to discuss the situation with regard to the provisions under the act and especially the fact that the borough. Like those in the rest of the country, Blackburn, were able to extend subsidies to private builders for the erection of houses.⁴¹ The housing sub-committee considered the matter and it was resolved: ‘to allow lump sum payment of £100 to those builders or individuals constructing housing complying with the Act’.⁴² In Preston, the amount was £120 for two storied houses and £100 for bungalows. Blackburn made no differentiation. The act was of course short lived and by December there was a change of government and Wheatley introduced his own housing act. The borough council did not construct any houses in 1923 and private builders contributed only 16 houses in 1923. This was a reflection of the short lived nature of the 1923 Act and illustrates that neither the borough or private builders had the opportunity to do much in the act’s provision of housing. It was reported in February 1924, that the: ‘Council will erect those houses of a type and size available for Exchequer subsidy’.⁴³ These were proposed for the Brownhills site but

⁴⁰ This was as we have seen short-lived as a new Labour government would take power and the Wheatley Act introduced in 1924.

⁴¹ Local Authorities were no longer empowered to build under the 1923 act.

⁴² See GPHSCM 23rd August 1923

⁴³ SEE GPHSCM February 1924 p19.

unfortunately no subsidy was available unless the council could prove that local builders were unable to build, the matter was, it appears, left in abeyance.

Blackburn Housing under the 1924 Act.

The town clerk reported receipt of circular 520 from the Ministry of Health on the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act 1924 to the housing sub-committee in September 1924. The borough engineer and the borough treasurer were instructed to prepare plans and report on 'the question of erecting houses within the provisions of the Act for the Brownhills site'.⁴⁴ It would be some months before the report was prepared but building still continued by private enterprise and the subsidy of £100 was still available and this would continue into 1925. The major shift in this policy was that the subsidy would only be paid to those builders who were prepared to sell the house at a price not exceeding £600 for those council houses built by private enterprise. This was again a significant ideological shift in local politics in Blackburn with the Conservative council insisting on private construction for rental at an affordable price. Houses for the working-classes would still be built under the 1923 Act but were price fixed by the borough council and profit levels for private enterprise curtailed by a Conservative council. This did not appear to be detrimental or a deterrent to local builders as housing was now constructed under the provisions of both the 1923 and 1924 Acts and local authorities were, as we have seen, empowered to build once again without recourse to private enterprise.

⁴⁴ See GPHSCM August 1924 p15.

There was still a need for housing in the town and the BMOH reported that in 1924 the waiting list was now 581 applicants.⁴⁵ By 1925, the BMOH was also reporting that: 'Compared with many industrial towns Blackburn is fortunate in its housing conditions.....it cannot be said that there are any real slum property.....I have not as yet discovered any back to back houses'^{46 47}

The progression of the building on the Brownhill site was therefore paramount to satisfy the demand for housing indicated by the waiting lists. During the course of March and April 1925 the council would propose that 238 houses and flats be constructed on the Brownhills site and contracts for these houses were placed with local builders in June.⁴⁸

The borough was still encouraging building by private enterprise and proposed that a further 100 houses be built on a new site at Hollin Bridge Street. They duly applied to the Ministry for sanction to borrow the £100 per house subsidy and £10,000 was requested.⁴⁹ The scheme was to build smaller type houses to keep the cost of housing down. Blackburn now offered a range of houses for rental in its borough ranging from 6/6d to 10/9d.⁵⁰ The borough engineer was asked to report on the position regarding further provision of houses in the town and in December 1926 he was recommending that: 'further 100 houses be built on the Brownhills site'.⁵¹ The

⁴⁵ See BMOH Annual Report 1924 p23.

⁴⁶ See BMOH Annual Report 1925 p24. It was also reported that overcrowding was less obvious with the average occupation of persons per room now being 1.1 persons. This continued to fall throughout the inter-war years.

⁴⁷ This was significant given the experience of other cities. For example, see R Ryder on Leeds in M J Daunton Eds. Councillors and Tenants.

⁴⁸ See GPHSCM May and June 1925.

⁴⁹ See GPHSCM March 1926 p17.

⁵⁰ A 3 Bedroom parlour house would be 10/9d whilst a 2 bedroom non-parlour house would be 6/6d

⁵¹ See GPHSCM December 1926 p19.

financial details were given to the council but not reported in the minutes. In January 1927, the borough council were to reduce subsidies to private builders from £100 to £75 and were to reduce the ceiling level for costs from £600 to £550 in view of the prevailing economic conditions. Interest rates and hence the cost of building materials and labour were reducing at a sufficient level for these reductions to be considered appropriate by the borough council. During the period from 1924 to 1927 building by the borough council and by private enterprise had been at a comparable rate (See Table 6.5) with 496 houses constructed by private builders and 461 houses by the borough council. By January 1927 subsidies for private enterprise builders were reduced from £100 to £75 and the maximum selling price reduced from £600 to £550. The nett effect of this would be that from 1928 until 1932 only 296 houses were constructed by private enterprise. However local authority construction remained higher at 1108 houses. (See Table 6.5)

The situation was completely in line with government subsidies, which were available to both sectors. However this was to change when subsidies were withdrawn for private builders throughout the rest of the period, when the 1924 Act was in force which was until 1932, even though subsidies were reduced from £9 to £7 10s in 1927. Blackburn borough council made application under the 1923 Act for further subsidies in August of 1927 but these were refused.

The period from 1928 to 1932 saw the largest increase in building by the borough council. (See Table 6.5) It was also the leanest period for house building by private builders who would only again commence serious building programmes from 1933 onwards. Building was to continue and the site at both Intack and Brownhills were

to be expanded by the purchase of a further 3.5 acres of land at Intack and the erection of 96 houses at Brownhills (Roe Lee site).⁵²The BMOH was reporting that in 1928, there was still: '471 Blackburn residents living in rooms who are on the waiting list for Corporation housing'.⁵³ He was also reporting that in comparison to many other East Lancashire towns Blackburn residents were housed in satisfactory conditions. They were however still to embark on what was a massive campaign in relation to their perceived needs.

The borough council by 1929 had become Labour controlled the Labour group having progressively taken local councils seats since 1926. (See Table 6.3) This culminated in a 16 seat gain overall in four years from 1926 to 1929 which saw Labour with 28 seats and Conservatives with 22 and significantly they gained 11 seats in the 1929 election which mirrored national trends seeing the second Labour government in office. It is therefore not surprising that with a Labour government again in office nationally, and a Labour controlled council in the locality that the proposals were for a massive housing scheme in Blackburn. The recommendation was that the borough proceed to build: '2250 houses under the 1924 Act and 175 Houses under the new Act of 1930'.⁵⁴ Nothing like this total would actually be built by the borough council who were still applying for sanctions under the Housing Act of 1924 as were all the other towns in the country. Nevertheless, the attempt to construct this huge number of houses continued unabated throughout 1930, 1931 and 1932. From 1928 to 1932 the borough constructed 1108 houses whilst private building amounted to only 296 houses. The situation was about to change with the

⁵² See GPHSCM April and May 1827.

⁵³ See BMOH Annual Report 1928 p29.

building boom of the 1930s about to commence. The outputs were completely reversed during this period with Blackburn borough council almost ceasing to build houses as Table 6.5 illustrates.

Housing in Blackburn under the 'Three Acts of 1930, 1933 and 1935'.

It is important to recognise the perception of Blackburn borough council's position with regard to housing and the housing conditions in the town during the early 1930s in order to understand what appears to be a complete abrogation of responsibility as regards housing provision under the 'Three Acts'. It was evident that the council, who were now in phase politically with the centre, simply complied with government legislation. Even so, private enterprise building continued with central government subsidies and constructed 1,708 houses from 1932 to 1938. This reaffirms the point that housing subsidies had become a 'path dependent' policy, territorial relations were interactive, a dual polity with mutual deference did not operate, local possessive pluralism was not displayed and, with Blackburn's town clerk being a central figure in the AMC, a structured polity was in existence. The AMC had, overall, been privy to negotiations with central government on housing policy.

⁵⁴ The GPHSC were now the Health and Housing Committee (HHC) See Minutes 6th December 1930 p13.

As we have seen the houses constructed from 1929 to 1932 were the highest totals during the inter-war period, with 1014 houses constructed (See Tale 6.5). This no doubt assisted the already quite available housing stock, as the borough perceived it to be. The council completed a survey of needs in line with the directives received from the Ministry of Health under the 1930 Act and later under the 1933 Act, as they were now required to do by law. The BMOH reported that they had completed a survey of overcrowding in the borough and had analysed some 3000 houses with four rooms or more. One of the surprising features was that there were: '250 houses in themselves fit for habitation (which) are overcrowded'.⁵⁵ Whereas the normal situation was, that houses were overcrowded slums, and unfit for human habitation. The borough considered that the current legislation, under the 1930 and 1933 acts did not suffice the needs in the borough which was for:

Larger houses for the families, but, under existing legislation no subsidy is available for re-housing families dispersed from houses other than that dealt with as part of an insanitary area under the Housing Act of 1930.....the solution of the problem would appear to lie in: -

1. A subsidy being available for the rehousing of the individual
2. A system of differential grant for families so re-housed'.

⁵⁵ See BMOH Annual Report 1933 p41. It was also reported that densities of housing were 16 persons per acre and persons per room occupation had reduced to 0.82 persons per room.

This was too the aim of the AMC in which Blackburn had a significant influence on the law committee, if not on the housing committee. The former advised the latter, it is not surprising that this influence affected the attitudes of those negotiating with the Ministry of Health at regional level on behalf of the local authorities. Again this is an example of the dual nature of local representation and the ability of the locality to use both channels of communication to their greatest advantage. The subsidies under the Wheatley Act of 1924 were abolished by Hilton Young the Minister of Health under the 1933 Act having seen that the 1930 Act had failed to clear the slums and that local authorities continued to build under this act rather than the new provisions. This was not surprising given the level of subsidies under the two acts.

By 1933, Blackburn council had ceased to provide housing given that this was not subsidised from central funds and also that under the Housing Act of 1930 the subsidies were unattractive and building had ceased under the provisions of the Wheatley Act of 1924. The provisions of the 1933 Act completely changed the role and function of local authorities. This was reflected in the lack of output in Blackburn as well as in other major towns, a situation reflected in Conservative controlled Preston, but not, as we shall see in Labour controlled Wigan whose housebuilding programme continued.⁵⁶

By September 1934, the sub-committee met with the borough engineer to discuss the requirements in the town but they resolved that: 'In view of the high rentals that would have to be charged without state assistance that no action be taken in this

⁵⁶ See Chapter 8 for a comparison of output in the various towns.

matter'.⁵⁷ The council clearly signalling that they were not prepared to build under the terms of the 1933 Act, a confirmation that central governments directives that the nature, role and function of local authorities in housing provision had changed. This was completely in line with central government and was an indication of the locality once again being in phase with the centre in political complexion.

The Housing Act of 1935 placed a duty on local authorities to survey overcrowding in their areas and to prepare a five-year plan for housing followed by a five-year rolling plan. Overcrowding was legally defined for the first time and it became an offence in law to have overcrowded conditions in which people had to live. Blackburn complied with the legislation, which was confirmed in April 1935, but little was minuted after this date on progress. A proposal to build 130 houses was proposed by the housing sub-committee in August 1936 when the borough engineer was asked to report on available sites. However, this was refused by the full council and in effect concluded the inter-war housing campaign in Blackburn. Blackburn would construct only 58 more houses in 1937 and 1938. (See Table 6.5)

It appeared that the borough council was prepared to go along with the provisions under the various acts and that they were not unduly concerned at the nature of the provisions. A further survey was completed on overcrowding in 1936, under the terms of the 1935 act. The BMOH reported that:

Arising out of the overcrowding survey the Health and Housing Committee considered steps to be taken to secure abatement, and in doing so, have

⁵⁷ IN 1932 the title of the Committee was again changed to the Estates and Housing Committee and a new sub-committee was formed and will be referenced as Housing Sub Committee Minutes(HSCM). See HSCM September 1934 p34.

regards to 170 privately owned and empty houses suitable for occupation by members of the working-class. Approaches were made to the Property Owners Associations with a view to those houses being offered to the Corporation for decrowding purposes 34 houses had been offered.....Since the overcrowding census had been completed 115 families have become decrowded.⁵⁸

Blackburn politics and Housing under the 'Three Acts'.

One of the most significant factors affecting local policy in Blackburn was the political nature of both the centre and the locality and the provisions of the legislation under the 1933 Act, which saw no role at all for local authorities in housing provision. The composition of the local authority from 1931 to 1938 was in the overall control of the Conservatives although from 1934 to 1937 this was with the assistance of both the Liberals and Independents in the council chamber. Unlike Preston there was no evidence of a process of socialisation in political life and it does appear that there was more of a party political nature to politics in Blackburn than that exhibited in Preston as the evidence has shown. Blackburn was more adversarial perhaps because there was no extra-political social networks evident in the politics of the town.

⁵⁸ See BMOH Annual Report 1936 p40.

Conclusions.

The central questions in this chapter concerns the nature and complexion of territorial politics and central/local relations within the policy field of state-aided housing provision during the inter-war years in Blackburn.

A number of significant issues and questions were raised concerning:

- The nature of local politics in the town and how centre/periphery relations were conducted.
- The use of the AMC within a tripartite relationship in territorial politics.
- The evidence of a structural relationship in territorial politics.
- How central policy was implemented locally and how this affected central/local co-operation.
- What evidence was there of attitudinal change by both polities.

This analysis was completed in relation to the core questions solicited in this thesis with regard to:

- The nature and complexion of territorial relations and how these began at an earlier time and were conducted within a structured polity rather than the dual polity thesis suggested by Bulpitt.
- That the impact of state-aided housing policy in 1919 was the genesis of welfarism anew and marked a significant shift in politics, welfare provision and economic orthodoxy. Policy continued throughout the inter-war years and having once become established became path dependent. Housing provision was high politics.

- Attitudinal change began and central/local relations changed. Territorial politics was not characterised by mutual deference and frigidity but was more interactive.
- Central/local relations were conducted within a framework of diminishing fiscal tensions and high deference to local possessive pluralism, and local possessive pluralism itself began to change. This fundamental change, was assisted by state-aided housing provision, and subsidies to both the public and private sectors in housing, especially from the mid-1930s.
- The motives for intervention changed individual need being recognised in an emerging policy as the varying strands of thinking themselves began a transformation.
- The emergence of the AMC, and its liaison and organisational function within a structured regional/national relationship in housing politics and policy formulation.

What evidence was there in Blackburn to support the core hypotheses?

The chapter endeavoured to ascertain the level of interaction and the relationships that existed with the centre and how those relationships could be classified as being consensual, conflictual, deferential or mutually conducive and having a high level of interaction. The data and evidence, especially from local political parties and trades organisations, was not available, as it had been in the other case studies despite extensive searches both locally and nationally. Nevertheless local minutes and newspaper records did provide sufficient information for analysis and comparison with the other case studies. They also provided too information on housing policy

and the flavour and nature of politics in the town especially on housing policy and provision.

Central Policy Implementation and Central/Local Relations in Blackburn.

The adoption by the local authority of government housing policy, almost to the letter, was perhaps because in the main both levels of government were of the same political complexion. The short-lived Labour governments in 1924 and 1929 produced policies conducive to housebuilding in Blackburn and whilst Conservative policies did not necessarily meet with approval within the locality there was no evidence of any deterioration in relationships. On the contrary, Blackburn continued to build under the Wheatley Act, which provided the most advantageous subsidies.

The conservative nature of the AMC was reflected in the politics of Blackburn and vice-versa. It seems reasonable to assume that the influence the borough had within the AMC, with Mr Lewis Beard being chairman of the influential law committee, was also an influence within the borough council. The borough must have been privy to both the governments thinking as well as the AMC's views on housing policy and what was, and was not, politically or practically possible. It could even be said to be an insider's view or an intimate relationship. This is also a good example of the influence of institutions on politics and how significant actors can influence those institutional structures regionally, locally and in the implementation of policy issues and objectives. Blackburn clearly operated within a structured polity.

Attitudinal change and local possessive pluralism.

It was suggested earlier that attitudinal change from the centre and periphery was a prerequisite to closer central/local relations if mutual deference and local possessive pluralism were to be overcome. Blackburn demonstrated that they could engender very close relationships with the Ministry. They followed central direction in policy implementation almost to the letter, they were in phase⁵⁹ politically with central government and even when not of the same political colour or complexion, for a brief time when a Labour administration was in office, they were appreciative of the terms and subsidies on offer under the Wheatley Act. Furthermore, the borough had significant influence at regional level within the AMC. There is no evidence of significant conflict in territorial relationships nor was there any evidence of fiscal tensions operating between the centre and the periphery. Blackburn appears to be an excellent example of a town, which was consensual in its relationships. Local possessive pluralism did not appear therefore to be an operational code in the politics of housing policy in Blackburn. It is accepted however that there was an element of deference in as much as Blackburn borough council complied with almost every directive from the centre in its consensual relationship in housing policy. There was no evidence of an attitude by central government of high deference to local possessive pluralism. Indeed relationships were consensual within a structured polity.

⁵⁹ The question of political phasing between the centre and periphery was discussed earlier but it means the centre and locality being of the same political complexion.

The borough having complied with policy direction there was no evidence either of fiscal tension save for a brief concern by the periphery over rental policy, a situation experienced also by Preston. The borough was not as significant a provider of housing as either Preston or Wigan but nevertheless they had constructed 1.869 houses for which they were now responsible as 'landlords'. Local possessive pluralism and deference to this by the centre was not an issue in Blackburn.

What was evident however was attitudinal change by the locality in a number of important ways concerning their new role and function in the territorial relations of housing policy. Prior to 1919 there had been significant output in housing by private enterprise in the town and clearly without any input from the local council. From 1919 however input from the council changed. Such issues as housing rentals, the provision of practical sized homes for poorer families and those with specific housing needs became the concern of the locality. The council was prepared to 'cap' the level of building costs to which it would contribute subsidies and it also insisted that such houses were to be for rental only. There was also a changed political attitude by a Conservative council towards the issue of welfare provision in the town, something not associated with private enterprise building, rentals, or housing policy in the town previously. The borough employed housing specialists from 1918 and also began to display impatience with central government, sometimes to the point of minor conflict, even though they were, politically and ideologically, in phase with central government during the period. In sum, it is considered that Blackburn made significant ideational and attitudinal shifts during the inter-war period. The changing mindsets transformed as policy promotion, and subsidies from the centre, emerged in there varying forms.

New Institutionalism. Politics and housing policy in Blackburn.

This final section will examine the issues of party-politics, pressure group politics and housing policy in Blackburn. It will focus on the concepts of historical institutionalism, and Institutions of Interest Representation.

These concepts, it will be argued, are equally valid when applied to the investigation of local political behaviour and the effects of structures and actors on local decision making, as they are when applied to national or international politics. Institutionalism needs to consider the significant variations that exist in close regional or geographical areas and it does so by allowing us to focus on local institutions and actors with equal validity when compared to national structures and agents.

The implementation of national policy at the local level and the interaction between the less formal organisations which are: 'themselves highly institutionalized...single parties or interest groups...(or) party systems....Structures that link state and society are indeed institutions'. (Peters, p112-113) Blackburn politics exhibits these institutional relationships that exist within its political community 'Political parties are one of the dominant players in the political arena and like any organizations can be conceptualized as institutions'. (Peters, p113) These concepts can be equally well applied to local institutions. 'Most of these organizations do impart to their members a sense of what they should and should not believe in, and how they should behave politically'. (Peters, p122) These institutions are also capable of socialising the personnel within their structures and this was obvious within the

nature of the party-politics evident in Blackburn that appeared lacking in Preston. The nature of the party-politics was such that at the earliest opportunity the Labour Party in Blackburn took control of the council. This however made little or no difference to local housing policy and they simply did not have the time to consider change in 1929, a problem that had befallen the Labour Party nationally in 1924 and again in 1929. The meaningful contribution by the centre however was the significance of the Wheatley Act of 1924 on housing provision, a policy left unchanged by successive Conservative governments.

It was clear that having embarked on a policy to provide housing for the working classes this became path dependent and the policy would continue throughout the inter-war period and beyond. The political nature of the housing subsidy did not affect the policy direction and housing was provided whether this was by the council itself or from private enterprise. The policy was initiated and continued and whilst it can be argued that the effects of national institutions and subsidies affected housing output, it did not affect the ideational concept of state-aided housing provision overall. It was a prime example of a policy initiative that would be continued until a significant shift in ideology in the 1980s changed the focus of policy.

Blackburn is an excellent example of consensual territorial politics and how this can and does direct local policy. It is evident that Blackburn accepted and introduced central policy almost without question and therefore the nature of central/local relations, and indeed regional/local relations, could be said to have been consensual. There was evidence of the occasional conflict with central government but this was not at a significant level. The important factor of course was housing provision and,

comparisons illustrate that Blackburn's policy assisted the provision of houses for the working-classes. It is also true to say that, of the three case studies, Blackburn had the least unhealthy and overcrowded conditions both in 1919 and at the end of the inter-war period.

There was evidence however of the influence of a local pressure group, the Master Builders Federation, who were concerned for the protection of their members when the council raised the question of building houses by direct labour. It is perhaps ideologically anathema, that a Conservative controlled council should consider building by this method. They were of course under pressure from the Ministry to erect houses by the most expedient and cost saving methods and hence extend reasonable rentals to those who occupied the dwellings. The issue was raised early in the building campaign in August 1920.⁶⁰ After considering the matter in April and deciding in June to erect houses using direct labour, rather than local building contractors, this after the borough had sent a deputation to Newbury to assess the scheme in operation there. It was obvious that this would have an adverse effect on local builders and the local economy but would result in cost savings by the borough. The council decided to accept the representations made by The Master Builders Federation but they still decided not to place contracts for work. What evidently did happen was that local builders, instead of submitting tenders, were employed by the borough to construct houses and thereafter, and only for a short period before tendering was re-introduced, the matter was referred to as 'the Direct Employment of Labour' rather than building by 'Direct Labour'.⁶¹ This is an example of a local pressure group, or one of interest representation using its

⁶⁰ See GPHSCM August 1920 p14.

influence on policy issues. The decision not to build by 'Direct Labour' actually placed the borough council in conflict with the MOH. Having submitted tenders for sanction by the Ministry based upon the housing prices in Newbury built by direct labour, they had to adjust these in the light of discussions with the Master Builders Federation. The council also demonstrated its intentions when it restricted subsidies to those houses built for less than £600, later £550, and conditional upon rental by the working-classes. The majority of houses came under the rateable value of £13 which was considered the level for working-class houses.

Blackburn is an excellent example of a local authority being 'in phase'⁶², with the political nature and complexion of the centre during the majority of the inter-war period. Housing policy in the town reflected government legislation within the spirit and the letter of those directives from the centre and would be different from the experiences of both Preston and Wigan. The initial problems of overcrowding, insanitary and unhealthy housing in the town were not so severe as other towns and this was reflected in the towns housing policy and output. This is perhaps why, in comparison with Wigan and Preston, the output per head of population was the least in the three towns.

In sum, Blackburn exhibited a number of characteristics in territorial relations similar to those found in Preston. Central/local relations were consensual which is not surprising given that the town was in phase with the nature of central government. When it was out of phase the housing subsidies, especially under the Wheatley Act, were beneficial to its housing provision and Blackburn complied with

⁶¹ See GPHSCM December 1920 p17.

central housing policy throughout the whole inter-war period, like Preston policy could be described as continuing and therefore 'path dependent'.

Local involvement in regional representation and the active commitment of the town clerk within the AMC ensured that the borough was fully involved in regional negotiations on housing policy. There is no evidence then of the existence of a dual polity or mutual deference by the centre towards the local authority. Clearly Blackburn accepted the fiscal provision for housing subsidies and policy was implemented almost to the letter. There was no evidence of local possessive pluralism and similarly deference by the centre. What Blackburn did experience was welfarism anew and the town built the 93.14 per cent of its state-aided housing under the subsidies contained in the Addison and Wheatley Acts. (See Tables 6.4 and 8.8)

Finally, there was a displayed attitudinal change, and ideational change from 1919 to 1939, which evolved as housing policy emerged from the centre. As indicated earlier there were significant local actions from a Conservative council which, would not have been displayed or utilised prior to the introduction of state aid for housing. The 'official mind' of both the centre and periphery had changed as policy evolved and the various strands of thinking on housing policy transformed.

⁶² The centre and periphery were of the same political colour and shared the same overall ideology.

Chapter 7.

'Ancient and Loyal'

Political Tenacity: Territorial Politics

and Inter-War Housing in Wigan.

Introduction.

This chapter concerns inter-war housing in Wigan and the nature and effects of both national and local politics and policies in housing provision for the working-classes. Wigan provided a contrasting political scenario to both Blackburn and Preston and exhibited a very different party-political nature in both local and territorial politics and in central/local relations. Wigan was, from the mid-1920s, a staunch Labour town and did not display the political characteristics of the politics of civic pride of Preston or a Conservative and consensual Blackburn. Given the different political complexion of the town and its tenacious political attitude, housing provision also provides a contrasting picture in terms of the nature and timing of the actual provision and the construction of houses under the various inter-war housing acts. Ideas on assisted housing provision emerged much earlier in Wigan as did the concept of the locality building working-class housing for rental which was much in evidence under the Housing Act of 1890, something not considered in Preston and Blackburn. The motives for, and methods of, intervention in housing policy, were placed on the political agenda from the turn of the century. Thus, social policy, which recognised individual need, was much more in evidence at an earlier time in Wigan as the evidence on the politics and policies of housing in the town will illustrate.

The focal point of discussion will centre on the various inter-war housing acts as well as how these acts were interpreted and implemented at local level and how it affected the actual provision of houses for the working-classes in the town. It will also analyse the nature, complexion and interactions in local politics and the relationships that existed between the centre and periphery. This chapter will focus on:-

- A brief survey of pre-World War One development in Wigan, its social, demographic, industrial and geographic evolution.
- The development of politics throughout the inter-war years.
- The introduction of the various housing acts during the period.
- Local pressure groups in Wigan and their influence on housing policy and politics.
- The nature of central/regional/local relations and housing policy and how these could be described as consensual or conflictual.
- The use of the AMC within a tripartite relationship in territorial politics and the evidence of a structural relationship.
- The influence of 'extra-political social relations'.
- What evidence was there of attitudinal change by both polities.

Early social, demographic, industrial and housing conditions in Wigan.

In the 1800s coal, iron and cotton brought prosperity to the town and placed Wigan firmly on the economic and industrial map. Mining played a significant industrial

and political function in the town and provided high levels of employment, for example in 1921 the number of mineworkers was 12,869. (See Table 7.2) This represented 36.52 per cent of the working population. Textiles also played an important part in employment with 8,640 persons employed in this area in 1921. In total these two occupations accounted for 61.04 per cent of the occupied working population in 1921.¹ It is not surprising therefore that the level of unionisation in Wigan was high with a strong representation from the mineworkers union. It was an important contribution to the local political nature and ideology of the town and how this influenced political behaviour and centre/periphery relations.

Canals also had a significant impact on the town and the establishment of a navigable waterway assisted the town's growth and economic prosperity and viability.² Rail-links were established with Preston and its docks in 1838 and it also became part of the main London to Scotland line. In 1848, Wigan was connected to Bolton, Bury, Liverpool and Manchester as part of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. It was at the heart of industry and transportation and like Preston was situated on a main arterial road. Demographic change was also significant and the population of the town increased considerably from 1801 as Table 7.1 illustrates. Wigan was a much smaller town than either Blackburn or Preston but nevertheless had a large population by 1921.

¹ Statistics taken from J M Humphries. M.A. Dissertation. Wigan Library Ref. 330.942.736.

Table 7.1 Population Increase in Wigan 1786 to 1931.

Year.	Population.
1786	5,000
1801	10,000
1851	31,041
1881	48,194
1901	60,770
1911	89,152
1921	89,421
1931	85,357

Source. J M Humphries. 'Economic Change and its Effect in Wigan and District 1918 - 1939. Wigan Reference Library.

Table 7.2 Wigan's Employment base from 1911 to 1931.

Wigan Employment from 1911 to 1931.			
	1911.	1921.	1931.
Occupied population	33,325	35,235	29,105
Mining employment	12,176	12,869	7,740
Textile employment	10,131	8,640	7,869
Metal workers	2,737	3,154	2,121
Transport and Communication	2,608	2,763	1,966
Commerce and Finance	657	3,662	5,333
Professional occupation	1,189	1,018	731
Personal Services	2,012	2,186	2,221
Building Trades	1,815	943	1,124

Source J M Humphries. As Table 7.1

² The canal system linked up with Leeds and Liverpool and also with the Bridgewater Canal to Leigh. The famous Wigan Pier was located at the centre of the network where the canals integrated.

The employment base of Wigan also shifted from 1911 to 1931, (See Table 7.2). The major employers were mining, textiles and metalworking with only marginal changes by 1931 when commerce and finance had also become important occupations.

Housing conditions in the town, according to the 1911 census were reflected in the percentage of the population living in houses with more than two persons per room. Table 7.3 gives an indication of the conditions in Lancashire where Wigan, when compared with Preston and Blackburn, was in a much poorer state being almost at the top of the list of overcrowded towns, only St Helens being in a worse situation.

Table 7.3 Percentage of the population living in houses with more than two persons per room in Lancashire. Extract from the 1911 census.

Town	Percentage of Overcrowding.
St Helens.	17.0
Wigan.	12.4*
Warrington.	10.6
Liverpool.	10.1
Salford	10.0
Burnley.	9.5
Bootle.	9.2
Manchester.	7.2
Preston.	5.6*
Blackburn.	4.4*
Blackpool.	4.2
Accrington.	3.8

* These are the towns under analysis. Source. 1911 census.

The overcrowded nature of the housing conditions and the employment base at the end of the 19th century would be one of the reasons Wigan specifically requested changes in housing designs (See below). Wigan borough council was making an attempt to ease overcrowding even before 1911 when the census was showing the deplorable conditions that still existed. The council had a Housing of the Working-Classes Committee at the end of the 1890s and between 1893 and 1903 it was attempting to build houses for the working-classes in the Scholes area of the town. The plan was to construct 210 houses in the Vauxhall Street area after demolishing unfit houses nearby.³ By 1902, the council had erected 160 of the houses and were to approach the LGB for some form of support to erect the remaining 50 houses planned which, under the act, it had an obligation to sell. It was resolved that the town clerk should seek a meeting with the LGB to: 'relieve the Corporation from the obligation to sell the 50 houses now proposed to be erected'.⁴ It continued to construct houses during 1903 and proposed that a further 54 houses be built in Spring Gardens.⁵ 59 houses were actually constructed on the site. Further building was proposed in 1908⁶ in the Melverley Street area of the town situated near Wigan Pier and the main road leading to the town-centre in Wallgate. Although this was proposed no further mention appears to be made of this again.

The borough also had an Insanitary Housing Committee and it was reporting on housing conditions in the town. By 1913, the Wigan medical officer of health reported to the committee that: 'the housing conditions in the Borough are deplorable, but a serious effort has been made during the year to inaugurate a real

³ This is evidence of the early involvement of the council and its desire to subsidize housing provision at a very early stage after the introduction of the Housing Act of 1890.

⁴ See Wigan Housing of the Working-classes Committee 16th July 1902 p58. (WHWCC)

⁵ See WHWCC 12th October 1903 p21.

improvement in this respect.The policy of this committee has been to obtain reconstruction of dwellings and to demolish as far as possible'.^{7 8}

National and Local Politics in Wigan during the Inter-war Years.

This section is concerned with the nature of politics in Wigan and will examine both national and local representation in general and municipal elections. It will also examine the party-political situation in the town and the influence this had on local politics in the council chamber. It will argue that unlike Preston, local politics in Wigan was more radical and, like Blackburn, the Labour Party in Wigan would take control of the council at the earliest opportunity. Unlike Blackburn, Labour would retain control in both local and national politics and, in essence, Wigan became and remained a Labour Party town displaying a much more militant nature than the other two case studies. This militancy was the key to local political action in housing policy and the much earlier ideation in the town on assistance in the community for rented housing by the working classes.⁹

⁶ See WHWCC 16th July 1908 p58.

⁷ See Housing and Insanitary Houses Committee 8th December 1913 p1. (HIHC)

⁸ Closing orders were made for 245 houses in 1913. Nett losses and gains in housing meant that only housing for 115 persons would be provided whilst the population increased by 873.

⁹ Discussions with academics studying Blackburn's weaving unions at the turn of the century suggest that although these were strong trade unions they were not militant.

National Politics during the Inter-War Years.

Wigan was a single-member constituency as opposed to the two-member constituencies in Blackburn and Preston. Prior to 1910, Wigan had been a Conservative town with Sir Francis S Powell being the MP for twenty-five years. Table 7.4 shows the results of general elections from 1900 to 1942. In 1910, the town was first won by Labour with Henry Twist taking the seat, a situation that was reversed in the second election that year when R J N Neville regained the seat for the Conservatives. The election of 1918 saw J A Parkinson take the seat for Labour and he would remain their representative until 1942 when another Labour MP, William Foster, was returned unopposed. Other than a very brief period in 1910, Wigan had been a Labour town from that time. This was not a situation reflected in local politics as we shall see. It was 1924 before the town council was won for Labour and 1925 before it had an overall majority with 34 of the 56 seats available. Clearly, the situation in Wigan did not reflect national trends. The town had a Labour MP in 1910, 14 years before the first Labour government briefly took office and it gained and retained both the national parliamentary seat and gained power in the council chamber much earlier than either of their contemporaries in Preston and Blackburn. Wigan was a far more politicised town and in comparison to the political incorporation in Preston and the Conservative nature of Blackburn politics, is a good example to compare and contrast politically.

Sir Francis S Powell, who held the seat for 25 years, was active both locally and nationally. He introduced various pieces of legislation in the Commons, including the ' The Public Health Act of 1890, The Woollen Cloth Factories Act of 1899 and

the Education Act of 1902'. (Brown 1968, p32) He was also of a philanthropic nature locally and built a number of reading-rooms in Wigan, The Powell children's library and the Powell museum, which was demolished in the 1980s to make room for road schemes in the town.

A labour representation committee was formed in Wigan in 1907. 'Wigan was one of the first Boroughs to set up an LRC, with the Wigan branch of the Independent Labour Party being set up in March 1907'.¹⁰ It was after this time that Labour remained independent of the Liberals and became the accepted opposition to the Conservatives in the town

The significant factor in both local and national politics in Wigan was the influence of trade unionism and especially that of the miners union but this was not at all times evident. Prior to 1918, it is suggested that the political history of Wigan shows that there was a deferential attitude of the working-classes and that this in many ways socialised the working-classes because of the: 'conservative paternalistic legislation, and also as a reaction against the Liberals'. (Brown, pp4-5)

¹⁰ See Wigan Observer 24th March 1907 p1.

Table 7.4 Wigan Parliamentary Election Results 1900 to 1942.

Year.	Result.	Votes.	Electorate.
1900	Sir F S Powell Con.	3,772	8,220.
	William Wood .	3,139	
1906	Sir F S Powell Con.	3,573	8,874
	Thorley Smith	2,205	
	William Woods Lib	1,900	
1910	Henry Twist Lab.	4,803	9,550
	R J N Neville	4,293	
1910	R J N Neville Con	4,673	9,646
	Henry Twist	4,110	
1918	J A Parkinson Lab.	12,914	38,811
	R J N Neville	11,584	
	R Alstead	2,434	
1922	J A Parkinson Lab.	20,079	39,929
	A E Baucher	15,436	
1923	J A Parkinson Lab.	19,617	40,105
	Lord Balneil	14,451	
1924	J A Parkinson Lab	20,350	40,217
	D P Maxwell-Fyfe	15,006	
1929	J A Parkinson Lab.	27,462	54,008
	E Barlow	18,144	
	F Bright	1,307	
1931	J A Parkinson Lab.	23,544	54,689
	G D Roberts	22,526	
1935	J A Parkinson Lab.	27,950	55,784
	R Grant-Ferris	17,646	
1942	William Foster Lab. Returned unopposed.		

Source. Wigan Observer.

Local Politics within the Inter-War years.

During the inter-war years, and since, the borough can be described as a solid Labour town. The composition of the borough council was of 13 wards, each with three council seats and one aldermanic seat. The aldermanic seats were traditionally adjusted after each election in November and unlike Preston they were not returned unopposed. The electorate was 38,811 in 1918 and rose to 55,434 in 1938, reaching a peak of 55,784 in 1932. Table 7.4 illustrates the election results during the period. One councillor retired from each ward per year and therefore only one-third of the seats were up for election each year making a total of 14 seats. Unionisation in the town was strong, this being particularly so in mine-working and textiles unions. The Labour tradition in this part of Lancashire when compared with Preston and Blackburn was much more militant during the inter-war period than in the other towns.¹¹

It is true to say that the Conservatives held the majority of seats from 1918 to 1923 but from 1924 onwards Wigan became a solid Labour town in local, as well as national politics. There is no doubt that the shift in power in 1924 was to the advantage of the Labour Party after having suffered the loss of three seats in 1923 when, with the assistance of the Liberals and Independents on the council, they had control.

Labour holds the balance of power again.the Tories in Council had a majority of 1 but Labour had a majority of 2 on Councillors elected.

Therefore the readjustment of aldermen would mean that Labour would have

¹¹ Conversations with other researchers on textile unionism in Blackburn suggest that this textile workers union was not a militant one and played little part in the town's politics.

21 councillors and 7 aldermen, as opposed to 5, and Conservatives 19 councillors and 6 aldermen as opposed to 8. Liberals have 2 councillors and 1 alderman.¹²

Whilst the Liberal and Independents were never a significant force in local politics during the period it did assist the Labour Party to retain control of the council up to 1922 and only in 1923 did the Conservatives actually hold power for a year in the council chamber.

¹² See Wigan Observer 3rd November 1924 p3.

Table 7.5**The Composition of the Local Council in Wigan 1918 to 1938.**

Year.	Labour.	Conservative.	Liberal & Ind.	Uncontested.
1918	18	28	10	0
1919	22	24	10	3
1920	23*	22	11	2
1921	22	24	10	4
1922	22	27	7	3
1923	19	31	6	1
1924	28	25	3	2
1925	34	19	3	2
1926	38	15	3	3
1927	37	16	3	6
1928	37	16	3	5
1929	39	15	2	7
1930	40	15	1	8
1931	38	17	1	6
1932	37	18	1	5
1933	38	17	1	4
1934	40	16	0	5
1935	41	15	0	7
1936	43	13	0	6
1937	44	12	0	9
1938	44	12	0	9

Source. The Wigan Observer in November of each year. Wigan Reference Library

* The first lady council member was elected in the borough.

Inter-war Housing in Wigan.

This section of the chapter will examine the nature of housing policy in Wigan under the various housing acts and will address the following issues: -

- What was Wigan's housing provision up to the end of the First World War?
- How did the town fare in its housing policy and politics under the various inter-war housing acts?
- Why did the borough decide to build using a direct works department and what were the local and national political and economic implications of this dogmatic decision?
- What was the nature and complexion of territorial relationship and housing policy and politics in Wigan, did local politics operate within a structured relationship rather than a dual polity and were relationships adversarial?
- How was welfarism anew greeted in the town and how did this affect local attitudes to housing provision initially and during the inter-war years given the path dependent nature of central policy?
- Was there any evidence of mutual deference and frigidity or 'local possessive pluralism'?
- How local ideas on housing issues developed much earlier than in the other towns in the analysis.

Wigan's housing provision, prior to, and during the First World War.

Wigan's housing situation prior to the First World War can be described as dire. As has already been illustrated in Table 7.3, Wigan was almost at the top of the league in terms of the percentage of its population with more than two persons per room in Lancashire, only St Helens being worse. Houses had been constructed in various parts of the town and by the outbreak of war in 1914 it had severe problems, when in 1913, for example, it was able to house only 115 persons from an estimated population increase of 873, an unenviable situation.

By September 1917 the issues had not been resolved, nor would they be. The war was to consume all the financial resources the country had and housing was not a priority of government at this time. The LGB wrote to the borough advising them that houses could not be constructed unless 'the houses were necessary in connection with the war requirements'.¹³ The council was however aware that housing was now an issue on the political agenda and it later resolved that: 'The question of preparing for the housing schemes to be in readiness for commencing at the expiration of the war was discussed'. The borough engineer was instructed to proceed with these plans and to report to the committee.

The concept of town planning was not lost on the borough either. In January 1917, the borough received advice from a borough engineer that Professor Abercrombie, Professor of Design at Liverpool University, had called to see him regarding a proposal that the University would like to complete a study on: 'Wigan and its

¹³ See HIHC December 1915 p1.

environs as an industrial Centre for the study of town planning'.¹⁴ The borough engineer had given assurance to assist Professor Abercrombie wherever possible and a plan was drafted.¹⁵

Housing provision in Wigan from 1918 to the introduction of the Housing Act of 1919.

During the latter part of 1917 sites were being considered in the Whelley and Richmond Hill areas of Wigan. The chairman, vice-chairman and borough engineer had attended a housing conference in Liverpool in November and reported to the HIHC. The major concerns in Wigan, as it was throughout the rest of the country, concerned financing the housing schemes and the speed with which building could progress after the war. The poor state of housing was also reflected in their report to the committee when it stated that: 'drastic and speedy action must be taken if the horrible conditions in which so many of our people have to live were to be swept away'.¹⁶ The death rate, in 1918, was reported by the Medical Officer of Health as 18.45 deaths per 1,000 of the population. Housing and health conditions in Wigan, were to say the least, atrocious.¹⁷

The conditions in which people lived and the nature of houses to be provided, was a paramount consideration in the borough as well as a concept of what types of home should be provided. It was obviously aware of the need for, and nature of, a quality

¹⁴ See Streets Buildings and Inspections Committee 22nd January 1917 p344.

¹⁵ A student, Gordon Hemm, produced a plan for Wigan and this was published in the Town Planning Review in April 1918.

¹⁶ See HIHC 14th January 1918 p266.

home, a 'dream home,' and in this respect it laid down certain criteria for houses to be constructed in the town.¹⁸ Each house should have: -

- A bath and provision for hot water supply.
- A separate bathroom and scullery.
- Ample window space.
- All rooms should be under one roof space with no back extensions.
- Kitchen and living rooms, 'where the wife lived', should be the sunniest rooms in the house.
- Houses should be provided with a parlour where possible.
- Houses should be broad rather than deep.

The LGB circular on future housing provision was discussed in Wigan and again there was concern at the level of subsidies being proposed at that time. In a meeting with the HIHC on the 24th March 1918, the town clerk advised of the details of the scheme and made a number of points regarding the proposals. It was agreed to hold a special meeting to discuss the issues in light of the fact that the borough had previously provided 210 houses on which a subsidy was unavailable and also the fact that it still had 90 houses in planning for Meverley Street. Housing issues in Wigan were already politicised and motives and methods of intervention clear.¹⁹

¹⁷ See MOH Annual Report 1918.

¹⁸ Full details of the quality of houses envisaged can be found in records CBWi A2\2312\2 pp 266 -7 in Wigan Records Office based in Leigh.

¹⁹ This is an indication of the existing attitude of the locality towards housing provision illustrating that they already had the motivation within the borough and council to provide homes for the working-classes. The changing mindset, which was only just evolving in the other towns, was on the political agenda in Wigan.

The borough continued to search for appropriate sites, looking at Ridyard Street in Pemberton, Bottling Wood near Whelley and at Worsley Mesnes. In April 1918, it resolved that: '15 acres of land be purchased at Bottling Wood, Near Whelley'.²⁰ It was further proposed to build 122 houses at a density of 12 per acre and also 136 houses at a density of 12.65 per acre. In terms of overall requirement the committee resolved to aim at: 'erecting 500 houses immediately upon the conclusion of the war, and that further schemes be prepared as the opportunity arises'.²¹ It was later resolved that this number be increased to 1,500 and later to 2,500. At the same time, the town clerk placed a number of points before the committee which, he felt, it should consider.²² It was the clear intention of the borough to proceed with housing schemes and it made appropriate application to the LGB. The LGB was of course in a transitory stage at this time and would shortly become the Ministry of Health. The town clerk had attended a meeting with Hayes Fisher, the President of the LGB, in Sheffield on the 1st October 1918 and in November 1918 he advised the committee of the proposals under the provisions of the Treasury-LGB scheme. This was an early indication of the tenacity of the town to question central government on issues they were concerned about.

Further sites were sought for suitable land in the town for housing schemes and land was identified in Beech Hill, on the outskirts of the town, and this would eventually become the site for the first houses erected under the 'homes for heroes' campaign in Wigan. In April 1919, the details of the Treasury-LGB scheme for subsidies were released and discussed by the housing committee and in May a deputation from the

²⁰ See HIHCM 18th April 1918 p672.

²¹ See HIHCM 24th April 1918 p741.

borough met with Mr Courtney Clifton, an LGB inspector to discuss the proposed schemes and the housing conditions in the borough. Mr Clifton visited Bottling Wood, Ridyard Street and Beech Hill, and on concluding his visit he promised to send his report to the LGB that weekend. The deputation from the corporation: ‘respectfully suggested to Mr Clifton to urge the Board to lose no time in sending their decision to the Corporation as to these three sites, so that the Corporation could proceed in their scheme with the least possible delay’.²³

Local trade unionism would enter the arena of housing at this stage. ‘Under the rules of the Building Trades Employers Union no doors or windows, unless made within one and a half miles of Wigan would be allowed to be used’.²⁴ Nevertheless, and despite this quirk, the borough still planned to build and would be bound to those designs, layouts and standardised pieces of equipment that would be given in the Tudor-Walters Report.

One of the major foci of this research is the nature and complexion of central/local relations and Wigan is an excellent example of the contrasting manner in which territorial politics were conducted. Original contact between the borough and the Ministry did not commence on an amicable basis. Even before planning permission had been given and the Housing Act of 1919 introduced, Wigan was on a collision course with the LGB, and later the MOH, over the issue of local deviations from national directives on housing. The argument was that local needs should take

²² For example these included the number of houses to be erected, locations, use of compulsory purchase orders, estimates and designs. See Minutes Ref CBWi A2\23\2. Wigan Records Office Leigh, pp673-675.

²³ See HIHC 12th May 1919 pp842-843. The borough engineer gave details of the type, size and number of houses to be constructed.

²⁴ See HIHCM 12th June 1919.

precedent over national designs where this was shown to be in the interests and needs of the particular locality. In Wigan, for example, as we have already seen, there was a considerable number of mineworkers and bathing facilities were requested downstairs, saving the dirt from the miners being taken through the house to an upstairs bathroom. Bathrooms were therefore requested downstairs. Similarly the fact that copious amounts of hot water would be used for bathing it was considered necessary to have higher ceilings to allow for more adequate ventilation and condensation. These were amongst the issues which, would cause conflict between the centre and periphery and would delay the output of housing in Wigan.²⁵ Prior to 1919 it could be argued that a dual polity existed but this was under the remit of the LGB who, as we saw in Chapter two, were deferent about local housing issues given the fiscal limitations they had to endure. What was beginning to change in 1919, as we can see, is that contact between the centre and periphery increased significantly and the AMC, and other representatives of local authorities, were now involved in housing issues. Wigan, having strong representation on the AMC, benefited from the knowledge this provided to local authorities and Wigan was using the new institution (MOH) and structural arrangements, regionally and nationally, to promote its policy objectives (See below).

²⁵ A number of local concerns were voiced with the housing commissioner in Manchester and included issues such as road widths, ceiling heights, design of houses, location of bathrooms.

Housing policy in Wigan under the Housing Act of 1919.

The provisions of the housing act, circulated to local authorities on the 25th August, were forwarded to all members of the HIHC on the 2nd September. The borough was also to contact the housing commissioner, reminding him that it had already submitted a scheme for Beech Hill and sought permission to commence building. The issue of ceiling heights had still not been resolved and despite the housing commissioner's refusal to allow the 9-foot ceilings, it was reported that permission had been granted for houses in Crossens, near Southport, to have 9-foot ceilings. The town clerk was advised to: 'obtain approval of the Ministry for the height of rooms to be 9 feet for the houses to be erected in Wigan'.²⁶ The borough was again to submit plans to the housing commissioner for the Beech Hill site and was to ask for sketches of house plans proposed.

Given the poor housing conditions in the town, the borough decided to complete a full survey of its housing needs. The survey, required by the Ministry by the end of October, would not be completed until the end of January 1920. The ceiling heights issue was still not resolved and the borough was to ask the AMC to intervene on its behalf and to meet the Ministry to discuss the matter. Meanwhile the borough proceeded to obtain tenders based on ceiling heights of 8 feet 6 inches and 8 feet. Wigan made representation to the AMC. The council of the AMC resolved to meet with the Ministry on the 12th December 1919 when it was to put the case that in industrial areas the ceiling heights of 8 feet were considered too low and urged, the Ministry to agree to 9-foot heights on ground-floor rooms.²⁷ From the very

²⁶ See HIHCM 15th September 1919 p1321.

²⁷ See Housing Committee Minutes (HCM) 29th December 1919 p246.

beginning of political interaction with the centre on housing policy, Wigan was prepared to use all available channels of communication and in this instance the structured polity it is argued existed.

Other institutions also became involved in the debate, illustrating the point that organisation is the mobilisation of bias towards any commonly perceived goal or objective. The Wigan and District Trades Council and the Wigan Labour Party had passed a resolution that: 'the heights of rooms of working-class dwellings should not be less than 9 feet'.²⁸ The North West Branch of the Society of Medical Officers of Health had also contacted the borough stating that: 'In the opinion of the members of the North West Branch of the Society of Medical Officers of Health a minimum height of 9 feet in both living and bedrooms is desirable'. It was resolved that a copy of this letter be forwarded to the Ministry of Health to support the town's case.²⁹

The town clerk advised the council that the pressure had been successful and that a meeting between senior members of the AMC and Sir James Carmichael and Mr Forber of the MOH had: 'agreed to meet with representatives of the Northern County Boroughs'.³⁰ The town clerk reported on this meeting which was held on the 11th March 1920 in Manchester and was attended by representatives from Wigan, Bury, Warrington and Darlington. The reasons for the required heights were outlined by the various boroughs, for example the need to air clothes and the extra laundering required in occupations such as mining. Mr Forber, for the Ministry, promised that:

²⁸ HCM 10th May 1920.

²⁹ Ibid. The borough arranged a meeting with the AMC and with M.Ps. from neighboring constituencies in an attempt to lobby the Ministry of Health.

³⁰ See HCM 1st March 1920 p681.

‘the matter would receive the consideration of the Ministry and the Minister’s decision would be communicated as early as possible’.³¹ On the 28th May 1920, the Ministry of Health wrote to the borough on the ceiling heights issue and stated that: ‘Dr Addison was willing, in districts where there were special circumstances of a kind indicated by the Conference (of the AMC), to agree to a height of 8 feet 6 inches in the ground-floor rooms providing that the total of the walls are not thereby increased’.³²

In contrast with Preston, which immediately accepted the Ministry’s decision on ceiling heights, Wigan borough council, which had a Labour MP, and a Labour controlled council, although they were not the majority party, used the political institutions, structures and actors to assist in achieving a political goal on behalf of the townspeople. This serves to illustrate the diverse nature of local political institutions and the way Preston was socialised whilst Wigan was a much more radical town and was prepared to use all methods, institutions, structures and individuals at its disposal to achieve its aims. Wigan borough council, was a more politically aware and radical organisation and illustrates the difference between the conservative and socialised nature of Preston politics, Blackburn Conservatism and Wigan’s developing Labour radicalism.

This use of regional representation and other institutional structures with a shared perception of a common objective is a good example of how institutions of interest representation actually work in practice and also how inter-institutional co-operation in local/regional politics can be effective. It is also an example of what was

³¹ See HCM 12th April 1920 p857.

³² See HCM June 1920 p1145.

previously described as local authorities having a dual opportunity to influence central/regional/local relations. The support of other allied bodies or institutional structures was effective in achieving a common objective. Having agreed a compromise on ceiling heights, the borough could now begin to concentrate on actually constructing houses for the working-classes.

Wigan, like Preston and Blackburn, was experiencing difficulties in obtaining sanction for houses. This was also the situation in Warrington. It contacted the borough expressing that: 'this Council is of the opinion that any such delays, have been, and are being, caused by the various regulations, requirements and restrictions of the government and its departments and considers it unfair to blame Local Authorities for delays and difficulties'.³³

Having firmly established what was a significant need³⁴, the borough had not yet made any definite arrangements to actually build. It is true that it had surveyed and agreed sites and that Beech Hill had been earmarked as the first site for construction, but no final costs had been obtained for such construction. This was another problem to affect housebuilding in the town. For almost a year, the process of obtaining tenders for the houses would be pursued. The town clerk of Wigan played a prominent role on the council of the AMC and it was obvious that his influence assisted Wigan and other towns in this problematic area. It is an indication too, in institutional terms, of the influence of individuals within political structures and the effect these individuals can have on policy outcomes. The AMC would refer the matter to the Ministry of Health.

³³ See HCM 12th January 1920 p670.

The housing commissioner was subsequently invited to a meeting in Wigan to discuss the problems in attaining suitable tenders. The result was that the borough was advised that the tenders they had received were still too high, the best tender being £905 for a type A house. In Preston, this was £845 and nationally the average was £881. There was now to be a suggestion that Wigan would use direct labour to construct houses. Blackburn had done the same but later amended this to the use of: 'directly employed labour', phraseology fitting the political conservatism of that town.

It had been reported nationally that the construction of houses in the borough of Southgate in London, by direct labour, had resulted in houses being constructed for £619; 'at some two thirds of the cost of current tenders'.³⁵ Wigan sent a deputation to Southgate to investigate this situation but, it was later to report that the:

Reports in the national press are much exaggerated and some portions inaccurate.....the houses are rough cast not brick.....the extra cost of facing bricks not included.....were not constructed by direct labour.....but by tender from various individual trades (as in Blackburn).....the homes in Southgate were much smaller than those in Wigan.³⁶

The process was repeated and tenders once again sought during late June and July. On the 13th July 1920 13 tenders had been received, 10 being exactly the same

³⁴ The borough engineer now having sight of the survey considered that 1,500 type A houses, 750 type B houses and 250 type B4 houses were required in the town. See HCM 3rd June 1920 p1141.

³⁵ Newbury it will be remembered was reporting prices of £700 (See previous chapter)

³⁶ See HIHCM 15th June 1920 p1142.

suggesting that a ‘building ring’ had been formed locally and tender number six, was accepted, the prices of which were Type A £900, Type B £1025 and Type B4 £1075.

This tender had been submitted by The Manchester Building Guild³⁷, and the contract was eventually signed in September 1920 so that building would eventually begin some 13 months after the introduction of the 1919 Housing Act.³⁸ Given the nature of the tendering process in Wigan and the difficulties the borough council had in obtaining satisfactory process for their houses the guilds appeared to be an ideal alternative to the false competition in the tendering process with building rings being formed to combat competition. Inflated prices were fixed by the builders concerned prior to tenders being submitted, which was not, of course, in the best interests of the locality or economy in building of houses for the working-classes. Table 7.6 indicates the progress of housing completions on the Beech Hill site.

Table 7.6 House completions on the Beech Hill Site 1920 to 1922.

Date.	Houses Commenced.	Houses Completed.
14 June 1921	93	2
10 September 1921	135 (Full total)	11
10 April 1922		59
14 August 1922		98
11 September 1922		109
End of December 1922		135

Source. Housing and Insanitary Housing Committee Minutes June 1921 to December 1922.

The 135 houses had cost £128,406 to complete, the average cost being £951.

³⁷ Building guilds were a short-lived phenomenon and restricted in number to 20 by government.

During the course of Spring 1921, Wigan was planning a further 160 houses at Ridyard Street in Pemberton and 106 houses in Bottling Wood near Whelley. By March 1921, the Government had brought building under the Housing Act of 1919 almost to an end. At this stage, Wigan had not constructed a single house of the 135 proposed in Beech Hill and its overall target of 2,500. The borough was to seek assurances regarding the completions on the Beech Hill site and also the proposals already submitted for the Ridyard Street and Bottling Wood sites which totalled 401 houses in all.

The Government was now announcing that unless houses were completed by June 1922 it would not rank for subsidy and Wigan was faced with the same problem as other towns in as much as they had constructed few houses. This raised problems for the Beech Hill site and for the proposals on the other two sites. It was therefore resolved that: 'The Corporation should, before commencing building on the Bottling Wood site, ask the Ministry of Health to state definitely that the cost of such houses rank for subsidy not withstanding that they might not be completed before the 1st July'.³⁹ The houses on the Beech Hill site would be completed but the situation regarding the other two sites would remain unclear for some considerable time. The Ministry advised Wigan that it should only commence to build those houses that would be completed by the deadline date of the 1st July. This would mean that Wigan would have built only about 90 houses as construction up to the 14th August had only reached 98 houses. (See Table 7.6)

³⁸ See HHCM 13th September 1920 p1552.

³⁹ See HCM 14th March 1921.

The conflictual nature of territorial relations was to continue and the town clerk was to contact the Ministry seeking assurances on future building. The reply was less than definite stating that: 'the housing on this and the Ridyard Street site should rank for subsidy whether completed by 1st July or not'.⁴⁰ This obviously caused concern in the borough which was about to sign contracts for the building on these sites but would not do so until it was advised that it would definitely rank for subsidy.⁴¹

A deputation from the borough had met with the Minister of Health in London over the issues and argued that permission to build now would: 'save money in preventing disease and unhealthiness in helping to preserve the lives and morals of the people'.⁴² The Ministry stated that:

They were prepared to allow an additional 50 houses to be built in two instalments of 25.....the Ministry could not in any way bind themselves to any additional houses but they would be prepared to consider the Corporation's position again when it was ascertained as to the ultimate number of houses left for allocation.⁴³

The issue of additional houses was however still not finalised. The borough had constructed houses on the Beech Hill site type A being 900 superficial feet. The Ministry wanted this reducing to 769 superficial feet with bathrooms downstairs, thereby saving costs on plumbing. The borough would build houses of 830 superficial feet with bathrooms upstairs stating: 'that the Corporation, knowing the

⁴⁰ See HCM 9th May 1922.

⁴¹ The conflict was to continue for some months with the borough attempting to obtain permission to build but without firm assurances from the Ministry regarding subsidies. The town clerk placed the blame with the Ministry. See Housing Committee minutes 9/1/1922 page 340-342 for full details.

⁴² See HCM 13th February 1922 p624.

⁴³ Ibid.

wishes and habits of the working-class people, were in a better position than the Ministry to decide what is the most suitable place for the bathroom'.⁴⁴

Tendering was again to be an issue. It can be seen that only twelve months earlier prices were quoted at £900 for type A houses, admittedly of a larger area. By November 1922 the Ministry considered tenders of £408, for the smaller house, too high. After modification of design it would be eventually agreed in March 1923 with a tender from: 'J S Teanbey and Son of Sheffield for £365 9s 10d, be accepted'.⁴⁵ This was still not acceptable to the Ministry and at a meeting with the housing commissioner it was eventually agreed that 24 houses could be built at this tender price, the balance of 24 houses to be left until prices fell further. Eventually, the 50 houses were erected, building commenced on the 11 June 1923 and completed by December 1923 when the first tenants were to take occupation on the 24th December. This would conclude building under the housing act of 1919 and 185 houses in total being erected.

The experiences of Wigan amply illustrate the conflictual nature of central/regional/local relationships in housing even at this very early stage of policy implementation. (See below and also Chapter eight) Suffice to say at this stage that there was very tight control by the centre. This would cover such issues as design and layout, tendering and economic costs of housing, approval for construction at every stage of the housing process. Housing policy was very evidently not one, which could be described as being consigned to the sidelines of politics.

⁴⁴ See HCM 29th May 1922 p1197.

⁴⁵ See HCM 5th March 1923 p574.

Housing in Wigan under the Greenwood Act of 1923 and the Wheatley Act of 1924.

State-aided housing had now become established firmly on the political agenda, welfarism that would become a continuing theme from the 1920s to the 1980s. It was, in historical institutional terms, a path dependent policy. It was a politicised issue locally and nationally and this was evident in Wigan in both the local elections and General Election of 1922.

The Conservatives were to win the General Election and the Housing Act of 1923 would be introduced. Wigan did not construct any houses under this act, which was duly followed by the introduction in 1924 of the Wheatley Act, with which this section of the chapter will be concerned. Most of the houses built by the borough from 1923 to 1932 were constructed under the Housing Act of 1924. This was not just in Wigan but within the country as a whole. One of the significant features of the inter-war housing campaign in Wigan, unlike in Preston or Blackburn, was the number of houses constructed in the Borough from 1933 to 1938 under the anti-slum legislation contained in the 'Three Acts'. Table 7.7 gives details of the housing constructed in the borough during the inter-war period.

The Housing Act of 1923 was first mentioned in the borough in July 1923 when the borough engineer advised the housing committee that Circular 388 from the MOH had been received, and that the: 'prime objective appeared to be to enable the Corporation to do everything possible to stimulate the erection of houses by private enterprise.'⁴⁶

⁴⁶ See HCM 9th July 1923 p1009.

Table 7.7 Houses constructed in Wigan from 1918 to 1938
and Unfit Houses in the Borough.

Houses constructed by				
Year.	Borough Council.	Private Enterprise.	Total.	Unfit.
1918	Nil	Nil	Nil	N/A
1919	Nil	Nil	Nil	N/A
1920	Nil	Nil	Nil	N/A
1921	28*	2	30	929
1922	107*	18	125	1195
1923	50**	23	73	972
1924	Nil	24	24	1358
1925	10	130	140	2023
1926	106	73	179	2294
1927	196	115	311	2871
1928	182	89	271	2619
1929	162	82	244	2102
1930	135	34	169	2263
1931	41	107	148	2195
1932	Nil	102	102	2297
1933	78	221	299	2099
1934	304	284	588	2081
1935	186	262	448	2426
1936	193	236	429	2418
1937	238	183	421	1733
1938	362	280	642	2284

Source. Medical Officer of Health Annual Reports 1918 to 1938

All houses erected by the Borough from 1925 to 1938 were constructed by Direct Labour, an issue discussed later in the chapter.

*Houses constructed on the Beech Hill Estate. **Houses constructed in Ridyard Street, Pemberton.

In view of the financial implications of the Act a meeting between the housing committee and the finance committee was agreed and took place on the 18th September making several points concerning the new act. The committee resolved to offer subsidies of £100 to private enterprise builders and also to offer loans of up to 90% for those owner-occupiers prepared to build houses⁴⁷. The council had a Conservative majority and these suggestions were therefore not surprising. The elections later in the year were also to see elected the last Conservative council in the borough. (See Table 7.5) The housing committee was also to resolve that: 'for the time being the Corporation should suspend further consideration of themselves erecting housing for a period of 3 months after the scheme outlined had been announced to builders and public at large'.⁴⁸ The council did not erect any houses in 1924 and only 24 were erected by private builders. This was much the same reaction as in the majority of towns for the Greenwood Act simply did not stimulate building.

The local trades and labour council was to become involved in the housing issue and they forwarded a resolution to the housing committee stating that:

In view of the serious shortage of housing accommodation in Wigan as evidenced in the reports by the Medical Officer of Health, and also in view of the operations of the Rent Restrictions Act, this meeting, representing the organised workers of the Borough, urges the Housing Committee of the Council to use every possible effort to speed up the erection of working class dwellings: while recognising that some little has been done (sic) the general problem of housing shortage is as acute as ever.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ These were much in line with Preston and Blackburn.

⁴⁸ See HCM 18th September 1923.

The housing committee resolved to write to Mr Lewis advising him that the committee was doing all in its power to speed up the erection of houses. The borough did not build one house the following year and only 24 were built by private enterprise, even though the subsidy of £100 was available.

The Housing Act of 1924 was now in force and a minority Labour government in office. The borough continued to obtain land for building and the significant change under the act was, of course, the level of subsidy and also the fact that local authorities could once again build houses without first having recourse to private enterprise. There was still an acute housing shortage in the town. The WMOH was reporting that there were: 'not less than 2,000 families without separate houses.....500 houses which should be demolished'.⁵⁰

House-construction was concentrated in the Ridyard Street Area where a further 116 houses were planned, tenders were accepted for £476 10s per house. The borough also considered housing-construction and reports that other towns were using, wooden houses, concrete houses and pre-cast houses were investigated. Clearly, the officers were not impressed after visiting a number of sites and it resolved to continue building using only traditional bricks.

Housing schemes from this time would all be constructed using 'direct labour', which would be a source of controversy and conflict, as well as the continued building in the late 1930s, and requires special mention here as it had a significant impact on both housing production, politics and central/local relations.

⁴⁹ See HCM 8th October 1923 p1444.

⁵⁰ See MOH Annual Report 1923 p6.

Building in Wigan by Direct Labour.

This section is concerned with a significant political issue in housing that was found mainly in this case-study rather than having critical effects in either Preston or Blackburn. It will be remembered that the political phraseology of 'direct labour' was changed to 'direct employment of labour' under a Conservative-controlled council in Blackburn, direct labour being an anathema to them. Preston on the other hand, being politically acquiescent did not appear to consider the issue of construction by direct labour despite the fact that towns so close to it were doing so. In Wigan, however, the issue of direct labour was a crucial one. From 1925, all the houses constructed by the borough were completed by direct labour.

It should be remembered that the town's political complexion had now changed and that from 1924 the Labour Party had the largest majority, though not overall control, on the council. Labour had 28 seats, Conservatives 25, and Liberals and Independents 3. Labour, with the assistance of the Liberals and Independents, now controlled the council and has since remained continuously in office. The local elections of November 1924 were therefore significant in Wigan's political history. Wigan was now a Labour town and a political stronghold of the working-classes.

This is a significant factor in both politics and housing policy in Wigan for it is suggested that whilst local government has a certain autonomy, it nevertheless has to work within the constraints imposed by the centre. However, those constraints are somewhat muted, it is suggested, where the nature and complexion of the periphery is in accord with that of the centre and of the same political complexion. Or, where

the strength of the periphery is so overwhelming that political acquiescence may not be such a significant factor in the political process. Examples of this consciousness date back to Poplarism, Clay Cross⁵¹ and militancy over rents in Glasgow in 1915. There are of course many other examples of working-class militancy and action with a barracks being sited near Oldham because of working class action there. The issue of direct labour in Wigan is an example of local decision-making conflicting with centrally-determined housing policy where the political nature and complexion of the centre is not in accord with that of the periphery.

The borough engineer, who was a significant person in housing ideology in Wigan, instigated the idea of creating a direct works department in the town, which would recruit its own labour-force. His view was that: 'no private tenderer (sic) was in a position to do the work better than it could be done by the Corporation'.⁵² It was suggested that where tenders were received by the corporation that the borough engineer should also submit a tender for the work and that: 'such statements should be included along with and in the same form as other tenders'.⁵³ These sentiments were echoed by a number of councillors and, not surprisingly, criticised by others who suggested that a direct works department would not be able: 'to get out of the men what a private firm could'.⁵⁴

Tenders had been sought for the erection of houses at Ridyard Street the lowest being for £408. This was referred to the Ministry for approval but rejected by it as being too high. The housing committee was advised to go over the whole matter

⁵¹ See Melling 1980 Chapter Two by Carol Bedale for further information on this working-class action.

⁵² See Wigan Observer 8th February 1923 p3.

⁵³ Ibid.

again and to obtain further tenders. The borough had been through the re-tendering process and the amount of £408 was still the lowest price obtained and the housing committee was now satisfied that this would be the lowest price it could obtain. The council approved the tender and at this stage was not aware from whom the tender had been received; 'it was for the plans and specifications submitted by the Borough Engineer'.⁵⁵ From the press reports it was clear that the borough and the Ministry were not on the most amicable terms. Nevertheless, the borough's direct labour department would construct the houses. Political change of course brought building to an end by local authorities once the 50 houses had been completed in Ridyard Street and the borough would construct only 10 further houses until the introduction of the Wheatley Act of 1924.

It would be 1925 before the issue was again raised and the borough empowered to build houses once again under the Housing Act of 1924. The issue was to be fiercely debated in the council chamber. The Labour group wanted direct labour without recourse to any form of tendering process or competition for its direct labour department. Understandably, the Conservatives were concerned for private enterprise and about the principle of competition for any contract placed by the council. Examples were given on previous tenders and these had in the past proved far lower than those submitted by private enterprise, especially where building rings had been found to be operating. Examples of the savings made by other towns were quoted from Manchester, Swansea, Glasgow and Jarrow. Alderman Yates, for the Labour group and chairman of the housing committee, argued for direct labour without competition whilst alderman Baucher, who had been a Conservative

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ See Wigan Observer 8th March 1923 p3.

candidate in the General Election in 1922, argued that there must be a competitive process. The arguments were eventually interrupted by the town clerk who promised to phrase a resolution satisfactory to both sides. This was eventually accepted and the matter left with the senior officer. The Labour group had the power to force the issue but on advice from the town clerk concerning the views of the Ministry of Health it was decided to leave the matter with him.⁵⁶ Work was nevertheless to be completed by the direct works department.

The council meeting in January 1926, whether wittingly or unwittingly, gave massive powers to a new sub-committee formed for the purposes of obtaining all materials to be used for building purposes. The special purchasing committee had now been formed and would undertake this task. The sub-committee consisted of five members of the housing committee and one from the finance committee and was delegated with the powers

To accept tenders and enter into contracts for all work required to be ordered.....to decide whether in any particular case it is impracticable or undesirable to obtain tenders.....to authorise the Borough Engineer (under the supervision of the Special Purchasing Committee) to order work and to purchase materials in such cases.....That Standing Order 15(I), requiring that tenders be obtained by competition or work to be done or for materials to be purchased, shall be suspended.⁵⁷

The only barrier now in operation would be that of the sanction from the Ministry of Health on plans to be approved. This was to prove a conflictual situation between

⁵⁶ See Wigan Observer 3rd December 1925, p3.

⁵⁷ See Wigan Observer 7th January 1926 p3.

the centre and the periphery. The very first opportunity that the housing committee and the special purchasing committee had, to advertise for tenders, it declined to do so.⁵⁸ The borough had in effect committed itself to a direct works department free of competition as regards the housing of the working-classes. The matter would be fiercely debated again at the April council meeting when the council was accused by the Tories of: 'going on very dangerous lines'.

The situation was put to the test when an application was made to build 98 houses on the Bottling Wood site near Whelley. The borough engineer did not wish the scheme to go out to tender but the council was mindful of the attitude of the Ministry towards the process and its views on competitive tendering. The borough was to arrange a meeting with representatives of the MOH and the views of both sides were put.⁵⁹

The borough engineer's tender was for £50,410 for the 98 houses and the lowest tender would be £45,176 from Messrs R & S Smith from Orford in Warrington, some 10.4 per cent cheaper, or almost another 10 houses for the borough. The housing committee recommended to the council: 'to erect the whole of the 98 houses by direct labour at an estimated cost of £50,410'. This was £5,234 extra burden on the ratepayers of the town.⁶⁰ The borough council was of course Labour-controlled yet the decision to build was by no means a unanimous one and the further decision to use a 50/50 building process was only defeated by 7 votes to 6 in the housing committee. The houses would be constructed by direct labour with an extra burden

⁵⁸ See Wigan Observer 4th March 1926 p3.

⁵⁹ The Ministry agreed that direct labour could be used but where the tender price exceeded the lowest tender submitted the extra cost would have to be taken from local finances. A tender process was therefore necessary to comply with the Ministry's wishes.

on the rates and would commence on the 1st June 1926 and be completed on the 27th June 1927.⁶¹

The only other significant change to the direct works situation would be in 1930 when the special purchasing committee would be abolished and a corporation works department would be set up. This had wide-ranging effects upon housing, in terms of purchasing and supply of materials and the use of labour for the housing schemes. It would no longer be necessary for the department to advertise for the tender of goods supplied to it. There would be no competitive process at all. This caused a great deal of acrimony in the council chamber from the Conservatives who felt that business should be conducted on: 'thoroughly businesslike lines.....Those on this side of the Council thought it was a great mistake to have eliminated competition from their building enterprises'. Alderman Yates replied that it had 'nothing to fear from anyone'.^{62 63}

Building in the town continued under the 1924 Act right up to 1932 when the subsidies under the Wheatley Act were abolished. During the period from 1924 to 1932 the borough would erected 832 houses. Private enterprise constructed a further 630 in the town. This brought to a conclusion building under these subsidies but direct works labour was used on all subsequent houses.

⁶⁰ See HCM 28th April 1926 p789.

⁶¹ The council was criticized in the local press for its attitudes towards direct works. See Wigan Observer 6/11/1926 p7.

⁶² See Wigan Observer 4th December 1930 p3.

Housing in Wigan under the three Acts of 1930, 1933 and 1935.

This section will examine the provision of working-class houses under the anti-slum legislation contained in the various acts introduced initially by a Labour government and in the latter two by a National government (Conservative in essence) from 1933. What was significant under this phase of building was the fact that the borough council constructed 1,361 houses from 1933 to 1938 and private enterprise, in conditions favourable to itself and in a time when there was a significant building boom for owner occupation, built 1,466 houses.⁶⁴

By 1930, housing conditions in the town were still extremely poor. The WMOH was reporting that there was 2,263 houses unfit for habitation, a situation that would grow progressively worse by 1935 and would be no better in 1938 despite the fact that there had been 2,827 houses constructed in the public and private sectors (See Table 7.7). The unhealthy and insanitary conditions were the stimulus for progress. This does not, however, explain why building was so poor in the other two towns which, were still reporting large numbers of unfit houses albeit not as many as in Wigan.

The whole focus of government's housing policy changed, as illustrated in previous chapters, and whilst the subsidies were not as generous as those under the Wheatley Act it did provide a stimulus, at least initially under the Labour government's legislation, for housing to be provided. And yet, when the subsidies were not as

⁶³ With 40 Labour and 5 Conservatives seats on the council Labour had little to fear politically.

⁶⁴ See chapter 8 for a comparison of outputs under the various acts in each town.

generous, and when most local authorities had virtually abandoned the provision of houses by local councils, Wigan continued to build apace.

What needs to be explained is why Wigan continued to build, and provided more houses in the five years from 1934 to 1938, than by private enterprise? The borough built 1,283 houses and 1,245 were constructed privately during the period of a building boom for owner occupation. One possible answer is the very nature of politics in the town and the direction of the policy by the borough engineer, to be adopted by the council. Here, we have an example of the role and function of significant actors within the structure or institutions that are concerned with local politics and local housing. The policy adopted would create several issues and areas of conflict between the locality and the periphery and within the institutions at both levels of government. They would also involve the use of regional institutions, the AMC, in which Wigan was represented on the council of the association. Again this is an indication of local authorities using all structures and actors to assist them in achieving policy goals. The borough engineer had, thus far, played a significant role in the direction of housing policy, the creation of a direct works department and the virtual abandonment of competition in the tendering process. It is in the politics and policies of housing in Wigan that the answer lies.

The politics and policies of housing in Wigan during the 1930s.

This section of the chapter will investigate the provision of housing that Wigan continued to make under the terms of the 1924 Act, the 1930 Act and finally the 1935 Act. It will focus on the nature of the housing provision and seek to answer the question: Why did Wigan, unlike the majority of other towns in the country, for example Preston and Blackburn, continue to build houses when state-aided housing policy had almost been abandoned by the rest of the country? It will focus on the nature of house-construction in the town and the policy of direct labour. Also on why Wigan created its own direct works department and how the political nature and complexion of the town and its paid officers affected attitudes and beliefs towards the provision of houses for the working-classes by this method of construction. How the rules of the council were 'manipulated' to favour direct labour and almost abolish the process of competitive tendering for house- construction. It illustrates how local institutions are influenced by local politics and how policy, in terms of 'historical institutionalism', becomes 'path dependent' (Peters, 1999) and furthermore how the attitudes and beliefs of individuals, paid and unpaid, affect the policies, and decision-making within those structures.

Housing in Wigan from 1930.

At a meeting of the housing committee in November 1930, the requirements of the new housing act were outlined by the town clerk. In particular, details were now required by the MOH concerning overcrowding in the borough as the focus of housing policy had now been directed towards an anti-slum campaign. At a special

meeting of the Insanitary Housing Committee in December a report from the borough engineer. The town clerk and the Medical Officer of Health indicated that: 'during the next five years 1,168 houses should be built and 18 houses in the Lime Street improvement area reconditioned making a total of 1,186'⁶⁵ The council was hoping to embark on the construction of that total but Wigan, like the majority of towns, still planned and prepared to build houses using the subsidies still available under the Wheatley Act. Before the programme could commence, however, the slump of 1930 had now set in and building was brought to a standstill throughout the country as the Labour government continued to grapple with the economic problems of the nation.

Table 7.7 illustrates that Wigan constructed only 41 houses in 1931, none at all in 1932 and 78 in 1933. When compared to Preston and Blackburn, this was extremely poor, as this period seemed to be the most productive time for house construction in the towns. Examination shows that the borough council in Wigan were experiencing difficulties in obtaining sanction from the Ministry of Health for housing. The council were laying-off builders and other tradesmen from its direct works department as the recession hit hardest. Whether this was deliberate policy by the Ministry towards the borough council, because of its insistence on building by direct labour from 1925, can only be speculative but there is some evidence of this contention.

The borough council had agreed in December 1930 that they needed to provide: '1186 houses'⁶⁶ This decision formed the basis of the borough's five-year plan for

⁶⁵ See HIHCM 23rd December 1930.

⁶⁶ See HCM 23rd December 1930.

housing as required by the Ministry and this was forwarded to the Ministry as the basis of future plans. This policy seemed to be stalled in view of the output in 1931 and 1932 but it was being reported that the borough council was concerned at the high level of unemployment in the building industry. Councillor Banks accused the Ministry of Health of: 'holding back building schemes for little or no reason'.⁶⁷ It was also reported that the borough had been advised that they must tender for all contracts despite the fact that under direct labour every scheme:

Had come out lower and.....he was at a loss to know what they could do to give the Government satisfaction.....there are 150 men drawing unemployment pay who would rather be working for the money and yet they could not start the houses. ⁶⁸

It seems reasonable to conclude that the use of direct labour by a Labour council under the direction of a Ministry controlled by a Conservative government was an area of conflict that was to delay construction in the town. The borough council was out of phase with the centre in terms of housing policy and political ideology. The borough would however not be totally frustrated and they would continue to build later in the decade, when other towns had ceased to provide council-houses.

It was from 1934 onwards that the output of houses would soar in both public and private housing sectors. While the output in the private sector was mirrored throughout the country and with the owner occupation boom of the mid-1930 well underway, Wigan would continue to have a very aggressive housing policy directed by its council and its borough engineer. This perhaps as a reaction to the previous

⁶⁷ See Wigan Observer 5th May 1932 P3.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

frustrations experienced over the issue of construction by direct labour and the delays incurred and consequently the poor output of housing from 1931 to 1933 in the town.

In 1932, the borough council was writing to the new Minister suggesting that the five-year programme, abandoned in 1930, should now be recommenced and that 1,186 houses should be erected in the borough. He reminded the Ministry that: 'as far back as 1920 there was a definite need for 2,463 additional houses and even with the proposals under the 5 year programme to erect 1186 houses would still leave a shortage of 278 houses (this was the figure quoted).⁶⁹ The borough, despite economic recession and a new Conservative (National) government and Minister, still attempted to obtain permission to build considerable numbers of houses under the 1930 Act.

Nationally, Sir Hilton Young was framing his legislation for the 1933 Act and, as a Conservative, would attempt to control the output of housing by local authorities by removing subsidies. He would completely reverse housing policy which, would now be directed towards provision by private enterprise. Housing output in this period would be almost 5 to 1 by private enterprise, yet in Wigan the council constructed more houses. It will be remembered that Hilton Young introduced this act without recourse to the AMC who were furious at this move as it had been the first time that legislation had been introduced without it having been involved in the consultation process.

⁶⁹ See HCM 11th April 1932.

Wigan had now submitted a scheme to construct 328 houses on the Worsley Hall site in Pemberton and was to prepare plans and estimates for the MOH. The issue of tendering was again to be raised despite the fact that Wigan had a direct works department. The cheapest tender was from Messrs Clough and Gaskell for £15,682, the borough engineer's tender being for £16,204, for 54 houses. The committee resolved that the tender from the borough engineer be accepted. The town clerk advised the meeting that the decision would have to be communicated to the Ministry along with details of all tenders submitted.⁷⁰ The Ministry would not sanction borrowing for the houses and it was resolved that a deputation be sent to the Ministry to seek an interview on the matter. This meeting took place in October when the Ministry: 'after full consideration.....was prepared to consent to the execution of the work by direct labour'.⁷¹

A draft scheme for 326 houses on the Worsley Hall estate would be completed and subsidies under the 1924 Act applied for. The basis of the application under these subsidies was that they were part of the 5-year-plan for housing in Wigan and sanction should be given under the Wheatley Act. None of the houses constructed since 1925 having been completed under any other act. The 1933 Act had not yet come before Parliament for final approval but was drafted and ready to be enacted. The plans were forwarded to the Ministry and would not receive approval under the 1924 Act, the Ministry advising the borough of the regulations under the 1933 Act. A deputation was sent to the Ministry who asked for certain amendments to be made to the plans. Wigan continued to argue the case that the houses were for slum clearance and that the conditions in the town were still poor. The Ministry would not

⁷⁰ Details of the correspondence can be found in the HCM 22/7/1932 pages 1677-9.

⁷¹ See HCM 10th October 1932 p2125.

sanction houses under the 1924 Act, but indicated that it was prepared to sanction some of the houses under the 1930 Act.⁷²

One of the primary objects of the 1933 Act was to promote building by private enterprise rather than by local authorities. This was, however, not to deter the borough from continuing with proposals to construct houses even with the much reduced subsidies now available to it which were essentially based upon the number of persons re-housed. The act also required a five-year programme to be submitted for slum clearance schemes up to December 1938. The Medical Officer of Health was asked to prepare a report on the numbers of unfit houses and the number of persons he envisaged would be displaced. A special meeting between the HIHC and the HC was held and the MOH reported that: '458 houses and 2096 persons were involved'.⁷³ There was clearly a demonstrable need for housing in the town and although the two housing schemes in Worsley Hall had been started the borough still insisted on further house construction.

A housing conference was also called in the town in September when local builders, building societies and the borough council were involved. The town clerk advised the meeting of the provisions under the 1933 Act, especially with regard to the supply of houses under the act. He also reported that the borough had erected 1905 houses in the borough since 1919 but that:

According to the last survey of housing needs made by the housing committee in 1930, the housing committee considers that at least 1168

⁷² The town clerk and the mayor visited the Ministry on the 17th May 1933 to discuss the issue again. See HCM 12/6/1933 1375-1376 for a full report.

⁷³ See Minutes of the Special Meeting of the HIHC and NCM with the MOH 25th September 1933 p1515

houses were required in the Borough.....the Corporation Housing Committee are prepared for the time being to concentrate (as suggested by the Ministry) in dealing with the clearance of slum areas and re-housing the persons displaced.....If, however, it is found that private enterprise is not in a position to provide sufficient houses, the Housing Committee would approach the Minister of Health for permission to erect houses to meet the general housing situation, as well as houses to re-house people displaced from slum areas.⁷⁴

Being aware of the provisions of the 1933 Act, the borough was to contact the Ministry with regard to future housing needs and suggested that: 'the Corporation may at a later date find it necessary to apply to the Ministry for permission to erect non-subsidy houses if it be found that private enterprise is not meeting the demand'.⁷⁵ This was a very shrewd move as the provisions of the 1933 Act of course removed the necessity for local authorities to be involved in building and was the sole reason why Blackburn and Preston ceased building.⁷⁶ The housing schemes at Worsley Hall were approved and were to be built by direct labour during the course of 1934 and 1935.

The borough continued to purchase land in Beech Hill and at Worsley Hall for further housing schemes with 28.75 acres being purchased at Beech Hill and 18.72 acres at Worsley Hall. Thus, a situation would be continued, if not escalated under the provisions of the 1935 Act which were shortly to come into force and would address the issues of both slum clearance and overcrowding. In this respect, the

⁷⁴ See HCM 18th September 1933 pp1847-51.

⁷⁵ See HCM 12th March 1934 p787.

borough was very active in pursuing the acquisition of further land and in promoting housing schemes for the town.

Housing in Wigan under the 1935 Housing Act.

Building continued under the 1930 Act and the 1933 Act. The borough had now completed a survey of its further housing needs under the new legislation using the parameters for overcrowding as indicated by the Ministry.⁷⁷

A further 77.5 acres of land were purchased at Worsley Hall, which was now by far the biggest council owned area of land in the borough. During 1937 application was made for 220 houses which were agreed by the Ministry in September and by the middle of 1938 the requirements of the town was still being reported as 390 houses by the MOH. Land at the disposal of the corporation would hold 100 houses and therefore the borough needed additional land to build. By the end of 1938 410 houses had been completed on the Worsley Hall Estate and it was resolved that: 'the Borough Engineer and his staff be congratulated for their excellent work in connection with the completion of the said houses'.⁷⁸

Building would continue until the outbreak of the Second World War (a period not researched in this thesis). It is sufficient to add that in 1939 the MOH was reporting

⁷⁶ See comparisons in Chapter Eight.

⁷⁷ The parameters for overcrowding and rooms for use as bedrooms were disputed by the AMC and were a source of conflict between the AMC and the Ministry. The council reported that they had 928 families residing in overcrowded conditions. See HHHC and HC joint meeting minutes 16/7/1936 page 1564.

⁷⁸ See HCM 12th December 1938 p278.

that 320 dwellings were required for overcrowding.⁷⁹ In March 1939 the borough engineer, Mr James Dillon, left the employ of the borough to take up a post in Beckenham. The town guide for 1939⁸⁰ stated:

Since the end of the Great War approximately 2,500 houses have been erected by the Corporation under the various Housing Acts and a further 172 are in the course of erection.....it is anticipated that for housing purposes under the slum clearance schemes a further 390 houses will be required and for abatement of overcrowding 200 houses.

Rental policy in Wigan.

The rental policy in the borough, not surprisingly, clashed with the views of the Ministry, and it also exhibited a concept that was not evident in Blackburn or Preston; the use of rent subsidies by the borough to assist the poorer workers being housed. Again, this is an example of the political awareness of the borough which, actually reduced rents in view of the post-war slump in 1921 and 1922. Initial rents for the Beech Hill site, for example, were set at variance with those demanded by the Ministry as Table 7.8 indicates.

A scheme of rent rebates was introduced, again an innovative action by the borough council. This allowed some relief to the poorest workers with the rebates calculated on the basis of the numbers of persons occupying the premises and the average wages of the households.

⁷⁹ See MOH Annual Report 1939 p8.

⁸⁰ See Wigan, An Official Guide, February 1939.

Table 7.8 Rents on the Beech Hill site in 1921.

Type of House.	Ministries Rent.	Wigan Rent.
A Non Parlour	10/-	9/6
B Parlour Houses	12/6d	11/6
B4 4 Bedroom Non Parlour	14/-	12/6

Source. Housing Committee Minutes 26th May 1921 p982. The figures quote are exclusive of rates.

Although this was not a means test as such it did relate in some way to the means of the workers, and for example, a two bed-roomed house occupied by two people would receive a rebate of 8d per week. The rent for a two-bedroomed house would be reduced to 8/1d on the Worsley Hall and Bottling Wood estates as opposed to 6/1d on the Ridyard Street estate.⁸¹ Evidently, rental policy in the town was flexible and appeared to address the problem of rentals for the lowest paid workers.

Conclusions.

The central questions in this chapter concerned the nature and complexion of territorial politics and central/local relations within the policy field of state-aided housing provision during the inter-war years in Wigan.

A number of significant issues and questions were raised concerning:

⁸¹ Wigan also allowed exchange of housing whereby the lower paid workers could take advantage of the lowest rents on offer by moving house within the council's housing scheme.

- The nature of local politics in the town and how centre/periphery relations were conducted.
- The use of the AMC within a tripartite relationship in territorial politics.
- The evidence of a structural relationship in territorial politics.
- How central policy was implemented locally and how this affected central/local co-operation.
- The nature of politics in the town and how these could be described as consensual or conflictual.
- What evidence was there of attitudinal change by both polities.

This analysis was completed in relation to the core questions examined in this thesis with regard to:

- The nature and complexion of territorial relations and how these began at an earlier time and were conducted within a structured polity rather than the dual polity thesis suggested by Bulpitt.
- That the impact of state-aided housing policy in 1919 was the genesis of welfarism anew and marked a significant shift in politics, welfare provision and economic orthodoxy. Policy continued throughout the inter-war years and having once become established became path dependent. Housing provision was high politics.
- Attitudinal change began and central/local relations changed. Territorial politics was not characterised by mutual deference and frigidity but was more interactive and intense especially in Wigan.

- The nature and implementation of national housing policy in the periphery, the continuation of state subsidies and evidence of path dependency in this policy field.
- Central/local relations were conducted within a framework of diminishing fiscal tensions and high deference to local possessive pluralism, and local possessive pluralism itself began to transform. This fundamental change was assisted by state-aided housing-provision with subsidies to both the public and private sectors in housing especially from the mid-1930s.
- The motives for intervention changed, Wigan, prior to 1919, recognised the importance of individual need and social provision even under a Conservative council.
- The ‘official mind’ of the borough council, and its attitude towards housing aid was obvious at an earlier stage in Wigan than either Preston or Blackburn.

What evidence was there in Wigan to support the core hypotheses?

The section will summarise the nature and complexion of inter-war housing policy and politics in Wigan, the nature of central/regional/local relations, and how the theoretical concepts of historical institutionalism’ can enrich the explanation and understanding of these issues. Housing policy was an issue that inextricably linked all aspects of government’s political, economic, social and ideological behaviour. Inter-war housing policy was politics; it was a policy, which promoted welfarism anew.

Wigan Politics. Central/Regional/Local Relations and the Inter-war Housing Acts.

There are a number of significant issues evident in the politics of housing in Wigan that require explanation and which affected the nature of central/regional/local relationships.

For most local authorities building under the Housing Act of 1919 was their first experience of planning and provision of houses for the working-classes or even for slum clearance and re-housing. In Wigan this was not the case (See below) It was the case, however, that, state-aided housing and the issue of welfare provision by the state nationally, although not in Wigan locally, was a new experience also. Working with central government departments, whether this was the LGB or the MOH was not a new area of involvement for Wigan. This was perhaps a significant reason why the borough continued its efforts on housing and was not overly concerned at the need for frequent contact with central government. The evidence presented, of the experience of the Conservative council in Wigan at the turn of the century, and in planning houses under the 1890 act, illustrates an early involvement in welfare issues in a town blighted by insanitary and overcrowded housing conditions. The attempts to provide housing continued up to 1914 and with a hung council up to 1919. Thereafter, Wigan, like Preston and Blackburn, began to take advantage of state-aided housing provision. In sum, the significant policy change in 1919 was not as marked on the political culture of Wigan. What would change of course was the tenacity thereafter, under a Labour controlled council, towards a housing policy for the working-classes driven by determined ideology throughout the whole of the inter-war period, as summarised below, and as indicated earlier in the chapter.

Wigan's housing and Central/Local relationships prior to 1919.

Wigan's contact with central government on the issue of housing provision dated back to 1893 when it provided 210 houses between that date and 1903 under the provisions of Part III of the Housing Act of 1890. There was, of course, no state aid and the provision of these houses placed a great strain on the borough's finances. Nevertheless it is clear that the borough did not adopt an attitude of local possessive pluralism, and indeed co-operated with the wishes of the LGB in providing houses for the working-classes by clearing of slums in Scholes. Contact was therefore established at an early stage and it was evident that the borough held no fears of central government institutions should contact with the centre be required. Fiscal provision, as we have seen, was not available under the economic orthodoxy and a dual polity, as suggested earlier, was in operation prior to the First World War.

The borough recognised the fact that it should be able to provide for those in need and accordingly approached the LGB for permission to retain the houses it had constructed for rental, a move denied by the LGB under the provisions of the 1890 act. By 1913 the council recognised that: 'it is evident that private enterprise in building is not keeping pace with the requirement of the population'⁸² The conditions in the town were, as we have seen, lamentable. The LGB recognised this fact when, in 1915 and LGB inspector, Mr Collins, visited the town and reported that: 'there was a need for additional working-class houses in the town'.⁸³

⁸² HIHC Minutes, 8th December 1913.

⁸³ HIHC Minutes 8th April 1915.

In contrast to Preston and Blackburn the borough council were prepared to provide houses for rental by constructing these and offering them for rental themselves. The transition then of local councillors towards policies of welfarism was not as contrasting in the town in 1919 as it demonstrably was aware of the need prior to this time. The motives for intervention, overcrowding and insanitary conditions, whilst evident to a lesser degree in the other case studies, were more acute in Wigan and were recognised by the Conservative controlled council at the turn of the century. These ideas were supported by both the Liberals and Labour and, as the political strength of the Liberals declined, even more so by the Labour group in the town.

The changing nature and complexion of politics in Wigan.

This is perhaps the most significant issue in the whole question of housing provision in Wigan. From 1919, the borough council was a 'hung' council, although the majority of seats held changed hands up to 1923. Labour representation relied on the support of the Liberals and Independents to remain in overall control and it made full use of the position. From 1924 the Labour Party had full control of the council and would not lose this again.

The nature of this political power and control was fully reflected in the issue of the provision of houses for the working-classes and in the manner in which politics was used by the controlling Labour group. This power, and the possible abuses of

authority, was used to achieve what appeared to be common goals in the method of construction of houses. Examples of this are plentiful but the major illustrations are:

- The manipulation of the borough's standing orders in ensuring the process of tendering and the elimination of effective competition in this process.
- The establishment of a direct works department to deal with the construction of housing.
- The composition of a sub-committee to purchase materials and labour without recourse to a normal competitive process.

One could almost describe these issues as abuses of power and the political process, but they could also be viewed as shrewd political manoeuvring within the political institutions of the town. The paid officers of the town had the same commitment and shared values towards this common goal. The work of the borough engineer and the town clerk in the processes of negotiation for, and the construction of houses in the town, was due to their tenacity.⁸⁴

The town clerk too played a significant role and function in his dealing with the centre and also in his capacity as a representative of the borough on the regional representative association of local authorities, the AMC. The duality of function ensured that he was both up to date in his knowledge of legislation, the thinking of the AMC on housing policy and of course he was privy to all of the discussions held at the various levels of negotiation locally, regionally and with the Ministry. This

⁸⁴ The borough engineer was in many ways the driving force behind the political process with his ideology of building by direct works and he was a significant actor within the political structure. The same can be said of the town clerk who was involved also with regional representation within the AMC.

was a pivotal role and function and he was a significant participant in his advisory and representative capacity within and without the borough. This is a good example of the role and function of significant actors within institutional structures at the various levels of politics. It also illustrates the changing nature of central/local relations from a 'dual polity' to that of a structured polity.

The evidence is that Wigan borough council could almost be said to have lived at the Ministry of Health throughout the inter-war years, and initially, with the Ministry's housing commissioners in Manchester, whilst they were in situ. Further, that the borough council was not afraid to put its views forcefully, and in many instances, obtain sanction for building that might not have been granted to other less energetic or forceful local authorities. Inter-institutional relationships were frequent, frank, objective, and, as far as Wigan's housing provision was concerned, productive almost throughout the whole of the period. Deference, mutual or otherwise, was not a feature of territorial politics in Wigan.

The nature of central/local relationships throughout the period can be described as professional, tenacious, frequent and, in the use of the housing legislation, almost manipulative.

They were professional in as much as the relationships were conducted on an amicable basis. It was tenacious in as much as Wigan pursued its policies and programmes with far more vigour that had been obvious in Blackburn or Preston, hence the frequency of the meetings, conferences and deputations from the borough with the Ministry. Finally, and very significantly, it was manipulative given that the

borough council would always try and use the legislation available to its greatest advantage possible in terms of housing provision and subsidy.⁸⁵

By far the most important and contentious issue raised with the Ministry was that of the use of direct labour to build their houses. The borough was not afraid to challenge the Ministry's view on this issue which, arose because of the inability to agree tender prices with the Ministry. This is another good example of a 'path dependent' policy which, having been established, continued to operate and became the norm. Furthermore, it would not be changed during the whole of the inter-war period even though it was challenged several times by the Ministry nationally, and, locally, by the Conservatives on the Wigan. It is a good example too of the nature of central/local relations and how the strongly held views of the locality operated in the best interests of their borough.

The operational codes in territorial politics of 'mutual deference and frigidity' and 'local possessive pluralism' suggested by Bulpitt and Bellamy are reflected somewhat differently in Wigan given the nature of its political ideology and tenacity. Evidence has shown that Wigan did not exhibit a consensual relationship with the Ministry, nor was it prepared to accept rejection of its applications to the Ministry to build under the most advantageous terms. Preston and Blackburn had an agricultural/urban mix in geographic location. Wigan was truly an industrial base with mining, heavy industry and textiles. However, the dichotomy between industrial/agricultural or urban/rural in fiscal provisions was not evident. Wigan simply fought their corner and, whilst the borough manipulated the political process

⁸⁵ There are numerous examples of this by attempting to build under the most advantageous subsidies even though these subsidies had officially ceased under the subsequent legislation.

locally, to achieve its aims in housing policy. Also during the building boom of the mid-1930s the borough, unlike the other two, produced more houses than private enterprise. Given the evidence, it is suggested therefore that the concepts of mutual deference and frigidity and local possessive pluralism were not evidenced in the town's political life or its housing policy.

Overall, Wigan pursued a vigorous housing policy throughout the period and, when other local authorities had ceased to build, the borough continued and its output exceeded that in the private sector. Politically, this was a triumph in Wigan, for its townspeople and its strongly held Labour views. 'Militancy' and 'tenacity' had achieved a very successful housing programme on behalf of the working-classes, even though there had been a poor start to the housing campaign in 1919.

In sum, there is considerable evidence to support the issues raised in this thesis concerning the introduction of state-aided housing policy being welfarism anew and of the path dependent nature of policy throughout the inter-war years in Wigan. Policy in Wigan was also reinforced by local action by the council who sanctioned building by direct works and gave massive powers to sub-committees, which almost obliterated the need for competitive tendering in housing provision. The political majority enjoyed by the Labour group in Wigan allowed it to ride roughshod over the political process. Finally, there is considerable evidence that the borough used all the political channels to satisfy its perceived demands for housing and was not afraid to challenge the authority of the centre on numerous occasions. The borough also used regional representation to its fullest extent to both satisfy its demands for housing and to challenge the policy directed from the centre where it felt this

conflicted with the towns best interests. No more was this evident than in the tendering and direct works building processes. It is therefore argued that the borough used the political processes and institutions and to their fullest extent and the evidence of a tripartite relationship was overwhelming. The nature of this territorial process therefore does not lend itself to dual polity, mutual deference and frigidity or a high deference to local possessive pluralism. Indeed, it is argued that, because of the nature of territorial relations in Wigan, local possessive pluralism was not a feature of the town's local political complexion after 1919.

Ideational change was somewhat different in Wigan compared to the other two case studies. It commenced at an earlier time, and the reason for this, it is suggested, was because of the appalling conditions of housing in the town during the latter part of the 19th century. The Conservative council recognised this and attempted to provide housing as we have seen. The Labour controlled council thereafter, and akin to their political ideology, used local taxation to provide housing subsidies through reduced rents and rate rebates. Their construction, in the main, was through direct works and they were not afraid to manipulate local bye-laws to accommodate their ideological persuasion that the tender process for housing should be abandoned. There are then numerous and varying examples of ideational change in Wigan that differed from those in the other case studies. The local strands of thinking on housing policy and provision emerged earlier and throughout the period in a different form.

It is also worth noting that the attempts by the centre to constrain housing output in the town were resisted and this is the reason why Wigan's housing output exhibited a different pattern than that displayed in Preston and Blackburn. The political and

ideological values and beliefs of the council in the town rode roughshod, in some instances, over national directives and policies. The motives for intervention in Wigan evidently favoured the promotion of a kind of social policy that recognised individual needs. The town used the incentives from central government to provide housing but they also used local taxation both to supplement state aid and to provide housing themselves even when national policy was towards private enterprise construction. Ideas and motives for housing policy therefore changed in Wigan but in different areas and to a greater degree than in Preston or Blackburn.

Chapter 8.

Central/Regional/Local Relations,

The Politics and Policies of Inter-War Housing in

Blackburn, Preston and Wigan.

A Comparative Analysis.

Introduction.

This chapter is a comparative analysis of the three case studies of Blackburn, Preston and Wigan. It will compare and contrast their nature and complexion in central/regional/local relations, local politics and housing policy, during the inter-war years. It will focus on the issues of:

- The nature and complexion of local and national politics in the towns.
- Housing conditions and housing output during the inter-war years.
- Local issues affecting housing policy in the localities.
- Local ‘Institutions of interest representation’.
- Central/regional/local relations, housing policy and output.
- Attitudinal changes and local possessive pluralism.
- Ideational and mindset change and the role of ideas.

Tables 8.1 to 8.4, provide an analysis of the case studies, which are broken down into four analytical periods, and compare and contrast the following areas:

- Housing policy implementation and local policy variation.

- The significant local actors involved.
- The external influences on housing policy and local politics.
- The political complexions of the towns.
- Political phasing between central/local government.

Table 8.1. Housing Policy from 1919 to 1925.

Town.	Local Political Complexion.	Political Phasing In Phase or Out of Phase with Central Government.	External Influences on Policy¹	Policy Variation from Central Government Directives	Local Influential Actors in Politics and Housing Policy.
Blackburn	Conservative. Active Labour Party locally held office only once.	In Phase. Except for the 1924 Labour Government.	Employment base was non-militant despite unionisation. Overcrowding level at 4.4 per cent in 1911.	Overall compliance with policy. Built 10.27 per cent of total inter-war housing in this period.	Mr Lewis Beard, Town Clerk was active within the AMC.
Preston.	Conservative with Civic Pride. Political assimilation evident throughout the whole inter-war period.	In Phase. Except for the 1924 Labour Government.	Civic pride. Non-militant employment base. Freemasonry. Overcrowding level at 5.6 per cent in 1911.	Overall compliance with policy. Built 17.53 per cent of inter-war housing in this period.	Trades Council. Councillor Morris was Labour Party agent and Chairman of the Housing Committee.
Wigan.	Labour stronghold. Labour remained in office throughout the period.	Out of Phase. Except for the 1924 Labour Government.	A Strong Labour Group. Labour base in the Mining Industry with strong unionisation. History of labour politics in the town. Wigan had the poorest conditions, high death rates and infant mortality. Overcrowding level at 12.9 per cent in 1911.	Overall compliance with policy. Local council militancy slowed housing output Built only 7.7 per cent of inter-war housing in this period.	Labour Group. Town Clerk with AMC. Borough Engineer active in housing policy and introduced the direct works department.

¹ It should be remembered that unemployment nationally was increasing from 1921 and this too was an external influence on each of the towns as well as on national attitudes to housing subsidies.

Table 8.2. Housing Policy from 1926 to 1930.

Town.	Local Political Complexion.	Political Phasing In Phase or Out of Phase with Central Government.	External Influences on Policy.	Policy Variation from Central Government Directives	Local Influential Actors in Politics and Housing Policy.
Blackburn	Conservative. Labour held office only once in 1929.	In Phase. Except for the 1929 Labour Government.	Employment base was non-militant despite unionisation. Local Master Builders Federation was active.	Overall compliance with policy. Built 82.87 per cent of inter-war houses during this period.	Mr Lewis Beard with AMC.
Preston.	Conservative with Civic Pride. Labour failed to take control in 1929 when they had the opportunity.	In Phase. Except for the 1929 Labour Government.	Civic pride. Non-militant employment base. Freemasonry?	Overall compliance with policy. Built 69.78 per cent of inter-war houses during this period.	Trades Council. Councillor Morris.
Wigan.	Labour stronghold and Labour remained in office throughout the period.	Out of Phase. Except for 1929 Labour Government. Council gave massive powers to housing sub committee and tendering was almost abolished locally.	A Strong Labour Group. Labour base in the Mining Industry with strong unionisation. History of labour politics in the town. Greater social need for housing due to poor conditions in the town. Direct works department built all local council houses.	Overall compliance with policy. Houses Built by direct labour against government policy. Total of 34.98 per cent of inter-war houses during this period.	Labour Group. Councillor Yates. Town Clerk with AMC. Borough Engineer

Table 8.3. Housing Policy from 1931 to 1933.

Town.	Local Political Complexion.	Political Phasing In Phase or Out of Phase with Central Government.	External Influences on Policy. ²	Policy Variation from Central Government Directives	Local Influential Actors in Politics and Housing Policy.
Blackburn	Conservative.	In Phase with National Government.	Employment base was non-militant despite unionisation. Local Master Builders Federation was active.	Overall compliance with policy. Built only 6.84 per cent of inter-war housing from 1933 to 1935.	Mr Lewis Beard with AMC.
Preston.	Conservative with Civic Pride.	In Phase with National Government.	Civic pride. Non-militant employment base. Freemasonry?	Overall compliance with policy. Built 12.76 per cent of inter-war housing from 1933 to 1935.	Trades Council. Councillor Morris.
Wigan.	Labour stronghold and Labour Remained in office throughout the period.	Out of Phase With National Government.	A Strong Labour Group. Labour base in the Mining Industry with strong unionisation. History of labour politics in the town. Greater social need for housing due to poor conditions in the town. Direct works department built all local council houses.	Constructed few houses during this period. Conflict with Central Government on which Housing Act it wished to build.	Labour Group. Councillor Yates Town Clerk with AMC. Borough Engineer

² Rising unemployment continued and economic depression deepened. Both these factors influenced housing policy nationally in terms of subsidies under the 1930 Act and continued to influence policy

Table 8.4. Housing Policy from 1934 to 1938.

Town.	Local Political Complexion.	Political Phasing In Phase or Out of Phase with Central Government.	External Influences on Policy.	Policy Variation from Central Government Directives	Local Influential Actors in Politics and Housing Policy.
Blackburn	Conservative.	In Phase with National Government.	Employment base was non-militant despite unionisation. Local Master Builder's Federation was active. Private sector building greater than the local authority during the whole of the period.	Overall compliance with policy. Building by Local Authority was almost non-existent.	Mr Lewis Beard with AMC.
Preston.	Conservative with Civic Pride.	In Phase with National Government.	Civic pride. Non-militant employment base. Freemasonry. Private sector Building was greater than the local Authority during the whole period.	Overall compliance with policy. Building by Local Authority was almost non-existent.	Trades Council. Councillor Morris.
Wigan.	Labour stronghold and Labour remained in office throughout the period.	Out of Phase With National Government.	A Strong Labour Group. Labour base in the Mining Industry with strong unionisation. History of labour politics in the town. Greater social need for housing due to poor conditions in the town. Direct works department built all local council houses.	This was the most productive time in inter-war housebuilding. Wigan built 57.23 per cent of its inter-war housing during this period. Considerable conflict with Central Government concerning the subsidies under Housing Acts. Local Authority building was greater than the private sector during the whole of this period.	Labour Group. Councillor Yates. Town Clerk with AMC. Borough Engineer.

Local political complexions.

The political nature and complexion of the case studies are a central feature of the thesis and the politics and policies of each town have already been illustrated. Whilst the towns exhibited differences in their political ideology, values and beliefs, they also exhibited a number of structural characteristics in a framework within which they had to operate, for example:

- All of the towns elected a proportion of their council each year.
- The councils were all composed of alderman and councillors.
- The aldermanic benches were all available for election in direct proportion to the number of elected councillors.
- All the towns had an equation of wards represented by councillors and aldermen.

The major concern is with the differences in the nature and complexion of politics exhibited by the towns. How local attitudes, values, beliefs and political ideologies affected local political actions and how these actions shaped politics and policies in the periphery. The towns displayed different characteristics and levels of political acquiescence within the council and between the council and central government.

Whether the locality was ‘in phase or out of phase’³ with the political colour of the centre was an important issue which on occasions, shaped local policy making and affected the provision of housing for the working-classes. The interrelationships between centre and periphery was affected by the attitudes of the locality and of local institutions and actors just as the attitudes of the central institution analysed,

³ This basically means that both central and local government were of the same political persuasion.

the Ministry of Health, and its senior civil servants, attempted to shape policy and thereby housing output, in the periphery. The nature and level of political relationships was different in each of the case studies and had a significant effect on housing policy and output in the localities as has been illustrated. The political nature and complexions of the towns are individually considered as falling into the following complexions and exhibiting the following characteristics.

Overall, Preston was under Conservative control. When the local Labour Party had the opportunity to take control of the council they failed to do so. This was because of political assimilation and civic pride. The two factors took precedent over political desires and party political aspirations in the town. Significantly the chairmanship of the housing committee was given to a Labour councillor by the controlling Conservative group. This was a means of assimilation just as social interaction had been outside of the council chamber. This led to a political complexion of non-politics in the town, which appeared to work for its benefit especially in housing policy as we have seen and which will be compared to the other towns later in this chapter.

Blackburn too was Conservative throughout the period, but unlike Preston the Labour group had not been socialised or assimilated into local politics and they seized control of the local council at the earliest opportunity by electing their councillors to the aldermanic bench. This control lasted only a year hence the conclusions on the political complexion of the town. One other similarity with Preston was the selection of a chairman of the housing committee, which was chaired by a long established Labour councillor and later alderman. This is the only

area one could consider as being an attempt to control the politics and policies of housing in Blackburn. Unlike Preston it did not negate the aspirations of power for control of the council in the town. The Labour Party in Blackburn appeared to be more militant than Preston but simply did not have the opportunity to express its aspirations as it could not achieve political control for any length of time. Blackburn was clearly a Conservative town during the inter-war period and its political philosophy mirrored the directives on housing issues given by the centre. This is perhaps not surprising, as the politics of the centre were also Conservative except for two short periods. The housing policies of the Labour government in 1924 could not have been more conducive to a Conservative administration and a local authority wishing to build houses with a government subsidy. There would be little conflict on housing policy with the centre.

Wigan displayed a completely different nature and intensity in its political life. Evidently, it was the most militant of the three towns in local and national politics and had a political tenacity that it was not afraid to display. Even when the Labour group did not have a majority on the council it was using both the Liberals and Independents to support it in the council chamber to preserve its overall control. Politics were conducted on strict party-political lines and Wigan, just like their colleagues in Blackburn, would take overall control of the council at the very first opportunity. Unlike the other towns, the Labour group in Wigan, having taken control of the council, was never to lose it again and this was perhaps the most significant factor in the town's political life. One common feature between Wigan and Preston was the fact that both had a Labour chairman of the housing committee

even when the Conservatives were in power in the council chamber. Both these chairmen were also in office throughout the period.

Political power in the town reached a level whereby Labour simply rode roughshod over local political life. They used their majority to promote policies that were conducive to a Labour ideology and nowhere was this more obvious than in housing policy. The structures were constructed with an ideological perspective and the actors involved contributed to the promulgation of policies conducive to that ideology. Examples of this are, firstly, the setting up of a direct works department and the insistence by the council of constructing houses using this method of contractual tendering rather than by competition. Secondly, the formation of sub-committees to pursue those objectives. Thirdly, the councils manipulation of policy and local byelaws was used to constrain competition and to promote local political ideology. Control, power and party politics were the order of the day in Wigan's political make up; it was unashamedly Labour and undeniably radical, unlike the other towns in these case studies.

External influences on local politics.

The external influences upon local politics varied considerably in each of the towns. Preston had an active Trades and Labour Council which, surprisingly, had little influence on Labour politics in the town or on the overall political nature and complexion of local politics. The major influence clearly was the notion of civic pride and political socialisation within and beyond the council chamber.

In Blackburn, there was no evidence available of the political activity displayed in the other towns save to say the town was Conservative. Even the massive textile industry in the town did not have an influence on the political life of the town. Just as Wigan was Labour and radical, Blackburn was Conservative with both a capital and small c and political acquiescence was the norm. Blackburn did have some influence with the AMC and it was obviously aware of the political climate on housing policy because of the role the AMC played and its interrelationships with central government.

The major influences in Wigan were the employment base, the unionisation of the workforce with its undoubted militancy and its effect on the political institutions and actors within those institutions. In housing policy, the significance of the influence of these actors cannot be overstated. The borough engineer and the town clerk played an important role and function in local politics, policy formulation and decision making. There is no doubt that they manipulated policy towards the ideological perceptions akin to the Labour group. They were, after all, employed by the borough and it is fair to assume that they too were, in turn, socialised by the overall political beliefs portrayed within a very strong Labour group locally. These participants in the political process had influences at different levels within the political process and within housing policy.

The borough engineer was influential at the local level and in local policy formulation, whilst the town clerk was influential at not only the local level but at the regional level also with the AMC. The town clerk was, because of his intimate knowledge on housing policy at national, regional and local level, an influential

actor in the process of policy formulation and territorial relationships. Whilst Blackburn too had this knowledge, it was not used in the same manner because of the political persuasion in the borough being in phase with that of the centre. Wigan of course was out of phase and used the knowledge to the benefit of promoting the political ideology contained within the borough council. Thus, for different reasons, arising from the varying nature and complexions within each of the towns, the influences impacted upon politics and housing policy to different degrees and at variable levels. Consequently, they had significantly different influences upon local housing policy and politics.

Housing conditions and house construction during the inter-war years.

This section will reflect on the housing needs in each of the towns in 1919, as determined by the local authorities. They will be expressed in terms of a percentage of the population in that year and related to the needs expressed in each case, Table 8.5 contains details of that analysis and Table 8.6 indicates building prior to that date. There was clearly a different and significant perception of needs in 1919 as Table 8.5, illustrates.

**Table 8.5. Housing requirements in 1919, as a percentage
of population that year.**

Town.	Population in 1919.	Houses Required.	Percentage of 1919 Population.
Blackburn	131,246	576	0.43%
Preston	117,277	6,111	5.21%
Wigan	93,944	2,500	2.98%

Source. Medical Officer of Health Annual Reports in each of the towns.

Houses constructed between 1911 and 1919 in the three boroughs also reflected the divergence between Wigan and the other two boroughs. Table 8.2 indicates Wigan constructed only about one-tenth of the output achieved in the other two towns. Blackburn too had a significant housing programme in the town prior to 1911 and from 1905 to 1911, 2313 houses were constructed in the borough (Boroughs MOH annual reports 1905 to 1911). Wigan, on the other hand constructed a mere 160.

**Table 8.6 Houses constructed between 1911 and 1919
as a percentage of 1919 population.**

Town.	Houses Constructed.	Percentage of 1919 Population
Blackburn.	838	0.63%
Preston.	798	0.68%
Wigan	54	0.07%

Source. Medical Officer of Health Annual Report in each of the towns from 1911 to 1919.

The actual total of houses constructed in each of the towns is indicated in Table 8.7 along with those constructed by private enterprise. The figures, when reflected against perceived needs, are quite illuminating especially for Blackburn. It is accepted that the needs of the towns would change between 1919 and 1938 and that more houses would be constructed to abate overcrowding, insanitary conditions and to cope with demands of the population. However, in all three cases the population had declined in this period, marginally in Wigan but significantly in Blackburn. The populations of Preston and Blackburn in 1938 were virtually the same the former with 113,000, the latter 113,200⁴ the population of Wigan was 82,530. Table 8.7 also indicates the percentage of houses constructed by both the borough council and private enterprise as a percentage of the town's population in 1938.

**Table 8.7 Houses constructed by Borough Councils and by
Private Enterprise 1919 – 1938.**

Town.	Council Construction.	Private Construction	Total Constructed	Percentage of 1938 Population
Blackburn.	1,869	2,508	4,377	3.87%
Preston.	2,737	4,100	6,837	6.04%
Wigan.	2,378	2,265	4,643	5.62%

Source. Medical Officer of Health Annual Report in each of the towns.

What differed within the towns was the political motivations behind building and the construction under the various Housing Acts of 1919, 1924 and from 1930 to 1935.

⁴ See the various borough's MOH Annual Reports as previously cited in the appropriate chapters

One of the anomalies appearing in the figures is the actual output of houses under the various housing acts and how each of the boroughs reacted to the legislation. Table 8.8 illustrates the building under the various acts and the percentage of the total output during each period.

The output under the various acts in Preston and Blackburn reflect the boroughs building programmes almost in line with central government policy. Both commenced under the 1919 Act with immediate attention being given to the legislation. This was apparent too in Wigan but to a lesser extent and housing construction, as we have seen in the case study, was affected by the attitude of the Ministry towards the borough.

Building under the 1924 Act and thereafter provides the most interesting comparison. Preston and Blackburn constructed most of their inter-war housing during this phase of building, as did the majority of towns throughout the country. Wigan however did not and whilst building continued apace throughout the United Kingdom it reached a standstill in Wigan.

The pattern of housing construction in both Preston and Blackburn was almost completely in line with the direction of central government. Given this situation it is not surprising that the overall nature of territorial relationships, when applied to housing policy, was consensual. When the politics of the two towns are analysed they clearly reflected conservatism (small c) and assertive civic pride in Preston and the Conservatism of inter-war Blackburn.

from which these statistics are taken.

Wigan was completely different in its building pattern, its method of construction and its political ideology. These factors were an influence on the nature of its territorial relationships, which in turn affected the nature and timing of housing provision. Wigan continued to build council houses well into the 1930s completing more houses than private enterprise in the period 1934 to 1938 when it constructed 1283 houses as against 1245 by private enterprise. Why then was Wigan so different during these two significant periods of construction and how did the nature and complexion of territorial relationships affect its housing provision?

Table 8.8 Housing output under the inter-war Housing Acts.

Housing Act.	Blackburn.	Preston.	Wigan.
1919 Act.	192 (10.27%)	480 (17.53%)	185 (7.77%)
1924 Act.	1,549 (82.87%)	1,910 (69.78%)	832 (34.98%)
1933 to 1935 Acts.	128 (6.84%)	347 (12.67%)	1,361 (57.23%)
Totals.	1,869	2,737	2,378

Source. Medical Officer of Health Annual Reports in each town.

Wigan exhibited a number of characteristics and influences on housing policy not evident in the other two towns, they were: -

- The political complexion of the council.
- The establishing of a direct works department to build houses.
- The town was more unhealthy and overcrowded.
- The influences of significant individuals as paid members of the borough especially the borough engineer and town clerk.

Housing policy in Wigan, was subjected to a greater political influence than in either Preston or Blackburn. The overall political choices of the borough council influenced the attitude of its officers and their values and beliefs became in phase with the demands of local politics. Both political institutions, and policy, were manipulated in favour of certain courses of action locally. The setting up of a direct works department and a sub-committee for purchasing building materials both influenced political choice and the process of competitive tendering; competition was almost eliminated. These issues, were driven by the prevailing political ideology, and the unionisation of the labour movement in the town, traits not exhibited in the other towns.

It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that having a significant need for housing, the overall effects of a more politically motivated locality eventually worked for the benefit of the town and its output was far more significant than in Blackburn. However, Preston had a more successful completion in terms of numbers of houses constructed, including private ones, after its housing campaign took off in 1919. Nevertheless if the output of houses constructed by the council is compared to Preston and related to the populations of the towns in 1938, then Wigan fared best of all with 2.88 per cent. Preston achieved 2.41 per cent, Blackburn 1.65 per cent.

The tenacity and political militancy exhibited in Wigan appeared to work for the benefit of its townspeople and its housing output by the council. Overall output from both sectors saw Preston marginally greater than Wigan (See Table 8.8). Had the MOH not brought construction in Wigan almost to a standstill in 1931 and 1932,

when the borough constructed only 41 houses, the result may have been different and a greater number of houses constructed in Wigan.

Central/Regional/Local relations, housing policy and output.

It was suggested in Chapter One that there were two significant changes in the nature and complexion of territorial relations at the end of the First World War. Firstly, there was the introduction of a form of welfarism, state-aided housing policy, not previously undertaken by either central or local government. Secondly, the ideological shift in local perceptions on policy, especially welfare policy, and the shift from an adversarial stance by local authorities whose ideology saw competition between local authorities and the fiscal tensions within: 'local possessive pluralism.' (Bellamy, p12)

Changes in national institutions also had an impact on policy and territorial relationships and specifically the transformation of the LGB to the MOH in 1919 and, at the same time, the introduction of the Housing Act of 1919. These influences and changes had a significant impact on territorial politics and on the institutions and actors involved at central/regional and local levels. It was a period of transition and learning (See below).

The focus of this section will be to ascertain how Preston, Blackburn and Wigan coped with these major changes and institutional influences and the shift in ideological perceptions towards welfarism generally and state-aided housing policy

specifically. The result of these changes had a significant impact on territorial politics and, as Bulpitt suggested, there was a change from what he termed the 'L'ancien regime' after 1926. These changes, it is argued, occurred earlier and, in the case of state-aided housing policy, at a different level with very strict control by the central institutions over the action of the locality. The nature, complexion, and substance of the territorial dimension in politics significantly changed but not in the direction or to the extent that Bulpitt suggests as far as housing policy was concerned.

The case studies illustrate that at varying levels, in different ways and in variable intensities, the nature and complexion of the territorial dimension in central/local relations changed. As far as inter-war housing policy was concerned, these relationships could not, in all cases or this policy field, be described as mutually deferential. The control exerted by the centre could not have been more clearly exhibited or legislated and the economic controls were put in place to ensure compliance by the periphery. The case studies illustrate that the reactions to policy and the consequent territorial relationships in negotiations over policy issues were not the same in each of the towns.

Preston was consensual and this was not surprising given the political nature of the town and its political assimilation. The borough was prepared to build under the Treasury-LGB scheme; they immediately accepted the generous terms under the Housing Act of 1919 and built a significant number of houses compared to Blackburn and Wigan. The same can be said of their actions under the Wheatley Act of 1924 until its cessation in 1932. Finally, they discarded building as a borough

under the subsequent acts from 1930 onwards. It was, in fact, a model borough council in this respect. The only issue of conflict was the question of rent policy and this was an issue so strongly fought by many towns in the United Kingdom.

Blackburn, which exhibited a greater activity in local party politics, was still however a Conservative town during the period. Given this political persuasion again it would be surprising if the town did not reflect the policies determined by the centre. One other significant feature of housing policy implementation was the borough's perceived needs in 1919. It will be remembered that, when compared to Preston and Wigan, its perceived needs were minimal. Furthermore, the borough had in fact an extensive building programme from 1905 onwards, a situation not found in the other towns. Despite this lower anticipated demand, the town still built a significant number of houses, but not as great as the percentages in the other towns when related to its population in 1938. Blackburn too could be described as a model town in terms of central government direction on housing policy under each of the inter-war acts.

Wigan's relationships with central government institutions were somewhat different than the other towns as evidenced from an early stage and prior to 1919 when the borough wished to build houses under the Housing Act of 1890. The matter of ceiling heights was an issue taken up with the LGB and would eventually be resolved by compromise after the borough had cited other towns where extra ceiling heights had been granted in excess of the 8-foot standard demanded. This was an early indication of the town's militancy and political consciousness; it was also an indication that the borough was politically astute. The borough was also involved

regionally in their activities within the AMC, as were Blackburn, but at a different level and for a different purpose than Blackburn's town clerk who became chairman of the Law Committee. Wigan's intention was to obtain feedback and to influence the grass roots of local politics rather than from perhaps personal prestige for an individual. This indicates how Wigan was prepared to use the institutional framework of political activity and, it is also an example of: 'interest representation'

From the outset Wigan was politically astute. The town was of a different political complexion than that of the centre, and out of phase with the overall conservative nature of inter-war politics there being only two short periods of Labour government. State-aided housing provision, as we have seen, was a new attempt at welfarism from the centre. In 1919, despite previous confrontations over ceiling heights, the borough council built 185 houses under the 1919 Act. When compared to Preston this was poor but was, more or less, in line with Blackburn.

It was from 1925 that the situation significantly changed in terms of central/local relations and the implementation of the centre's policy on housing. The first Labour government had fallen but the remnants of their housing policy remained in the form of the Wheatley Act of 1924, an Act used by all the towns until 1932 when it was repealed by Hilton Young. Why then was Wigan different from the other towns who displayed conservative tendencies and politics?

Wigan was more politically aware and its politics was organised on a different level than the other towns. Labour politics were more militant, more tenacious, had a different employment base and were well organised locally as a political group. This

was the fundamental difference between Wigan, Preston and Blackburn and would be the underlying factor that influenced the consciousness of the borough council, its officers, their ideological values and beliefs, and the whole foundation on which the notion of central/local relations were conducted. The town had a greater social need for housing, was constructed on a different employment base requiring special needs in terms of housing requirements, and most importantly, was of a different political persuasion. It had political muscle born from its labour base and it used that power locally in the council chamber. It manipulated local byelaws and introduced sub-committees to further its ideological beliefs. These were traits not displayed in the other towns. This political maneuvering led almost to an abuse of power as far as competitive tendering for housing contracts was concerned and this was the source of the contention between central and local government over housing policy. This political motivation drove the council's policy and it is hardly surprising that conflict arose initially and more significantly after 1925.

Three phases can be identified in the housebuilding programme in Wigan, from 1926 to 1930, from 1931 to 33, and from 1934 to 1938. During these periods houses were constructed by a process of direct labour. This was a method of building considered in the other towns but not seriously so. Indeed in Blackburn, it will be recalled that the term 'direct works' had been replaced by 'direct employment of labour'. In any event, the two were not comparable as the department in Wigan was one with its own labour force and is indicative of the ideological persuasion and union activities within the town, features not displayed in the other case studies.

From 1926, Wigan's housing output was comparable to the other towns but during the period from 1931 to 1933 it was almost at a standstill when both Preston and Blackburn were building apace under the Wheatley Act. The period from 1934 onwards saw housebuilding at a standstill in Preston and Blackburn. This was in line with central government policy as the onus to build had now been removed from the localities with the introduction of the Housing Act in 1933. This was however the most significant contribution to Wigan's programme and, indeed, from 1934 the output from the direct works department was greater than that by private enterprise in the town.

Relationships between the Ministry and the borough council during the whole period were at the highest level. When the borough wanted sanction to build, or, where delays were in existence, it sought meetings with the Ministry and the Minister to discuss these problems. The tenacity of the borough was responsible for the continued output from 1934 to 1938. Territorial relations were very different and far more conflictual, intense and tenacious and politically motivated in Wigan than in the other towns. The institutional influences were significant. The actors within those local institutions in the process of provision of inter-war housing and in territorial relationships centrally, regionally and locally, also played a significant part in the borough's strategy on inter-war housing provision especially after 1925.

The civic pride of Preston, the Conservatism of Blackburn and the mobilisation of a bias of Labourism in Wigan, all displayed a different level of intensity in territorial relations. If the town was politically in phase, or of the same political persuasion and complexion as central government, then conflict was not an issue. If however the

town was 'out of phase', had dominant ideological values of a different complexion to the centre, then conflict was an issue. It was an issue handled in a particular way by the borough council in Wigan, which on reflection, and certainly from 1934 to 1938, benefited the town in terms of housing production. Furthermore, the conflict was the source of stagnation in the town's building programme during the period from 1930 to 1933.

What is clear is that the nature, frequency and intensity of contact between the centre and periphery were different in the towns examined. Relationships were conducted at an appropriate level, determined by the political regime and complexion of the town and were further resolved by the perception of housing needs. Whilst the intensity was not the same, it is true to say that the institutional processes were

'New Institutionalism' and the case studies on inter-war housing policy and politics.

The case studies exhibit similarities and differences within the chosen theoretical framework. The major institution locally was the borough council and in each of the studies the town established a department, in one form or another, to deal with housing policy and provision. This action locally, as well as nationally, set the policy field on a course that would be continued into the 1980s. The policy became path dependent from the ideation of state-aided housing provision in 1919. Policy was established and a social provision created that was to become known after 1945 as the welfare state. Even though the provision of housing changed in the 1980s, the

policy of providing homes for those who could not purchase their own house is still an established principle albeit not necessarily a provision by local authorities.

Wigan provides several important examples of how new institutionalism can explain both policy choice and political direction, and ideology. Firstly, there was the creation of a direct works department and the process of non-competitive tendering for building contracts. Secondly, and significantly the decision to continue building during the mid-1930s when other towns had ceased providing houses for the working-classes built by the council. Thirdly, the establishment of a Labour group on the council on party political lines and one that ride roughshod over local political institutions and processes. These features of politics in Wigan, the structure and the influential agents within those structures are clearly evidenced using this theoretical framework for analysis.

As Peters suggests: 'The basic argument is that institutions do matter and they matter more than anything else that could be used to explain political decisions.' (Peters, p150) The evidence from the case studies illustrates this point and the decisions taken in each of the boroughs, although divergent and ideologically contrasting, do provide examples of how the theoretical framework assists in explaining policy choices and how political behavior in the three towns can be explained and enriched. It also assists in illustrating that the complex interconnections within the territorial dimension are not necessarily as clear as Bulpitt might suggest. When specific policy fields are examined using: historical institutionalism the analysis can provide more illuminating and varying answers.

Are the case studies a representative sample of the nature and complexion of territorial relations?

The question remains; Is this snapshot of political life and the implementation of state aided housing policy during the inter-war years, given the close geographical location of the towns, considered a representative sample and an indication of the nature and complexion of territorial relations, politics and housing policy during the period?

Wigan provides several important examples of how historical institutionalism can explain policy choice, political direction and ideology. For example, the creation of a direct works department, the process of non-competitive tendering and, significantly, the decision and ability to continue building during the mid-1930s, when other towns had ceased. The establishment of a Labour group that rode roughshod over political institutions and processes and the significant actors within these institutional structures clearly evidence the use of these theoretical concepts. The policy choices determined the course of future actions within the town and also of the actions of the individuals within the political structures.

What is evident is that institutional interaction was not the same in each of the towns and that the ideology of political life, how local politics should be conducted, differed also. This perception influenced the way that policy was conducted and how it should be conducted with regard to the central institutions of government. All three towns exhibited different relationships and varying intensities with their

relationships with the centre but what is clear is that: 'mutual deference and frigidity' (Bulpitt, p135), as far as housing policy was concerned, was not the scenario exhibited. All of the towns were anxious to build, concerned at the economic demands on the locality and, where necessary, to negotiate closely with the centre on issues with which they felt strongly. Even politically assimilated Preston challenged the Ministry on the question of rents to be charged, as did Blackburn. Whereas ideologically motivated Wigan was almost prepared to be in constant conflict with the Ministry in an endeavor to secure housing for its townspeople. It would seem therefore that the nature of territorial relationships even in the most acquiescent of towns was not one conducted in isolation or where the periphery were left to their own devices on housing policy. The politics of inter-war housing was an issue that needed and received the full attention of the centre, regionally with the AMC, and in implementation, the localities.

Ideational change, interventional motives and local housing policy and provision.

This part of the chapter will summarize the ideational changes that evolved in local housing policy and politics after 1919 and will compare and contrast the reactions of the localities to the interventional methods and motives behind state-aided housing policy. The implementation of central policy, as we have seen, varied in each of the three case studies. The question addressed here is: why and how was central policy implemented and how did this affect both territorial relations and the politics and policies of housing provision in the localities during the inter-war years?

Previous chapters have outlined that the influence of the various strands of thinking on housing policy and the balance of ideas began to change and evolve after 1919, they were punctuation's in the equilibrium of policy. Central government had resisted policy change and state-aid for both economic and ideological reasons, imperial taxes were not for local consumption. The attitude of local government too was that local issues should be addressed in the periphery, local possessive pluralism was certainly evident as Bellamy points out. However, not all localities reacted in the same way and there is evidence to show, for example, that in Wigan there was a request made to the LGB that houses constructed under the 1890 act should be retained by the council for rent by the working-classes, this was refused.

What then changed, what movement was there in the directional thinking on housing policy, how were these changes implemented locally, and to what degree did this transition vary? Ideas on housing policy and motives for intervention progressively changed nationally as we have seen. The case studies illustrate that motives changed in the periphery also. Local ideas and ideology evolved once state aid was placed on the political agenda and it was recognized and established that in housing provision local taxes could not meet the demand for housing without state aid. Nevertheless, local authorities did begin to use local rates for housing subsidies as the case studies illustrated, for example, rents were subsidized, differential renting schemes introduced for the poor and top up grants to private enterprise builders were made. (See below) There was then a contrasting local policy implementation of national policy one which, was influenced mainly by the political complexion, political interaction from working-class movements and other institutions of interest representation especially those groups of interest intermediation within the various

localities. It is to the changing direction of thought, the changing local mindset that the focus now briefly turns to explain the local processes evident in the case studies.

Preston.

Prior to 1919, Preston's housing for the working-classes, had been constructed by private enterprise (See Table 5.5). Evidence shows that the borough were prepared to build under the Treasury-LGB scheme and prepared plans on that basis. This was a new venture for the council as we have seen. The political complexion of the town was such that despite local involvement from the PTLC political radicalism was not their forte. Never the less there was input from the PTLC who were very actively involved in the initial discussion on housing provision. There is no doubt that this focussed the minds of the local council, and, as the evidence illustrates, were active during the whole inter-war period.

There was no evidence of local possessive pluralism in the town and the central/local relationship had clearly been consensual and is not surprising given the political acquiescence displayed. There is evidence of ideational change within the town and local Conservatives accepted the principle of state aid and aid for local housing from the rates. Subsidies, over and above those recommended by central government, were available to private enterprise builders and local rates were used to subsidize rents in the town although there was no evidence of differential renting.

Blackburn.

The housing output in Blackburn prior to 1919 had been fairly significant and consequently its housing needs in 1919 had not been as severe as either Preston or Wigan. (See Tables 6.1 and 6.4) The Conservative council, which remained in office throughout the inter-war years, therefore did not have the same depth of problem as the other towns. Politically too, the town was 'in phase' with the centre and this was reflected in the fact that the borough carried out the spirit and letter of the housing acts during the inter-war period.

What was noteworthy in the ideational change in the town was that it was prepared to use local taxation, to aid housing provision, in a number of important ways. This is perhaps surprising for a Conservative council: they never the less used local rates to subsidize rents, they employed housing specialists within the borough, they were concerned at the practicality of the homes actually provided, and they made provision for the poorest families within the town and those with specific housing needs. For a local authority of its political nature, and, given the fact that it had previously no involvement in housing policy or provision, the measures adopted by the council were politically and ideologically meaningful and their direction of thought on housing provision had clearly shifted.

Wigan.

Wigan presents a different scenario from the other towns and in a number of important ways. Politically as we have seen the nature and complexion of local politics in Wigan was quite different from either Preston or Blackburn although Wigan too was under a Conservative controlled council prior to 1918. However for the purposes of these case studies the borough council was a hung council from 1918 but with the support of the Liberals, Labour had effective control of the council chamber. The housing conditions of the town were also much worse than the other case studies, a fact recognized by the early application to build houses to be ratified by the council.

The whole basis of Wigan's ideation on housing policy and the channeling of the direction of thought during the inter-war years was inextricably linked to its party politics and social ideological values. These values continued to emerge throughout the whole period but it is true to say the strands of thinking emerged earlier and to a different intensity. This is evidenced by the pattern of housebuilding in the town more especially during the 1930s when other towns had ceased to build. Wigan however continued its programme. (See Tables 8.7 and 8.8) Rent rebates, subsidized loans for private enterprise builders, the creation of a direct works department, the virtual abandonment of the tendering process, the resistance by the town to have its housing programme curtailed by central government, the actions of various individual employees of the council and especially the borough engineer, are all examples of the political tenacity and ideology of the town towards housing provision for the working-classes. In sum the council used every means possible to

construct houses. They promoted a form of social policy directed at individual needs even when this meant the subsidy of houses from local rates and the provision of local subsidies to private enterprise builders.

All three towns then exhibited different political, ideological and social characteristics in their individual housing policies. What is evidenced here is the fact that despite these political variations, uneven development of housing commitments and differing social needs, all the local authorities demonstrated a willingness to build homes for their working-classes. Their direction of thought towards housing and social provision emerged as housing policy developed, its characteristics changed as punctuation's in the equilibrium of policy evolved in a continuing and complex area of welfare provision. Housing policy was indeed welfarism anew.

What other evidence can be found to support the case studies?

The aim of this section is to illustrate that the closeness of the geographical location of the three towns in the case studies does not detract from the validity of the research. Furthermore, this can be supported by evidence gained from other areas of research on inter-war housing policy and territorial politics.

There is evidence from other cities, (albeit by the very nature of the topic selected for this thesis not a great volume of evidence), to illustrate that the political significance of inter-war state aided housing policy and its impact on social welfarism was an important issue and policy field. There is evidence also supporting

the various aspects of policy, and actions of and reactions by, the various cities and towns, towards both housing policy and the nature of territorial relationships that existed during the period.⁵

Manchester.

Manchester clearly had an industrial heritage; it had rapid urban growth, a diversified economic structure and a long tradition of organised labour. The organisation of Labour however was not of a militant nature within the council chamber and in terms of its effects on territorial relations exhibited similar characteristics in those of Preston. As Dale points out: ‘ Manchester was often at the forefront of disputes with central government..... the degree of actual conflict was very limited, in part this because the Labour movement seems to have been relatively uninvolved’ (Melling, p209) During the inter-war period, the politics of the city council was in phase with that of the centre being Conservative overall.

Building under the 1919 Housing Act was delayed as it had been in most towns and cities with local authorities being supervised at every stage of their activities and they also experienced severe difficulties in obtaining tenders. They too used building guilds as did Wigan but this did not avoid delays in building or the tendering process. Significantly the city council decided that:

An alternative method of meeting these difficulties would have been to by pass the private contractor altogether.....the City took a pragmatic approach.

⁵ Examples are from Melling 1980 and Daunton 1984 and concern. Dale looks at housing in Manchester for example, Finnegan at Leeds, Ryder at County Durham and Dresser at Bristol.

A works department was set up and a more extensive use was made of it than in any other authority⁶ (Melling, p211)

This brought the city into conflict with the Ministry, as it had in Wigan, and the MOH threatened to bring the building of 650 houses to a halt after only 150 had been constructed under the 1919 Act. Just like the majority of town in the United Kingdom building in Manchester under the Wheatley Act of 1924 was the most significant and productive period with: ‘over half the dwellings in Manchester being built under the 1924 Act’ (Melling, p213)

The 1930s also proved difficult. The: ‘formation of a National Government (Conservative in essence) in 1931, however, led to a heavy-handed approach from central government’. (Melling, p215) Dale refers to the number and type of houses proposed by the council for erection and the level of output actually achieved. This was perhaps surprising but is an example of how conflict existed in territorial relationships given that they were in phase or of the same political nature and complexion with that of central government. As Dale suggests: ‘Conservative Governments do come into collision, for example, with predominantly Conservative Local Authorities.’ (Melling, p218) She suggests however that ‘Manchester’s ideology was closer to the social democracy of the 1945 Labour Government than traditional Conservative or Labour Party approaches.’ (Melling, p219) This suggests that the city council considered the issue of social welfarism important and housing policy played a significant part in local ideology and local politics even when, on the face of simple statistical evidence of the composition of a local council, the council

⁶ It has been evidenced here that Wigan was just as pragmatic and made full use of its direct works department and all houses were constructed using the direct works department after 1925.

was in phase with the centre. Manchester also suffered from attempts of the centre to control local authorities: 'in the numbers of houses built..... This is achieved largely through central government manipulation of the subsidy system.' (Melling, p219) It appears then that the complexion of local politics had little influence on central government whether they were in phase or out of phase with the political complexion of central government.

On the issue of institutionalism there is evidence here too of the significance of individual actors within the institutional structures in Manchester becoming involved as they had in Wigan. Miles Mitchell, it may be remembered from an earlier chapter, was chairman of the AMC's housing committee, was also chairman of Manchester's housing committee.⁷ He attempted to use his local knowledge and national influence to shape housing policy for the benefit of the city by organising a meeting with the AMC and the Ministry to discuss issues central to Manchester in particular and the country in general. This illustration of the influence of important local elite's, was also exhibited in Wigan and in Blackburn.

Leeds.

During the inter-war years, the overall political complexion of Leeds was Conservative. There were very short periods of Labour control, for example in 1929, but it reverted to Conservative control again in 1930. The party politics of the city however exhibited the characteristics of consensus within the council chamber, as

⁷ E.D. Simon whose work on the anti-slum campaign was cited earlier and who was Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister also played a significant role in the politics of housing.

least as far as housing policy was concerned, and this was evident from the outset in 1919. Whilst politics was conducted on party lines, on this issue, it reflected the nature of political activity in Preston and in Blackburn and indeed it appears in Manchester. 'The Conservative administration collaborated with the Labour Party in establishing a housing committee to supervise the construction of a projected 6,000 houses dwellings under the Addison Act.' (Melling, p28)

This cooperation worked for the benefit of the city as it had in Preston, in Leeds during the period up to 1926: 'the Council built 3,781 houses and private enterprise 2,328'. (See Melling, p108) From 1921, having proposed 6,000 houses in 1919, the city's Conservative administration adopted a 'wait and see policy.' (Melling, p108) It was only prepared to consider future housing in the light of the government's future proposals, which did not materialize until the Wheatley Act of 1924.

Building under the 1924 Act followed a similar pattern to that of Wigan, where output was below the national average. For example, Leeds output was 11.9 houses per 1000 of the 1931 population, the national average was 16.5. The reasons for this appear to be both political in nature and also due to a shortage of labour and materials. The Conservative administration of the city was out of phase with the complexion of national politics but the Labour group were in power from 1928 to 1930 and under a Labour government in 1929. Furthermore, and unlike Wigan which also experienced severe shortages of labour in the building trades, Leeds was not prepared to consider building by direct labour which was an anathema to the Conservative group but should have been acceptable to the ruling Labour group in ideological terms. Finnegan, (in Melling, p115) suggests:

The Labour Party saw direct labour as a means of reducing the cost of house building and therefore achieving lower rents. But this idea met with vehement opposition which persuaded the Labour administration of 1928 – 30 against a practical test of direct labour house building. Instead they used direct labour estimates drawn up by the City Engineer to discourage high-cost tenders for private builders.

Building from 1934 onwards continued apace in Leeds as it had done in Wigan. The driving force in Wigan was political ideology and the power and tenacity of the Labour council being the driving force. Leeds however was under Conservative control and it was, therefore, perhaps surprising, that building under the 1930, 1933 and 1935 Acts, continued having been positively discouraged by legislation. The reason for continued production was the very poor state of Leeds housing and the number of unfit back-to-back houses in the city. The other factor was political change. In 1930, there had been a guarded response to the act and: ‘Leeds, which reverted to Conservative control in November 1930, did not find the prospect appealing.’ (Melling, p109) The need for 30,000 houses under a slum clearance programme was a daunting task and the response to the Labour government’s act clearly was that they did not wish to embark on such a building programme.

‘By 1933 clear inter-party differences on the issue had been exposed....caution remained the hallmark of the Conservative approach.’ (Melling, p111) In November 1933 Labour gained control of the city council once again and planned to eradicate the slums of Leeds with an ambitious programme of housebuilding. From 1934 to 1940 the council constructed 11,692 houses and 20,508 were constructed by private

enterprise. 'Without doubt Council housing in Leeds came of age between 1933 and 1939 thanks to the impetus provided by Labour's housing policy.' (Melling, p113)
Thus, Leeds, like Wigan, had an active Labour council during this latter period, and had sufficient political motivation and muscle to continue building.

Melling suggests that one of the reasons towns like Wigan and Leeds continued to build after 1936 was because of the political and economic necessity within the country:

After 1936 the private housing boom began to subside, and its impact as an economic stimulant meant that to allow deflation of the boom might throw the whole system into recession. The effective attack on the cancerous housing conditions, in areas like Clydeside, Tyneside and Lancashire, was not only advisable in the late 1930s, it was politically and economically necessary. (Melling, p30)

Whilst these political and economic factors undoubtedly had an impact on housing and housing policy the evidence is that it was not the same in all towns but was very much at the mercy, discretion and tenacity of local political parties and their political ideology.

Bristol.

Madge Dresser's work on Bristol covers the period from 1919 to 1930 and focuses mainly on the issues of the methods of construction and the responsibility of the

council as both a builder and a landlord. (See also Daunton 1983 and 1984) The study nevertheless exhibits a number of characteristics that are found in the case studies in this thesis.

Political acquiescence, for example, was evident in the politics and policies on housing as Dresser points out: 'Bristol City Council was distinguished by its Conservatism.....growing Labour pressure precipitated an alliance between Conservative and Labour Councillors under the aegis of the: 'non-political' Citizens Party.' (Melling, p165) Even by 1930, the Labour group was described as: 'a less radical group than they had been in 1919.' (Melling, p165) If it was described as: 'non-political' in 1919 it could hardly be less radical in 1930.

On the question of housing Dresser suggests that the:

Labour members on Bristol Council were forced into increasing accommodation with a residualist housing policy.....Labour.....supported the sale of Council houses.....they lacked a coherent economic analysis with which they could effectively counter the parsimonious complacency of their opponents. (Melling, p165)

Output under the two acts concerned, appeared to follow the national pattern of construction with production considerably increasing under the Wheatley Act of 1924. (See Melling, p160 Table 12)

There are examples where direct labour too was used on specific housing programmes but a direct labour department was not established in the city and

housing policy from 1919 to 1930, under the Addison and Wheatley Acts was not radical. It could not really be expected to be so as the acts concerned were conducive to the demands of the locality. Nevertheless, there is evidence of the sorts of problems that existed in other towns, for example with the tendering process and with the creation of building rings in the town, a feature in Wigan under the 1919 Act. It appears from Dresser's description of the politics of housing in Bristol that this reflected the nature of Preston although the socialisation process was not the same and appears to have been confined to the pressure in the council chamber.

Conclusions.

The impact of state-aided housing policy had far-reaching social, economic and political implications in national and local politics. Dual polity with an operational code of mutual deference and frigidity was not conducive to this policy field. It could be argued that the significance of state-aided housing policy and its impact on welfarism was such that it could not simply be left to the localities. The policy had to be nationally driven, even when local authorities were supposedly to be excluded from responsibility for provision under the Housing Acts of 1933 and 1935. A 'partnership' or at least an 'agency' relationship between the centre and periphery was necessary to implement policy and to provide information and plans for future housing needs.

This chapter addresses the central question of this thesis; namely what was the nature and complexion of central local relations and territorial politics, in inter-war housing policy? It shows that territorial relations were not the same in each of the case studies, nor was it the same in other towns and cities within the United Kingdom. The nature and complexion of local politics did influence relationships with the centre. Furthermore, territorial relationships were not those suggested by Bulpitt in terms of either the existence of a dual polity, or a relationship that was mutually deferential or frigid. It is further suggested that there had been significant attitudinal change within the localities from one of local possessive pluralism. This was necessary for the localities to act as agents of the centre in housing policy and for ideological change in economic orthodoxy. The case studies illustrate that this change was not to the same intensity in each of the towns and cities and there was still a dichotomy between the industrial/agricultural and urban/rural areas. This was partially reflected in central government legislation which still made provision for greater subsidies in rural/agricultural areas. What is evidenced is the fact that local mindsets changed, albeit to varying degrees and in differing ways. Nevertheless, the challenge to provide homes for the working-classes, under the complex and changing legislation, was accepted in the localities. Ideas, and motives for intervention emerged and continued to develop, as the different strands of thinking from central government shaped housing policy and territorial politics.

What is evident in the case studies presented, and from the case studies in both Melling and Daunton, is that they illustrate the nature and complexion of political interaction was different. This differentiation depended, in some measure, on the complexion of the locality and local intensity and awareness within local party

politics. What is evident in all of the studies is that politics, both local and national, does matter and had a significant impact and effect on the question of inter-war state-aided housing policy. It impacted to the degree that political activity in territorial relations was at such a level and intensity, from 1919, that it was of sufficient interest to capture the attention of the centre. It was welfarism anew and could not be the subject of a dual polity that exhibited an operational code of mutual deference and frigidity. Central/local relations, within the policy field of state-aided housing, was, high politics. Housing policy, was conducted within a structured polity, within a tripartite relationship in territorial politics. As policy and politics evolved, and as the motives for, and methods of, intervention changed so central/local relations altered. Mutual deference and frigidity, within a dual polity, was not the operational code in territorial politics during the inter-war period.

Chapter 9.

Conclusions.

Welfarism Anew?

Territorial Politics and Inter-war

State Housing in Three Lancashire Towns.

Introduction.

The question in this thesis concerns the nature and complexion of territorial politics when applied to three case studies of inter-war housing policy in Lancashire. This thesis analyses the structure of territorial relations, how they developed over time and how they were conducted within the specific policy field of state-aided housing provision.

It is argued here, that during the First World War ideational changes occurred in terms of welfare provision, and especially in the field of social provision of housing. The mindsets of political elite's changed, the result of which was that in 1919, institutional changes were created and a crucial shift, in territorial politics and welfarism in the United Kingdom ensued. These transformations took place as a consequence of the fear of revolution due to the critical social conditions that existed. This generated a fundamental alteration in political and economic orthodoxy, the social and political implications of which saw the advent of welfarism anew, a more structured approach in central/local relations and attitudinal changes in both central and local government. These institutional, social, motivational, attitudinal and relational changes are a central focus in the questions

analysed and investigated in housing policy and how that policy was implemented at the periphery. The development of policy and the motives for, and methods of, intervention began to emerge, and were directed towards social policies that recognised individual need. Furthermore they were policies which provided incentive, via state aid under the various housing acts, rather than being prohibitive as government policy had been under the 1890 Housing Act.

This thesis addresses the character of those changes and argues that a structured polity existed in inter-war state-aided housing policy. It began at an earlier stage than Bulpitt suggests and that attitudinal change within both polities occurred and a tripartite relationship was evident in territorial politics. Thus, I conclude that Bulpitt's hypotheses might be revised in terms of his explanations of his macro treatment of the concepts of: dual polity, court and country and mutual deference and frigidity, in territorial relations.

The conclusions drawn from the case studies illustrate that:

- Territorial politics were important, playing a significant part in the housing policies of the towns.
- The political compositions of the towns varied in colour as did the political nature and complexions of the towns with respect to central government.
- The nature of political interaction varied in each of the towns and covered the whole spectrum of political communication from consensual

with assertive civic pride in Preston, consensual and Conservative in Blackburn, to conflictual and militant in Wigan.

- Ideational and motivational change occurred in the localities and methods of implementation varied in the towns reflecting their political composition, nature and complexion.
- Institutional change, from the LGB to the MOH was established and a process of interaction between the polities instituted
- Housing could not be considered as a matter of low politics. Territorial relations demanded 'agent' if not 'partnership' level of interaction and the economic consequences of policy implementation were crucial. Housing policy was high politics.
- Attitudinal change from that of high deference to local possessive pluralism and local possessive pluralism, a central feature in central/local relations to 1919, was evident. The nature of the new policy arrangements demanded the attention of the periphery through fiscal provision by the centre in its various guises.
- Despite the economic arrangements made by the centre, fiscal tensions in central/local relations were displayed and varied in each of the towns.
- There is considerable empirical evidence of the operation of a tripartite relationship in territorial relations within the policy field of state-aided housing. The AMC was utilised by municipal authorities to varying degrees and intensity and local representation on, and interaction with, the AMC was clearly displayed. The AMC also played a consolidating role with other representatives of the localities in developing housing policy and co-ordinating meetings with the MOH.

- The housing output varied according to the needs of each town. Blackburn and Preston, who conformed to the wishes and directions of central government policy with little territorial conflict, built in accordance with central government policy and their housing output reflected that policy implementation.
- Wigan however, differed in its political nature, its use of political institutions and was affected by local ideational and ideological challenges to central policy. It was a more aggressive and militant locality and its housing output varied in intensity and, at a later period, than either Blackburn or Preston. Contact and conflict with central government was frequent and unfettered.
- The motives for and methods of intervention changed as various strands of thinking emerged on state-aided housing policy that recognised individual and social needs.
- The mindsets, or purpose of intentions, both locally and nationally began to alter as policy developed from prevention to promotion by incentive.

Territorial politics and the 'ancien regime'

Chapters one and two outlined Bulpitts theories on dual polity with an operational code in territorial relations of mutual deference and frigidity. It also illustrated the concepts of high and low politics and especially the changes in territorial relations after 1926 what he termed the ancien regime.

The contention here is that territorial politics significantly changed after 1919 and there are a number of influences that affected that change. These changes, political, economic, social and structural, all affected relations between the centre and the periphery. They also affected the way territorial politics and social welfarism was considered and conducted thereafter, these events marking a crucial change in politics, territorial relations and welfare provision in the United Kingdom. It is argued that if the nature and complexion of territorial relations is analysed using the theoretical construct of historical institutionalism, a different and enriched explanation emerges when applied to the policy field of inter-war state-aided housing provision. The territorial dimension, it is argued, also emerges at an earlier time and with a different intensity from that suggested by Bulpitt. The case studies are used to illustrate the level, intensity and nature of territorial relationships and how these differed in the towns concerned, as well as in other case studies in the United Kingdom. This thesis shows how a more structured approach to territorial relations existed and operated in a tripartite relationship between the centre, regional representatives of the local authorities, the AMC, and peripheral government.

The changing nature of territorial politics.

Initially there were two major factors that affected change. The first was structural, the introduction of the Ministry of Health. The transformation of the LGB to the MOH in 1919 was the first major institutional change that affected local authorities with such intensity and it changed the operation and conduct of territorial politics and the way the centre interacted with the periphery. But, this variation alone was

not a mutually exclusive condition for such change in territorial politics; it required a catalyst. That catalyst was the pressure for social change and the advent of welfarism.

The second important factor occurred from the critical social conditions that existed during and after the First World War, as a result of a threat of revolution and the potential overthrow of the state in the United Kingdom. The introduction of state-aided housing policy which, it is suggested was welfarism anew, was introduced in 1919 with the legislation contained in the Housing and Town Planning Act of that year. This social provision was what Lord Astor termed the price of insurance against revolution.¹ It was a policy introduced to ward off such a threat and was the genesis of the welfare state twenty-five years before the reforms proposed and introduced by William Beveridge.² Welfarism was firmly placed on the political agenda in 1919 and continued throughout the inter-war period with the perpetuation of state subsidies for housing for both the public and private sectors. The acceptance of this welfarist ideology committed government to a programme of social reform. Once the policy developed a path dependent manner, central government was committed to future legislation on social provision. This legislation gave both levels of government a different role and function. It also allowed for the introduction of a further institution to become involved in the political equation, the AMC, as a pressure group for local municipal authorities. The involvement of the AMC was significant in the tripartite relationship in politics and housing policy thereafter.

¹ 114 HC Deb. 8th April 1919. Col. 1956 (W Astor).

² For a brief explanation of the proposals under the Beveridge Report and events leading up to the introduction of those social reforms see Paul Addison, The Road to 1945 especially Chapter VIII.

How then, and in what way, were territorial politics changed and how did it effect the relationships between the centre and the periphery? There were several major factors affecting territorial relations during the period, not least of which was the new role and responsibility of local authorities for a form of welfare provision not previously undertaken by them, and, their role as either agents or partners of the centre in housing policy. There was the need for attitudinal changes by both polities, which was characterised by a dichotomy in local fiscal interests and also, in deference in centre/periphery relations.

The hypothesis is that these fiscal tensions and the resultant attitudes of the centre and periphery began to change in 1919 and pressure was reduced by the provision of state-aided housing and the advent of owner-occupation during the mid-1930s. This engendered a differing set of territorial relations with varying degrees of consensuality and conflict between the centre and periphery. Politics, economic orthodoxy and territorial government changed marking a watershed in political, social, economic, and welfare provision in the United Kingdom. Whilst it is accepted that a deferential attitude still pervaded it was not at the same level or intensity given the development and changes in institutional structures and economic ideology especially within the policy field of inter-war, state-aided housing.

Changes were imposed on both levels of government by the structural and social changes occurring at the end of the First World War. There was also the issue of the influence of the significant actors involved within the institutions at both levels of government and within the AMC. All of these factors, the structural changes and the

changing role and function of actors within the significant institutions challenged the ancien regime that Bulpitt suggests existed. Instead, the thesis demonstrates that:

- A structured polity existed consisting of central government, peripheral government and regional representatives in the form of the AMC.
- Territorial relationships changed at an earlier stage than suggested by Bulpitt and began to change significantly during the First World War and before.
- The existence of a dual polity characterised by mutual deference and frigidity was not an applicable operational code characterising territorial politics during the period.
- There was significant and continual interaction in central/regional/local relations which demanded a partial partnership with the centre with the local authorities acting as agents of central government.³
- There was a significant shift in the structural arrangements and the role and function of both the centre and the periphery with the expansion of welfarism anew.
- There was a significant attitudinal change in central/local relations, from high deference to local possessive pluralism, and local possessive pluralism, itself.
- Territorial relations, were much more complex and at a higher level of interaction and intensity than Bulpitt suggests. The involvement of the centre and periphery in such a critical policy area meant that the nature, role and function of politics had changed. But they had shifted in a different direction, to a greater intensity, and with greater political diversification and interaction with regional representation playing a significant role.

- Central government, regional representation and local government were inextricably linked in a policy area driven originally from a perceived fear of revolution, which arose out of the social dislocation caused by First World War.

Given these arguments, in what ways might Bulpitt's hypotheses be revised to explore the tensions between continuity and change in the period and ones that might enrich explanation of what was a macro view of territorial relations by Bulpitt?

Buller (1999, p693) points out that

Most of Bulpitts work was how to construct a macro picture of the workings of the British polity over time. Territory and Power (to which this thesis specifically relates) was concerned to provide a macro study of territorial politics in the UK. The most obvious drawback was the sheer scope of the research implied by the focus. Put bluntly, macro analysis requires the student to "know a little about a lot" (Bulpitt, 1995, p515)

Herein lies a problem when analysing a micro political issue within a macro theoretical hypothesis. The argument here is that what Bulpitt failed to address were issues he considered that the centre or court deemed were low politics operating in a dual polity. His analysis failed to consider the operation of micro political issues which in fact could be determined, by analysis, as, high politics. This, was because of the depth and breadth of their significance in the spectrum of politics, economics,

³ The issue of 'partnership and agency' in a political context is too wide a subject for discussion here

territorial relations and welfare provision. In other words, the macro scenario is altered by micro political issues which, after investigation, prove to be different in nature, intensity and effect on political interaction. Politics are affected by what at first might appear as low political policy fields.

Thus, for example, in housing policy, which he contends was low politics, the focus on such areas as:

- Continuity and change in a complex policy field.
- Peripheral reaction to and implementation of national policy.
- The effects of central government policy on local authority thinking.
- The effect locally of a complex and changing national policy
- The effects of a particular policy field considered as low politics on both territorial politics and those areas considered as high politics, for example, the economy and the knock on effect on social provision and welfarism.
- What Bulpitt contends are low political issues or priorities by the centre, need investigation to determine the level and extent of their determinate effects on territorial politics and central/local relations.

As Stoker (1995, p103) suggests: 'macro-theory building inevitably leads to generalisations concerning some aspects of the British polity'. A situation it is argued applies in state-aided housing policy as far as territorial relations and a dual polity is concerned. Evidence shows that micro political issues, or matters considered as low politics, need investigation. For example, the concept of court and

and is not a central question although it does have implications in the context of territorial relations.

country and the interaction between centre and periphery in territorial relations, are key issues in Bulpitts analysis, and need explaining in terms of their operationalisation and how they affect the holistic political scenario that Bulpitt suggests is the case. His concept of mutual deference and frigidity, so central to the conduct of territorial relations, needs to be applied to the microcosm that was peripheral government and its interaction with the centre. What this thesis has shown is the need for micro analysis on key policy issues. By analysing such policy fields as housing provision, and how territorial relations operated, a different picture emerges of central/local relations during the inter-war period.

What needs to be investigated also is the political scenario Bulpitt paints and how this operated in terms of the other critical policy fields affecting governmental decision-making on significant and complex policy issues with wide-ranging social, economic and welfarist implications. It is not sufficient for Bulpitt to contend that central government did not become involved in a number of policy fields because they were too dull, time consuming or awkward to deal with. This seems rather dismissive of areas of policy that had a crucial and far-reaching impact on territorial politics.

One of the foci of this research is to test Bulpitts hypotheses on a policy field, which he classified as low politics. It is contended here that housing was a major issue during the inter-war years and Bulpitts generalisations within his macro-political theorising could be revised so as to illustrate how other important subjects may be investigated.

Evidence shows that from 1919 public expenditure was increased and for some eighteen months state-aided housing materially affected central/local relations the economy of the country. Thereafter, economic determinism demanded a restatement of policy on public funding for local housing. Whilst the nature and extent of state aid altered the underlying ideology that provision from the centre should remain became a fact and a part of the emerging strands of thinking within a complex policy field. This type of policy area could not be glossed over by dismissing it to the sidelines of politics with the conceptualisation that it was low politics, and as Buller points out: ‘as discretion and centralization increasingly replaced the old governing principles governments became increasingly overwhelmed by the competing demands of various societal groups’. The argument here is that these demands, and the intervention by central government, who, for economic reasons, had detached itself from housing policy and state-aided provision prior to 1919, underwent a changed mindset because of the fear of revolution. Central government realised that the critical social conditions warranted intervention. Housing policy was high politics.

Elsewhere, using Bulpitts dual polity thesis, in a macro political investigation, important evidence concerning territorial politics and the nature and complexion of central/local relations, would not have provided a sufficient framework for investigation. In sum, Bulpitt’s analysis would have been enriched by analysing micro political and policy issues, even those considered as low politics. By analysing the workings of inter-war state-aided housing policy within a framework of new institutionalism a more complex and enhanced scenario emerges. As Buller further suggests: ‘a more realistic approach to the structure-agent problem would

lead Bulpitt to provide more plausible empirical account of the rise and fall of Statecraft regimes'. By using the theoretical concepts within new institutionalism, especially historical institutionalism, evidence demonstrates, as the case studies on inter-war housing elucidate, how Bulpitt's hypotheses might be revised to explain some of the tensions between continuity and change in a complex and emerging policy field that was inter-war state-aided housing provision. A number of the areas investigated are given below to illustrate and exemplify the type of analysis suggested and how this would enrich research and explanation of territorial relations and housing policy.

Attitudinal Reformation: A changing mindset.

What, prior to 1919, Bellamy refers to as an attitude by the periphery of local possessive pluralism began to transform as far as housing policy was concerned. Policy became established and characterised by path dependency throughout the inter-war years. Despite these ideological shifts, which in some instances were at the margins of policy, for example with minor changes in subsidies, the centre and the periphery were inevitably linked in state-aided housing provision. Central government could not build without the aid and assistance of the localities and subsidies to the private sector were channelled through local authorities.

Attitudinal change, the 'official mind' of both the centre and the periphery began to transform as opinions on, and approaches to housing policy began a conversion from prevention to incentive provision in state-aided housing policy after 1919. Evidence

shows that both polities began to rethink their approaches to the appalling housing conditions that prevailed. The case studies show the extent to which local authorities were prepared to change their ideas and involvement in housing policy, a field they had not previously been involved in. Despite the varying political nature and complexions of the towns under review, they all shared a number of similar characteristics after the advent of state-aid for housing. Wigan, as chapter seven illustrated, was more tenacious and militant and its housing programme was different to Preston and Blackburn. The shared characteristics were the ability and willingness to respond to the implementation of a new area of central government policy and to alter the local direction of thought towards a process of provision by incentive. This was of course true also of central government ideology as the various strands of thinking on housing policy emerged. Attitudes changed from, detachment and prevention, to, involvement and incentive provision, as the earlier chapters indicated. Social policy emerged which was directed towards individual needs, it was welfarism anew. What was critical of course was the fact that ideas and motives for involvement by both the centre and periphery had evolved. There was no longer a complete resistance by the centre towards this type of social provision that had been the ideological position under the 1890 Act. The 1919 Act changed the emphasis and direction of provision and placed state-aided housing policy on the political agenda in a momentous way, thereafter policy materialised in a different way.

The argument here is that central/local relations were very different by 1938 even though the relationships varied in nature, complexion and intensity as the case studies illustrate. Territorial politics had significantly changed due to the inextricable

interaction within politics and housing policy. The advent of owner occupation also altered the balance of, and the need for, these publicly provided goods. There was however still a significant need for state-aided housing as output after the Second World War proved and what subsequently became known as the welfare state was established. The contention, of course, is that the advent of the welfare state commenced much earlier in 1919 and welfarism anew was engendered by the introduction of state-aided housing policy.

Structured Polity and Tripartite Relations.

Regional representation was a significant area to be investigated and the role and function of the AMC played an important part in inter-war housing politics and policy. (See chapter Four) The argument here is that this important intermediate institution was part of what can be described as a structured polity. By examining structures and significant individuals within these structures in this way a different complexion on policy and political interaction emerges. There is evidence also from the case studies of the local/regional interaction and the significant roles played by individuals within these structures and their impact on policy formulation. The AMC provided the arena for influence on macro policy issues in its intermediation with central government. It also provided the means by which the localities could raise micro issues of concern and, as was suggested previously, the AMC gave the periphery a dual opportunity to influence policy; it was a significant part of a structured polity in housing policy and territorial politics. (See Diagram 1 page 3).

In sum, the nature and complexion of territorial politics when applied to inter-war state-aided housing provision in the three Lancashire towns investigated suggests that there is considerable empirical evidence that a crucial shift occurred in politics, and economic orthodoxy, the result of which was welfarism anew. This fundamental change, having manifested itself, local authorities clearly played a more significant role and function, as 'agents' of central government in the implementation of housing provision. 'Mutual deference and frigidity' in a 'dual polity' was not the operational code in territorial politics. In practice, there existed a more structured polity with a tripartite relationship between centre, region and locality. Empirical evidence from the case studies, supported by evidence from other works of a similar genre, illustrate that whilst the political nature and complexion of the towns varied, there was considerable and close interaction in territorial relations which was supported, and in instances initiated, by regional representation from the AMC.

Attitudinal change was also evident and began with the creation of a fiscal appropriation, in the form of state subsidies for housing under the newly created MOH. Fiscal tensions began to lessen between the centre and periphery with the result that a transformation occurred in attitudes toward, high deference to local possessive pluralism, and local possessive pluralism itself. The advent of welfarism anew, in the form of state aided housing provision and the path dependent nature of that policy, including the subsidies for owner occupation and private sector building, created an atmosphere that reduced fiscal tension and also the ratepayer/landlord dichotomy. As fiscal provision became more widely available to both the public and private sectors, so tensions diminished. The advent of welfarism anew with the introduction of the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 and the creation of a

new MOH by Christopher Addison changed the nature and complexion of central/local relations and territorial politics. Thereafter, the structural changes that occurred, and, the developing mindset of the actors in both central and local government, as the various strands of thinking transformed, played a decisive role in the nature and development of a critical and complex area of social policy.

Appendix 1.

Principal Housing Legislation from 1915 – 1939.

Act of Parliament.

1915. Increase in Rent and Mortgage Interest

(War Restrictions) Act. Coalition Government in office.

This act fixed the levels of rents at the pre-war level and was enacted in response to the rent strikes in Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester and London.

1919. Housing and Town Planning etc., Act.*

(Addison Act) (9 & 10 Geo V, c35) Coalition Government in office and Christopher Addison, later Viscount Addison was Minister of Health.

The duty was imposed on Local Authorities to conduct a survey, within three months, of housing needs in their districts and to submit plans to the MOH for any shortage in dwellings. The work was to be supervised by the MOH through the eleven housing commissioners in the country. The financial liability of local authorities was limited to the product of a one-penny in the pound rate increase the residual cost being borne by the Exchequer. This was the first time state-aid had been given to subsidise house-building. Councils could fix rents but these had to be approved by the MOH and up to March 1927 these were based on the controlled rents of pre-war housing.

1919. Housing (Additional Powers) Act.

(9 & 10 Geo V, c99).

Under this act, houses built by private enterprise were eligible for a lump-sum subsidy, which in practice was to range from £130 to £242.

1920. Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest

(War Restrictions) Act. Coalition Government in office.

This act was again to fix rents at the pre-war level.

Housing Acts continued.

1923. Housing etc., Act 1923.*

(Chamberlain Act) (13 & 14 Geo V, c 24) A Conservative Government was in office and Neville Chamberlain was Minister of Health.

Under section 6 of the Act local authorities were prevented from building unless themselves unless they could satisfy the MOH that it was preferable for them to do so. Houses built by Private enterprise qualified for a lump-sum subsidy usually £75 paid by the Exchequer through the local authority. Councils were permitted to increase these grants by local subsidies to builders. Subsidies to local authorities where they were permitted to build would be £6 per annum for 20 years for houses completed by October 1925. This was later extended under the 1924 Act by 15 years but reduced in 1927 by a third for houses completed after September 1927. The subsidy was withdrawn for houses completed after September 1929.

1923. Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest

Restrictions Act. A Conservative Government was in office.

This act again fixed the level of rents at the pre-war level.

1924. Housing (Financial Provision) Act, 1924.*

(Wheatley Act) (14 & 15 Geo V, c35) The first Labour Government was in office with John Wheatley as Minister of Health.

The act granted local authorities a subsidy of £9 per house for 40 years. (£12.10s per annum in agricultural parishes) In most cases the local authority would contribute £4.10s per annum from the rates. Houses built by private enterprise also qualified for this subsidy. From 1927 the subsidy was reduced to £7.10s and was finally withdrawn in 1933. This act once again allowed local authorities to build houses themselves.

1930. Housing Act, 1930.*

(Greenwood Act) (21 & 22 Geo V, c39) A Labour Government was in office and Greenwood as Minister of Health.

The act gave local authorities power to acquire 'clearance areas' of slum property which required total demolition. Before demolition could begin local authorities had

to provide accommodation for people displaced. The Exchequer subsidy was to be £2.5s per annum for 40 years for each person re-housed (£2.10s in agricultural parishes). Extra allowances were available at £1.5s per person per annum where the land was particularly expensive to purchase (over £3,000 per acre) or where re-housing involved the erection of flats. The annual rate contribution was fixed at £3.15s for 40 years and where the population was more than 20,000 the local authority had to produce a five-year plan, repeated every five years, for its slum clearance programme. Local authorities could decide their own rent policy and subsidies could be given to those who could not afford the rents.

1933. Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1933.*

(23 & 24 Geo V, c15). A National Government was in office and Hilton Young was Minister of Health.

The act abolished the Wheatley subsidies for houses not approved by the MOH by 7th December 1932 and a new five-year scheme was introduced for slum clearance. The act also introduced a building society scheme providing cheap finance for investment for rental by private enterprise.

1935. Housing Act, 1935*.

(25 & 26 Geo V, c40) A National Government was in office and Hilton Young was still the Minister of Health.

For the first time it became the duty of local authorities to survey the extent of overcrowding in their areas and to prepare plans for providing sufficient accommodation in their localities. When the five-year plan to abolish the slums had been completed a five-year programme to abolish overcrowding was to follow and overcrowding was legally defined for the first time. Subsidies, to diminish overcrowding, were only available in three special cases: if it was necessary to build flats: where financial costs of a housing programme would place an untenable burden on local rates: and for re-housing agricultural workers. The act also made some changes in the terms of compensation in compulsory purchase.

1936. Housing Act, 1936.

(26 Geo V & Edw VIII, c51). A National Government was in office.

The main purpose of the act was to consolidate the legislation already in force, principally the 1930 and 1935 acts. Subsidy arrangements were not affected.

1938. Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1938.

(1 & 2 Geo VI, c16) A National Government was in office.

The act introduced a uniform scale of subsidy for all new housing schemes. The basic subsidy was to be \$5.10s per annum for 40 years for each house (£10 in agricultural parishes) and a minimum of £11 per annum for flats on expensive sites. The three special case subsidies of 1935 were maintained but with changes in their levels.

*These Housing Acts are the principal items of legislation throughout the inter-war years and are the Acts discussed in this thesis although brief reference is made to some of the other legislation listed.

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