

PEOPLE AND PLANNING

The Skeffington Committee was appointed in 1968 to look at ways of involving the wider public in the formative stages of local development plans. It was the first concerted effort to encourage a systematic approach to resident participation in planning and the decision-making process, in contrast to the entirely top-down process created by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act.

The origins of the Skeffington Report lay in the 1965 publication by the Planning Advisory Group of *The Future of Development Plans*, which recommended changes to the planning system to include much greater public participation. It called for all plans to be publicly debated in full, with the opportunity for representations to be made throughout the entire preparation process. There was also a growing realisation of the impact of the American planning experience and a growth of interest in the concept of participatory democracy as opposed to representative democracy.

However, the immediate impact of the Skeffington Committee was limited. It was criticized as being too ambiguous and as encouraging nothing more than greater publicity and as 'educating' residents from the planners' perspective. 'Participation' was inadequately defined and the Report was seen to simply promote a more efficient system by convincing people of the virtues of planning. Local authorities used and undermined the idea of participation to simply speed up the planning process by giving their decisions a seal of legitimacy. Technocrats and local authorities simply subverted the ambiguities of the Report for their own purposes.

Yet this is to underestimate the long-term impact of the underlying principles first expressed in the Skeffington Report. It has been a long and tortuous process and in many respects it remains a difficult ideal to implement in an entirely satisfactory and systematic way. Nevertheless, the concept of participation established by the Report has continued to be a central consideration in planning.

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INTRODUCTION

The Skeffington Committee was appointed in 1968 to look at ways of involving the wider public in the formative stages of local development plans. It was seen as the first concerted effort to encourage a systematic approach to resident participation in planning and the decision-making process. The state had limited experience on which to develop the idea but it was part of a broader trend designed to encourage more direct forms of participatory democracy. This was the start of a long process by which the state promoted public participation not only in planning but in the management of council housing, schools, social services and community development. As such, it set a vital precedent which continued to evolve over the ensuing decades. It was the point at which the state accepted an obligation to include people in the decision-making process, to actually ask them for their opinions.

The immediate impact was limited. It was never binding but was meant as a guide and was criticized as being too ambiguous, as encouraging nothing more than greater publicity and as little more than an attempt at 'educating' residents from the planners' perspective. Local authorities used and subverted the idea of participation to speed up a planning process which had often become dogged by lengthy and expensive delays. In doing so, it appeared that a consensus had been reached, giving their decisions a seal of legitimacy. The Report's recommendations have been seen as mundane, a reflection on the distance which local authorities would have to travel to make participation a reality (Cullingworth and Nadin 1994, 252). Technocrats employed by local authorities simply subverted the ambiguities of the Report for their own purposes. Yet this is to underestimate the long-term impact of the underlying principles first expressed in the Skeffington Report. It was extremely important not because of the short-term impact but because it was the moment when the planning process stopped being entirely driven from above, when it was no longer just about the vested interests of local government, developers, technocrats and investors. By giving people a voice, it marked the start of a shift in perspective and in governance. What participation means in practice is still debateable, but it is still debated. The idea that people should have a right to be heard in the planning process and that they should not be ignored by planning professionals has continued to develop since Skeffington. It has been a long and convoluted process and, in many respects, it remains a difficult concept to implement in an entirely satisfactory and systematic way, but the ideal of participation is still relevant and remains a central consideration in planning. Public consultations take place on a range of planning research and projects.

Conceptually, participation emerged most noticeably in the 1960s and early 1970s, though partial engagement can be traced back to the 1940s (e.g. see Larkham [in press]).

Influential figures such as Max Lock developed and promoted a more inclusive approach to planning. Lock was one of the most influential figures in synthesizing planning with ideas about social concerns. His work in the war, and on the Hull and Hartlepool plans, developed the idea of using a civic diagnosis, of taking a regional approach to planning which would incorporate physical, social and economic factors. In 1943 he published *Civic Diagnosis: A Blitzed City Analysed*, an outline of the Hull Regional Survey, in which he used maps, photographs and diagrams in an attempt to engage with a broader public (Lock 1943; see also Darling 2007). In 1944, Lock was tasked with producing the Middlesbrough redevelopment plan. His proposals were presented to the public through a successful public exhibition, cheap pamphlets and public meetings. Both were attempts to place people at the centre of the process, using various public groups to collate data and making extensive use of surveys.

Despite Lock's pioneering techniques, the planner was still at the centre of the whole process. Participation was defined in terms of publicity and education. It gave the appearance of consultation and, as such, was a means of legitimizing the process. It was an approach which was, generally, replicated in the 1950s. However, the notion of participation as a means of developing social and political processes was increasingly discussed by critics from the far left to liberals alike in the 1960s. Diverse interpretations pointed to the difficulties in pinning down a definition. There was a disparity between what critics aspired to achieve through participation and what was actually attainable. Supporters of the concept believed that the institutional structures of modern states discouraged participation or they exploited the ideal for limited types of participation which did not challenge their power and authority (Parry 1972, vii). Others maintained that participation was an idealized pipedream which was incongruous with the reality of modern life and the scale and complexity of government (Bulpitt 1972, 302). Problems in developing effective participation included both the low levels of commitment and involvement and the failure of democratic institutions to promote the concept (Finer 1972; Kavanagh 1972). Nevertheless, the theoretical benefits of participation in an effective democracy were supported by some political scientists. Dennis Kavanagh believed that there were sound reasons to encourage the broadest possible political participation and that wide participation was a 'useful means of buttressing stability' in a liberal-democracy (Kavanagh 1972, 123).

Participation was promoted as a means of extending democracy, of creating a pluralistic participatory democracy. It is based on the democratic rationale that citizens have a right to be involved in the decision-making processes which affect their lives (Rydin 2006, 2). What is essentially a pluralistic view associated with social inclusion, the underlying inference is that social content can and should be channelled through public involvement. This involvement can, notionally, serve a strategic purpose by diffusing conflict and thereby consequently smoothing out the policy process (Rydin 2006, 3).

'Conflict' and the need to smooth out the policy process were key factors in the attempts to implement participation in the planning process. Interest in the concept of participation in planning was a reaction to a series of perceived failures, that 'when we build again we must do better', and the excessive power of private capital. The idea of citizen participation had become popular in the USA from the 1950s when an idealized belief in the benefits of participation emerged (Damer and Hague 1971, 218).¹ However, despite some experimental initiatives, fully inclusive participation was difficult to generate and planning decisions affecting localities were, as with the redevelopment

plans of the 1940s, often not influenced by the participation that did take place (Rydin 2006, 2; Larkham [in press]).

Nevertheless, the impact of the American experience was one of the five reasons Sean Damer and Cliff Hague identified as underpinning the relatively rapid growth of interest in the idea of public participation in the planning process in Britain.² They also pointed to interest in the social ethic of planning, a growth in the concept of participatory democracy as opposed to representative democracy, a long history of delays and bottlenecks in the administration and processing of plans and a 'growth of public interest in the urban environment' as instrumental in placing participation into policy debates (Damer and Hague 1971, 217).

People had become increasingly dissatisfied and frustrated with many of the decisions made by planning authorities in the 1950s and 1960s. Besides the delays which caused years of misery, there was also a reaction to the impact of urban renewal programmes which led to disputes over planning issues and which had led to the displacement of the poor and disadvantaged. Liberal Americans had promoted the idea of advocacy planning as a way of representing the voices of the silent (Damer and Hague 1971, 218). Coupled to this were broader social and cultural changes. An emerging 'welfare' and 'consumer' society demanded better services, social as well as material, and some people were increasingly less willing to be deferential (Shapely 2007; see also Levin and Donnison 1969, 475).³ Gradually, the activities of the state, local government and professional planners and architects were being demystified and challenged.

The 'mystification' had been created by technocrats in post-war Britain. Problems in planning were highlighted in Britain throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. Interest in planning began in the late nineteenth century, with Ebenezer Howard and the Garden City Movement, and legislation gradually culminated in the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, which established the framework for post-war planning. By this stage, the social ethic of planning had evolved (see, for example, Stevenson 1986). Central to this ethic was the belief that good planning would end the Victorian squalor that had blighted British inner urban areas. The 1947 Act gave local planning authorities, and local county and borough councils, sweeping new powers to control all future development in their areas. Density levels would be tightly controlled. They were also required to produce their own development plan which they had to submit to the Minister of Housing and Local Government (initially the Minister of Town and Country Planning). These plans had to be reviewed and resubmitted for approval every five years. A public inquiry had to be held to consider objections. However, in practice, it took years to prepare plans, get them approved and then start implementation. By that time, they were often out of date (Levin and Donnison 1969, 474).

Origins of the Skeffington Report

The planning and redevelopment of large inner-city areas was created and implemented without any meaningful public consultation. It was driven by small groups of technocrats and a few councillors. The entire process was jealously guarded and controlled from the centre of local government. Citizens remained ignorant of what was happening and when it was going to happen. In practice, redevelopment programmes which could last 20–30 years created miserable blight for residents forced to live in and around clearance areas.⁴ The Planning Advisory Group was appointed in 1964 to examine the

planning system. It published the report, *The Future of Development Plans*, in the following year. This highlighted a number of systemic problems and the subsequent decline in public confidence (Great Britain 1965). The whole system was unwieldy and the Group felt that the government should only give approval to broad plans and not get bogged down in the detail of large development plans (Damer and Hague 1971, 220). The Group believed that the detail should be left to the local authorities and that this should be seen as an opportunity to involve the public in the planning process. They asserted that the future planning system should have 'greater scope for public participation' thereby winning public support for plans (Great Britain 1965, 11).

The state's commitment to participation was explicitly recognized by the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act. It called for public discussion of planning decisions during the formative stages of the process when they could still be directly influenced by residents. The Act required planning authorities to publicize reports into the surveys of the proposed development areas, to inform people of their right to have the opportunity to make their views known and of the duty of planning authorities to provide the opportunity (Levin and Donnison 1969, 475). At the second reading of the Bill, Anthony Greenwood, the Minister of Housing and Local Government, stated that above all he was 'determined that there shall be more real public participation in planning', and that he wanted people to have a 'much better chance of being involved in the planning of the area they live in and of influencing it'. He claimed that 'bringing people into planning means a good deal more than the "right" to inspect plans and object to them', and that he wanted to make sure that people got to 'know what the planning authority is proposing to include in its plans before attitudes harden' (Hansard 1968b, col. 1388). Greenwood emphasized that local authorities had to take public participation seriously and must take full and proper account of objections to plans (Hansard 1968a, col. 1366). There was little opposition to the idea of participation in planning. Labour MP, Frederick Willey, described the 'harmony that reigns between the two Front Benches' whilst adding that there was a pressing need 'for wider participation of the public in the processes of planning' (Hansard 1968b, col. 1388).

Despite the apparent embrace, traditional Labour culture was hostile to the idea of citizen participation. Labour's customary outlook was to maintain central control over the political process, that political outcomes were more important than the actual process (Fielding 2003, 191). Progress would be made through tight control over expanding state machinery. This was seen as the means of achieving growth and wealth redistribution (Fielding 2003, 194). The idea of increasing participation in politics was put on the backburner. Many, including Wilson, believed that most people continued to be apathetic and disengaged with political processes (Fielding 2003, 195). It was felt that only a few interfering members of the middle classes, who were hostile to Labour, really wanted participation. However, this failure to expand social democracy was questioned by young radicals in the 1960s. The over-centralized state was being openly criticized by the late 1960s, though members from the left and right of the Party had long advocated greater active citizen involvement in politics. Tony Benn led the calls for participation, claiming in 1968 that people were tired of having policy dictated to them and that they wanted a greater voice in the decision-making process (Fielding 2003, 196).

In March 1968, the Labour government asked Arthur Skeffington, Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington and, from 1967 to 1970, Private Secretary to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, to chair a committee to look into the best ways of

improving communication between planning authorities and residents and to recommend ways of getting the public involved in forming the actual plan.⁵ The Skeffington Committee, which consisted of 26 members, conducted research over a 16-month period with a remit to look into methods that would improve publicity and create effective public participation.⁶ Their immediate aim was to suggest practical ways of implementing participation in planning, both structure and local plans, as sanctioned by the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act. They received ideas and comments from over 400 organizations and individuals. Submissions were debated by two working groups and the full Committee, followed by further discussions with relevant bodies.

The Committee believed that authorities and the public alike were united in their support of the principle of participation (Great Britain 1969, 1). Members understood 'participation' to refer to the 'act of sharing in the formulation of policies and proposals', the provision of information by local planning authorities and the 'opportunity to comment on that information' through the entire 'plan-making process' (Great Britain 1969, 1). They seemed to be clear that people should be 'able to say what kind of community they live in and how it should develop', and that they should be able to do so in ways which 'influence the shape of our community' so that communities 'reflect our best aspirations' (Great Britain 1969, 3). They believed that when policies were imposed from above it led to frustration and 'all too easily to alienation between the authority and people', resulting in further dissatisfaction and 'hurt' (People and Planning 1969, 3). Participation was about empowerment, inclusion and extending democracy by giving the 'opportunity of serving the community and thereby becoming involved in its life, contributing to its well-being and enriching its relationships'. Previously, some local authorities had been successful in informing the public about development plans rather than involving them in the decision-making process and, even when there had been an attempt to include the public, it was usually only when 'proposals were almost cut and dried', which actually led to the public viewing the local authority 'more as an antagonist than as the representative of the community' (Great Britain 1969, 3). Plans had become barriers between the authority and the public, reinforcing the political separation between the two sides. Participation would build bridges and would mean that the 'dangers of antagonism will be so much less' and the 'interchange between the authority and people' would become 'more profitable' as councillors and citizens alike would have a greater knowledge of plans and processes.

The Committee recognized that some local authorities at home, such as Coventry, and abroad had already championed participation. The Report was part of an evolutionary process of change. The main recommendations included improvements to the flow of information throughout the preparation of plans and the publication of a timetable showing the opportunities for active resident participation. It called for all plans to be publicly debated in full, with the opportunity for representations to be made throughout the entire preparation process. The Report encouraged local authorities to convene community forums and recommended the appointment of community development officers to actively seek out public opinion and to feed this back into the planning process. The community forum, they hoped, would provide 'corporate discussion' to allow a 'cross fertilisation of ideas' and a 'two-way flow of information' between the public and the planners.⁷ The idea was inspired by the Model Area Planning Councils in the USA and similar experiments in Holland. Forums, they believed, could provide a basis for continual dialogue throughout the planning process. They would be a conduit

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for the flow of information from the planner, a platform for discussion with the public and a vehicle for further discussion thereafter (Great Britain 1969, 14). The Committee was keen to include the quieter members of the wider public, which they believed could best be achieved through local authorities employing community development officers. Most people, they understood, would remain passively on the sidelines, but the community development officer would make personal contacts, actively seeking out opinions which would then be fed back into the planning process (Great Britain 1969, 16). The emphasis throughout the Report is on the need to engage with the whole community affected by planning. Committee members were unequivocal in their belief that every reasonable effort should be made to 'inform and involve all member of the community' (Great Britain 1969, 23). They wanted to include the 'non-joiner' and not just organized groups and the more opinionated members of a community. They wanted surveys and initial proposals to be published in easily digestible forms and distributed to as wide an audience as possible. Besides the forums they wanted a series of public meetings and exhibitions. These exhibitions should be simple, easily understood, 'interesting, entertaining and exciting' (Great Britain 1969, 29). These should be supplemented, where possible, with 20-minute films or slides presented through overhead projectors. This was meant to be about attracting attention and engaging the public by using relevant methods. It was about avoiding jargon and making plans comprehensible. The Report also wanted local authorities to let people know which of their ideas had or had not been incorporated into the final plan and to explain the reasons for not accepting any proposals (Great Britain 1969, 31).

Yet, as they also acknowledged, there were 'limitations to this concept', and, they insisted from the outset, responsibility for development plans had to remain with the planning authority. Participation was framed as a relatively narrow concept, as a means of smoothing the process, and not as a mechanism for changing the democratic process. As all plans demanded the 'highest standards of professional skill', the completion of the plans 'must be undertaken by the professional staff of the local planning authority' (Great Britain 1969, 1). They wanted to improve understanding between the public and the authority, to promote new ways of thinking and a new outlook, to educate and inform (Great Britain 1969, 4). One of the planning problems they identified was the large number of delays in implementing development plans. They were keen to speed up the process, not to increase the delays. Part of the education process included recognizing that 'change is inevitable', that population increases meant that 'striving at all costs to preserve what now exists' might not be possible (Great Britain 1969, 11). They claimed that although they did not want it to appear as if their comments merely wanted the public to 'play acolyte to the planning authority's High Priest', they were also guarded against public views which might be 'narrow, bigoted and ill informed', just as it was possible for the planning authority to be 'autocratic, insensitive and stubborn' (Great Britain 1969, 11).

This was not about participation as a goal in its own right. Local authorities needed to market and communicate their ideas, to 'inform' the wider public through controlling information and by carefully managing their relationship with the media. A continual and open dialogue was needed along with 'imaginative advertisements at key stages in the planning process' (Great Britain 1969, 16–20). It was seen to be particularly important to make use of radio and television for 'publicizing planning matters' (Great Britain 1969, 21). Ostensibly, this was part of the process of communicating

proposals to as wide an audience as possible whilst plans were being formulated. But it was also about educating the public and speeding up the planning process. The Report stated that the public had to be 'ready to recognize the need for steady progress' when plans were being prepared. Planning authorities should draw up a timetable when embarking on preparing a plan, with clear target dates. The time for debate, therefore, would always, by necessity, be restricted. They thought that even for the large structure plan a period of only six weeks should be made for representations (Great Britain 1969, 39).

A key aim was 'education'. Publicity was insufficient. What they wanted to do was to 'secure a full understanding of the proposals and informed comment on them' (Great Britain 1969, 43). It was necessary to develop a 'better public knowledge of planning'. They wanted the state and local authorities to produce advisory booklets to explain the 'nature and purpose of structure and local plans', films that explained the 'operation of the new development plan system' and exhibitions which actually disseminated general information. School children and the general public should co-operate with planning departments to 'ensure that education about planning matters is part of ... liberal and civic' education. Teachers should be trained in the 'philosophy and practice of town and country planning'. The Committee was effectively calling for the nation to be educated in the ways of the planner. They believed that 'better knowledge of planning is necessary', and that it was only when there was a 'better public understanding of the purpose of planning' that the efforts of planning authorities would be 'fully rewarded' (Great Britain 1969, 47). Local authorities had to act with more openness, but there had to be 'give and take' and the public, educated in the ways of planners, 'should react constructively to the facts and ideas put before them', leading plans to move 'smoothly and with reasonable speed' (Great Britain 1969, 47).

The possible extra costs of arranging meetings, giving lectures, meeting individuals who wanted to make representations, receiving and sending letters, holding exhibitions and employing extra staff would, they recognized, add burdens on local authorities and would 'limit in practice what can be done' (Great Britain 1969, 39). Significantly, they also warned that 'unless local planning authority members and officers and the public are likewise committed to the principle and to its constructive implementation' then the 'practical recommendations we make will be arid' (Great Britain 1969, 9). The success of participation would depend 'largely upon the local authority member', and planning department members had to engage with a full 'programme of public meetings and discussions with groups that will promote public participation' (Great Britain 1969, 9). Local authorities had to embrace the spirit of participation or it would be, at best, lip service and pointless.

Responses to the Skeffington Report

The Committee believed that its findings and recommendations had unanimous support (Levin and Donnison 1969, 473). However, immediate reactions were mixed. The duality underpinning the Report, the tension between effective participation and effective planning implementation, was recognized by some contemporaries. On the one hand, it was viewed by critics as a radical report which was designed to protect the ordinary citizen in the face of the powerful bureaucrat, a promise to allow people to participate in the decision-making process in matters of vital concern to themselves (Garner 1979, 412). The Report seemed to encourage a fundamental shift in planning

culture, one that would check the supremacy of the technocrat and give some power back to the people affected by their decisions. It was hoped that the Report would have a profound and lasting impact on the planning process. Peter Levin and Professor David Donnison thought that it should leave a 'constructive imprint on our planning procedures' (Levin and Donnison 1969, 476). They highlighted how the recommendations meant consulting people throughout the process and not upon completion, that decisions could evolve as the plans were being formulated rather than leaving objections to the end when the scope for change was minimal (Levin and Donnison 1969, 476). The Report was apparently supporting participation in planning from start to finish. Levin and Donnison thought that the idea that area surveys should be published and made widely available was 'refreshing' and 'encouraging'. They also welcomed the idea of creating a standing community forum and of appointing new officials, such as the community development officer, as 'interesting' (Levin and Donnison 1969, 476-7).

On the other hand, however, Levin and Donnison sounded a few early notes of caution. They pointed out that participation and publicity could actually frustrate the development process, leading to even greater delays. With a hint of scepticism, they accused the Committee of viewing participation as a 'pilgrim's progress' which would automatically lead from the darkness of apathy and ignorance to the light of understanding and constructive action (Levin and Donnison 1969, 477). They wondered whether the public would be better served by choosing representatives, professionals who would be directly accountable to the electorate. Conflict, they argued, was almost inevitable in the planning process and this would be better negotiated through elected officials. They expressed cynicism about the Committee, suggesting that its members were naive and accusing them of assuming that the procedures of a 'Quaker meeting can be adopted to the commercial, political, professional and racial rough house' in which planning decisions were carried out (Levin and Donnison 1969, 478). However, they fell short of claiming the Committee members were more creditable than credible because, as acknowledged, the Report was also a propaganda tool to sell the idea to local authority officials. Nevertheless, they stated that the aims of participation needed to be fully clarified and defined and that more work needed to be done on the planning process and how many of those affected by decisions were often not only unrepresented but 'often unknown' (Levin and Donnison 1969, 478). Although, they claimed, it would be quite easy to guess 'the kind of people whose voices would be heard' at the community forums, it was at least as important to 'learn the needs of those who will not be heard'.

Levin and Donnison's early remarks on the Report proved insightful. Participation in practice was fraught with difficulties. One of the main points of emphasis was on the need to educate people in planning rationale. The Report stressed the need to teach the public about the planners' logic, to make them comprehend their viewpoint. This was a process which should start in school and continue throughout adult life. It was believed that this would lead to greater understanding and harmony between the public and the planner, resulting in a much smoother process. People should be involved in their area surveys, which would be controlled by planners, and which would facilitate co-operation. This was not about challenging planning decisions. Rather, there was an assumption that planners did, indeed, know best and that people were simply living in ignorance. They needed to be informed and educated. The Report was criticized for effectively encouraging nothing more than better public relations, for leading the public in order to

make life easier for the planners. Damer and Hague believed that the planner would still dominate the whole procedure and that the Report was, in their opinion, vague and ambiguous and, as such, it was not really designed to promote participatory democracy but to speed up the implementation process (Damer and Hague 1971, 226). Indeed, the whole idea of participation was treated with some scepticism, as most people did not engage with local politics and were unlikely to be motivated to do so unless there was a tangible threat to their own interests and a real opportunity of influencing or overturning decisions (Damer and Hague 1971, 227–8). There were problems in defining and monitoring the future ‘success’ of participation and, for Damer and Hague, there was a need for a clear operational definition of public participation in different contexts to give it clear meaning and, consequently, to be able to measure success rates (Damer and Hague 1971, 228). The Committee was criticized for being too focused on improving an inefficient planning system. This framed their perspective and shaped the entire report. It was dismissed for being too one-sided as it focused on education and improving publicity, telling the people what was going to happen rather than allowing meaningful contributions, even though evidence suggested that the public were demanding to be more actively involved (Damer and Hague 1971, 231).

The main focus was on information. Attempts to create community forums, the appointment of community development officers, the commissioning of information films to educate the public about planning constituted a limited attempt to build effective participation. After a decade, only a few local authorities had appointed officers and what public forums existed were sparsely attended (Garner 1979, 412). The whole concept, as interpreted after the Report, was used and designed by professionals for their own purposes (Boaden 1979). The Planning Advisory Group and the Skeffington Report were criticized as being a vehicle for reducing public opposition to planning proposals. They simply wanted to ‘inform’ and ‘educate’ by providing information in order to control and manipulate the whole process (Bruton 1979). Skeffington still felt that while the public should be able to influence the process, the planners should still be able to make the final decision (Fielding 2003, 199). He believed that the process should build bridges, bringing planners and public together in a spirit of friendly co-operation. The Report was also designed to placate local authorities unconvinced of the need for participation (Fielding 2003, 199). Organizations such as the London Boroughs Association and the Urban District Councils Association remained sceptical (Fielding 2003, 199). Officials in Whitehall found it difficult to manage the contradictions. They made it clear that forums and development officers were not compulsory. Councils remained in charge.

Political enthusiasm was limited. In October 1968, Judith Hart was tasked with promoting participation. She claimed that the welfare state had failed to react to the demands of many users, that it was unresponsive and outdated and that people had to be invited to actively participate (Fielding 2003, 198). She still believed that most people did not want to get involved but thought there was a growing demand amongst people to get involved in decisions affecting their communities. In 1969 she wrote a Green Paper on the issue and advocated the creation of neighbourhood councils which would fit into municipal wards. They would engage with council officials, attend meetings and access information. This was not just about empowering the ‘people’. It was more specific. Underpinning the Skeffington Report is a desire to give residents who lacked the skills, confidence or experience a voice in decision-making. This was evident in the proposal to appoint community development officers to actively seek out

opinion, to act as a type of advocate. It was a tool for developing stable, cohesive communities. Other government schemes were keen to encourage the same policy. Wilson, however, dismissed the idea and moved Hart from her position as Paymaster General (Fielding 2003, 198).

Participation in practice

Critics highlighted the problems in creating effective participation schemes in the 1970s. The state had encouraged local authorities to develop consultation strategies in the planning process by creating forums designed to facilitate discussion between local authorities and the people affected by the planning decisions. The Department of the Environment also supported the idea of housing participation schemes which they hoped would bring tenants and council officials together regularly to manage housing policy (Shapely 2007). However, despite these good intentions, creating effective mechanisms for consultation and participation proved problematic. In practice many local authorities ignored the idea, others paid it lip service and some used the public forums as a means to maintain local government authority, to speed up the planning process by manipulating those forums which were created to achieve the aims desired by the council.

From the late 1960s through to the late 1970s, successive governments tried to promote greater community participation through experimental action-research schemes such as the Community Development Project (CDP). Some tried to merge the idea of the Project with the creation of community forums to discuss planning issues, but their efforts highlighted the limitations of participation in planning. Amongst many other initiatives, the twelve Community Development Project teams encouraged residents to form groups that would engage in planning decisions affecting their areas. In 1973 Professor John Greve, advisor to the Home Office and Professor of Social Administration at the University of Southampton, provided an early review of the CDP. Greve stated that the CDP was a partnership between the state and local government and 'of major importance for the residents of deprived areas' in identifying needs and problems and in proposing ways of dealing with them and 'participating in the management of services and other resources' (Greve 1973, 119). One of the fundamental ideals of the CDP was the reassertion of 'democratic politics' by increasing individual and communal capacities to 'create or take opportunities' and to 'exercise self determination of their own lives' and of their environment (Greve 1973, 119). The Teams campaigned for better information and communication from the local authorities, efficient boarding-up of condemned properties and greater tenant participation and choice concerning the future of the whole area ([CDP] 1974a, 177). They wanted change to be accompanied with better communication. The CDP aimed to bring local government and public agencies closer to the communities in housing, planning and environmental improvements. They intended to use legislation and government initiatives (Action Areas, General Improvement Areas and public participation) to give residents a much greater level of responsibility in the decision-making process ([CDP] 1974a, 183).

The Teams achieved little. Their aim was to encourage and support 'self-help within the community' and build the capacity for 'participation in the processes of policy and decision making and implementation affecting their lives' (Home Office 1974, 1). But they came up against oppositional authorities who controlled policy and, most importantly, resources. Coventry provided an initial focal point. The creation of a community forum

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along the lines suggested by the Skeffington Committee was proposed. The council had provided evidence to the Committee, claiming that it had consulted with residents about rebuilding after the war and again from 1962 they had held a series of ward meetings between residents and the planning authority (Humble and Talbot 1975, 2). Their evidence pointed out that public participation usually involved the same minority of organized groups. It was the council that urged Skeffington to engage total public interest and to make people more aware of planning techniques. After the Report was published, and the Hillfields district of Coventry had been chosen as one of the first Community Development Project areas, Terence Gregory, the City Architect and Planning Officer, suggested that the two initiatives should be combined. The CDP team would incorporate the idea of a community forum to discuss planning proposals. In 1970, John Bennington was appointed Director of the Coventry CDP. He was keen on developing the idea and he wrote to the council's Policy Committee expressing the hope that groups of residents could form around specific issues of interest, at which point council officers could join local working parties to create an effective and relevant community forum. Bennington believed that he had the support of local ward councillors.

However, there was resistance. He believed that ward councillors were unable to 'influence even their own party very strongly' on the idea of a community forum (Humble and Talbot 1975, 5). Discussions dragged on throughout the year. In October, the Planning and Development Committee agreed that the idea of a community forum should be explored by Bennington, but, again, senior council officials including Gregory continued to drag their feet. The Policy Committee again discussed the idea of the forum on 22 March 1971 but, once more, deferred a decision. Bennington expressed his frustration. He claimed that the 'demand from the residents and the expectation from the residents was there', as was the formal commitment from the Project Committee, but 'we didn't seem able to get anyone to actually act on it' (Humble and Talbot 1975, 8). Resident groups expressed a desire for an open and continual dialogue with the council, but creating a forum proved impossible.

Theoretically, the council appeared to embrace the idea of participation, but in reality officers and elected members resisted implementing any plans which might undermine their own authority. Robert Aitken, Director of Education, claimed that although Gregory was sympathetic to the ideas in the Skeffington Report, and of the idea of community involvement and participation, he did not think that Gregory was 'wedded to the concept of a community forum', and the council's Chief Executive was decidedly unconvinced (Humble and Talbot 1975, 3). Concern was expressed at the amount of time and commitment needed if all senior council officers had to attend monthly meetings, especially if the idea was replicated across the whole city. In August 1971 the Policy Committee again deferred a decision on the community forum. Finally, on 20 September 1971, the Policy Committee formally rejected the proposal, claiming it would place too many demands on officers' time (Humble and Talbot 1975, 18).

Bennington believed that there was a more serious issue being debated. He claimed that informal discussions had taken place in the Labour Party Group about a community forum and the whole idea of public participation and that it had been a 'very abrasive discussion which is hostile towards us in many respects' (Humble and Talbot 1975, 20). The Group was divided between older members who favoured central control and central planning and younger members who believed in the 'need for new democratic forms to be developed' (Humble and Talbot 1975, 20). The council had stated that

another sub-committee would be formed to look further into the idea but, Aitken claimed, this was just ‘another device to put it off – another room behind another blank room’ and that the real decision was to ‘shelve the whole idea, let it gather dust and push it away somewhere’ (Humble and Talbot 1975, 21). For Aitken, the underlying issue was the perceived loss of power and status. He believed that people were afraid of the idea of a forum because ‘they can’t see how they fit in’, that councillors would feel their ‘status in the community’ would be undermined and that professional planners would have their ideas scrutinized in ways which could threaten their conceptual approach to urban planning (Humble and Talbot 1975, 24). For Bennington, the forum was a potential ‘threat to both the political and bureaucratic balance of power’ challenging the top-down city-wide corporate management approach to policy (Humble and Talbot 1975, 27).

As early as 1972 the Department of the Environment sent out a circular to local authorities to provide comments on the Skeffington Report. It stated that although it would be advantageous if different groups could meet to discuss planning issues, whether this was ‘practical and how it should be done is essentially a local matter’ (DoE Circular 57/72, cited in Humble and Talbot 1975, 27). The forums were supposed to emerge and evolve in response to the local plans and groups wanting to participate. There was no central commitment or statutory requirement. Local authorities were trusted to develop their own strategy. This was the problem. Another CDP team in the Benwell area of Newcastle highlighted similar problems. Research into slum clearance plans for the area showed that the council had left residents ill-informed about the process, the plans for the redevelopment of the whole and about their rights regarding compensation, rehousing and the public enquiry ([CDP] 1974b, 1). Newcastle City Council was criticized for its lack of interaction with tenants. The Team claimed that ‘despite a high level of interest amongst residents in the area’ there was still a ‘great deal of dissatisfaction with the amount and nature of consultation provided by the council’ ([CDP] 1974b, 1). Most of the information provided for residents was given at statutory legal junctures in the process and was ‘extremely formal and technical’, making it difficult ‘for the average man in the street to understand’ ([CDP] 1974b, 1). Tenants were still treated as inconsequential to the whole process because of the flow and nature of the information presented. It was a systemic failure. They felt that compensation and rehousing policies should be transparent and clearly explained ([CDP] 1974b, 2). Above all, they demanded ‘real participation’.

The Team claimed that ‘virtually no attention has been paid to involving the residents themselves’, and that neither before nor after the public enquiry were residents given the opportunity to ‘challenge debate or alter the corporation’s plans’ ([CDP] 1974b, 3). The public inquiry occurred during working hours without offer of compensation for the loss of wages, which deterred many people who were already struggling with low incomes. Moreover, as was generally the case, those residents who were able to attend and who did try to challenge the plans were told that the inquiry was not concerned with public views but was a legal forum for the council, government and property owners to discuss compensation ([CDP] 1974b, 3).⁸ One group of residents was so ‘frustrated with the outcome of the public inquiry’ that they organized their own ‘real’ public inquiry which avoided the technical aspects of compensation but which asked the most pressing question ‘where and when will I be rehoused?’ ([CDP] 1974b, 3). The residents at the meeting ‘expressed great dissatisfaction with redevelopment plans’ which

were only now, at the end of the process, just starting to be discussed in detail with them, and even then it was only as a result of initiatives which they had themselves organized. The Team strongly urged the council, to which they were reporting, that, as a ‘matter of course’, residents should always be given the opportunity to take a ‘structured and on-going place in discussions about clearance and redevelopment’ ([CDP] 1974b, 4). They told the council that in their experience residents were not apathetic to policy and that their experience ‘confounds the notion that residents in clearance areas are not interested in intelligent discussion about their future and just want to get out’ ([CDP] 1974b, 4). The council’s failure to engage, they stated, was having a destructive impact on community cohesion. In a damning claim, they believed that ‘what is happening is that a lack of information and real consultation promotes a disruption of any cohesion and interest in the neighbourhood’ and that this created a vacuum in which ‘myths abound’ so that when a plan was created in ‘isolation from the residents’ then it was ‘hardly surprising that it is out of touch with their wishes and often rejected by them’ ([CDP] 1974b, 4). This failure led to disillusionment and dislocation. It was this, not a lack of interest, which generated a feeling of apathy.

Some of the Community Development Project reports and opinions must be treated with a caveat. A significant number of the workers and authors promoted a Marxist agenda and, for them, the concept of participation was ultimately designed to have far-reaching consequences. Nevertheless, in the narrow field of planning and the local authority, participation had never been on the agenda. The future leader of Newcastle City Council, Jon Gower Davies, described the total lack of regard for tenant views during the Rye Hill Improvement Scheme in the mid-1960s (Davies 1972).⁹ Davies commissioned a tenant questionnaire in 1974 to consider resident opinions in potential Housing Action Areas. This survey highlighted the opposition to clearance policies, a strong attachment to the area and a desire for better quality homes ([CDP] 1975, appendix, 7). It was a pointless exercise. The CDP report claimed that residents actually had only two ‘unpleasant alternatives’. They could choose ‘removal to possibly inconvenient council estates after a long period of blight and upheaval’, or they could suffer ‘poor environmental conditions and the strong likelihood that house improvements will not be carried out’ ([CDP] 1975, appendix, 7).

Local authorities continued to avoid the concept of participation in planning. The redevelopment of the Newton Heath area of Manchester underlined the lack of genuine regard for the idea of including residents in the planning process (Shapely 2011). Contemporary research into participation in the 1970s highlighted the basic discrepancies between policy and practice. Peter Hain’s study of the redevelopment of Covent Garden showed how resident forums could be subverted to the needs of the local authority, creating a consensus which supported their plans rather than challenged their power. Hain described how the GLC was able to dominate and manipulate the Covent Garden Forum so that they were able to control and regulate its activities (Hain 1982, 38). In practice, participation meant ‘educating’ the public into accepting planning proposals, avoiding conflict and obtaining agreement for government policies (Hain 1982, 32–3).

Conclusion

The Skeffington Report was criticized for a number of reasons. It failed to distinguish between different types of participation, from public involvement in the

actual decision-making process and what was, in reality, an exercise in education and public relations (Leigh 1977, 154). There was no definition of what was actually meant by 'participation' in practice. It remained largely undetermined and vague.¹⁰ The idea of the Report was to translate the requirements of the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act with the statutory requirements for publicity and public participation into actual practice at the local level, but it never really explained how this might be achieved (Hansard 1969, col. 246w). Nor could it compel local authorities to take decisive action. They were still allowed to define the parameters through which a system might operate or, as was usually the case, still allowed to simply kick it into the long grass. There was no effective systematic approach, no obligation, no sanctions and no timetable.

The Report had never fully grasped the shift in power at the local level needed to make participation effective, the broader political implications of participation. When it came to facing this reality, local authorities clung on to their power and authority. Councils such as Coventry liked to portray themselves as embracing the idea of participation in planning, but the reality was very different. Although they wanted to show that they had a history of consulting people, when faced with the reality of engaging in a community forum they delayed making any commitment until they finally rejected the idea on the basis that it was not practical within their time restraints. Whilst the mechanics did need consideration, there was an underlying sense that participation through a forum would challenge the power and authority of elected and unelected officials alike. Local authorities clung to their centralized administrative systems of control and command over policy and resources (Daniel 1970).

Despite the critics and shortcomings, the Skeffington Report continually emphasized the need to engage with all members of communities affected by planning. As such, it is a genuine attempt to encourage and suggest ways of developing participatory democracy. The problem was that in the 1960s and 1970s, 'participation' was still a concept in its infancy. Yet after only 18 months of investigation and deliberation, the Committee was meant to produce a report which showed the way forward. Condemning it as naive is unfair. Rather, they were faced with an impossible task, at least in the short-term. Nevertheless, the Report signalled the start of a shift in thinking and approaches as to how policy should be developed and managed. The idea of creating community forums and the appointment of community development officers was in vogue, but it was actually a rushed suggestion in the face of limited time. In practice, professionals and council officials believed the aim of the suggested reforms was to create a consensus that would smooth over the planning process, not to create debate and absorb ideas from within the communities. Effective participation remained problematic. But it has continued to be a central feature in the evolution of the decision-making process.

The underlying danger with participation was that it would prove to be little more than tokenism. S. R. Arnstein's ladder of participation underlined the different rungs leading towards an effective model (Arnstein 1969; see also Quetzal and McCallum 2006; Collins and Ison 2006). Only the top three rungs of the ladder (partnership, delegated power and citizen control) were effective means of citizen participation. The others were either non-participation (therapy and manipulation) or were just token gestures (informing, consulting and placating). Since the Skeffington Report, outcomes have been either top-down local authority controlled or bottom-up attempts at power sharing (see also Hill 2000, 106–7). There is still concern that while protest against some planning decisions can attract a great deal of attention, publicity and sympathy, others,

such as the poor, unemployed, homeless and ethnic minorities remain passive voices (Hill 2000, 107). The problem of social and political exclusion remains. It was a concern which influenced government policies from the mid-1960s. Slum clearance, industrial scale redevelopment, migration, rapid immigration and long-term economic decline had undermined social cohesion in many urban communities. The rediscovery of poverty highlighted the limitations of welfare. Slumland was replaced by perceptions of the 'inner city', defined by concentrated levels of deprivation, of the poor, low paid, unskilled and elderly, each with a heavy reliance on social security. They had no representation. The Labour movement was more concerned with their members and with pay and conditions at work. The open ended housing market left the door open for social mobility, enabling people with the job and resources to move into private houses and away from the council estates. For those left behind, social dislocation increased. It is a long, historical and structural problem. However, if participation is to be an effective means of expanding democracy then exclusion must still be addressed (Hill 2000, 123). Despite the criticisms, the fundamental values of the Skeffington Report have become accepted normative principles in the rhetoric of planning. Recent studies have pointed ways forward. The perceived importance of the 'stakeholder' is claimed to be of central importance (see, for instance, Baker, Coafee and Sherriff 2006, 1–30). New ways of developing a collaborative planning process, of building community links and developing participation culture have and will continue to be discussed and debated (see, for example, Healey 2006; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2002; Woltjer 2009).

There are some fundamental reasons as to why it is still being debated if not avoided. Public participation throws up a number of challenges and conflicts which explain why it has been so difficult to reach a consensus and an effective working model. Planners and politicians have often defended what is effectively their territory, their power and authority. The vision, the status of creating the big plan, was at times jealously guarded. Participation was seen as a challenge to the expertise of the professional. In the 1950s and 1960s there were added pressures, including the time-scales, costs, the sheer size of the projects and the political process. Moreover, few ordinary people actually had a 'vision'. There was little in the way of a grass-roots movement demanding an alternative to what was offered. There was an underlying faith in the knowledge of the planners and architects. People wanted the slums cleared, an end to overcrowding, dirt and environmental decay. The largely untried alternatives being offered promised a new standard of living. For many, the reality of the choices made by the professionals and local authorities shook this trust. People had opinions, few of which embraced modernism. Tenant groups emerged from the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s to give residents a voice. They were formed for different reasons, including as a protest against rent rises, the lack of social facilities, future development plans, the poor quality of the new homes and the impact of planning blight. Skeffington was important precisely because it was the moment when the state gave implicit recognition to the legitimacy of the people having a stake in their own environment.

Notes

- 1 The issue was discussed in Britain by Josephine Reynolds (1969).
- 2 Damer was a lecturer in sociology in the School of Architecture, Building Science and Urban Planning in the University of Strathclyde while Hague was a lecturer in the Department of Town and Country Planning at Heriot-Watt.

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- 3 Donnison was Director of the Centre for Environmental Studies. He also advised the Conservative government and was influential in the creation of the experimental Neighbourhood Scheme. Levin was a Senior Research Officer at the LSE.
- 4 Residents were not the only ones left frustrated by the process (see Adams 2011).
- 5 Skeffington also served as chair of the Labour Party. He was a former lecturer and qualified barrister. He died on 18 February 1971 at the age of 61.
- 6 For a full Committee list see Great Britain 1969, 1.
- 7 The idea of forums was experimented with in West Germany, notably in Munich, during the late 1960s.
- 8 Residents were faced with the same situation across the country (Shapely 2011).
- 9 Davies eventually became a lecturer at Newcastle University.
- 10 Sebastian Haumann has highlighted how participation in the West German and US context left a great deal of room for diverging interpretations at the local level (Haumann 2012).

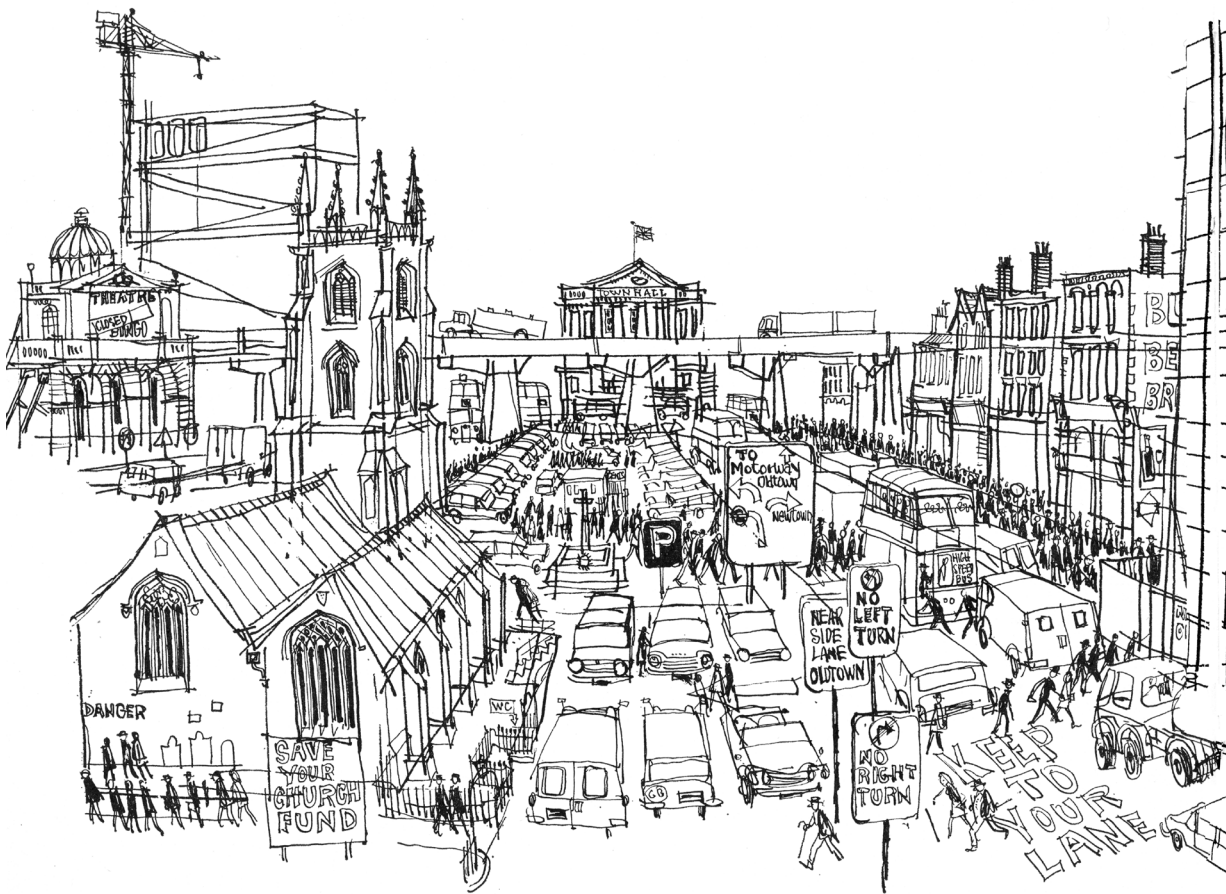
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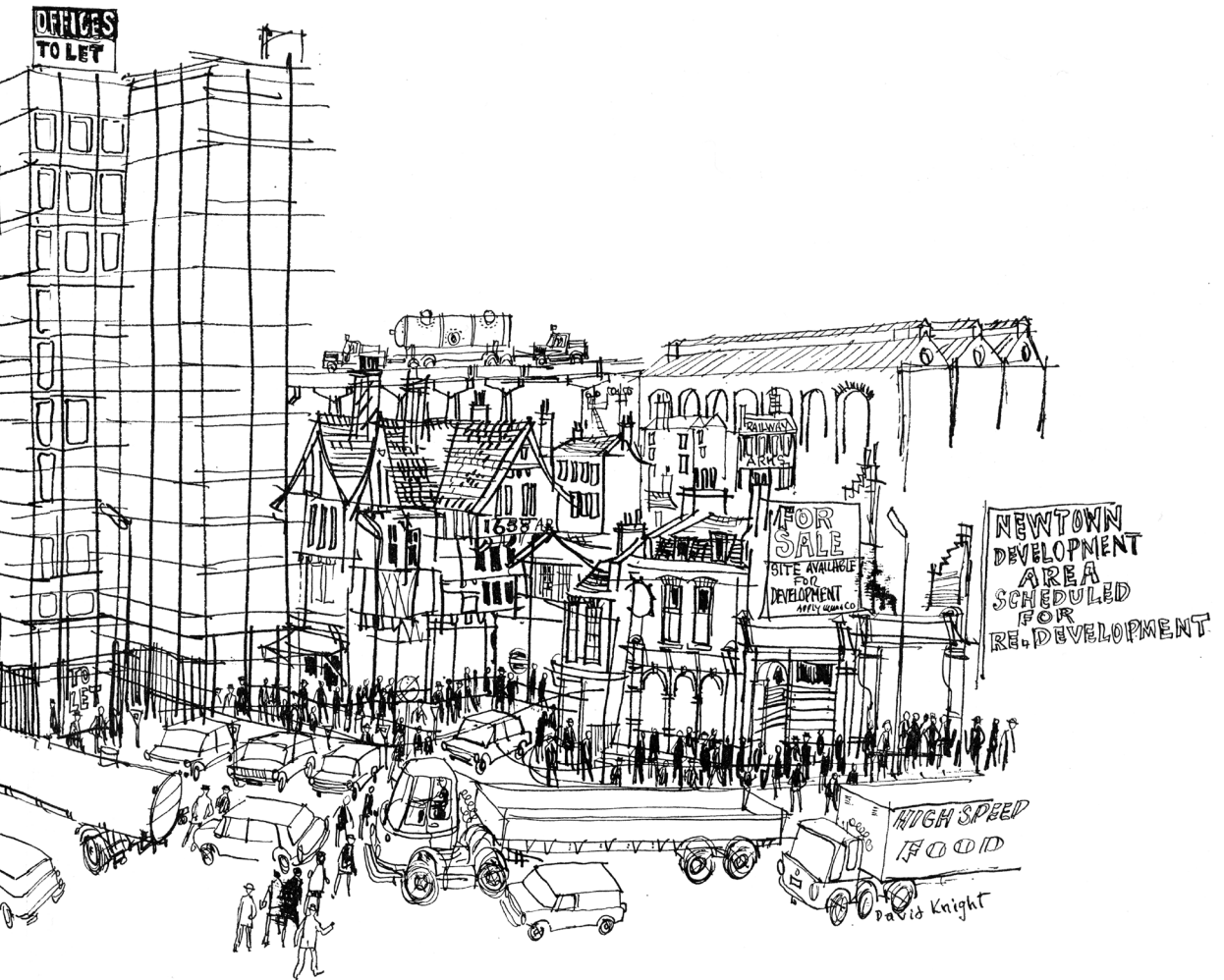
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Report of the Committee on Public Participation in Planning



COMMITTEE

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Joint Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Housing and Local Government

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Mr H. Webb
Mr E. Wistrich

Secretary

Mr P. W. Rumble

* Sir Mark Henig was appointed a member but resigned before taking up work on the Committee on his appointment as Chairman of the East Midlands Economic Planning Council.

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To:

The Right Honourable Anthony Greenwood, MP,
Minister of Housing and Local Government ;

The Right Honourable William Ross, MBE, MP,
Secretary of State for Scotland ;
and

The Right Honourable George Thomas, MP,
Secretary of State for Wales

Introduction

Gentlemen,

1 We were appointed in March 1968 'to consider and report on the best methods, including publicity, of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area.' We have undertaken this task with pleasure because we believe that the growing interest in participation is a valuable new development; and we have been sustained and encouraged in our work by the enthusiastic and constructive evidence we have received from large numbers of individuals, organisations and public bodies interested in planning.

2 Our immediate task was to suggest practical ways in which local planning authorities could best implement the relevant parts of the new Town and Country Planning Act, thus enabling people to contribute their ideas while plans are being prepared for the area in which they live. We have done this; but we have also thought it right to examine more broadly the context in which these recommendations are made since they are designed to respond to a widely expressed public demand as well as to serve a practical purpose. Indeed, although our recommendations about the actual methods of participation are set in the field of planning we hope that some of them will be of assistance in applying techniques of public participation in other spheres. Certainly the Committee feel that this broader aspect of their work is important in a large, complex and socially advanced industrial nation like ours where the principle of public participation can improve the quality of decisions by public authorities and give personal satisfaction to those affected by the decisions.

3 As soon as we were appointed we issued a general invitation to submit ideas and comments. Over 400 organisations and individuals responded. In addition, we invited comments from particular associations and persons, both in the United Kingdom and overseas. Ideas from these submissions provided the basis for prolonged discussion by the full Committee and two Working Groups of members. These are the standard techniques of a public committee. But, because of our remit, we thought it right to go beyond this, and to expose our ideas to comment and criticism as they developed. For this purpose, we prepared a memorandum setting out the main themes as they appeared to us, and invited further evidence from a number of bodies. We met several of these, and had lively and constructive debates with them. All this was done before we tried to reach conclusions or draft this report.

4 There were, of course, differences in emphasis in the ideas put to us in evidence but they were based almost unanimously on enthusiasm for the principle of participation and showed that authorities and the public wished to work creatively and responsibly together. Some criticism was expressed about failures to communicate in the past but the overall approach has been a constructive one,

seeking to bring planners and the people closer together. We give in *Appendix 2* the names of people and organisations who have given evidence and should like to record our appreciation of the considerable help that we have obtained from all these sources.

5 We shall draw frequently on key words in our terms of reference and think it advisable to say at the start how we have interpreted them.

- (a) *Participation*—We understand participation to be the act of sharing in the formulation of policies and proposals. Clearly, the giving of information by the local planning authority and of an opportunity to comment on that information is a major part in the process of participation, but it is not the whole story. Participation involves doing as well as talking and there will be full participation only where the public are able to take an active part throughout the plan-making process. There are limitations to this concept. One is that responsibility for preparing a plan is, and must remain, that of the local planning authority. Another is that the completion of plans—the setting into statutory form of proposals and decisions—is a task demanding the highest standards of professional skill, and must be undertaken by the professional staff of the local planning authority.
- (b) *The Public*—We do not think of the public solely in terms of the community as it shows itself in organised groups. We regard the community as an aggregate comprising all individuals and groups within it without limitation.
- (c) *Publicity*—We use the word 'publicity' to mean the making of information available to the public. Basically this information will be fact, argument and explanation. Publicity alone is not participation; but it is the first essential step towards it.

6 We finished our work before the reports of the Royal Commissions on Local Government in England and in Scotland were published. For that reason, our recommendations are related to the present structure of local government. We believe that the broad principles we lay down are of general validity although some adjustments in their detailed application will, no doubt, be desirable in the light of changes in local government structure that may be finally determined. In any event, planning under the new development plan system is starting now with local authorities as we have them at present. Our recommendations therefore have an immediate relevance.



7 It may be that the evolution of the structures of representative government which has concerned western nations for the last century and a half is now entering into a new phase. There is a growing demand by many groups for more opportunity to contribute and for more say in the working out of policies which affect people not merely at election time, but continuously as proposals are being hammered out and, certainly, as they are being implemented. Life, so the argument runs, is becoming more and more complex, and one cannot leave all the problems to one's representatives. They need some help in reaching the right decision, and opportunity should be provided for discussions with all those involved. The Town and Country Planning Act 1968* provides the citizen with a statutory guarantee—that he must be given information about a given situation and an opportunity to make his views known to his local planning authority. The authority must then consider them.

8 Planning is a prime example of the need for this participation, for it affects everyone. People should be able to say what kind of community they want and how it should develop: and should be able to do so in a way that is positive and first-hand. It matters to us all that we should know that we can influence the shape of our community so that the towns and villages in which we live, work, learn, and relax may reflect our best aspirations. This becomes all the more vital where the demands of a complex society occasion massive changes; changes which in some areas may completely alter the character of a town, a neighbourhood or a rural area. The pace, intensity and scale of change will inevitably bring bewilderment and

* There are a number of references in the report to legislation affecting England and Wales. We have not thought it necessary to complicate the text by translating these into references to the Scottish provisions. Planning legislation as a whole is very similar under both codes. In particular, the public participation provisions introduced in Part I of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Bill 1969 were virtually identical with the corresponding provisions in the Town and Country Planning Act 1968.

The Committee included a number of members from Scotland. Our recommendations take the Scottish situation into account and are fully relevant to planning north of the Border. It may be that the factors that govern the progressive introduction of the new planning system in Scotland will be different from those in England and Wales. We are clear however that, whenever the new system is introduced, the same considerations as regards public participation will apply. There will, of course, be considerable flexibility in the actual measures to be taken and it will be open to Scottish planning authorities with the guidance of the Secretary of State for Scotland to fit the measures they take and the techniques they use to the conditions and requirements of their own districts.

For convenience the report refers to 'the Minister' and 'the Ministry' throughout. In Wales the Secretary of State for Wales has responsibilities under the Planning Acts similar to those of the Minister of Housing and Local Government and the Secretary of State for Scotland.

frustration if people affected think it is to be imposed without respect for their views. This leads all too easily to alienation between the authority and people. Some people are bound to be hurt and others will remain dissatisfied even though they are informed of proposals and are able to comment on them. Not everyone's wishes can be met. But the fact that some people may ultimately be hurt only strengthens the need for them to know of proposals early, to understand them and to be involved in shaping them.

9 As well as giving the individual the chance of saying how his town or village should develop, participation also offers him the opportunity of serving the community and thereby becoming involved in its life, contributing to its well-being and enriching its relationships. Nor are the benefits just to the individual; many groups attract people whose local knowledge and skill will often produce new and valuable ideas.

10 The advantages that flow from involvement of the public have been recognised by several local planning authorities whose work has, to some extent, anticipated the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1968. That being so, it may be asked why there has been so little to show from past efforts and why, generally, the public has made so little impact on the content of plans. The reasons vary from place to place; but two general points emerge. They are:

- (i) First, most authorities have been far more successful in informing the public than in involving them. Publicity—the first step—is comparatively easy. To secure effective participation is much more difficult.
- (ii) Secondly, some of the authorities who have made intensive efforts to publicise their proposals have done so when those proposals were almost cut and dried. At that stage, those who have prepared the plan are deeply committed to it. There is a strong disinclination to alter proposals which have been taken so far; but from the public's point of view the opportunity to comment has come so late that it can only be an opportunity to object. The authority are then regarded more as an antagonist than as the representative of the community and what was started in good will has ended in acrimony.

11 Where information comes too late and without preliminary public discussion there is the likelihood of frustration and hostility. It may be that the plan produced is the one best suited to the needs of the community but the reasons for decisions do not emerge, nor are people told why superficially attractive alternatives have been put aside. This failure to communicate has meant that the preparation of a plan, instead of being a bridge between the authority and the public, has become a barrier, reinforcing the separation that springs up so easily between the 'them' of authority and the 'us' of the public.

12 Often, too, organisations and individuals have made things worse when a plan has appeared because their approach has been too narrow and indiscriminately hostile. Problems affecting the whole of their community, and even extending beyond it, have been regarded in the light of sectional and local interests. Change has been regarded as desirable only if it occurs elsewhere or if it is of direct benefit to the interests they represent.

13 To some extent, therefore, authorities and the public have contributed to the separation between them, but administrative and legislative factors may have added to it. Some of our members experienced in local government administration felt that difficulties had been aggravated because existing local government boundaries were unrealistic. We hope that changes made following the report of the Royal Commissions on Local Government will help in the operation of the new planning system. Another factor has been the nature of the existing development plan. It has been able to cope only imperfectly with the increases in population and traffic that have taken place since these plans were introduced in 1947 and has been found inadequate as a method of involving the public. The Town and Country Planning Act 1968 seeks to provide a means of expressing more relevant plans and a way of bringing the public into the process from the outset.*

14 The arguments in favour of greater public involvement during the formative stages of plan-making have, of course, been advanced for some time. Many authorities have recognised and voluntarily responded to the spontaneous demand for participation in their area. They have tested their belief that it is right and useful to engage the interest and to sound out the views of the public—and they have benefited from doing so. Indeed, the oversimplification of relationships between 'them' and 'us' to which we referred earlier will, no doubt, seem grotesque to those who live in areas where the public and authority have worked together with co-operation and understanding. Several of our recommendations are based on the

* Section 3(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1968 states: '3(1) When preparing a structure plan for their area and before finally determining its content for submission to the Minister, the local planning authority shall take such steps as will in their opinion secure: (a) that adequate publicity is given in their area to the report of the survey under section 1 above and to the matters which they propose to include in the plan; (b) that persons who may be expected to desire an opportunity of making representations to the authority with respect to those matters are made aware that they are entitled to an opportunity of doing so; and (c) that such persons are given an adequate opportunity of making such representations; and the authority shall consider any representations made to them within the prescribed period.'

Section 7(1) contains similar provisions for local plans.

experience of those pioneering authorities (*Appendix 3 illustrates how Coventry County Borough Council and Washington Development Corporation tackled this work*) and we have noted, too, the practices in overseas countries where, within their own planning system, attempts have been made to bring planners and the public to work together towards the same ideals.

15 This report is, then, set in an evolutionary context in the nature of development plans, in the procedures associated with them and in the relationship between authority and the public. All three aspects are relevant to this report.

The area of debate

16 As was to be expected, many of the submissions we received pressed for special consideration to be given to the contributor's particular interest but common themes ran through several. They included, for example, a plea for more education in planning matters; for better access to, and a wider distribution of, information; for a statutory right of consultation by local amenity societies or for their representatives to be co-opted to the planning committee; for planning committees to be open to the press; and for a closer link between physical planning and social welfare work.

17 In the same way, themes recurred in our discussions—the local planning authority's responsibility for decision; the need to involve all sectors of the community and not just the articulate groups; the importance of a two-way exchange of ideas, influencing and modifying the content of the plan, and not just a one-way exercise in persuading the public.

18 The question of the cost in time and money which our proposals will involve has always been to the forefront in our discussions. We have never forgotten that planning is a means and not an end; and that its purpose is to set the framework within which houses, roads and community services can be provided at the right time and in the right place. Planning is not just a theoretical exercise that can proceed regardless of time; and greater public involvement will make demands on money and staff. But these are costs which must be accepted if the citizen is to be fully involved in democratic planning.

19 The objective is clear—to establish and maintain a better understanding between the public and the planning authority which will be of benefit to both. But the problem is how, in some areas, to strengthen, and, in others, to promote the new attitudes, the new ways of thinking, the new outlook upon which that understanding is founded. It may help if we state briefly the guide lines to our thinking.

20 We identify two main sectors in the community whose constructive interest needs to be engaged—those who are actively interested and organised, and the non-joiners and inarticulate from whom a response has to be drawn. The forging of links between both sectors will place additional and heavy responsibilities on the council members and officers who are at the hub of these activities. They will have to go out to the people to inform them, to discuss with them and seek their views. These activities are, of course, an integral part of the duties of the authority as a whole and will involve all members and officers of departments whose work is affected directly or indirectly by proposals contained in the plan. Members and officers will have to try to be even more accessible to the public, and there will need to be a new spirit of open discussion of planning issues and a recognition that effective participation will imply a more or less continuous open debate, moving on through the planning process but bearing the seeds of controversy at each stage. It may seem that participation will only lengthen the period of dispute between an authority and the public; but we see the process of giving information and opportunities for participation as one which leads to greater understanding and co-operation rather than to a crescendo of dispute.

21 Clearly the dangers of antagonism will be so much the less and the interchange between the authority and people more profitable, if councillors and citizens alike have a better working knowledge of the meaning of development plans and the processes involved in their preparation and coming into force. The best hope for this is a long term programme of education; but the continuity of debate which is implicit in the participation process can itself be educative for both the planner and the public.

Keeping things moving

22 Planning has acquired a bad name partly because intolerable delays have held up the implementation of urgently needed developments. Yet delays could become worse through the injection of public involvement into the intricate process of preparing a plan. Indeed unless the business of participation moves forward steadily it could nullify the Government's expressed intentions to speed up the planning process. Each authority should, therefore, prepare a timetable making clear the stages at which they hope to secure positive reactions from the public and setting the date by which they should receive comments and ideas. The public should work with the authorities to keep to those dates, though public discussion will, of course, continue throughout the process and not only at these particular points.

23 The fact that plans are sterile documents until the development they propose takes place is not the only reason for wanting the participation programme to move expeditiously. Planning proposals, while they are being debated, affect people's lives and the value of their property. It is necessary to reduce to the minimum the worry that hangs over people during this period.

24 We have referred to some of the difficulties attendant upon public participation, but the expenditure of time and effort will be justified if it produces an understanding, co-operative public and planning better geared to public opinion. If objections can be anticipated or eliminated the formal stage of public inquiry will be smoother, less contentious and speedier.

25 Finally, we would emphasize that public involvement at the formative stage in the making of a plan in no way diminishes the responsibility of the elected representatives to make the final decision about the content of a plan. They, too, must be given the responsibility for deciding the best methods and timing of participation activities in their area. It is for this reason that we suggest a wide variety of methods on which we hope authorities will draw when undertaking this vital work.





The development plan and plan-making process



26 A development plan is, broadly speaking, a series of documents—some written statements, some maps, and some diagrams—setting out the main planning policies for the area of a local planning authority, i.e. a county or a county borough, for many years ahead. It does not in itself directly control the development or acquisition of land; but it sets out the policies which will guide those processes.

27 The duty of preparing development plans was first imposed on local planning authorities in the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. The provisions of that and later planning Acts were consolidated in the Town and Country Planning Act 1962, but there was no alteration in the basic nature of the development plan for over twenty years. It is by reference to plans prepared and amended under those Acts that physical planning is conducted today. Essentially, these plans show how it is proposed that land shall be used. They are effective as an instrument for controlling development but less so for creative planning; and they do not bring together comprehensively the related problems arising from the use of land and the demands of traffic. There is no statutory obligation upon an authority to involve the public when amendments to the plan are being considered; but there are rights of objection once the amendment has been placed on deposit and public inquiries are invariably held if objections are received.

28 Recognition of the deficiencies in this system led to the review by the Planning Advisory Group. Its report,* published in 1965, recommended a new type of development plan, now provided for in Part I of the Town and Country Planning Act 1968. It is substantially different in form and substance from the existing plan, and, in particular, in the new obligations imposed on local planning authorities to give publicity to the matters they propose to include in their plans and to take into account representations made before any plan is placed on deposit and made subject to formal objection. This was indeed one of the matters the Government singled out for special comment in the White Paper 'Town and Country Planning'** which preceded the new legislation. In this it was said

'One of the Government's main aims in the present review of planning legislation is to ensure that there are greater opportunities for the discussion of important changes while they are still at the formative stage and can be influenced by the people whose lives they will affect.'

29 The new development plan for each local planning authority will contain two parts, namely a structure plan and local plans. The structure plan will consist of a written statement, illustrated diagrammatically, and will be submitted to the Minister for approval. It will set out policies

and general proposals for the development and other use of land in the authority's area, including measures for the improvement of the physical environment and the management of traffic. The proposals will be set in their regional context and show the implications for investment and manpower.

30 Local plans will fill in the details of the structure plan and will be based upon it. They will show what kind of development will be allowed and where. Since the plan's main element will be a map on an Ordnance Survey base people will be able to look at it to see how their property is affected. The Act of 1968 enables a variety of local plans to be produced. They may include, for example, action area plans showing where major change is to take place within the following ten years, or district plans, which will bring together firm proposals by which a development control policy can be exercised.

31 Just as there has been an evolution in the form and content of plans so there has in the procedures which bring them into force. Those procedures are similar for both structure and local plans, subject to the major difference that structure plans require the Minister's approval, whereas local plans will normally be adopted by the local planning authority themselves—a fact which adds to the responsibility of local planning authorities to ensure that the public participation is real and effective. In summary, the complete process is as follows:

- (i) The authority publicise the report of survey for their area and matters they propose to include in their structure plan and enable the public to make representations about them. Those representations then have to be considered.
- (ii) Having taken account of the public's comments, the authority draw up the structure plan, put it on deposit for public objection and send a copy to the Minister. If there are objections which are not withdrawn the Minister holds a public inquiry before deciding whether to approve the plan.
- (iii) Once the authority have decided to prepare a local plan they publicise the report of survey for their area and matters they propose to include in the plan and enable the public to make representations about them. Those representations then have to be considered.
- (iv) Having taken account of the public comments, the authority draw up the local plan, put it on deposit for objection and send a copy to the Minister. If there are objections that are not withdrawn the local planning authority arrange an inquiry (which will be taken by an independent Inspector) before going on to decide whether to adopt the plan, with or without alteration. The Minister has the power to intervene throughout this stage of the process, and to take the decision into his own hands.

* *The Future of Development Plans* HMSO 10s

** Cmnd. 3333 HMSO 1s 9d

These procedures will also apply when it is proposed to amend a structure or local plan.

32 Public participation—the matter we are concerned with in our report—is the process that is to take place when plans are being prepared. It is something *additional* to the formal consultations that the planning authority undertake with other bodies directly concerned (for example, with district councils); and it is *additional* to the statutory rights of objection to a plan that has been prepared and placed on deposit.

33 The process of preparing a plan is likely to vary from area to area but some stages will be common to most. Certainly the process for all of them will be complex and intricate, and will call for considerable and varied professional expertise in making the best reconciliation of different demands, interests and constraints. The constraints are important because they limit the choice of solutions open to an authority. Some of them may arise from the application of governmental or regional policies, some may arise from physical barriers and others from economic feasibility. Plans have to have regard to what is possible; those which would build castles in the air are useless.

34 The subject of the plan—the city, town or country area, for which it is prepared—is constantly changing and will continue to do so. The plan will seek to guide the nature, rate and quality of changes in the use of land and in communications and will take account of the issues that influence them—the size of the population, the need and provision for housing, the development of industry and commerce, education, social services, shopping and recreation. There can be no final picture. The plan will state the guide lines for as far as can be seen, leaving room for change and filling in the details as time advances. So that the plan may be kept up to date the collection of information on which it is based will be continuous.

35 The preparation of a structure plan will mark a point in time when the facts, policies and proposals on which a plan is based are drawn together. At first broad issues will be considered. These will be gradually refined down to the selection of the best method of bringing particular proposals into a coherent unity. The process of refinement will call for a number of decisions at each stage and each decision taken will limit the options open for subsequent decisions.

36 It is implicit that the plan will deal with certain basic needs of society, such as the adequate provision of good housing, but provision for those needs can be made in a number of ways. For example, should a city be substantially expanded? If so, in what form? Should development in a county be concentrated in a few villages or dispersed over several? Should development in the vicinity of a historic town be substantially curbed in order to conserve

its character or is there scope for establishing a new centre? These might be the strategic issues which have to be decided on a particular plan. And once the general strategy has been determined, questions will arise on how development will be phased or which villages should be expanded. This process will apply to all the constituent elements of the plan so that at each stage the planner will be trying to answer problems relating to housing, transport, employment and testing alternative ideas one against the other until the jigsaw is complete. It will present many opportunities for telling the public what is happening, making information about planning of the area available to them and seeking views about policies and proposals.

37 For a structure plan the main opportunities for publicity or participation will be:

- (i) The announcement that a structure plan is to be prepared,
- (ii) The making of surveys of facts and opinions and the framing of general objectives,
- (iii) The identification, on a broad scale, of the possibilities and choices open to the community,
- (iv) The discussion of favoured proposals.

This summary telescopes a long process during the whole of which public debate may continue. The first two stages call for the giving of information and the consideration of first reactions; the second two will usually provide the best occasion for deliberate efforts to seek a public response—that is, to secure the participation of the public in the formulation of decisions.

38 For a local plan the main opportunities will be:

- (i) The announcement that a local plan is to be prepared,
- (ii) The making of additional surveys of facts and opinions,
- (iii) The discussion of ways in which problems can be solved,
- (iv) The discussion of favoured proposals.

As with the structure plan, there will be opportunities for giving information throughout the preparation period. Efforts to secure a positive response from the public can come most profitably at the third and fourth stages.

39 This summary gives an indication of the opportunities for publicity and participation but the statement of stages gives it an unnatural rigidity. It may be possible on occasions to combine two of the stages described above. For example, the choices available will be influenced considerably by the facts established by survey; and where there are no feasible alternatives the only course open will, of course, be a proposal which has to be explained and justified. Further, each authority will approach the job of preparing their plans in a slightly different way and they will best be able to identify the occasions when the public can most effectively be informed and consulted. The essential thing is that the opportunities should be there.

Participation: general considerations

40 In earlier paragraphs we have emphasized our belief in participation. Unless local planning authority members and officers and the public are likewise committed to the principle and to its constructive implementation the practical recommendations that we make will be arid. The way people on both sides approach these opportunities is more important than any formalised structure requiring publicity and opportunities to comment at specified times. Indeed it may be argued that given the right attitudes the methods best suited to each area will emerge. We do not agree fully with that view but we recognise that the suggestions we make are only practical aids to creating the right climate. We therefore comment briefly on how the authority and the public should play their parts.

The local planning authority

41 Planning is only one of the services that a local authority provide and it would be unreasonable to expect the public to see it as an entity in itself. Services like education, social welfare, housing and refuse collection may have to be administered separately but they operate in an environment which people perceive as a whole. Participation, when plans are being prepared, has to be seen in this wider context; it will necessarily involve consideration of the quality of the whole environment and of any planned changes in it. Indeed public participation would be little more than an artificial abstraction if it became identified solely with planning procedures rather than with the broadest interests of people. The corollary of this is that all members of the local planning authority are involved and that the planning department must have the support of other departments in their participation activities. The experience of Coventry, to mention just one authority, was that the whole range of community interests was discussed when public meetings about their development plan proposals were held. All comments were noted and sent to the relevant department for action. This comprehensive involvement of the authority, which recognises that development plans affect the whole life of the area, is the only basis on which participation can sensibly proceed.

42 The preparation of a plan will involve a series of major discussions by the planning committee or the council, depending on the particular arrangements for processing the plan and whether it is the structure plan or a local plan. On that we make the following points:

- (i) The initiative during much of the plan-making process will rest with the planning committee; but the ramifications of the plan are so extensive that liaison will be necessary with several other committees, as will be a proper teaming up of officers. However effective that liaison may be, we consider that the council as a whole

must be kept informed about and must be enabled to feel involved in the plan-making process, and especially so with respect to structure plans.

- (ii) Whatever may be the normal internal procedures of the council for delegation to committees and the submission of committee business to the council, the formative stages in the making of a plan should be arranged so that the council can be fully informed of the proposals and of the relevant arguments and considerations. These can then be debated fully and in public by the council. This arrangement may not fit conveniently into existing practices, but it seems to us that the endeavour to engage the public in participation must start by councils themselves dealing with the plan in this manner.

(a) *The role of the local authority member*

43 The success of participation depends largely upon the local authority member. New responsibilities and opportunities will be thrust upon him. He may need to be supported by officers with planning, sociological, administrative and publicity expertise but he is the man at the heart of the activity. Participation adds to the importance of the office he holds and to the value of time and effort spent in holding it.

44 It would be easy to underestimate the pressures on the local authority member which pull him away from his constituency. He is elected to represent a comparatively small number of people, but as soon as he becomes a member of a council he has to think in terms of the council and its activities as a whole as well as being the representative of those who have elected him. If he becomes a member of a committee he may have to devote a great deal of time to that. If he becomes chairman of a committee he has administrative functions as well. All these pressures tend to make him part of a central administration and less able to devote time to the smaller area which he represents.

45 The pressure on a local authority member to look beyond his own ward will apply when plans are being prepared. The structure plan will have a regional significance and the boundaries of local plans will seldom coincide with ward boundaries. Yet despite those pressures the elected member should remain the link between the authority and the people he represents. We think there are three ways in which members can work to strengthen the link. They are:

- (i) All members of the council should be well informed on planning issues. This becomes extremely important in view of the local planning authority's responsibility, in the normal case, to prepare and adopt its own local plan (see *paragraph 31*). There are obvious difficulties in grappling with new and complex

legislation and we believe that members will wish to avail themselves of any chance to learn more about the new system (see paragraph 248).

- (ii) Members ought to approach the preliminary discussion of planning proposals with an open mind. It would be naive to expect vital planning issues to be decided outside the party political arena but at the preliminary stage the main concern will be with the examination of problems, with publicity for issues concerned and with the debate on alternative proposals. Attitudes should not have hardened nor decisions have been taken.
- (iii) Members should be willing to take part in participation projects and to stimulate public debate. They will be speaking of the general feasibility of proposals and will be concerned with policy and its interpretation in development plans.
- (iv) Where district or parish councils are co-operating in giving publicity to plans for their area (as discussed in paragraphs 51-53 below), individual ward or parish members can explain proposals in their ward or parish, receive comments and see that they are sent forward by the council.

(b) *The role of the officer*

46 Officers of the planning authority—mainly those of the planning department but supported by the others involved—will have a formidable task in carrying out the programme of public meetings and discussions with groups that will promote public participation. This must, however, be regarded as part of the job of any planning officer and not as an unwelcome accretion. We are concerned that these new responsibilities, which will often mean evening work additional to that which many officers already accept so willingly, should not become a grinding burden. This work should, therefore, be taken into account in assessing the weight of the officer's job.

47 We do not consider that a special branch should be set up within the planning department to deal solely with participation. Most of the work on participation will be borne by senior staff but it will permeate everyone's work. The departmental training of staff, both through day-to-day work in the office and through refresher courses and other formal training, should be on that basis.

48 If there is to be continuity of publicity for all the plans which a local planning authority will be producing concurrently (and these will be at different stages) then it will be virtually impossible for all ideas and material to go first through committee procedure. This means that officers will be involved with the public, especially through local groups, giving them information and canvassing opinion before going to their committee.

(c) *The relationship of members and officers under the new system*

49 These new responsibilities should not cause officers to change their relationship in serving their committees and councils, but press coverage must be expected as they will be stating what problems there are and what choices are open. Indeed, if the effort to secure debate is to be successful the officer will necessarily be seeking publicity for planning issues. Although their responsibility for taking the final decisions is not affected, members should recognise that until they take their decisions on a development plan proposal they must not inhibit planning officers' freedom to inform and guide the public and to seek their involvement. Equally, members and officers must make it clear that although there are policy implications in the matters under debate no decisions have been taken and that the views of the public are sought to help in that process.

50 The officer should not be seen as an intermediary between members and public but he will have to provide technical expertise to both. Members will explain the policy implications of the technical advice to the public and sound out opinion before reaching a decision. Members and officers will together be involved in participation.

(d) *The role of district and parish councils*

51 Although district councils are not local planning authorities for development plan purposes they are elected bodies providing important services to the people in their area and it is appropriate that we deal here with their role. They will be responsible for promoting or guiding a substantial amount of development; they will produce ideas and carry out surveys. We recommend that local planning authorities should enlist their aid to achieve public participation. District councils can co-operate in giving publicity to plans for their area, whether by joint publication of proposals with the planning authority, or by planning and staffing exhibitions and promoting public meetings. They can also act as a centre for giving information, receiving ideas and passing them on. It might be a wasteful deployment of resources to have county planning staff working full-time for long periods in each main centre when a structure plan is prepared but, with the assistance of the district council, they could hold regular surgeries there.

52 The role of district councils described above would be additional to any statutory right of consultation that we would expect them to have on plans affecting their area. We see no conflict between those consultations and the making of information available to the public. The local planning authority should keep district councils in the forefront of discussions; but there may be occasions when it would be right to make information available to the public concurrently.

53 Parish councils can also assist in the process of participation. We suggest that where parish councils exist the local planning authority should inform them of proposals affecting their area and through them seek the views of the people the parish council represent.

The public attitude

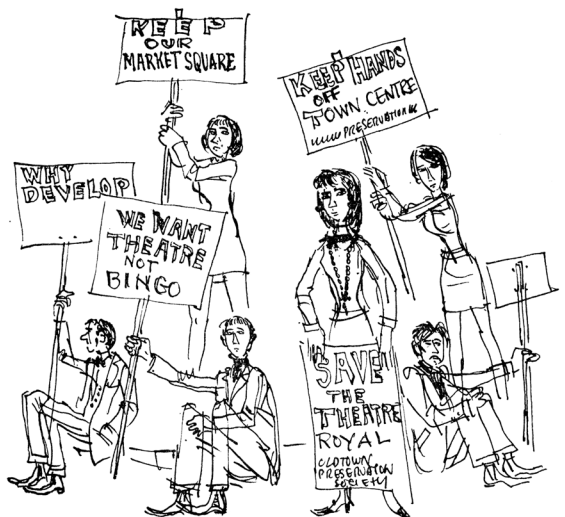
54 It may be argued that the public as a whole will never be sufficiently interested in planning to justify the effort required to involve them. One answer to this is the general point that educating people to participate in the making of development plans is part of the wider problem of educating them to participate in local government affairs as a whole. It is a point of entry to civic matters as a whole. But, quite apart from this argument, there is clear evidence that many people feel dissatisfied because they have been unable to influence the work of their local planning authority. There is an active and willing audience waiting for authorities who encourage participation, and a particularly vigorous response may be expected when local plans are being prepared.

55 Although the initiative in creating opportunities for participation will normally come from the local planning authority, the success of these activities will to a large measure depend upon the nature of the response from the public, and especially from local societies. People can help the work of the local authority by:

- (i) Responding constructively to opportunities to participate. People should not measure their success solely by the things they have stopped. They should take an equal pride in the part they play in framing constructive proposals for change; and they should publicly support local planning authorities where their views coincide. This will require resilience and good will, especially after creative proposals have not been accepted for reasons which may seem insufficient to those advancing them.
- (ii) Recognising that change is inevitable. The population of the United Kingdom is likely to increase by about 15 million by the end of the century. Space has to be found for these people and their activities. This will mean the alteration of town and country. Individuals and groups should seek to obtain what is best for the community as a whole. At times that may not mean striving at all costs to preserve what now exists.
- (iii) Joining any public debate or forum for discussion (see paragraph 60). Their own contribution will be valuable and corporate consideration may restrain unduly vigorous expression of narrow interests.

56 These comments may read as if the public should play acolyte to the planning authority's high priest. That is not so. Groups have a responsibility to their members and individuals should express their views, but it is as possible for people's views to be narrow, bigoted and ill-formed as it is for local planning authorities to be autocratic, insensitive and stubborn. The fact that many societies represent only one aspect of community life increases that risk.

57 People should not regard their role as a passive one in which they merely receive proposals and comment on them. They should be ready to give practical assistance in the creation of opportunities to participate, in bringing to people's attention the proposals that will condition a town's future, and in helping others to give expression to their views when policies are being formulated. This is service to the community; it is important that active members of society should help in this way to secure the involvement of those who might not otherwise respond.



Techniques for participation and publicity

58 Before looking at the detailed application of techniques we comment on some general ways of securing greater participation and publicity which are relevant to the preparation of both structure and local plans.



1 PARTICIPATION

59 We have looked for ways in which two main groups of the community may make a constructive response. They are, first, the active minority who take part in influencing community affairs, and second, the passive, who although deeply affected by decisions, do not make their voices heard because of diffidence, apathy or ignorance of what is going on. Into the active group fall those who normally join local organisations. We consider them first.

A community forum

60 Many organisations (for example, local chambers of trade) may have been set up to foster an interest that concentrates mainly on one of many topics that are brought together in a development plan. That interest is important in itself and a local planning authority could well prepare its plan by taking into account the views of those organisations separately, or in groups of like interests, and then producing its comprehensive proposals. Such discussions must continue; but we have considered whether groups might not be brought together in a community forum for corporate discussions so that there might be a cross-fertilisation of ideas and a wider realisation of the problems of an area as a whole and of the differing needs for which an authority must cater. The community forum

could also provide a means of a two-way flow of information between local planning authorities and the public. Generally, the movement of information is from the authority to the public; machinery does not exist for the return of views to the authority. A community forum could fill this gap. Because planning involves so many interests a forum of this kind would be of particular value when plans are being prepared; but there is no reason why its discussions should not embrace with advantage issues other than physical planning.

61 We do not know whether this idea has been tried in Great Britain over a period in relation to the whole area of a local planning authority but we give at *Appendix 4* some details of a meeting called in Croydon to discuss the evidence to be sent to our own Committee, which show that local organisations with widely differing interests can be brought together. We have also noted with interest parallel experiments in Holland and America, although these have had a greater rigidity of structure than we envisage for a community forum and they have concentrated on physical planning. In Chicago, for example, Model Area Planning Councils have been established through which residents are deeply involved in planning their area as soon as the preparation of a new plan is mooted. They co-operate with the City Planning Department, for example by preparing statements describing

present conditions, problems and needs in each area as seen by area residents and groups. These statements are submitted to the authority and form the basis of a continuing dialogue about proposals and their implementation.

62 We do not suggest that a consultative committee on the pattern described above should be established but we do believe that a forum for discussion could work creatively in some areas. Certainly flexibility would be necessary to suit local circumstances. There might be a tendency for this kind of forum to find a natural cohesion in smaller, compact urban communities than for areas with several inter-dependent but separate towns, though even on this more diffuse scale local societies and other bodies might learn from and help one another as well as the local planning authority. Where more than one forum is required within an authority's area they should be established according to priorities, starting with the most critical parts.

63 The initiative for convening a community forum could come from the local planning authority, in partnership with district councils where possible. Although it is the local planning authority who will be seeking to benefit from the discussion of proposals, active and willing co-operation between the planning authority and the elected council at the more local level would help to get the forum off to the best start.

64 Once the forum had got under way, we would not expect the authority to play a leading part in its activities. The authority would call a meeting of representatives of bodies such as local churches (possibly through the local Council of Churches or the area inter-denominational committee), voluntary social organisations, civic and amenity societies, residents and tenants associations, trade unions, political parties, chambers of trade, youth and other organisations interested in the working of the community. There would then exist the basis for a continuing and cohesive framework maintained by the sponsoring organisations.

65 The main purpose of this forum would, therefore, be to bring together in discussion the active units in the community. In the field of planning its practical functions might be:

- (i) To receive information on proposals from the local planning authority,
- (ii) To provide the opportunity for discussion by all means including exhibitions and films,
- (iii) To present the views of the constituent organisations to the planning authority,
- (iv) To continue a dialogue with the authority throughout the plan-making process.

66 The community forum could also offer administrative advantages to the local planning authority. In many areas

there are numerous local bodies and it may not be practicable to communicate with them all. The community forum might bring their representatives together and enable proposals to be put forward once instead of on many separate occasions, thereby saving time and effort. Indeed a forum might grow out of assemblies primarily convened in order to simplify administrative procedures.

67 It may be that in addition to bringing local groups together the community forum could provide some administrative services. These would be supplementary to the forum's main purposes and would depend upon an efficient secretariat if they were not to slow down the business of discussion. In summary, the administrative functions might be:

- (i) To assist in the formation of neighbourhood groups (*see also paragraph 84*),
- (ii) To organise meetings for discussions with groups of sponsoring organisations or the general public,
- (iii) To help individuals and local organisations to identify those people and organisations with similar interests or who might be looked to for help in the consideration of proposals, and to eliminate duplication of effort in similar activities,
- (iv) To act as a central point for correspondence, and as progress chaser to remind organisations that the time for comment was ripe.

68 The community forum would not, and often could not, seek to reconcile ideas, although where there was a single collective view it might be expected to carry considerable weight with the authority; nor would it prevent or take the place of discussions between the authority and constituent members.

69 We think it fair to say that the concept of a community forum has not generally been well received by those with whom we have had discussions. The local authority associations thought it would serve little purpose in the form in which we presented it to them. Several national organisations thought that local bodies would not support it because it might seem to emasculate the independent identity which local groups need to survive, but others took quite the opposite view and saw the concept as a vital one leading to a wider, more intelligent appraisal of issues and valuable within the whole field of community activities.

70 As there was this criticism we think it fair to look at some of the doubts that were raised. First, it was doubted whether organisations would join. We hope that we have shown that the forum would help them to work in a community context that could not be achieved in direct discussion with the authority. Secondly, it was suggested that the forum would just be a talking shop. To some extent this is true and even desirable; the forum would have no executive functions and would depend upon the quality of

the discussion for its effectiveness; but discussion is an essential part of forming policy. Thirdly, it was feared that the forum would become the focal point for opposition to the authority. But this assumes—wrongly, we think—that people who are the driving force in their own groups will allow their judgment to be submerged by representatives of other groups. If the Chamber of Commerce disagreed with an amenity society we would expect them to say so. Fourthly, it was feared that the forum might become the centre of political opposition. We hope that that would not happen; it seems unlikely that it would, as most local groups are not party political in their membership. Finally, it was feared that if the community forum provided administrative services it would prove a bottleneck and delay the transmission of material. That need not happen if a secretariat did its job efficiently, and there are plenty of examples of voluntary organisations which achieve a high standard in this. It could then make a positive contribution to participation, for example, by helping local groups to see that their comments were made in time.

71 We have set out the arguments at some length because the idea has been little tested in practice and because it carries risks. We do not put it forward as a recommendation to be adopted everywhere, nor in a rigid form; but the forum might often provide a bridge between groups and the authority and a useful link between groups themselves.

Advisory panels

72 Several planning authorities have set up advisory panels to advise them on such topics as the countryside or conservation. We see them as another way of involving local organisations and individuals. As well as involving people they can provide the source of expert advice—and do so on a broader front than is possible by co-option of the public to the planning committee (*see paragraph 73 et seq.*). Advisory panels do not have the comprehensive sweep of a community forum, nor do they provide a means of general participation.

Co-option

73 Power already exists to enable local planning authorities to co-opt members of the public to serve on planning committees* and many people who have submitted suggestions have urged that authorities should use, or be directed to use, this power.

74 The main arguments advanced have been that:

- (i) Co-option effects the direct representation of bodies vitally concerned with planning;

- (ii) The service of individuals of merit and with specialised knowledge can be obtained;
- (iii) Additional professional advice may be secured;
- (iv) Local knowledge and advice may be obtained, especially in relation to local plans.

75 Although co-option of members of local societies to planning committees would enable them to participate throughout the plan-making process, there are some difficulties. The number of possible co-options is limited by statute and it is not easy to suggest criteria for determining which societies should be thus favoured. Moreover, where the statutory limitation meant that representatives of some societies were excluded there could be no guarantee that their opinions would be voiced. The selection of individuals to represent organisations would be invidious and achieve only limited public representation. For these reasons we do not recommend co-option on this basis.

76 We see stronger arguments for inviting individuals of merit to serve on planning committees. Such co-options will generally be made because of the outstanding and personal contribution that a particular person can make. This reason has little to do with wide public participation. Co-options of this sort should, we consider, depend solely upon an authority's appraisal of their needs and of talents available.

77 We have little sympathy with the view that members of the public should be co-opted to provide additional professional expertise. Local planning authorities should look to their own officers for professional advice, and where those resources are inadequate for a special purpose they should supplement them by employing consultants.

78 We have more sympathy for the view that people with special local knowledge, especially members of second tier authorities in counties, should be co-opted to planning committees, especially when local plans are prepared for their area. Co-options of this sort should be for the purpose of advising on a particular local plan and be for a limited period only. Where a plan covers several small towns or villages it would seem better to co-opt people with a general knowledge of the area and to rely on other methods for obtaining highly detailed local knowledge.

79 While recognising the contribution that individual co-opted members have made in those authorities who

* Part I of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning Act 1962 provides, amongst other things, that a local planning authority may establish such planning committees as they think it expedient to establish for the efficient discharge of their functions as a local planning authority. Members of the public may be co-opted to such planning committees, but it is required that members of the authority shall constitute a majority.

have exercised this power, we do not recommend that co-option to planning committees should be a mandatory requirement. In relation to the number of interests involved in planning, its scope is too limited for it to be thought of as an instrument for effective public participation. Further, many people may consider it wrong that those who are not answerable to the general public should be nominated to serve on a committee, and thereby entitled to take part in decisions on the community's behalf.

Community development

80 The methods of participation that we have described above are ones designed mainly to assist in the involvement of organisations. These contain the active minority, the yeast of the community, but it is also important to seek out the views of those who do not join societies or attend meetings. Doing so is likely to be particularly difficult when structure plans are prepared. The general methods we described will assist in this process. Information given in the press will keep people informed, the local elected member will have his personal contacts, the community forum can be the springboard for involvement of the non-participants and much can be done by the use of questionnaires and surveys. But, in addition, we consider that the making of the development plan should be an opportunity for those who do not normally take part in community affairs to do so. We consider that this can best be achieved by someone working with the people concerned in the area where they live.

81 Some authorities already employ such people. Often they do so in areas where there are particular social problems, such as in deprived communities; or in areas of high unemployment; or to help re-settlement in a new town. Depending on the problems of the area, the type and emphasis of the role will change. For instance, it may be that in some areas, the social and welfare aspects of the role will be so strong that participation will best be achieved primarily through the personal welfare and community service. In others, it may be concerned wholly with some aspect of planning.

82 Whether the role is carried out by individuals or teams of people, as a 'planning' function, or with 'planning' as one aspect of a wider field of social and welfare work, is a question of priorities and management beyond the scope of our report. We are concerned that this role should be undertaken to provide a catalyst for local opinion. In the following paragraphs where we describe how this function might be carried out we have, for the sake of simplicity, done so as if the role had been allocated to one man who undertakes 'planning participation' only. For want of a

better name, we call him the community development officer. But these paragraphs in particular, and the other paragraphs of the report in which reference is made to this title, should be read in the context of the earlier parts of this paragraph. As with the concept of the community forum, we think it fair to say that the idea of the community development officer was criticised by a number of the organisations with whom we discussed it.

83 We envisage something more for this role than acting as the authority's antennae when development plans were being prepared. Indeed, so far as planning is concerned, the need might be most keenly felt when proposals were being implemented—most people will be most concerned when decisions start to affect their surroundings. He might have greater scope at the local plan stage than when a structure plan was being prepared, and it is desirable that there should be strong links in his work with the social development field. But in any event, we believe that there is a role for a community development officer when development plans are being prepared.

84 The work of the community development officer would depend upon an identification of groups within the community, whether based on neighbourhoods, industries or other interests. The community development officer should be able to advise the authority on such matters. His work with people would be primarily concerned with those who might not otherwise hear of proposals and take a part in influencing them, even if indirectly. It would be quite wrong for us to try to say how he should work. Communities vary greatly and he should have freedom to adapt his methods to local circumstances. The officer's work with people would have three main facets; to give information, to receive and transmit reactions, and to be a link with existing groups or to promote new local ones which would eventually stand on their feet as independent bodies for participation.

85 Clearly, the community development officer would work hand in hand with the planning officer and the information officer in establishing and maintaining communications with people. His work would necessitate personal contacts with groups, ranging from schools and youth clubs to old people's clubs, and with individuals; and would involve giving simple explanations and sounding out opinions, to be followed up later by the planning officer. The views expressed to him would then be taken into account in the formulation of plans and other work of the authority.

86 The extension of community work in this direction is bound to mean some additional expense for the authority; and each authority will have to decide from time to time whether to spend the money available on this or other aspects of community development and public participation.

87 As participation through community development officers could be expensive they should work as much as possible through existing groups and also assist in the formation of groups where none exists. These new groups would need fostering until they were firmly established and their own group leader emerged. The community groupings in an area might mean that on occasions the community development officer would work with street clubs based on a neighbourhood of several hundred dwellings; in others the community might not be based on a geographical grouping but on a community of interests. The community development officer would be able to identify these groupings and set about inducing a response to proposals.

88 The community development officer would also have links with the community forum and through those links bring co-operation between organised and specialist groups and those which may have arisen mainly as a form of self-protection against a proposal. He should encourage the positive involvement of members of the former groups to act as a bridge between those with special skills and knowledge and those needing an advocate to help in the expression of their views.

89 We have described the community development officer as if he were an employee of a local authority. In many cases we think that he will be, but other arrangements may be possible; for example, if in particular circumstances the link between physical and social planning is strong, he might be an employee of a council of social service. In that event, we think that it would be reasonable for the local authority to support his work with a grant if they considered it appropriate.

90 We have suggested that the job of the community development officer should be a full-time appointment of a suitably qualified person because it is improbable that his work could be undertaken without the backing of the authority or an organised body. His appointment would not in any way diminish the need for work to be undertaken voluntarily by local group leaders and for the creation of local, informal points for the dialogue between the public and the authority. The measure of the community development officer's success would largely be the extent to which he identifies and activates these points of contact.

Special rights of consultation

91 It was suggested to us frequently that the process of participation would be improved if special statutory rights of consultation were given to certain kinds of voluntary organisations. The arguments for doing so need special

consideration for two such bodies. They are local amenity societies and co-ordinating bodies for social welfare, such as the councils of social service or the rural community councils.

(a) *Amenity societies*

92 The arguments for giving special rights to bodies whose interest is specially concerned with the environment and physical planning are, at first sight, attractive. Certainly, many have shown themselves vigorous, well organised and possessing considerable expertise—and the increase in numbers throughout the country has been quite remarkable. Much as we admire the work of such groups, we think that it would be wrong to give statutory recognition to any organisation which represents only one of the multiplicity of interests affected by a plan. That does not mean that they will not be informed; they should be as soon as possible. There is, of course, the obligation upon the authority to provide adequate publicity and consider representations as laid down in the Act, but no one group should be in a privileged position.

(b) *Councils of social service*

93 The arguments for giving special rights to councils of social service are somewhat different. The amenity societies comprise the active and articulate; the councils of social service can assist in giving the views of those who might otherwise make little contribution. The many people who do not join organised groups come, of course, from all walks of life but voluntary organisations concerned with social and welfare work can assist those who may be specially vulnerable. Where the work of these organisations is co-ordinated through a council of social service or a community council their contribution can be particularly valuable because of the many aspects of community life on which they touch.

94 These bodies are not, of course, so immediately concerned with physical planning as are the amenity societies. People working for community councils will be more concerned with matters of social welfare, especially for the aged and young, but many are already broadening their interest to embrace social and community development. Through these bodies may come an indirect participation; but before even this limited form of participation can take place, communication is necessary. We think it would be wrong to give special rights to particular organisations, but the planning department should ensure that councils of social service are well informed throughout the planning process.

95 Some councils of social service have formed co-ordinating neighbourhood groups. The local planning authority should draw on them when considering the social implications of local plans.

Involvement by activities

96 We believe strongly in participation by activities. The public are far more likely to make representations and feel that they have contributed if they have undertaken some of the activities involved in processes of publicity and participation. We suggest, for example, that:

- (i) societies and individuals should be involved in arranging meetings and organising publicity;
- (ii) societies could assist in some survey work (*see paragraph 184*);
- (iii) the public should help in arranging and staffing exhibitions which might be borrowed from the authority to help crystallise local opinion;
- (iv) public meetings and exhibitions should be used as occasions for participation;
- (v) organisations should be invited to co-operate by distributing material both to their own members and on a door to door basis.

These are only a few examples. More are given in *Appendix 5*.

Development plans and their context

97 Of necessity our recommendations relate primarily to development plans, but there are many other opportunities for the public to be actively engaged in the improvement of their environment. We consider that a sustained interest in development plan proposals will not be achieved unless voluntary organisations are also invited to assist in other work, for example, youth groups might be invited to tidy up local eye-sores.

98 The implementation of some part of the local plan should be carried out as quickly as possible. Where a local plan includes measures for improvement, for example by way of tree-planting, which can be carried out in advance of the main proposals, that should be done. It may cost slightly more to implement proposals in this way but it will show that planning and participation produce results. There will be little incentive to further participation if no result is seen for several years.

99 Demonstration of the beneficial results of participation should be used to stimulate activities in other areas. For example, we recommend that visits should be arranged to show to the inhabitants of areas which are to be improved, the effect of similar work within nearby areas or towns. The local planning authority or community forum should, for example, promote visits to areas such as Deeplish (*see Appendix 6*) to show what has been achieved and explain the processes that led to it.



2 THE GIVING OF INFORMATION

100 The process of participation is dependent upon an adequate supply of information to the public. Before looking at detailed points in connection with what should be said, and how, where and when, we make several general points.

The need for expertise

101 It would be unreasonable to expect members and officers of local planning authorities to acquire highly specialised skills in techniques of communication, but some knowledge and understanding of them is desirable. The best results from efforts to publicise planning proposals will be obtained where the member and officer can draw on the support and expertise of an information officer or, on occasions, on the advice of a consultant. Many authorities have recognised this and have appointed information officers or established public relations departments. These officers may not be the men to deliver the talks at public meetings but they will be able to advise on the form of publicity most appropriate to what is being presented and consider how written material can best be expressed, what diagrams and maps can be supplemented by photographs and how best to seek the public's views. Their function will be to see that information is publicised in a way that is intelligible and stimulates comment.

102 The roles of the planning officer and the information officer are complementary. The planning officer will take the initiative in programmes of publicity and participation, identifying and supplying the technical content. He will give talks and lectures, provide the staff at exhibitions, attend public and group meetings, write articles and serve as an adviser on suitable bodies. He will know how the planning process is progressing and provide a regular supply of material for publicity. The planning department will usually have people with special skills in drawing and preparing exhibition material. All these can help to present technical work in a suitable form. The information officer will advise on techniques of presentation best suited to the type of plan and stage reached, and organise publicity coverage and press conferences.

Public access to the authority's formative debates

103 We have said earlier (*see paragraph 42 et seq.*) that the local planning authority should so organise its business

that the major debates on development plan proposals take place in open council. But on some occasions, especially for local plans, important decisions may be taken by the planning committee. Whether the press is admitted to all planning committee meetings must, we think, remain a decision for the authority. There may be occasions when some issues have to be debated in private, and there may be physical limitations on the number of people who can be present at a planning committee debate. But as a general principle, we urge and recommend that, however the local planning authority arranges its business, the press and local radio should be enabled to be present at the major debates during the formative stages in the working out of a plan, whether in open council or in committee. Reports of such debates can lead to a better public knowledge of the issues involved.

Relationship with the press

104 This last point leads us to consider the authority's relationship with the press. We have no doubt that the local press provides one of the vital means of publicity open to a local planning authority. It achieves enormous coverage; something approaching 90% of the adult population are likely to read at least one local newspaper, and, so far as the authority is concerned, such publicity is free.

105 There may be some apprehension at the suggestion that local planning authorities should concentrate their efforts on the local press as a main medium for the dissemination of their proposals. Some have been served badly in the past by reporting that has been sensational or distorted, but to some extent the remedy may be in the authority's own hands. We therefore describe how relationships between local planning authorities and the press may be improved and how the press may be enabled to make the full contribution of which it is capable.

106 In order to secure the best coverage from the local press the authority should provide them with a regular flow of information. This is essential. It is not only the big decisions of the authority that concern people, and much of what to the inexperienced eye might seem to lack appeal can be of great local interest. It is the business of the local press to identify that material. Regular, perhaps monthly, meetings between the planning department and the local press will be useful even though there may not seem to be great issues at stake. News will then be presented while it is still fresh. The meetings will help towards maintaining a dialogue with the press and through them with the public.

107 This continuous flow of information is important where it leads up to the publication of a major document. If it is put to the press with little preliminary build up, they will have space only for the items with the greater news impact. There are then inherent dangers of unbalanced reporting. The structure plan, for example, is too big to be handled adequately in a single newspaper report; it is essential, if coverage is to be balanced and full, that information is released as the process advances.

108 Further, continuity in the dialogue between the planning authority and the press is likely to lead to the channelling of material through a suitably qualified reporter, chosen to specialise in planning matters. He will build up a background knowledge which will enable him to identify responsibly matters which are of interest to the public and worthy of comment.

109 Information for the press needs to be available at the right time. If local planning authorities are to benefit fully from the publicity that the local press can provide they will need to recognise the practice of newspapers and the constraints imposed on them. Documents should be issued well in advance, with an embargo on publication date which is long enough to enable the reporter to do a considered job. Large batches of mixed items, for example minutes for a monthly or even quarterly meeting, should not be released simultaneously—to do so invites giving prominence to the most spectacular or sensational news item at the expense of equally important but less immediately newsworthy material. If publicity is to enable the public to contribute, planning news ought to be issued in time for comment in advance of a final decision. It is insufficient if minutes of the preceding committee meeting are available only when they are to be approved by the committee or confirmed by the council.

110 Regular briefings with the planning department can be a most useful channel of communication. Information so supplied could be put on a confidential basis, provided that the opportunity to put things off the record is not abused to stifle public discussion. Some authorities may be cautious about authorising an officer to undertake discussions in this way, but he must be recognised as the professional and technical expert, holding detailed information that the public may need. The system of making information available for publication but not for attribution is most valuable to the press and there is little evidence that it has been or would be abused or treated irresponsibly either by the press or by local authority officers. Top level briefings by planning officers and committee chairman will be desirable even where an information officer has been appointed.

111 As statutory announcements in the press are often overlooked because of the form and place in which they are published, copies of major announcements should be

sent to the editor or planning correspondent, as well as to the advertising manager. This should ensure that attention is given to the significance of the substance of the advertisement.

112 Responsibility in this co-operation between the press and the authority will not, of course, be one-sided. We hope that editors of newspapers would see that material supplied is reported objectively and responsibly. This does not mean that argument should be avoided. Indeed, the difference of opinion between the local authority and, for example, the amenity societies on some proposals may serve to promote public interest and discussion. The planning department will, however, be entitled to expect newspapers to report in a constructive spirit, seeking to stimulate productive discussion rather than rancorous argument, and to send suitably experienced staff to briefings. On the other hand, the planning authority must not be unduly touchy or defensive about public criticism or refuse to become involved in public argument.

113 Some local papers promote discussion on planning issues by publishing articles and correspondence as a regular feature. This provides a useful focal point and a means of presenting views on current planning matters, even when there is no front-page material.

114 Local planning authorities should make use of imaginative advertisements at key stages in the planning process. A local paper might be prepared to publish special pages or a supplement with the support of local advertising and then follow it with correspondence in succeeding editions. Space may be purchased in local newspapers for advertisement of meetings and exhibitions, but we would expect the steps we have recommended earlier to ensure a good coverage of material given at meetings.

115 The national press is unlikely to take a sustained interest in the majority of development plans throughout their preparation. Major issues of regional or national significance will, of course, be reported by the national daily and Sunday papers but the fact that their circulation is national restricts their scope for coverage of purely local matters. No doubt some papers, especially if they have a recognised planning correspondent, will discuss the issues which emerge, but these papers are at present in a minority. But although the interest of the national press may be only spasmodic, whatever opportunities there are for advancing public debate through them should be taken. The authorisation to prepare a structure plan is one of those opportunities. As the introduction of the new system will be phased and will relate to groups of authorities (*see Appendix 7*) it will have news value on a national scale. If these groups of authorities collaborate and co-ordinate the release of information we see an immense opportunity for stimulating interest by the national press on a scale that has been possible in the past only in relation to the metro-

polis. They should be ready at the start to identify what seem to be the big issues in their area which have a bearing within a national and regional context.

Television and Radio

(a) *Television*

116 Just as there are opportunities and ways of increasing and improving the coverage of planning matters in the press, so there are for broadcasting. The B.B.C. and the commercial television companies have in their own fields the same responsibilities to the community as newspapers have, and may be expected to respond to much the same range of interests. We recommend, therefore, that local planning authorities should be encouraged to use the growing pattern of regional, area and local broadcasting facilities much more than they have in the past.

117 The broadcasting authorities are themselves responsible for the content and pattern of all programmes. Local planning authorities should bear in mind that the problems of achieving better coverage are the practical ones of the availability of time and the degree of public interest. The more lively and stimulating public participation in planning becomes, the more responsive broadcasting authorities will be. Local planning authorities should not resist the airing of reasoned controversy in news and current affairs programmes, but should be ready to take part if there is to be a wider and constructive discussion of their plans.

118 We consider that structure plans will appeal, in a strictly news sense, to the area programmes now being broadcast by the B.B.C. and commercial television authorities. Local planning authorities should, therefore, seek to publicise their plans through television programmes as they do through the national press. In considering the publicity value of the plans the councils must take into account the visual appeal of television. Models and maps illustrating the proposals will need to be specially prepared, having in mind the need for clarity in reproduction on the screen or in the newspaper. Failure to produce suitable illustrative matter at the right time will often prejudice a proper coverage of the plan. Authorities should also encourage their experts to be readily available for television and radio appearances at the request of the appropriate broadcasting authority.

119 As television is a highly expensive medium, local planning authorities cannot expect considerable time for expansive debates. Representatives of authorities should avoid excessive detail when appearing on television and concentrate on the two or three essential issues which have to be presented and express them clearly. Because television time costs so much we do not recommend that local planning authorities should purchase it for purposes of advertisement.

(b) *Radio*

120 The establishment of experimental local radio stations is likely to lead to a significant development of publicity by radio. There are at present eight local B.B.C. radio stations in Britain in addition to the existing area programmes. These local stations provide radio outlets for stimulating public discussion in planning affairs and should be used increasingly to put over 'live' local issues.

121 The local planning authority should maintain the same kind of contact with the local radio station managers as they do with the editors of local papers and encourage the broadcasting of lively and imaginative programmes which deal with the conflicts that arise. The intensity of controversy which will arise most strongly when local plans are prepared may, at first sight, offer the prospect of the most stimulating local radio programmes. But these issues will spring from proposals when the structure plan is being prepared and they too should be presented to local stations as subjects for public discussion.

122 We recommend that local planning authorities should consider providing facilities for the broadcasting of council debates on the big planning decisions, which are the legitimate concern of the community. These include, for example, the thrashing out of matters to be included in the structure plan. The more open the discussions and the wider the audience, the greater will be the sense of participation.

123 For those areas not covered by local radio stations, contact should be made with the local office of the B.B.C. so that items may appear on B.B.C. area programmes.

124 The use of radio and television media for publicising planning matters is still in its infancy. The material is undoubtedly newsworthy but local planning authorities must expect to have to take the initiative in keeping radio and television staff aware of the importance of planning issues within their area.

Publications by the local planning authority

125 Publications by the local planning authority should form a major part of their publicity efforts. Authorities will need to produce a series of documents, including reports of survey and statements of matters which they propose to include in their plans, when structure and local plans are being prepared. In addition, several authorities produce monthly or quarterly bulletins or news-sheets. These deal with a whole range of civic or planning matters but provide a good way of keeping local people informed about development plan proposals and progress.



1 STRUCTURE PLANS

126 It may take two years or more to prepare a structure plan, not allowing for the time taken by public participation. During that period there will be many opportunities to inform the public and to invite them to comment; indeed, so many that if the local planning authority attempted to take them all they would probably weary people of the whole process and possibly not complete their plan. We therefore identify on a flow chart (*see page 24*) the main stages during the plan-making process which offer the best prospects for informing and involving people. We also comment upon those opportunities. The flow chart is misleading in two ways; it gives an impression of simplicity and discontinuity. Neither impression is true. The planning process is highly complex and a continuous one; but there will be times when the authority's main activity will be the assembly of facts and preparation of proposals, others when it will be the publicising of facts and proposals, and others when it will be consideration of public comment. We attach great importance to continuity in communications with the public—people like to know what is going on—but that does not mean that major and perhaps artificial efforts should be made to keep them actively involved all the time. In short, we recommend continuity of information and set pauses for participation. Often, of course, the giving of information will lead spontaneously to public reaction which will help to guide the planning authority in their further work. If anyone wishes to follow up matters between the set pauses he should be given full opportunity to do so.

Who should be informed and participate

127 We start with the basic proposition that a reasonable effort must be made to inform and involve all members of the community. Carried to its extreme conclusion that argument could lead to a demand that every member of the community should have full details at every stage of plan-making. That would be unrealistic. The cost and labour involved would be immense and the effort unwarranted. Therefore, we conclude that publicity should be directed in such a way as will inform the public of proposals and opportunities to comment and will enable those who wish to do so to participate in depth.

128 At first sight, the obstacles to informing and involving all members of the community about structure plans are awesome, but the diversity of subjects on which the plan touches offers many points at which interest may be stimulated.

129 The distribution of information should be systematically organised. For that purpose we recommend that local planning authorities should consider keeping a Participants' Register in which people or bodies could ask to have their name entered in order to ensure that they were notified of the preparation of a development plan. It may be that the register would be in the form of a mailing list for the regular distribution of bulletins which would give information about the programme for the preparation of plans and what planning publications were available. The information contained in the bulletins should be sufficient to indicate the scope of the plans and the areas affected. It is desirable that it should also include related planning matters, e.g. Conservation Areas. It would be reasonable if a charge were made to cover the cost of the service.

130 It should be made clear however that local authorities cannot be expected to keep a list of people who wish to be informed if and when planning proposals affect their property. The purpose of the register would be to make it easier for people to know when plans are being prepared which might affect their property.

131 In addition to publicity directed to groups there is the need to reach the non-joiner. Even though the greater response on the discussion of broad issues is likely to come from organised bodies the non-joiner has a right to be informed. The greater part of the population would be untouched if publicity were concentrated exclusively on societies and organisations. It is for this reason that we have stressed the role of the community development officer and of the press (*see paragraphs 80 et seq. and 104 et seq.*).

What should be said and how

132 The planning process itself will largely govern what information is available at any given time. Different authorities will approach the preparation of their plans differently and we are, of course, writing our report before any local planning authority has prepared a plan of the new kind. We think it would be useful if, after the first few structure plans have been prepared the Ministry were to analyse the stages of the planning process for each plan, and relate them to the timing of public participation in connection with the plan. This examination of the results of practical experience might suggest other and better ways of relating the two processes; but for the moment, there seem to us to be four main occasions which demand substantial efforts to make information available, the latter

two of which are also the most suitable for making intensive efforts to secure participation. We describe them in greater detail below. In summary they are:

- (i) The initial announcement;
- (ii) Reports of survey;
- (iii) The identification of choices available;
- (iv) A statement of favoured proposals.

133 We have said earlier that it may be possible to combine two of these stages (*see Paragraph 39*). The preparation of most plans will, we think, contain the elements we describe, but is not a process that can be mechanically applied. What is imperative is that sufficient information and opportunity for comment should be given.

(a) *The initial announcement*

134 Each local planning authority will be authorised, at a time determined by the Minister, to prepare a structure plan. We think that that authorisation should be publicised, especially as the public have a way of not reading statutory notices. At the same time people should be reminded of the plan's purpose. This recommendation goes beyond what is statutorily required—which is limited to publicity for survey material and matters proposed to be

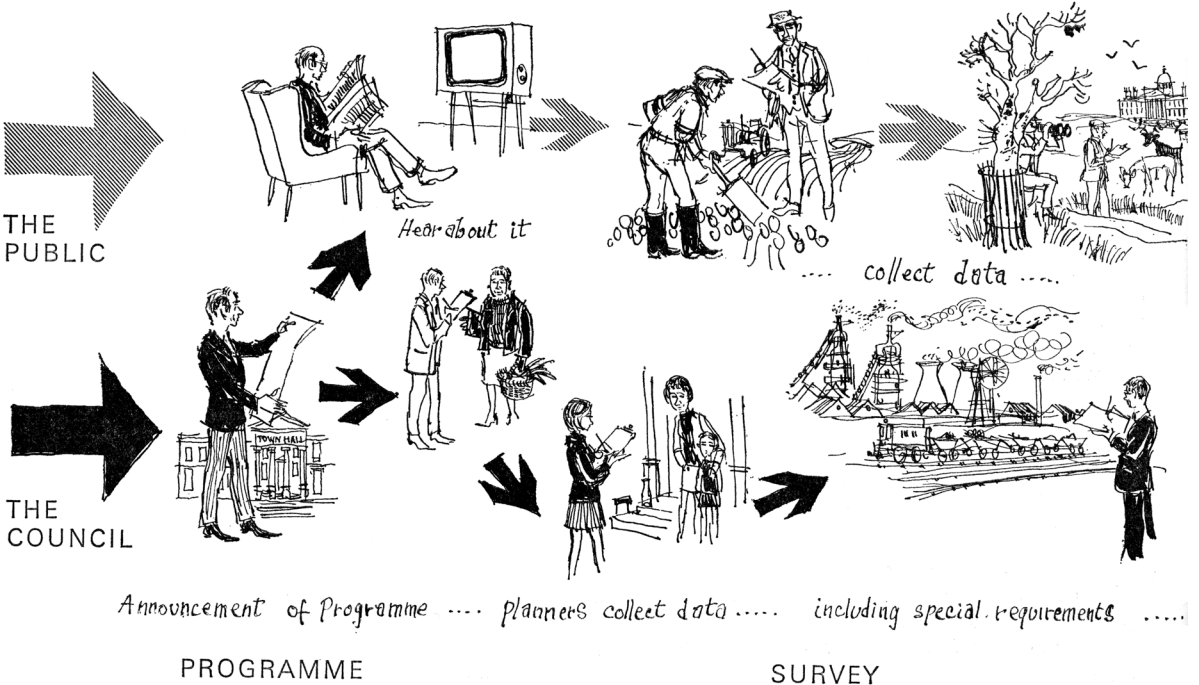
included in the plan—but it will mark the start of the participation process.

135 The authority's initial statement should also state a programme for participation so that people can see how and when their co-operation will be sought. We do not see this statement as a document designed for discussion, although the authority should be geared to discuss comments on the participation programme or answer other enquiries.

136 We have been urged to recommend that the public should be involved from the start in the establishment of the broad aims or goals that the community wish to see achieved. We doubt the necessity for that in this country. We think it implicit in the new development plan that there shall be an examination of the needs of the community, such as housing, employment, recreation and the means of communication, and a proper provision worked out for them—and local authorities are given extensive powers to see that it can be done. In the context of British planning these aims are implicit and accepted; it is the attainable objectives specific to the plan itself, the policies and alternative ways of achieving them that need to be debated.

137 We suggest that the publication of the initial statement should be the occasion of a press conference both to mark it for the local press and to inform the national papers.

STRUCTURE PLAN



(b) *Reports of survey*

138 Local planning authorities collect survey data continuously, but the preparation of a structure plan will necessitate a bringing together of the relevant facts. The survey will amass information on matters such as population, transport and housing and we would expect research and survey data to be published as reports. Authorities are also increasingly using surveys designed to discover what people want or prefer. We would expect the results of these surveys to be published also.

139 Some difficulty arises over the publication of survey material since it may be processed through computers or in an advanced technical language that is understood by few. Therefore, we recommend that survey data should be available at two levels. First, a simple statement of facts and data should be published with a commentary which is sufficient to enable people to take a sensible view on the main issues involved. Secondly, data should be available in sufficient depth to enable those who wish to pursue matters in detail to do so.

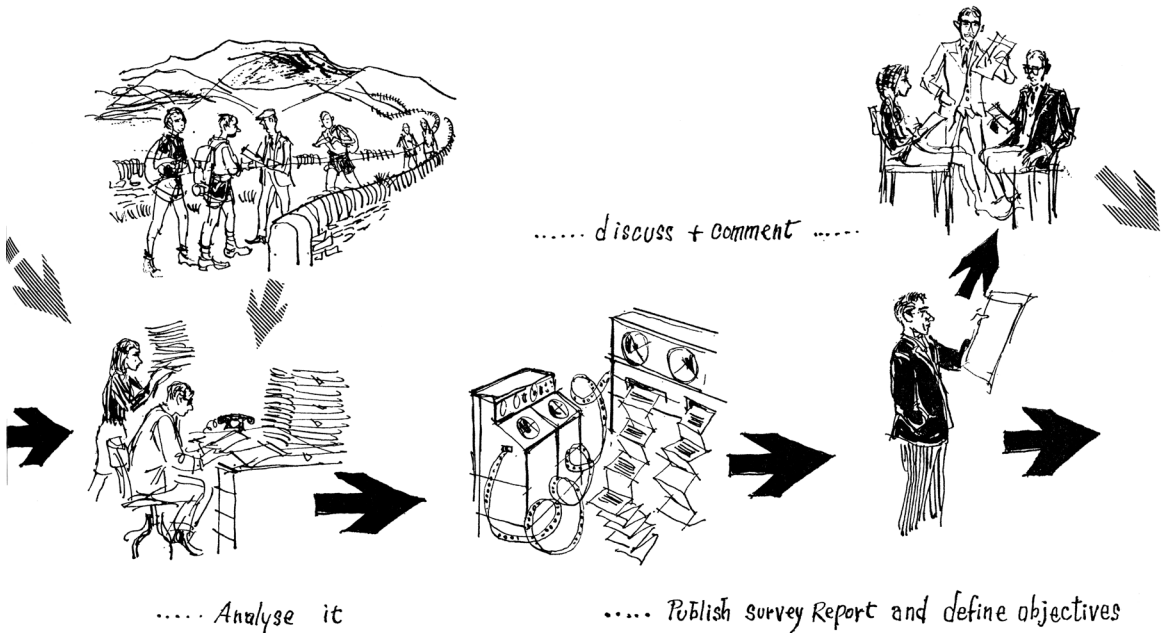
140 The survey data, especially where of national or regional importance, may be of interest to the national press and the professional journals as well as the local papers.

141 Although the most significant data will be coordinated into a report of survey to be submitted to the Minister we do not think the authority should wait until all the material has been sifted and assembled before publishing survey data. Reports should be published by reference to subject matter as the surveys are completed. The full reports may be expensive to produce and we would expect a reasonable charge to be made for them where the council thinks it necessary to cover part or all of the relevant costs of publication.

142 Local societies will sometimes be able to assist in the collection of data and thereby participate actively. There are greater opportunities for this when local plans are prepared and we deal with them more fully later (see paragraph 184 et seq.).

(c) *The identification of choices available*

143 The publication of survey material and the framing of general objectives will provide the basis for an examination of the main issues and problems with which the structure plan will have to deal, and will enable the authority to seek guidance from public reaction to those major issues. The examination might cover possibilities for preserving farm-



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land, for adopting certain housing densities or the broad way in which an effective transport system could be provided, possibly by presenting different solutions depending upon particular modes of travel, whether by bus, rail or car, indicating their comparative costs. We recommend that publicity be given to that examination and comment sought. It might include or lead to the analysis and presentation in sketch form of alternative choices. An example of this kind of examination is given in *Appendix 8*, which describes the alternative planning concepts for Los Angeles. The embryonic nature of the material could be demonstrated by publishing, side by side, diagrams illustrating alternative strategies. In the selection of a preferred choice, it will be necessary to emphasise the constraints, including matters such as the overall costs, and the needs of other areas and regions should be properly explained. The progression from an amorphous mass of material to the proposals for the structure plan can be assisted by the study of choices in relation to broad issues.

144 Where a variety of choices is open the authority should state which they prefer. Where the constraints are so numerous that only one viable solution exists, for example, the provision of a recreation centre in the countryside, the relevant facts and reasons for that choice should

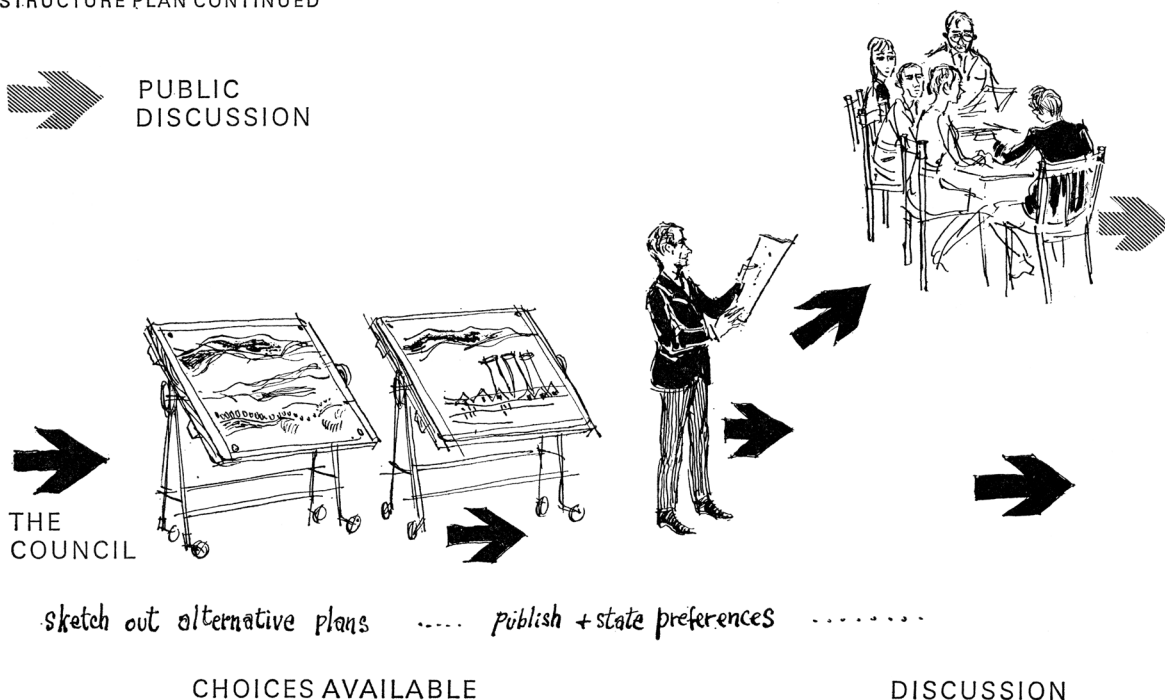
be given. There is no merit whatsoever in presenting artificial choices.

145 Authorities will need to be flexible in what they supply. Probably organised groups will have the greater contribution to make at this stage but the discussion whether, for example, part of the town centre should be devoted to commercial, civic or mixed purposes affects all the inhabitants of that area and they should have the chance to say what they think. There should be a stated period for discussion of these issues.

(d) *A statement of favoured proposals*

146 Having heard the public's wishes on the choices, or alternative strategies, open to them the authority will be able to prepare a statement of proposals. We consider it the key document in the process of participation. It will be based on survey material, public expression of views on the main issues and choices put to them and the authority's consideration of those views. Although it may be possible to look at broad aims in general terms, such as whether a new town should be built to house an expected increase in population or whether a number of existing towns or villages should be expanded, it is not easy to examine in

STRUCTURE PLAN CONTINUED



isolation a series of alternative ways of giving effect to what people have said they want. A time comes when the public should be able to examine the interrelationship of matters proposed to be included in the plan. If they are unable to do so there will be a feeling of frustration when the final version of the plan is put on deposit. The authority should, therefore, prepare a statement of proposals providing that synthesis. It will present proposals in a form which will be most generally understood and will for the first time point the way ahead for the area it covers. The structure plan itself will deal with policies and general proposals. Therefore the most effective use of the time spent on this stage will be made if the guidance sought from the public is concerned with matters of principle more than questions of relative detail.

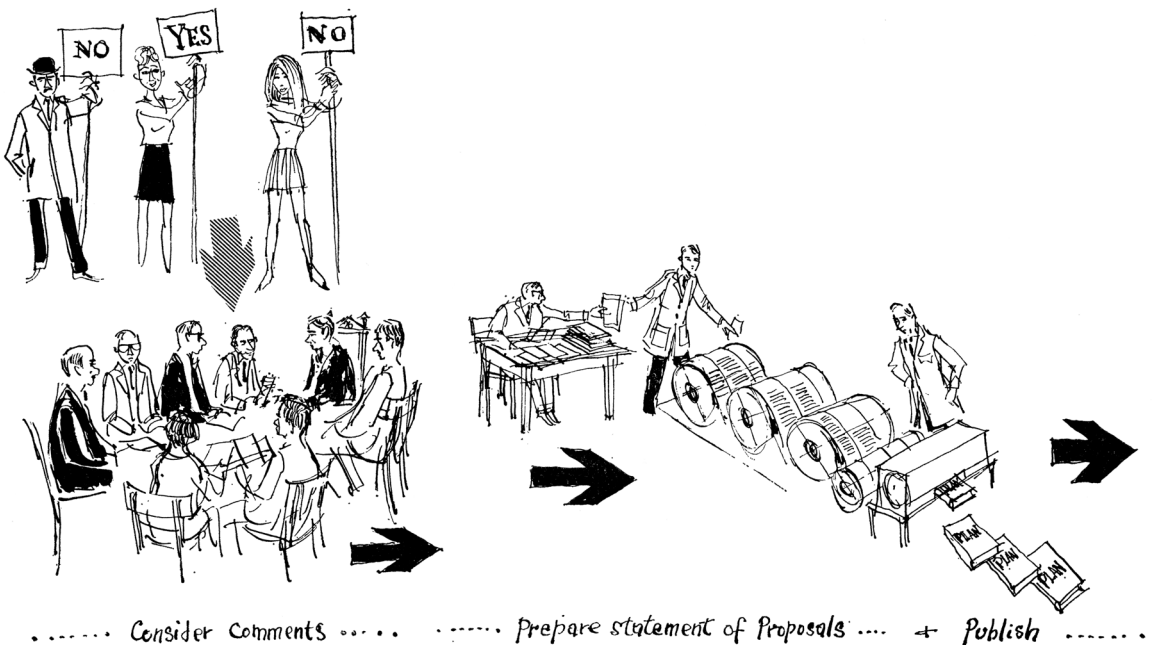
147 In presenting this statement two conflicting interests must be balanced ; first, the public should be able to take a comprehensive view of the issues involved and the solutions that the authority prefers; second, the impression must not be given that issues are already decided. Our view is that a statement which co-ordinates the authority's preferred proposals is necessary but it must state explicitly in the introduction to the document that the proposals are for discussion. If some indication can be woven into the design of the cover so much the better. We see some

dangers of misunderstanding if this document is called the 'draft plan'.

148 We recommend that this statement should be published at two levels—one which sets out fairly fully what the possibilities and proposals are and how they interact, and one which is a short popular summary in leaflet form.

149 The form of presentation will spring from the nature of the material being presented. The bulk of it should be written material illustrated as appropriate. Neither the detailed statement nor the simple leaflet need be expensive glossy brochures. They can serve their purpose as well if simply presented and will be considerably cheaper. We show at *page 38* how Liverpool illustrated part of their popular statement.

150 The statement of proposals should be as widely publicised as possible and the main occasion of public participation. It should be publicised through the local press and, if possible, through the national press also. It should be the subject of an exhibition and the topic for meetings with the public and with local groups. We describe in detail some of the techniques that could be used.



STATEMENT OF PROPOSALS

Public Meetings

151 The statement of proposals will offer something on which the public can bite. It is, therefore, suitable as the subject of public meetings, especially if matters of local importance are related to the broad issues.

152 We consider that public meetings in cities or large towns are likely to be more successful if they cater for small areas than if they attempt to embrace the whole of the city. So far as county districts are concerned, we consider that public meetings should be held in any district which is materially affected by matters to be included in the plan and, in some cases, at more than one centre in the district. Much will depend on local circumstances.

153 Although publicity for the preceding stages will have helped to provide a preliminary build-up of interest in proposals made, each meeting will need vigorous advertising in the local press and through societies. It is desirable that meetings should be held away from the council offices so that people may feel that they are speaking on level terms with the authority. We suggest no hard and fast rules about who should take such meetings. Probably the best speaking arrangement is for there to be a partnership between member and officer, with the officer dealing with

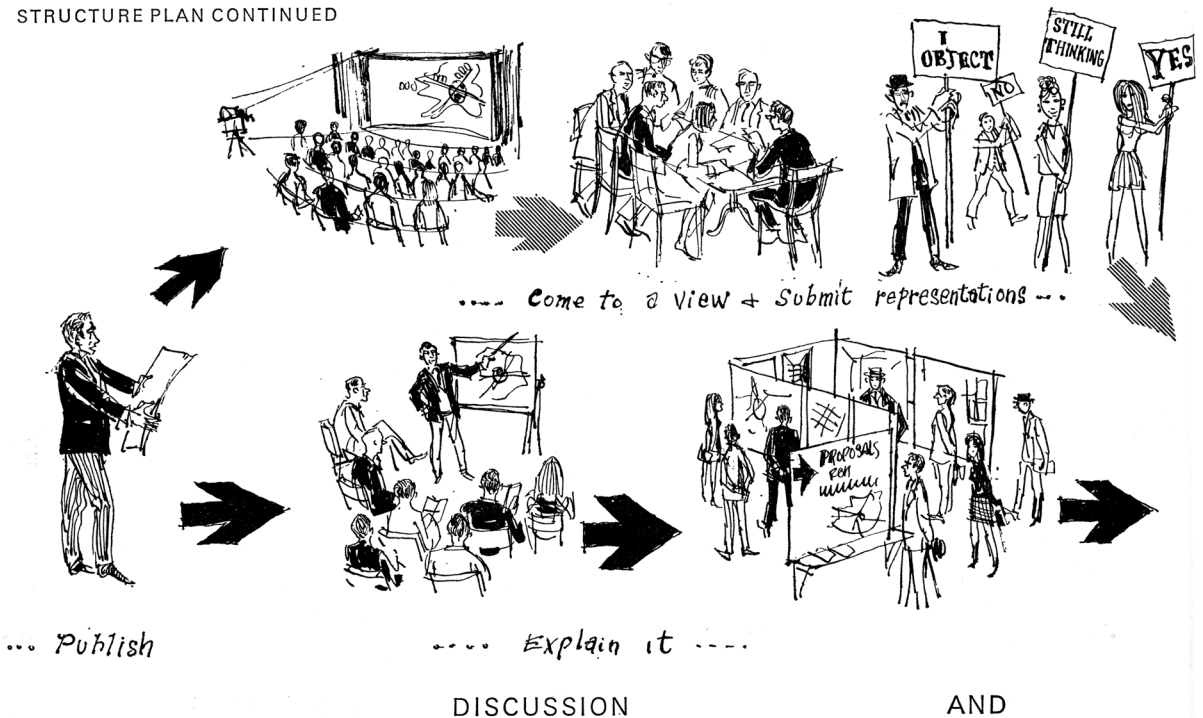
those technical aspects of a problem on which the member is not normally equipped to speak.

154 The public are likely to derive more from meetings if a variety of methods of communication are used. Talks could be illustrated by film strips or exhibition material. Indeed, authorities may wish to consider having 'participation packs,' consisting of a projector and screen, floodlights, portable microphone, loud speakers and display boards as standard equipment for public meetings.

155 There are, of course, dangers that public meetings may be unrepresentative. People may feel passionately and selfishly about issues of interest to themselves—and seek to make those issues the subject of discussion to the exclusion of others. The local planning authority will have to judge to what extent views are representative and should be taken into account. Meetings do however provide a valuable means of exchanging ideas as well as informing the public and are, additionally, evidence of the authority's desire for participation. Provided that the purpose of the meeting is clearly made known beforehand and the agenda reasonably followed the advantages of holding meetings considerably outweigh the disadvantages.

156 Members and officers should be ready to attend meetings with amenity, professional and voluntary bodies,

STRUCTURE PLAN CONTINUED



such as Rotary Clubs and Women's Institutes. These will often draw in people from a wider area than meetings based on wards or small geographical or administrative units.

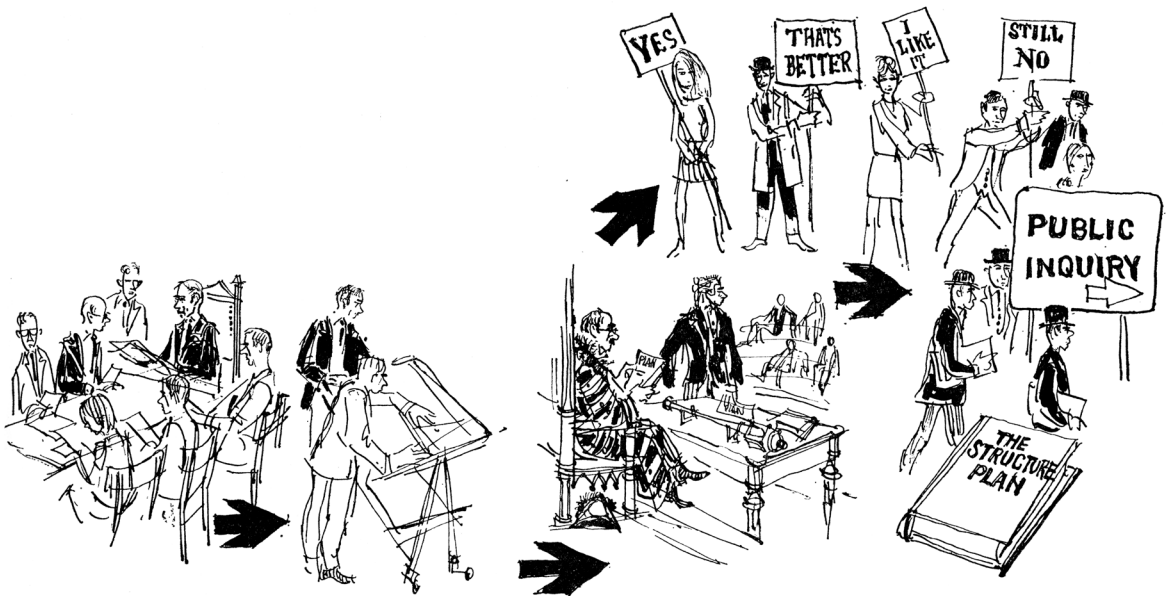
157 The meetings suggested above are all ones to facilitate the giving of information when issues are reasonably clear but before decisions are made. Where there are alternatives the authority should state which solution they prefer. This will help to sharpen discussion. Without it, meetings may flounder and the public feel that they have not got the lead they might expect.

Exhibitions

158 The evidence received by the committee shows that exhibitions have contributed substantially to the understanding of planning proposals. We recommend that a major exhibition should be held when the statement of proposals for any structure plan is prepared. The imaginative use of pictures, sketches, films and models can demonstrate vividly the substance of proposals and give life to written material which might otherwise have full meaning only to those with professional training and skills.

159 Several local planning authorities have held well planned exhibitions on the scale and of the kind we would expect to illustrate structure plan proposals. These exhibitions are costly, and it is essential that the maximum benefit be derived from them. This is most likely to be achieved when the following considerations apply :

- (i) Preliminary publicity must be widespread and effective. It should be given through the local press, poster campaigns, professional journals and the societies and bodies likely to respond.
- (ii) The exhibition should be simple and easily understood. It should convey the basic concepts of the plan simply and vividly, showing what is proposed as the essential structure and function of the area and why.
- (iii) The exhibition should be directed to the general public rather than any specialised groups. It should not require detailed knowledge of planning matters or procedures.
- (iv) The presentation must be interesting, entertaining and exciting. It will need movement, sound and colour.
- (v) The location must be right. Few people will make the effort to go to a place just for the exhibition. It



Consider Representations... Revise, Publish & submit to Minister

Formal objection and Public Inquiry.

REPRESENTATIONS

should, therefore, be located where it can benefit from the pulling force exerted by other influences. An exhibition centred within a popular shopping centre is far more likely to draw a large audience than one in a museum.

- (vi) There must be a sense of public involvement. The exhibition should be not just an exercise in giving information but used to sound out opinion, whether by inviting people to complete questionnaires or to make comments on panels specially provided for that purpose.
- (vii) Informed staff should be on hand to assist visitors.
- (viii) The public should be able to make arrangements at the exhibition to discuss matters in greater detail at the authority's offices.

160 We stress that major exhibitions need expert skills in their presentation. This may involve, for example, the employment of outside specialist designers to work within a general framework laid down by the authority. They may also wish gradually to strengthen the expertise within their own authority for although they may hold exhibitions for structure plan proposals only infrequently there will be a recurring need for specialist skills in preparing exhibitions for local plans.

161 We have already noted that the first authorisations to prepare structure plans will group authorities together. Although each authority will submit its own structure plan we consider it desirable that an experiment be made in presenting an exhibition which covers the whole of a grouped area. The exhibition would need to be held within the major centres of such an area and the cost shared.

162 Because large exhibitions are costly to mount and move, they must rely on drawing people to them. It is expensive to hold them for short periods in several places. Major exhibitions are, therefore, likely to be more economic propositions in county boroughs than in counties, where a good mobile exhibition may be more effective. This would cater for large towns in the county and should have screens giving prominence to proposals for those towns.

163 For the smaller communities in a county, county councils should consider making use of small travelling exhibitions which could be transported from one place to another and set up in town halls and libraries for a week or so. These should be backed by local publicity campaigns. We have also considered the use of exhibition trailer caravans for publicising structure plans. These would be expensive and would certainly need to be used for publicising other local authority functions.

164 The exhibitions we have referred to are ones arranged specifically to give publicity to proposals when a statement

of proposals is ready. In addition, we consider that a smaller permanent exhibition should be set up within the offices of the local planning authority to demonstrate the overall plan and progress made in achieving it; and that small exhibitions and loan models should be available on request to interested organisations.

165 The cost of these proposals is examined later (*see Appendix 9*).

Films

166 Local planning authorities invited by the Minister to produce the new development plans should consider supplementing any centrally produced film (*see paragraph 235*) by films specifically directed to participation in their area. A film running for about 20 minutes might be suitable for this purpose. We are advised that if an officer from the authority worked with the film unit, supplying technical material and advice, production cost would be about £4,000.

167 Other kinds of material and equipment can be used to illustrate planning matters. 35mm slide projectors are already widely in use. Film strip has proved itself in the education field to illustrate a standard talk or lecture. Some slide projectors can be used in the same way, and both film strip and slides can be linked to a pre-recorded commentary. Overhead projectors allow a lecturer to show prepared material and to sketch, to illustrate his points. Because techniques in this field are developing fairly quickly, any detailed advice that we might give would be likely to be quickly out of date. These methods do, however, provide useful aids in the communication of facts and ideas.

Press conferences

168 We suggest that a press conference should be held when the statement of proposals is published and that invitations should be sent to the national press as well as the local press and professional journals. The coverage given in the national press to regional economic reports and to some earlier development plan exhibitions encourages us to think that the statement of structure plan proposals will be judged to be newsworthy on a national basis, especially if large authorities group together to show the regional importance of the plan.

169 It is likely that the supply of advance information, issued with the letter of invitation, will lead to a more productive conference than if reporters are expected to

deal with material on the spot. Advance information should include a summary in simple language of the particular material which is the subject of the conference.

Where publicity should be given

170 Much can be done by the imaginative posting of notices to publicise events arranged to involve the public. The display areas in the local library, the church porch, the railway station, the post office, the bingo hall, the local pub, the launderette, and the village store may draw on different groups of the community but each may reach a wider audience than a notice posted at the council offices. Authorities should identify points of greatest activity and seek to use them intensively on the right occasions.

171 In addition to distributing notices widely, authorities should consider setting up a civic notice board in an established centre of activity, such as a shopping precinct.

Availability of information

172 The statement which brings together the authority's proposals for the area should be easily accessible to the public. The cost of producing documents will often be substantial but it is desirable that copies should be available at times convenient to the public at a number of points within a county borough and widely throughout a county.

Form of expression

173 Whatever medium is used for the communication of ideas it is essential that the language or representation used should be readily understood. Plans will be produced for the benefit of people: publicity should be comprehensible to them. As with all specialised disciplines, forms of shorthand have been and will be devised for speed and ease of communication among planners. But what speeds and facilitates communication for those with specialised knowledge can be a positive barrier to those without it. The use of jargon between experts may be understandable; between experts and the public it is unforgivable. The recipient of the message must be able to understand it. Whatever is said must be said simply and clearly.

Consideration of representations

174 The public should be told what their representations have achieved. Where suggestions have been accepted people will be glad to know this; where they have not, they should be told why. This is important to show that notice has been taken and that the process is not an empty device; and it offers real hope of reducing objections at the later formal stages if people have had a reasoned explanation at the preparatory stage.



2 LOCAL PLANS

General

175 Structure plans will expose the strategy for an area; local plans will show in detail how policies and general proposals are to be implemented. It will be at that stage that the individual will be able to see how his property is to be affected. Unless people are involved in formulating these local plans there is the prospect of far greater antagonism than when the general principles of the structure plan are discussed.

176 Although there will be considerable variety and flexibility in local plans we do not distinguish between them for purposes of publicity and participation. The basic form of the plan—a map and statement showing details of proposed land use—enables a similar approach to be used for publicity to most local plans.

Who should be informed and participate

177 Our general approach has been to seek ways to inform and to encourage three main groups of people to

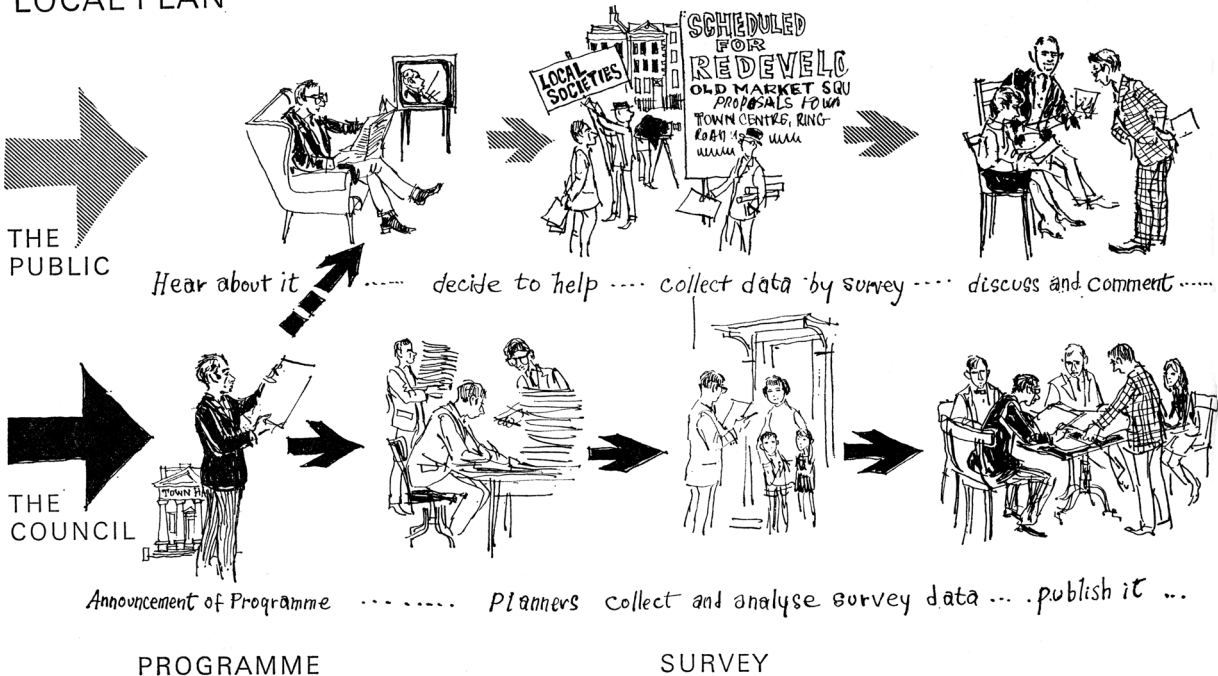
participate when local plans are being prepared. They are:

- (i) People living within the area;
- (ii) Prospective users of the area and
- (iii) People having a special interest in the area.

178 It would be too facile just to say that publicity should be directed towards those people who live in the area which is affected by proposals. Some local plans will be for the development of new sites on which few people live, some will be for shopping centres which have a regional importance, some will be for places of historic interest which are part of the national heritage.

179 There are, of course, particular difficulties about identifying prospective users in relation to certain kinds of development. Where houses are to be built on new sites or cleared land it may be virtually impossible to identify the future occupiers. In such cases the local ratepayers' or tenants' associations should have a special contribution to make. The contribution of individual prospective occupiers may be possible at the design and development stage of major schemes, but there are practical difficulties even about that. It is, however, a stage later than that which we

LOCAL PLAN



are appointed to consider and we do not comment further. We have considered whether owners and occupiers within the area of a plan should have a statutory right of individual notification and decided against this. The scope of some local plans, perhaps exceptionally involving as many as 75,000 people, is against this. We do not discourage individual notification where the area covered by the local plan makes it convenient, and voluntary organisations may be prepared to undertake this work ; but we consider that it would be impractical and unrealistic to suggest that there should be individual notification in every case. Where, however, individuals are notified it is important to explain what stage of the procedure has been reached and what stages are to come. Where, for example, there are prospective rights of objection to a plan or compulsory purchase they should be stated, as should any rights to compensation.

180 We have suggested as a basic principle that efforts should be made to inform and obtain a response from all those who may be affected by or have an interest in proposals which may be contained in a local plan. We have considered also whether special efforts should be made to hold discussions with prospective developers and decided that it would be wrong to do so because of the financial implications. Developers' knowledge of resources available to implement plans will be considerable and valuable

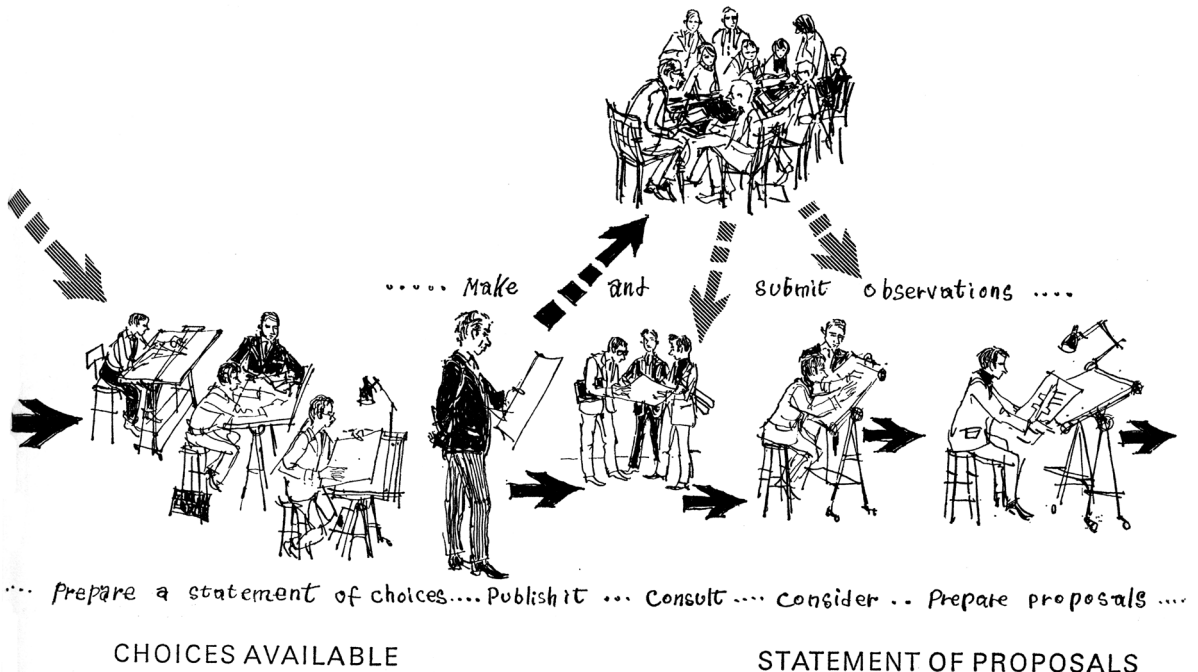
but their contribution to the thinking on local plans should come as a result of information made available publicly. Detailed individual discussions with developers will, of course, take place later within the context of the adopted plan.

What should be publicised and how

181 As with the structure plan, the planning process will lay down the pattern for giving information and opportunities to participate. The general pattern is set out in the flow chart (see below). We consider that the public should be kept informed throughout the preparation of a local plan for their area and that there are four occasions which should be the subject of intensive publicity. The four occasions are:

- (i) The decision to prepare a local plan ;
- (ii) The publication of reports of survey ;
- (iii) The publication of a statement of choices ;
- (iv) The publication of a statement of proposals.

We comment on all these stages below ; the last two afford the best opportunities for involving the public.



Intention to prepare a local plan

182 As soon as they have decided to prepare a local plan the local planning authority should announce that decision and at the same time publicise:

- (i) The relevant decisions in the structure plan which establish the context of the local plan and
- (ii) The proposed programme of work, including opportunities for participation.

The former is important if attention is to be concentrated on the issues in hand rather than on matters already decided by the Minister's approval of the general strategy: the latter will ensure that when detailed work starts, for example on the taking of surveys, people will know its purpose and how it fits into the overall scheme.

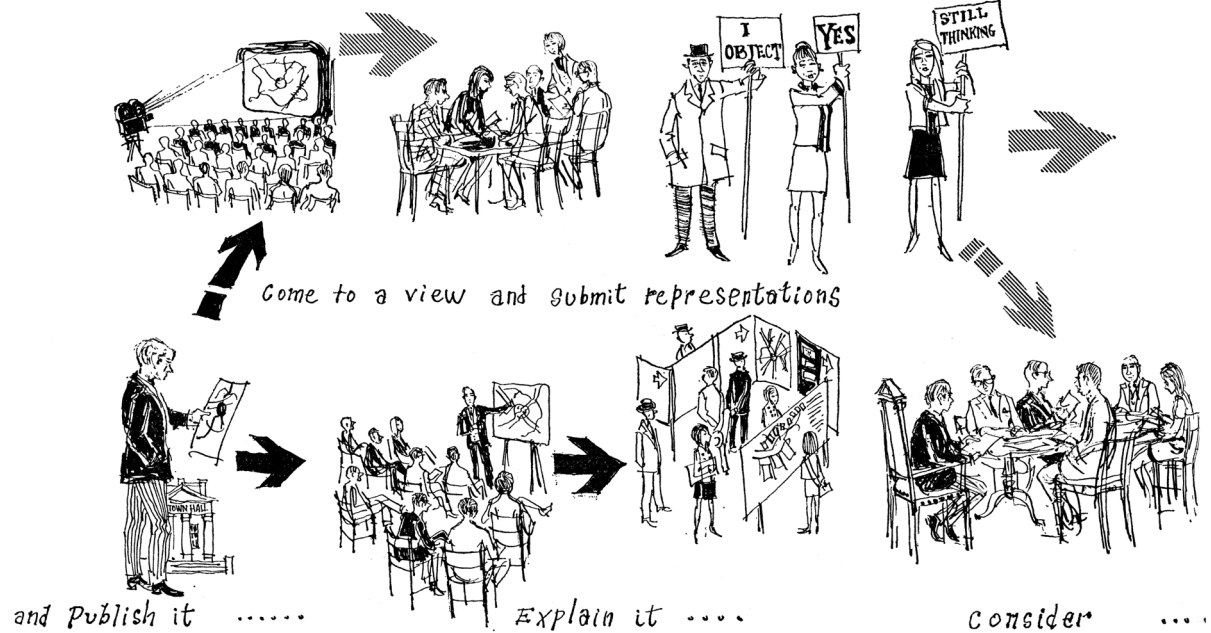
183 Although the overall strategy for the area will have been decided in the structure plan we consider that there is scope for sounding out how people want that policy implemented right from the start of preparing a local plan. This may lead to some impractical and unrealisable suggestions, but there should be sufficient knowledge of local constraints to prevent the wilder flights of fancy. We consider that the public can contribute realistically and

positively about their own area as soon as the initial decision has been taken.

Surveys

184 Major surveys will have been made when the structure plan was being prepared but additional surveys may be necessary for the local plan. We suggest that these be made the opportunity for active participation by inviting local organisations to undertake some of the work. These organisations might include amenity societies and Women's Institutes, and possibly senior classes of schools. The Countryside Commission, for example, are planning to use school children to carry out a nation-wide survey into how the landscape is changing; pilot surveys have shown this method of collecting data to be practical. If survey work undertaken by voluntary organisations is to provide part of the material on which the plan is to be based, the framework of the survey will need to be approved by the authority. They have statutory responsibility for making the survey and must be able to satisfy themselves that the work has been efficiently and comprehensively performed. The local group should, however, have some freedom to

LOCAL PLAN CONTINUED



DISCUSSION

arrange their programme within the framework and timetable laid down by the authority. Some survey work, such as surveys of trees, street furniture, buildings of architectural or historic interest and buildings of particular local significance, is particularly appropriate to local societies and schools. Several have already contributed in this way. For example, the Weald of Kent Preservation Society and the Committee for Preservation of Rural Kent have taken a valuable part in village study appraisals, identifying what it is that gives a village its individuality and character and what are the alien features. Such appraisals can then be taken into account in preparing local plans as well as serving other planning purposes. Similarly, the Manchester city centre plan illustrates the co-operation between the Civic Trust for the North West and the local planning authority in identifying places for the planting of semi-mature trees, and the creation of areas of pedestrian priority. In both cases, the initial survey work was done by the voluntary body. Experience suggests that two factors are of the greatest importance; the goodwill and co-operation of the authority and the sustained industry of a group of efficient workers.

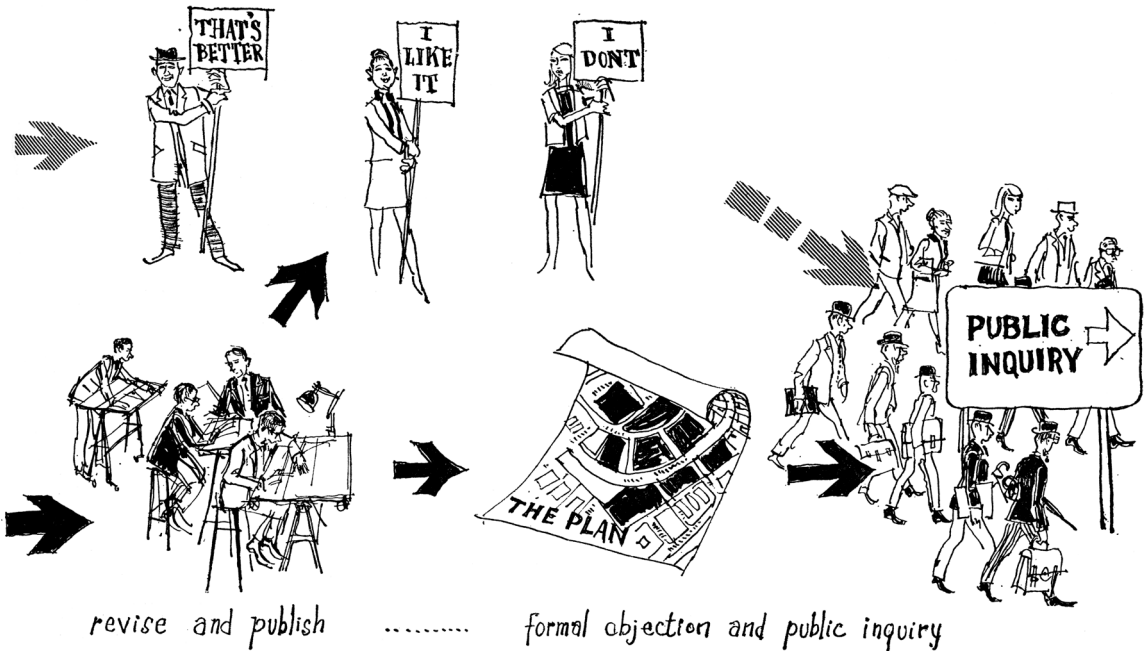
185 Opportunities for participation do not rest there. Other specialist organisations, e.g. Chambers of Trade,

should be able to assist in survey work; photographic societies can help by recording changes in the environment, and surveys of some activities, e.g. leisure activities, may be relevant to members of all local societies.

186 Local authorities will, no doubt, seek the prior co-operation and consent of land-owners where school children undertake survey work in the countryside — and consider insurance implications.

187 Surveys will be of two main kinds—those to establish facts and those to sound out opinions. We consider that the carrying out of the latter kind should normally be undertaken directly by the authority or by consultants appointed by them. The collection and collation of such material is a highly specialised technical exercise which will usually be unsuitable for voluntary organisations.

188 There is one point we wish to make in connection with surveys to test opinion and door-to-door interviews generally. It is that although popular demand, established by survey research, has obvious attraction as a scientific way of ascertaining the aims and desires of the community, the aggregate of individual opinion may, at times, fail to realise the full opportunities that are available. Unless the authority have done a great deal to inform the public, their



AND REPRESENTATIONS

opinion may be based on an inadequate knowledge of what is possible by way of change and improvement.

189 Survey material for a local plan should be available at two levels—a popular summary and in greater detail for those who wish to explore it.

A statement of choices

190 Once the general wishes of people in the area of a local plan have been heard and the survey data made available the local planning authority should set out in more detail what choices are available. For example, should expansion of shopping facilities be concentrated in one area or spread throughout a town; should the flow of traffic be improved by restriction on street car parking and the provision of car parks? It will set these choices in the context of the objectives of the plan and deal with local constraints and opportunities, pointing out the advantages and drawbacks of the various courses.

191 Giving publicity to this report will serve two purposes. It will provide one of the set opportunities for participation and it will serve to eliminate doubts and suspicions that would otherwise arise during a plan-making process which may last many months.

192 This stage corresponds to the discussion of broad issues on choices in the structure plan. It is not the major occasion for public participation but it is an important one and time should be allowed for public discussion and comment.

A statement of proposals

193 Once the public have expressed their choices and these have been tested one against the other, and in the light of what is possible as shown by the facts of survey and other constraints, the authority will be able to prepare a statement of proposals. This, as with the structure plan, is the key document in the participation process. It will be the first document to show the local community in detail how they would be affected. The written matter should say how the authority propose that an area should be treated. The statement should be as graphic as possible and be illustrated by diagrams, cartoons, sketches or photographs. Where alternative solutions are possible the statement should say which is preferred and why. There is some danger that this form of statement will give the impression that the options are not still open, but the publication of a series of alternative courses without an indication of a preferred course might confuse the public. The statement

should be clearly entitled 'statement for discussion' to show that it is open to public influence.

194 As this is the key document every opportunity should be taken to publicise it and get public discussion. It is improbable that the national press will be interested in the run-of-the-mill local plan. The local press may be expected to inform them where wider issues do emerge. What is essential is that a special effort should be made to get coverage by the local press.

195 In country areas there may be difficulty in deciding which local paper should be informed as there may be as many as twenty or thirty local papers within a single county. Contact with local papers based on the town or villages with which the local plan is concerned is obviously necessary. For other areas it is probably best to establish with editors of local papers what they want to be told about.

196 The statement of proposals should also be the subject of meetings with the public and we recommend that a public meeting be held within the area for which a local plan is prepared—and more than one meeting where the area is large. Before the statement of proposals is prepared, public response is likely to be limited and the demands that will be put upon members and officers to spend evening time on other functions associated with publicity for local plans, for example, talks to specialist groups, will be heavy. Sometimes meetings on a ward or parish basis will be suitable but often local plans will be prepared for areas which run over several administrative boundaries. For this reason, the local planning authority should have a wide discretion on the localities for which meetings cater.

197 Although the council member will be recognised as the elected representative of the community in his area, authorities should consider asking an independent local public figure to take the chair at the meeting. The ward member and officers would attend to explain the plan's proposals.

198 Publicity for these meetings should follow the pattern of that for meetings on structure plans. It should include notices in the local press shortly before the meeting, the issue of letters and posters to local ratepayers' associations, libraries, factories and shops, the supply of publicity leaflets and where appropriate individual notifications.

199 The subject matter of these meetings will almost inevitably range over matters not directly relevant to the plan itself—the emptying of dustbins is a favourite topic. Where this occurs the appropriate department should be notified for follow-up action.

200 Many authorities have made a small exhibition the centre-piece of their efforts to publicise local plans, relying on maps, aerial photographs and sketches to illustrate

their proposals, rather than setting up expensive models. These local exhibitions have a special value. In country areas where it has not been possible to hold a full-scale exhibition illustrating the structure plan they will give people a chance to get a visual impression of what is proposed. In towns where a major exhibition has been held local exhibitions will give people a sense of continuity in the process (*see Appendix 10 for a description of the Barnsbury exhibition*).

201 All that we have said earlier about the need for the public to be told what their representations have achieved, for information to be given clearly and simply and about the location of notices applies equally to the statement of proposals for a local plan.

202 Several aspects of publicity and participation are common to each of the main stages that we have identified. The community forum and the community development officer could be involved in each; there will have been continuous contact with the local press and a continuous giving of information to the public, comment on it and publicity for the consideration given to represen-

tations received. In addition, we recommend that the planning team preparing a local plan should be available to the public at specified times within the area to which the plan relates. In counties, where the public may find travelling difficult and expensive, the holding of regular surgeries in the offices of the local council would facilitate continuous contact and communication with the local public.

The need for experiment

203 Finally, we urge that authorities should experiment in the techniques they employ, even at the risk of occasional failure. We have suggested several methods but they are not comprehensive. From those methods authorities should be free to select those that seem likely to produce the best response in their area. But on top of that the authority should adapt tried techniques and experiment with fresh ones to see that participation is, and remains, vigorous and worthwhile.

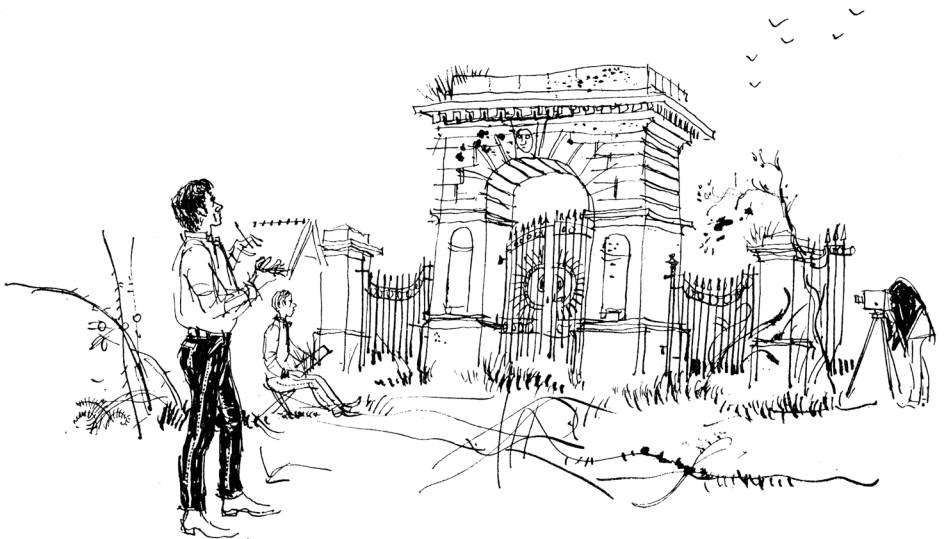
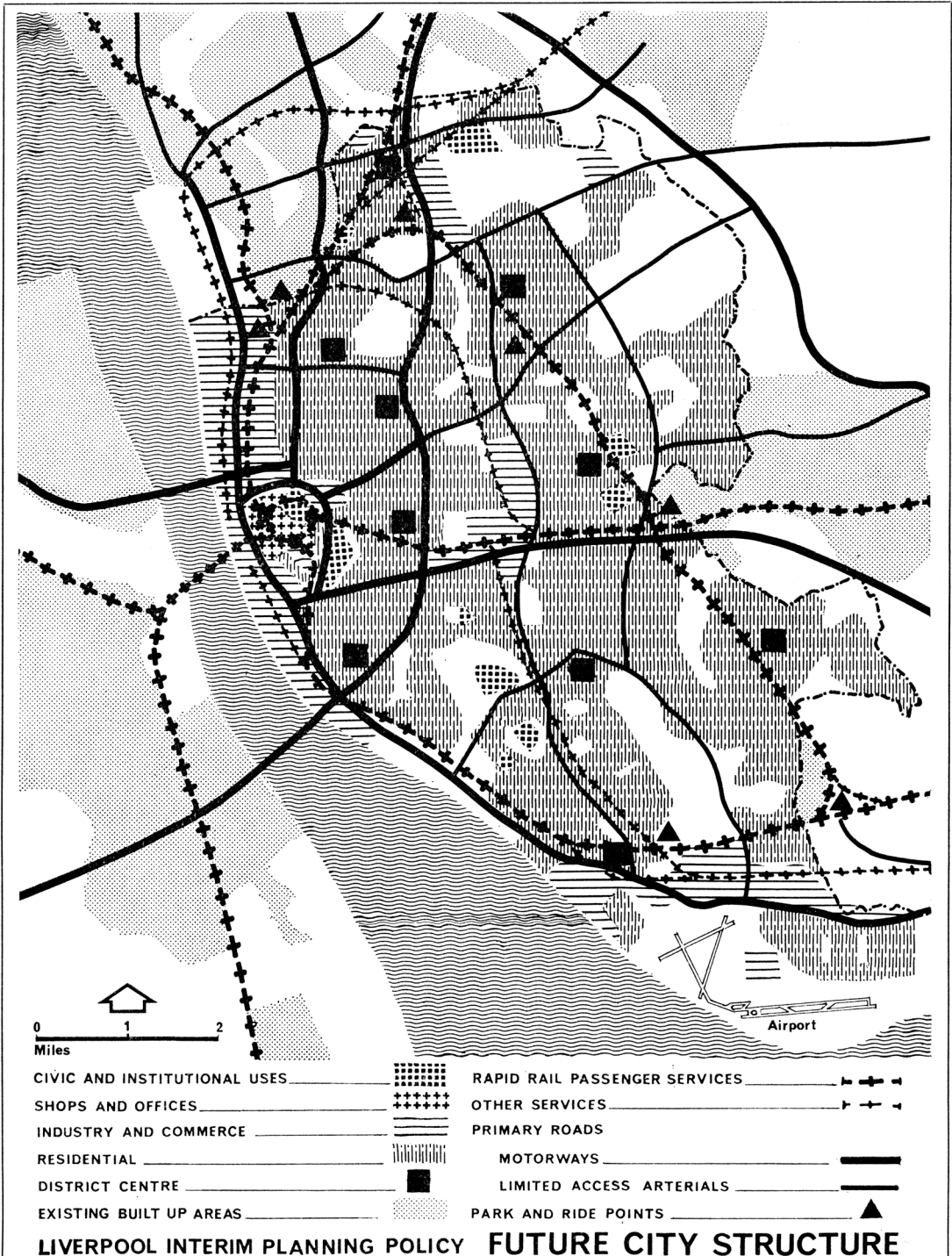


Illustration from "Liverpool - City of Change and Challenge" (see paragraph 149)



3 MATTERS COMMON TO STRUCTURE PLANS AND LOCAL PLANS

204 We turn now to a number of practical considerations that will apply when both structure and local plans are being prepared.

Time needed

205 Two conflicting factors stand out in the consideration of the amount of time to be spent on participation activities; they are the need for organisations to be given adequate time to consider material and the need to ensure that endless discussion does not frustrate action.

206 It is easy to underestimate the time that may be needed for a local organisation to consider planning proposals. The officers of most societies cannot work full-time on voluntary activities. Adequate notice has to be given to convene a meeting and time allowed for marshalling a corporate view before transmitting it to the authority. For some bodies even longer may be necessary, especially if a consensus of opinion cannot be obtained by way of a general meeting; for example, those organisations interested in social welfare may be able to sound out views only by means of individual interviews. Local planning authorities should therefore allow as much time as possible when public comment is invited.

207 There is, however, another side to the coin. Any development plan is a sterile document until action is taken to implement its proposals. The public should be ready to recognise the need for steady progress when plans are being prepared, bearing in mind that there will be opportunities for formal objection when the final version of the plan is deposited and before it is finally approved by the Minister or adopted by the planning authority.

208 We recommend two lines of approach. First, as we have suggested earlier (*paragraphs 135 and 182*), when the initial decision is taken to prepare a plan the local planning authority should prepare an overall time-table showing the target dates by which the major stages in the preparation of the plan would be reached. This should help to explain what is involved in the plan-making procedure and how long it will take. It will set the perspectives both for those who want to debate too long and for those who expect changes overnight. Secondly, we suggest that the time available for comment should be made clear when the public are consulted. Some flexibility is desirable since some plans will be of far greater complexity than others, but even with structure plans we consider that representa-

tions should be made within six weeks of any general or individual invitation to comment, or within six weeks of the last public meeting if a programme of meetings is arranged.

Financial implications

209 There are two main aspects to the financial implications of our recommendations. They are (a) the effect on property values of publicity for proposals in the form we suggest and (b) the cost to the authority of publicising proposals and securing participation.

(a) *Land Values*

210 When a plan shows that land or property is likely to be needed for future use by a public authority possessing powers of compulsory purchase, its value may be greatly affected. In extreme cases, it may be rendered unsaleable, and hardship may be caused to those who need to sell for personal or other reasons.

211 The law recognises these difficulties; and in certain defined circumstances, owners may require the public authority in question to buy their property at an undepreciated price. But this remedy applies only where the plan causing blight has been approved by the Minister in the case of a structure plan, or finally adopted by the local planning authority in the case of a local plan. It is not available where the plan is at the stage of public deposit and objection; still less at the formative stage of public participation, which is our concern. The danger we have to face is that widespread publicity for proposals at this stage may have a serious blighting effect on property.

212 There is thus a conflict between, on the one hand, the desirability of giving full publicity at an early stage to proposals the planning authority are considering, so as to stimulate informed public discussion and, on the other hand, the need to avoid causing hardship to individuals by the casting of blight over land or property that may not be acquired for many years or, indeed, at all.

213 There is no ready answer to the problem and we can do little more than draw attention to it and express the hope that in drawing up material for publicity and participation, planning authorities will take great care to avoid unnecessary blight on properties or anxiety to those

who may be affected. For example, to illustrate in detail three lines for a road when the arguments in favour of one of them are compelling will damage the interests of owners on the other two lines to no good purpose. If only one truly viable solution exists, the authority should state this as their preferred solution and say why. Similarly, to define in detail the boundaries of a site at a stage when these are still open to consideration may be equally harmful—and again purposeless, if the choice eventually falls on other land. In these ways, the authority can reduce the problem, but it cannot be eliminated altogether. Some increase in planning blight may have to be accepted if there is to be increased participation by the public.

214 We do not consider that the early publication of proposals can harm anybody's interests where its effect is to appreciate the value of land; indeed the sooner proposals are published the better protected is both the owner and prospective purchaser.

(b) Cost

215 We are aware that if we do not attempt to quantify the additional cost of our proposals we shall be open to criticism. We are equally sure that it would be misleading and foolish to try to do so in absolute terms. There are two main reasons for this; local planning authorities vary greatly in the size of their populations, areas and financial resources, and there is unlikely to be consistency in the level of expenditure that will be incurred even within a single authority.

216 The methods of publicity and participation necessary in Newcastle upon Tyne and Norfolk, for example, will differ. In circumstances as diverse as these it would be misleading to suggest as an appropriate level of expenditure a proportion of the planning department's budget, an amount per thousand head of the population or a percentage of the total development costs envisaged by the plan. We do, however, illustrate in *Appendix 9* the cost of a number of methods of publicity and the estimated level of annual expenditure incurred by Hampshire and Liverpool. We do not suggest that these figures are a guide to what the level of expenditure should be. The cost of past efforts gives no safe guide to the likely cost of adequate publicity in the future, partly because separate figures have not been kept for these activities and partly because during the first few years when the new system is introduced publicity will need to describe the system as well as the proposals within a plan. We regard money spent on providing for participation as worthwhile expenditure which may reduce the cost of subsequent formal procedure.

217 The number and grades of staff needed for participation work will also vary from area to area. Certain activities

will affect primarily the planning department, who will need sufficient staff to:

- (i) Arrange and attend public meetings;
- (ii) Give talks and lectures to associations;
- (iii) Meet individuals wishing to make representations;
- (iv) Receive and evaluate letters;
- (v) Correspond with those making representations;
- (vi) Staff exhibitions.

218 Additionally there will be demands made upon the information, administrative and social planning services of the authority.

219 We would consider it right for an authority to assist the work of any community forum that provided substantial administrative services. A standard grant might cover secretarial and other administrative services, and specific grants be paid to cover special expenses, such as for organising public meetings and helping to form local societies.

220 We can appreciate that many authorities will be concerned about the availability of staff as well as money, and this may limit what can in practice be done, at any rate for the time being. The number of qualified planners is, however, increasing year by year and the phased introduction of the new planning system will enable authorities to benefit from these increasing numbers.

Proposals by public authorities

221 Development plans will include some proposals which are to be carried out by public authorities other than the local planning authority—for example, other local authorities, Government Departments or statutory undertakers. Some of these developments may have significance on a national or regional scale. They may be directly or indirectly connected with development which is planned or has already taken place in the areas of neighbouring authorities and their nature and form may be partly determined by the requirement of providing a public service over a wider area. Clearly what is proposed in the area of one authority must have regard to the whole of the project of which it forms part—one obvious example of this is the routing of a motorway across several counties. Factors of this kind may in practice limit the choice of alternative courses of action in the area of a particular authority. Planning authorities will therefore need to consult fully with the Government Department or other body responsible for the development before drawing up material for public discussion of the proposals and of any options there may be.

222 So far in our report we have been concerned with public participation in the process of preparing structure and local plans. We now turn briefly to three other matters.

The Present Development Plan System

223 Planning cannot come to a standstill while the new planning system is being brought into force. The new system will be introduced gradually area by area, and even in the areas of those authorities which have been selected to prepare the first structure plans some time will elapse before they are ready. It is likely, therefore, that numbers of alterations and additions to existing development plans will be made under the procedures of the Town and Country Planning Act 1962. These procedures do not carry with them the public participation obligations introduced by the 1968 Act.

224 Although they will be under no statutory obligation to do so, we strongly hope that authorities preparing plans under the existing system will voluntarily accept an obligation to give full publicity to their proposals as they are being drawn up and to give the public an opportunity to participate in the plan-making process. In short, we hope that they will, in preparing these plans, observe the principles lying behind our recommendations.

Development Control

225 Although development control falls outside our terms of reference, we are in no doubt of the importance that should be attached to the giving of adequate prior publicity to important planning proposals before decisions are taken; this is a point which was made by many of the people and organisations who submitted evidence to us. There can, of course, be no identity of procedures here because of the fundamentally different nature of the local planning authority's position in handling a planning application on the one hand and in preparing a development plan on the other. The initiative in the case of a planning application lies with the developer, and in these circumstances, the local planning authority can usually bring the public into the picture only after the application has been made. Both structure and local plans will secure greater public influence over the broad issues of development control since they will contain statements of principle covering development in a way that is unusual in existing plans, and the public will have the opportunity to comment on and influence those principles. But there are many circumstances in which it is important that the public should be involved after an application has been made and

we are concerned with one particular set of circumstances in which this is so—namely, where the proposal involves a substantial departure from the development plan. It would obviously be quite wrong to provide for elaborate procedures for seeking out public opinion and taking it into account in the formulation of a plan if important objectives of that plan could subsequently be set aside by a grant of planning permission which the public knew nothing about.

226 There are already procedures for dealing with departures from development plans which are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans) Direction 1965*. This direction obliges local planning authorities to go through certain procedures before granting permission for development which would involve a substantial departure from the plan or affect the whole of a neighbourhood. They are required to advertise the proposal in a local newspaper and to give time for objections to be made before proceeding. They are also required to notify the Minister so that he may have an opportunity of calling in the application and holding a local inquiry if this appears to be desirable. The Department are holding discussions with the local authority associations with a view to improving publicity arrangements in these cases. One specific proposal in mind is that a planning authority should be required not only to advertise proposals of this kind in the press but also to post a notice on the site.**

227 These arrangements for departures from development plans were drawn up in the context of a planning system under which all plans were approved by the Minister and it was therefore logical for him to be given an opportunity of intervening if proposals were in mind which differed materially from the plan he had approved. It is possible to argue that since under the new system local planning authorities will be authorised to approve their own local plans they should be authorised to approve departures from them without informing the Minister. We understand, however, that the Ministry's intention is, at any rate during the initial years of the new system, to apply the existing procedures to departures from all plans and not merely those which the Minister has approved. We think that this is a sensible safeguard which will help to preserve the integrity of the new plans and to make it clear that public participation will not be neglected once a plan has been approved.

* See Ministry Circular 70/65.

** Arrangements for giving publicity to planning applications do, of course, go wider than this. In addition to general advice given to local planning authorities by the departmental circulars, there are statutory requirements for publicity to be given to development of the 'bad neighbour' type and to development that might affect the character or appearance of a conservation area. These requirements too have been strengthened by a new requirement to post notices on the sites in question (Town and Country Planning Act 1968, sections 57 and 76).

228 Nearly all development takes place in accordance with the general framework of a development plan or as a result of considered departures from it which receive publicity in the manner we have described. Where development of importance takes place under different procedures—for example, development by Government Departments and certain types of development by statutory undertakers on their operational land—we hope that the authorities responsible will, in conjunction with the planning authorities, find suitable ways of giving publicity to their intentions.

Traffic Plans

229 We have noted that the Minister of Transport has asked certain authorities to prepare traffic plans for their towns and we understand that several have been submitted. These plans, which involve short-term measures to manage traffic, will frequently have a considerable impact on people's lives, especially where the flow of traffic is re-routed. We think it would be anomalous if authorities did not provide opportunities for participation when plans of this kind are prepared and urge that they should do so on future occasions.



General

230 We have concentrated on what can be done to publicise proposals and to involve the public when plans are being prepared, but that will not be enough to secure a full understanding of proposals and informed comment on them. For that, a better public knowledge of planning is necessary. There is little enough public knowledge about the present system. There can only be far less about structure and local plans; and the novel procedures bring with them additional risks of public misunderstanding. People will need to be able to distinguish, for example, between the opportunities to contribute at the formative stage of the structure plan and the opportunity to object when that plan is formally submitted to the Minister; and they will need to be able to distinguish the equivalent opportunities in the procedure for preparation of the local plan. They will need, also, to know about the extended scope of development plans and the devolution of responsibility to local planning authorities.

231 We see a three-fold responsibility for imparting information about the new kind of plan; that of central government, that of local government and that of those concerned with the media of communications. These three main agents can be greatly assisted by other organisations, such as professional bodies and local amenity societies.

The Role of Central Government

232 We assume that the Government will continue to advise local planning authorities by means of circulars and bulletins. These circulars no doubt help to inform authorities and professional people, but they are not intended to be a widely read form of communication and are generally unsuitable for this purpose. They need to be supplemented by the provision of information for general consumption. We suggest that the Government should use four main methods.

(a) Booklets

233 First, we recommend that advisory booklets, ranging from a simple statement to a more detailed exposition, should be produced explaining the nature and purpose of structure and local plans and bringing out the opportunities afforded for public participation. These booklets should not be produced with any particular readership in mind; their range should be sufficient to ensure that information is presented at more than one level.

234 The co-operation of national bodies, such as the Civic Trust, the National Chamber of Commerce, the

National Council of Social Service, the National Citizens' Advice Bureaux Council and the Churches Main Committee should be sought to ensure that the publication of these documents is widely known. The Committee has received evidence from several such bodies and we are sure that they would help.

(b) Films

235 We suggest that the Government should consider commissioning the making of a film explaining the operation of the new development plan system and the opportunities for public participation. We recognise that films about ideas and procedures need considerable imagination in their production, but an imaginative film could contribute substantially to the understanding of what is involved and the part people could play. A film running about 20 minutes would probably be suitable for this purpose. Its showing would need to be co-ordinated at the time the Minister authorised an authority to produce its structure plan. The cost of the film would be likely to be in the region of £18,000 to £20,000.

236 Written advice would be needed from the Ministry on the ways and means of promoting local showings of the film and ensuring that it reached the largest possible audience. This advice should be made available to local authorities before the film was released. We would hope that national organisations, such as the Civic Trust, would co-operate in ensuring that the film had a wide distribution.

(c) Exhibitions

237 Thirdly, we recommend that an exhibition should be produced as an experiment to test the possible use of this medium by local planning authorities for the dissemination of general information. The exhibition on the new development plan system prepared by the Ministry for specialist groups could usefully form the basis of a small travelling exhibition for the general public. Such an experiment, using the experience of display designers in dealing with complicated subjects, could be a considerable aid to the exposition of the new development plan system; it could test the extent to which such material should be used as a nucleus for larger exhibitions at local libraries and the town hall; and it could help pave the way for exhibitions of the authority's own proposals.

(d) Advisory role

238 Fourthly, we recommend that the Ministry of Housing and Local Government should have the task of assembling, evaluating and publishing information, possibly in the

form of 'Practice Notes', about methods of publicity and participation used by local planning authorities. These should be published regularly. A continuous review is necessary for the following reasons:

- (i) Techniques of publicity are continuously developing. The use of local radio, for example, offers prospects of giving detailed information on local affairs not available even two years ago. Its use has yet to be fully explored.
- (ii) The structure of local government is under review. If areas are enlarged different approaches and emphasis may be necessary.
- (iii) Society itself is constantly changing and there will be the need for sensitive adaptation of publicity and participation techniques to take account of these changes.
- (iv) Although many authorities have publicised their development plan proposals energetically and effectively we have found little by way of systematic appraisal of the results and costs of their efforts. Opinions about results have been diametrically opposed; some people argue that good advance publicity can reduce objections to a plan, others that it will only lengthen the planning process by stimulating them.

239 The Ministry will be in a sound position to fulfil this function of supplying information about techniques, costs and effectiveness because reports of steps taken to inform the public are required to be supplied to the Minister.* Further, the regional offices of the Ministry will bring officers into frequent discussion about techniques being used and their effectiveness.

240 We recommend that the Ministry should consider producing material for use by local planning authorities. This might include the production of 'frame' material to form an introduction to exhibitions illustrating the authority's own proposals and would reduce duplication of individual efforts by the local planning authorities.

241 The efforts of the Ministry to inform the public about the new system could most effectively follow the authorisation of a local planning authority to produce plans under the new system. The regional offices of the Ministry are well placed to assist in this work.

242 In several of the tasks we have suggested for the Ministry, they would no doubt wish to draw on the headquarters and regional offices of the Central Office of Information for expert advice.

243 The role we have described for central government is a limited one and will not involve them in immediate and day-to-day contact with the community. We think this right in view of the division of responsibilities between central and local government. The brunt of the work on educating and involving the public generally, and on publicity for plans in particular, will have to be borne by local government employing the full range of its services.

The Role of the Local Authority

244 The same authority will often be both local planning authority and local education authority, responsible for providing the whole range of education, except at university level, and for controlling the curricula of most of the schools. We recommend that where the authorities are the same, the closest possible liaison should be kept between these two departments in order that knowledge about the physical planning of the community may be made available as part of the outward-looking curriculum which has been recommended in several reports on education; where the authorities are different, liaison is even more important. Lessons on such subjects will come to life most vividly where children feel involved. Senior classes should be encouraged to attend exhibitions illustrating either structure plans or local plans for the area in which their school is situated. Some authorities have run essay competitions which have produced lively and rewarding results (*see Appendix 3 on Coventry*).

245 The education of secondary school children about aspects of community life offers the best foundation for worthwhile participation in the years to come. We emphasize, therefore, that the activities we have recommended should be part of the way in which all secondary schools make children conscious of their future civic duties, and not just part of courses for sixth-formers who are going on to further studies.

246 We recommend that co-operation between the education and planning departments of the local authority should extend beyond schools to ensure that education about planning matters is part of the liberal and civic studies within places of further education. This would, in fact, help to implement the policy of the Department of Education and Science, who actively encourage the introduction of a liberal element into technical education.

247 The vigour and quality with which these studies are pursued in schools and places of further education will be strengthened if the training of teachers includes a similar emphasis on civic studies, including the philosophy and practice of town and country planning.

* See sections 3(3) and 7(3) of The Town and Country Planning Act 1968.

248 Finally, in addition to the general campaigns that authorities undertake to inform the public on such topics as preservation of the countryside or architectural design, we see a need for specific instruction for those who wish to understand the new planning system. No doubt many council members, and not just those on the planning committee, will want to be informed about structure and local plans, especially when their authority starts to prepare its first structure plan. We recommend that at that time local planning authorities should consider holding weekend schools or courses, possibly in conjunction with other authorities or with a national body such as the Town and Country Planning Association or the National Housing and Town Planning Council. We hope that these courses would be supported by speakers from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and attended by interested members of all sectors of the public including representatives of industry and commerce, teachers, members of amenity societies and senior journalists and radio and television commentators. Planning officers will also need to equip themselves further by means of similar refresher courses about ways of stimulating participation.

Other bodies

249 We have stated the importance that we place on local newspapers as a medium for publicising planning proposals and have suggested ways in which information can be released so as to obtain the best press coverage. The press themselves can help to see that a better supply of information is treated better. As with the public at large, members of the press need basic information about the nature and purpose of the planning process as a prerequisite of informed comment and discussion. We hope that the Ministry will explore with the National Council for the Training of Journalists the possibility of including adequate instruction about planning in the syllabus on local government which forms part of the training for journalists. Approaches should also be made to journalists' professional organisations to seek their co-operation.

250 The B.B.C. and I.T.V. programme companies could do much to help to inform the public by putting out more programmes of an educative kind about planning matters. These might deal with the fundamental characteristics of the new planning system, the kind of planning research that has to precede any new proposals, the considerations which professional planners have to take into account and how the public can help.

251 Just as there is the need for the public to be better educated in planning matters so is there the need for planners to be made aware of the importance of public

participation during their initial training or by refresher courses. No doubt the Town Planning Institute will give this matter consideration.

252 We have spent some time in reviewing the need for general education and information on the purpose of planning and the procedures involved. This may seem to be strictly outside our terms of reference, but only if participation is constructive and informed will there be the fullest realisation of the opportunities that are now open to local planning authorities and the people they represent.





Main recommendations and conclusion

253 We hope that local planning authorities will benefit from the practical suggestions and recommendations (over forty in number) that are brought together in *Appendix 1*. We hope too that they will adopt our main recommendations, which are set out below, fitting them into their plan-making process in the way which best suits the nature of the particular plan and the requirements of the people who will be affected by it. These main recommendations are:

- I People should be kept informed throughout the preparation of a structure or local plan for their area. A variety of methods should be used, and special efforts made to secure the co-operation of the local press and broadcasting.
Paragraphs 126 and 181.
- II An initial statement should be published when the decision is made that a plan should be prepared. It should state how the authority propose to inform the public, and should contain a time-table showing the main opportunities for participation and the pauses for their consideration. Although there should be full opportunity for public debate, it should not run on endlessly.
Paragraphs 134 and 182.
- III Representations should be considered continuously as they are made while plans are being prepared; but, in addition, there should be set pauses to give a positive opportunity for public reaction and participation. Local planning authorities should concentrate their efforts to secure participation at two stages. These stages apply to both structure and local plans and are (a) the presentation following surveys of the choices which are open to the authority in deciding the main planning issues for the area in question and (b) the presentation of a statement of proposals for the area in question.
Where alternative courses are available, the authority should put them to the public and say which it prefers and why.
Paragraphs 143, 146, 190 and 193.
- IV Local planning authorities should consider convening meetings in their area for the purpose of setting up community forums. These forums would provide local organisations with the opportunity to discuss collectively planning and other issues of importance to the area. Community forums might also have administrative functions, such as receiving and distributing information on planning matters and promoting the formation of neighbourhood groups.
Paragraph 60.
- V Local planning authorities should seek to publicise proposals in a way that informs people living in the area to which the plan relates. These efforts should be

directed to organisations and individuals. Publicity should be sufficient to enable those wishing to participate in depth to do so.

Paragraphs 127 and 177.

- VI Community development officers should be appointed to secure the involvement of those people who do not join organisations. Their job would be to work with people, to stimulate discussion, to inform people and give people's views to the authority.
Paragraph 80.
- VII The public should be told what their representations have achieved or why they have not been accepted.
Paragraphs 174 and 201.
- VIII People should be encouraged to participate in the preparation of plans by helping with surveys and other activities as well as by making comments.
Paragraph 96.
- IX A better knowledge of planning is necessary. Greater efforts should be made to provide more information and better education about planning generally, both through educational establishments and for the public at large. Only if there is a better public understanding of the purpose of planning and the procedures involved will a local planning authority's efforts be fully rewarded when they seek public participation in their own development plans.
Paragraph 230 et seq.

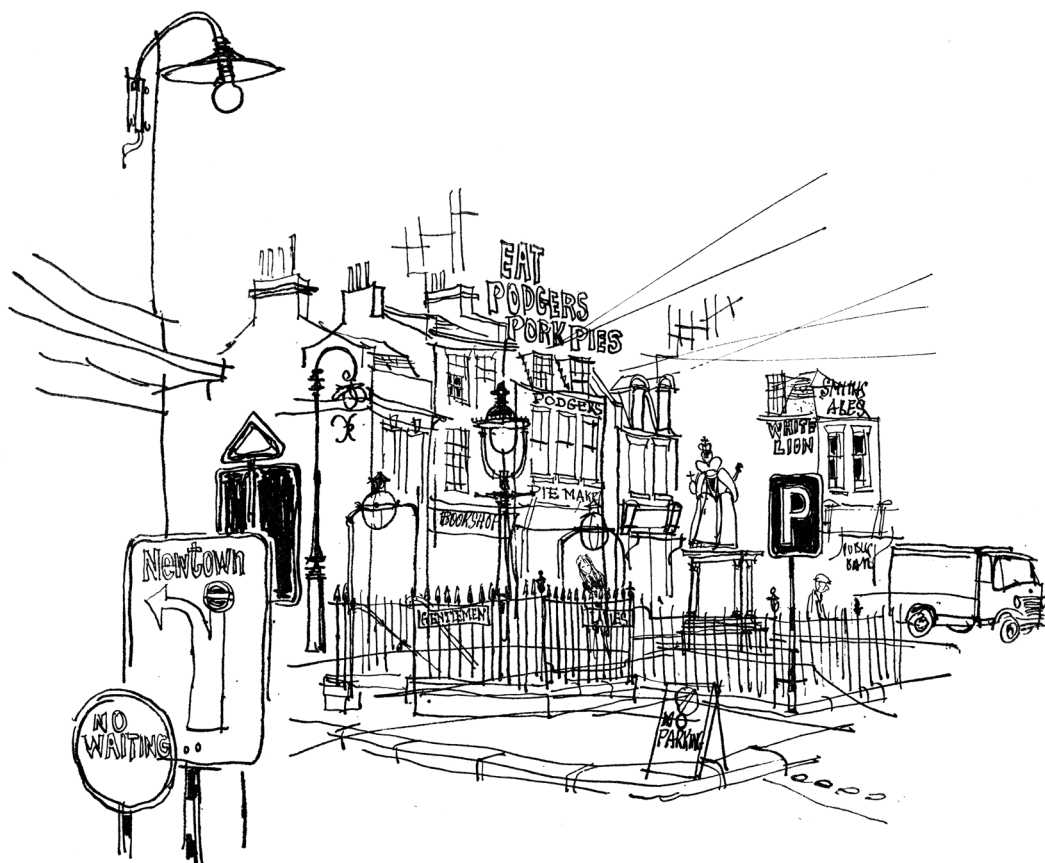
254 In making our recommendations we have borne in mind that procedures for public participation have to be superimposed on what are already complex planning procedures. But we have made it plain that we have tried to look beyond procedures. We want the paper of the plans to come to life; and to come to life in a way that people want. The essential requirements are that planning authorities should act openly, and that the public should react constructively to the facts and ideas put before them. There must be give and take; and the preparation of plans, which are only the first step towards the improvements we all seek, must move on smoothly and with reasonable speed.

255 Only in this way will the planning authorities and the public alike be able to grasp the opportunities for a new partnership offered by the Town and Country Planning Act 1968. That Act, wisely we believe, provides a good deal of flexibility in the application of the far-reaching changes it makes in the development plan system, because it recognises the wide variety of problems that have to be dealt with in different parts of the country. It follows, in our view, that there must be an equal flexibility in the methods used to bring the public into the planning process, which must allow not only for the differing nature of the plans that will be prepared, but also for local differ-

ences in the way in which people organise themselves (or choose not to organise themselves) to make their wishes known or to react to proposals presented to them. For this reason, we should like our recommendations to be used as guide lines for constructive action, rather than as a deadening book of rules. The Act places a clear general duty on local planning authorities, and provides the Minister with the means of ensuring that it is performed. Because of this we have not suggested that authorities should be required to comply with numbers of detailed requirements imposed on them by regulation. What seems

to us much more important is that they should approach their new duties in the broad spirit of our report.

256 We cannot end our report without expressing our deep personal appreciation of the services of our Secretary, Mr P. W. Rumble. Committees like ours are generally indebted to their Secretariat, but in this case the help given has been quite outstanding. He has marshalled and presented with great skill the large volume of evidence, has guided us through the intricacies of the relevant legislation, and, above all, been most expert in drafting our report.



Appendices



APPENDIX 1

Recommendations in detail

These recommendations include our main recommendations which are set out in *paragraph 253*. The main recommendations (*MR*) are identified as they occur. All the recommendations should be read in the light of the report, especially *paragraph 255* where we say that our recommendations are intended as guide lines for constructive action rather than as a book of rules.

1 Local planning authorities should enlist the aid of district and parish councils in publicising proposals and securing participation.
Paragraphs 51-53.

2 Local planning authorities should consider convening meetings in their area for the purpose of setting up community forums. These forums would provide local organisations with the opportunity to discuss collectively planning and other issues of importance to the area. Community forums might also have administrative functions such as receiving and distributing information on planning matters and promoting the formation of neighbourhood groups.

Paragraph 60
MR IV

3 Community development officers should be appointed to secure the involvement of those people who do not join organisations. Their job would be to work with people to stimulate discussion, to inform people in their neighbourhood, and to give people's views to the authority.

Paragraphs 80-90
MR VI

4 People should be encouraged to participate in the preparation of plans by helping with surveys and other activities as well as by making comments.

Paragraph 96
MR VIII

5 Participation should be set in its overall planning context. Groups should be invited to assist actively in improving the environment; where possible some of a plan's proposals should be carried out quickly even in advance of its total implementation and visits should be arranged to areas where the effect of planning and participation can be seen.

Paragraphs 97-99

6 Local planning authorities should consider obtaining expert advice in the giving of information, whether by the appointment of an information officer or the employment of a consultant, as the situation demands.

Paragraph 101

7 Local planning authorities should process their development plan proposals so as to enable the public and the press to hear the major debates at the formative stage, whether in open council or in the planning committee.

Paragraph 103

8 Local planning authorities should try to secure the help of the local press in publicising proposals. They should:

- (a) provide the press with a regular flow of information;
- (b) hold regular meetings with local press;
- (c) make information available to fit in with publication dates;
- (d) send copies of statutory notices of major events to the editor or planning correspondent as well as to the advertising manager;
- (e) hold press conferences at key stages in the planning process.

Paragraphs 104-115

9 Local planning authorities should seek the assistance of radio and television authorities to publicise plans. They should:

- (a) be prepared to discuss controversial issues;
- (b) provide illustrative material for television programmes;
- (c) keep managers of local radio stations fully informed of planning issues;
- (d) consider providing facilities for the broadcast of council debates on major planning issues.

Paragraphs 116-124

10 Local planning authorities should publish a variety of documents as a major part of their publicity activities.

Paragraph 125

Structure plans

11 People should be kept informed throughout the preparation of a structure plan for their area. There should be set pauses for public participation.

Paragraphs 126 and 181
MR I

12 Publicity should be directed in such a way as will inform the public of proposals and opportunities to comment and enable its most active members to participate in depth.

Paragraphs 127 and 177
MR V

13 The local planning authority should establish and maintain a central register of persons who wish to be informed when planning proposals are published.

Paragraph 129

14 An initial statement should be published when the decision is made that a structure plan shall be prepared. It should:

- (a) state that work will start shortly on preparing a plan;
- (b) explain the purposes of the plan; and
- (c) set out the programme for publicity and participation.

Paragraphs 134-137
MR II

15 Survey data should be made available at two levels—by means of a simple statement and in greater depth for those who wish to examine matters in detail.

Paragraph 139

16 Local planning authorities should publish and seek comments on a statement of choices for dealing with the main issues and problems of their area. The course the authority prefer should be stated and there should be a positive opportunity for public reaction and participation.

Paragraph 143
MR III

17 Following consideration of public comment on choices, local planning authorities should publish and seek comment on a statement of proposals. This is the key document in participation and again there should be a positive opportunity for public reaction and participation.

Paragraph 146
MR III

18 The statement of proposals should be published at two levels:

- (a) a reasonably full statement of policies and proposals and;
- (b) a popular summary.

Paragraph 148

19 Public meetings should be held to discuss the statement of proposals.

Paragraph 151

20 A major exhibition should be held to illustrate the proposals.

Paragraph 158

21 Local planning authorities should ensure that publicity material is so displayed as to be seen by a wide public.

Paragraph 170

22 Participation material should be simply and clearly written.

Paragraph 173

23 The public should be told what their representations have achieved or why they have not been accepted.

Paragraph 174

MR VII

Local plans

24 When local plans are prepared authorities should encourage people living in the area, prospective users of the area and those with a special interest in it to take part in the formulation of proposals.

Paragraph 177

MR V

25 People should be kept informed throughout the preparation of a local plan for their area.

Paragraph 181

MR I

26 An initial statement should be made when a local planning authority decides to prepare a local plan. It should publicise:

- (a) the decision to prepare the plan;
- (b) the relevant decisions of the structure plan; and
- (c) the proposed programme of work, including opportunities for participation.

Paragraph 182

MR II

27 Local groups and schools might be encouraged to undertake some survey work.

Paragraph 184

28 The public should be given time to express its views on choices put to them about the planning of the area. There should be the opportunity for public reaction and comment.

Paragraph 190

MR III

29 Once the public have said what choices they prefer, a statement of proposals should be prepared and widely publicised. It is the key document for participation in the preparation of a local plan and there should be the opportunity for public reaction and comment.

Paragraph 190

MR III

30 The statement of proposals should be the subject of public meetings in the area to which the proposals relate.

Paragraph 196

31 The local planning authority should consider holding an exhibition within the area to which proposals relate.

Paragraph 200

32 The public should be told what their representations have achieved or why they have not been accepted.

Paragraph 201

MR VII

Matters common to structure and local plans

33 When the initial decision to prepare a structure or local plan is taken, the local planning authority should publish a timetable showing when major stages will be reached.

Paragraph 208

34 The time available for comment should be made clear when the public is consulted.

Paragraph 208

35 Authorities should try to present their proposals in a manner which will avoid causing unnecessary blighting of property.

Paragraph 213

Related matters

36 Local planning authorities should encourage public participation in relation to development plan submissions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1962.

Paragraph 224

37 Opportunities for public participation should be provided in connection with traffic plans.

Paragraph 229

Education

38 A better knowledge of planning is necessary. The Ministry should produce material explaining the new development plan system and describing the opportunities for public participation.

Paragraph 230-233

MR IX

39 The Ministry should consider commissioning the making of a film explaining the operation of the new development plan system and the opportunities for public participation.

Paragraphs 235-236

40 The Ministry should, as an experiment, prepare a mobile exhibition on the new development plan system for use by local planning authorities.

Paragraph 237

41 The Ministry should assemble, evaluate and publish information about methods of publicity and participation.

Paragraph 238

42 The Ministry should consider the production of material for use by local planning authorities in connection with publicity for their plans.

Paragraph 240

APPENDIX 2

List of bodies and persons who gave evidence or assistance to the Skeffington Committee

43 There should be co-operation between local planning and local education authorities to ensure that planning matters are taught in schools.

Paragraphs 244-246

44 Planning matters should be taught in further education establishments as part of a liberal element in technical education.

Paragraph 246

45 Local planning authorities should consider holding weekend courses for councillors and others wishing to understand the new system.

Paragraph 248

46 The Ministry should discuss with the National Council for the Training of Journalists and journalists' professional organisations the possibility of including instruction on planning matters in training courses for journalists.

Paragraph 249

47 The bodies concerned with the training of planners should consider including public participation in the matters covered in the syllabus.

Paragraph 251

Government Departments

In addition to those Departments represented on the Committee, assistance was received from:

Department of Economic Affairs
Department of Education and Science
General Post Office

Commissions

Countryside Commission
Royal Fine Art Commission
Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland

Local Authority Associations

The Association of Municipal Corporations *
The County Councils Association *
The Association of County Councils in Scotland
The Counties of Cities Association
The London Boroughs' Association *
The Urban District Councils' Association *
The Rural District Councils' Association *
The National Association of Parish Councils *

Local Authorities

Greater London Council *
London Borough of Camden
London Borough of Southwark
Devon County Council
Dorset County Council
Durham County Council
Hampshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Huntingdon and Peterborough County Council
Kent County Council
Lancashire County Council
Lincolnshire County Council (*Parts of Lindsey*)
Somerset County Council
West Suffolk County Council
The Peak Park Planning Board
Barnsley County Borough Council
Bristol County Borough Council
Coventry County Borough Council
Eastbourne County Borough Council
Leeds County Borough Council
Leicester County Borough Council
Liverpool County Borough Council
Manchester County Borough Council
Newcastle-upon-Tyne County Borough Council
Norwich County Borough Council
Faversham Borough Council
Tenterden Borough Council
Prestatyn Urban District Council
Oadby Urban District Council
Battle Rural District Council
Cuckfield Rural District Council
Welton Rural District Council
Hullbridge Parish Council
Hurstpierpoint Parish Council
Windlesham Parish Council

* denotes persons or bodies with whom the Committee had discussions.

Associations, Organisations etc.

- Angel Association
 Architects Journal
 Arundel Society
 Association of British Chambers of Commerce
 Association of Land and Property Owners
 Association of the London Borough of Enfield
 Association of London Housing Estates
- Barnsbury Association
 Beccles Society
 Beckenham Planning Group
 Bedford Society
 Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Architectural Association
 Beverley and District Civic Society
 Bingley Civic Trust
 Bishops Castle Civic Society
 Bookham Residents Association
 Boxmoor Residents Association
 Bransgore and District Residents Association
 Bridge of Weir Improvements Association
 Bristol Civic Society
 British Waterways Board
 Brixham Amenity Society and Residents Association
 Brockham Green Village Society
 Bromley Town Plan Action Group
- Canterbury Society
 Cardiff 2,000
 Carlisle and District Civic Trust
 Carshalton Society
 Caterham Forum
 Central Council for the Disabled
 Central and North Fife Preservation Society
 Chartered Land Societies Committee *
 Chartered Land Societies Committee (*Scotland*)
 Chelsea Society
 Cheltenham Society
 Chertsey Society
 Cheshire County Federation of Ratepayers and Kindred Associations
 Cirencester Civic Society
 City of Durham Trust
 City of Rochester Society
 Civic Trust
 Cockburn Association
 Colchester Civic Society
 Colchester Civic Society (*Tree Protection Group*)
 Colour Sound Film Strips Limited
 Community Council of Lancashire
 Community Service Volunteers
 Confederation of British Industry
 Consumers Association
 Co-operative Union Limited
 Co-operative Womens Guild (*South Croydon Branch*)
 Corporation of Secretaries
 Council for British Archaeology
 Council for Industrial Design
 Council for the Preservation of Rural England
 Council for the Preservation of Rural England (*Hampshire Branch*)
 Council for the Preservation of Rural England (*Lincolnshire Branch*)
 Council for the Preservation of Rural England (*Northamptonshire Branch*)
- Council for the Preservation of Rural England (*Oxfordshire Branch*)
 Council for the Protection of Rural Wales
 Country Landowners Association
 Croydon Guild of Social Service
 Cuckfield Society
- Dartmoor Preservation Society
 Derby Civic Society
 Diocese of Southwark
- Ealing Civic Society
 Edenbridge and District Residents Association
 Enfield Preservation Society
 Eynsford Village Society
- Fabian Society
 Faversham Society
 Federation of Ratepayers and Civic Associations of The London Borough of Enfield
 Federation of Ravensbourn Residents Association
 Felpham Association of Ratepayers
 Fleet and Crookham Amenity Society
 Friends of Brockenhurst Society
 Friends of Lewes
 Friends of Llanarth and Llanina
 Friends of Old Isleworth
- General Council of the Bar
 Georgian Group
 Georgian Society for East Yorkshire
 Glasgow Chamber of Commerce
 Glasgow Tree Lovers Society
 Godalming Trust
 Gordano Valley Society
 Goring and Streatley Amenity Association
 Gower Society
 Great Budworth Amenity Society
 Greenwich Council of Social Service
 Guildford Society
- Ham and Petersham Ratepayers and Residents Association
 Harpenden Society
 Harrow Hill Trust
 Hartley Wintney Preservation Society
 Haslemere and District Preservation Society
 Havering Consumer Group
 Highgate Society
 Hinchley Wood Residents Association
 Hurstpierpoint Preservation Society
 Hitcham and Taplow Preservation Society
 Holt Society
 Hornsea Civic Society
 Hove Civic Society
- Ilkley College of Education
 Institution of Municipal Engineers
 Islington Society
- John Evelyn Society
 Jumpers Residents Association
- Kent Federation of Amenity Societies
 Kesteven Tree Society
 Kingston upon Hull Civic Society
 Kingston upon Thames Civic Society
 Knutsford Society

Lancaster Civic Society
 Leamington Society
 Leeds City Council Liberal Group
 Leeds Incorporated Chamber of Commerce
 Leicestershire Rural Community Council
 Leighton Buzzard District Preservation Society (*Inc.*)
 Letchworth and District Council of Social Service
 Lichfield Society
 Lincolnshire Association
 Little Chalfont Rural Preservation Society
 Liverpool Council of Social Service
 Liverpool Personal Service Society
 Local Government Information Office for England and Wales *
 London Council of Social Service
 Lowestoft and District Amenities Society
 Ludlow Society
 Lymington Society
 Lytham St. Annes Civic Society

 Malden and Coombe Civic Society
 Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service
 Market Research Society
 Marple Civic Society
 Meadows Group
 Meopham Society
 Mid-Jesmond Association
 Midlands New Town Society
 Milford-on-Sea Ratepayers and Residents Association
 Mill Hill Preservation Society
 Molesey Civic Association
 Moore Park Road Area Residents Association

 National Allotments and Gardens Society Limited and
 Village Produce Associations
 National Association of Tenants and Residents *
 National Chamber of Trade
 National Citizens Advice Bureaux Council
 National Council of Social Service
 National Council of Women of Great Britain
 National Federation of Womens Institutes *
 National Housing and Town Planning Council
 National Institute for Social Work Training
 National and Local Government Officers Association
 National Old People's Welfare Council
 National Playing Fields Association
 National Union of Ratepayers Association *
 National Union of Small Shopkeepers
 New Dover Group
 New Glasgow Society
 Norfolk Association
 Norfolk Association of Architects
 North Bedfordshire Preservation Society
 North Staffordshire Society of Architects
 Northumberland and Newcastle Society
 Norwich Society
 Norwood Society
 Nottingham Chamber of Commerce
 Nottingham Civic Society

 Old Buresdon Residents Association
 Ormskirk Civic Trust
 Oxford Consumers Group
 Oxford Residents and Ratepayers Association

 Paddock Wood Residents Association
 Parliamentary Committee
 Pershore Civic Society
 Peterborough Society
 Petersfield Society
 Pinner Association
 Portishead Ratepayers and Residents Association
 Portmore Park and District Residents Association
 Potters Bar Society

 Radlett Society
 Reading Civic Society
 Redevelopment Link Group
 Reigate Society
 Richmond Civic Society
 Riddlesdown Residents Association
 Ringwood Society
 River Thames Society
 Rochdale and District Council of Social Service
 Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland
 Royal Institute of British Architects *
 Rye Protection Society

 Saffron Walden Countryside Association
 St. Albans Civic Society
 St. Davids Civic Society
 St. Pancras Civic Society
 Sand and Gravel Association of Great Britain
 Sanderstead Preservation Society
 Scottish Civic Trust
 Sevenoaks Division Liberal Association
 Sheffield Civic Society
 Shenley Village Society
 Shepton Mallet Society
 Shoreham Society
 Slough and District Civic Society
 Slough Estates Limited
 Society of Conservative Lawyers
 Society of County Librarians
 Society for Individual Freedom
 Society for the Protection and Improvement of Local Amenities
 Society for the Protection of the Cardiganshire Coastline
 Solent Protection Society
 Southampton Civic Trust
 South Eastern Society
 South Hampshire Preservation Society
 South Wales Mayday Manifesto Committee
 Spalding and District Civic Society
 Span Developments Limited
 Sports Council
 Stafford Historical and Civic Society
 Stamford Civic Society
 Standing Conference of Councils of Social Service
 Standing Conference of Organisations of Social Workers
 Stevenage Valley Association
 Stoke Row Village Association
 Stretton-on-Dunsmore Village Society
 Sunderland Preservation Society
 Surrey Amenity Council
 Surrey Garden Village Trust
 Sutton and Cheam Society
 Sutton Coldfield Civic Society

Teesside Consumer Group
 Tetbury Civic Group
 Thaxted Society
 Tonbridge Civic Society
 Tower Hamlets Society
 Tower Hamlets Council of Social Service
 Town and Country Planning Association *
 Town Planning Institute *
 Town Planning Institute (*Scottish Branch*)
 Tunbridge Wells 1959 Society
 Twickenham Society

University College of London—Sociological Research Unit
 University of York, Architecture Society
 Upton-upon-Severn Civic Society

Wanstead Residents Association
 Wargrave Residents Association
 Wates Limited, Building and Civil Engineering Contractors
 Weald of Kent Preservation Society
 Weybridge Residents Association
 Weymouth Civic Society
 Wiltshire and Dorset Society of Architects
 Winchester Preservation Trust
 Windsor and Eton Society
 Wolverhampton Civic Society
 Woodley and Earley Society

Yarm Civic Society
 York Georgian Society
 York Group for the Promotion of Planning
 Youth Hostels Association

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 N. K. Mousley
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Mrs M. S. R. Nicholson

F. O'Brien

APPENDIX 3

PART 1

Evidence submitted by Coventry County Borough Council **History of public participation in Coventry**

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R. Perlman
K. Pinnock
D. T. Pollock

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Mrs P. Robinson
Miss E. Roche
B. Rome
K. C. Rowe
E. Rowlands, M P

M. A. C. Scott, BA
W. J. Scott
O. Simon
Miss A. M. Stratford
Cllr C. R. Stuart
A. C. Sutherland

Miss V. Tetley
J. D. Tetlow, BArch, FRIBA, MTP I
Miss C. Turner

Dr G. J. Van de Berg

Mrs M. Wadsworth
D. Walker
R. W. Walter
J. R. White
E. Whitfield
Major R. F. Willett
Mrs P. Woods
T. Wright

J. S. Yates

(a) Prior to preparation of draft planning proposals

In 1961, prior to the formulation of proposals in connection with the First Review of the Development Plan, it was considered that consultations in connection with any future provisions of the Review should be as broadly based as possible. This, it was considered, would serve to widen basic survey material, would inform a larger section of the public of the object of the exercise and would enlist their co-operation in encouraging an expression of opinion. In order to secure participation at the widest possible level, five techniques were initially adopted by the Planning and Redevelopment Committee. They decided:

- (1) To sponsor Ward Meetings to test area views.
- (2) To arrange for senior pupils at schools within the city to submit essays on local development problems and suggested solutions.
- (3) That the exhibition hall in the Department of Architecture and Planning and the Council's monthly bulletin of Civic Affairs be used to give publicity to survey data and draft proposals.
- (4) That the Public Relations Officer, through the Local Press, should organise an essay competition open to all members of the public on local development problems and suggested solutions.
- (5) To obtain views of 'Young Citizens', i.e. the new voters.

(1) Ward meetings

Altogether 28 Ward Meetings were held in the city between September 1961 and February 1962. These meetings were attended by a total of approximately 1,100 persons. At each meeting, which was usually chaired by an independent chairman, frequently a school master or Minister of Religion, a representative of the Planning and Redevelopment Committee explained the purpose of the meeting, and this was followed by an outline by a planning officer of the specific projects scheduled at that time for the community where the meeting was held. Members of the audience were then invited to give their ideas and ask questions relating to the future development of their areas.

A record of all the items mentioned at each meeting was kept, and notes of each meeting were sent to each member of the Planning and Redevelopment Committee, Ward Representatives and Chief Officers.

The Council was also prepared, if a request was forthcoming, to hold special meetings for every local association representing ratepayers' associations, community associations, etc., to consider their particular problems. The Ward Meetings were publicised in the following manner:

- (a) A statement was made to the Press by the Chairman of the Planning and Redevelopment Committee.
- (b) A notice was inserted in the local newspaper a few days before the Ward Meetings were to be held.
- (c) Letters and posters were sent to ratepayers' associations, factories, shops, etc., and arrangements were made with a firm of local advertisers to display posters on their advertising panels.
- (d) Publicity leaflets were printed indicating the place and purpose of the meetings. These were comprehensively distributed throughout the city.

All the points made at these Ward Meetings were closely scrutinised and analysed. Many of the items did not strictly fall within the ambit of the Planning Department, and in these cases they were referred to the appropriate Committee: many of these items referred to problems of footpath maintenance, location of lamp posts, pot holes, etc. Approximately 280 items were mentioned at Ward Meetings which concerned the Planning and Redevelopment Committee, and these

could be classified as follows:

- (i) Items which were the direct responsibility of the Committee, e.g. preservation of the Green Belt, allocation of land for development, planning administration, the continuing participation of the public in the planning process.
- (ii) Items in which the Committee had a joint interest with other Committees of the Council, e.g. public open space provision, provision of social facilities, road links between communities, etc.
- (iii) Items which were the concern of Central Government and private bodies, e.g. provision of post offices, telephone kiosks, shops, hotels, etc.

As referred to previously, all the points raised at the Ward Meetings were considered by the appropriate Committees, and those matters which were outside the sphere of jurisdiction of the Local Authority were referred to the appropriate Central Government Departments.

(2) *Ideas competition*

This competition was sponsored in order to obtain the observations of the public in regard to certain aspects of the planning process. They were invited to submit their comments under broad headings, e.g. deficiency of public buildings, lack of public services, visual untidiness, derelict and waste land, vandalism, and the reconstruction of the city centre. Approximately 50,000 pamphlets were distributed to householders and other organisations. Approximately 650 replies were received and these were analysed by a panel of members of senior staff from the Department of Architecture and Planning. Nominal monetary prizes were sent to the winners, as selected by the Chairman, City Architect and Planning Officer and senior planning staff.

(3) *Participation by school children*

The headmasters of schools in the city were asked to co-operate by requesting their pupils to take an interest in the planning of their areas, by answering a questionnaire or by undertaking group investigations.

This method attracted a very high response. In general, the questionnaire was concerned with play and recreational facilities, clubs, cinemas, etc., public transport, public services, e.g. proximity of telephone kiosks, adequacy of street lighting, etc. Observations were also requested on the city centre and any other matters which they cared to mention.

(4) *New voters*

In addition to the above, a further approach was made to those persons who had attained the age of 21 during the previous year. In this connection, an annual 'Welcome to Citizenship' meeting is held in the city by abducting the Y voters from the electoral roll. These are invited to the Council House for discussion, based upon a broad Local Government theme.

Pamphlets similar to the Ideas Competition were circulated to them, and their comments invited. This method, however, only attracted a very low response; although informal discussions with interested young voters proved much more rewarding. Following these methods of securing public involvement in the planning process, work proceeded in reviewing the Development Plan.

(b) **Following preparation of draft planning proposals**

(1) *Exhibition*

In April 1966, Draft Review Proposals were illustrated in a well advertised comprehensive exhibition, held in the City Centre with planning staff in attendance. This enabled the public to make representations or objections regarding its content, before any formal submission was made to the Minister of Housing and Local Government. Approximately 5,000 persons visited this 'informal deposit' of the Plan, and initiated over 2,000 comments

(2) *Discussion meetings*

During this same period, a further series of explanatory discussion meetings was held, some sponsored by the Council and some as a result of requests received from organisations, e.g. various sections of the Chamber of Commerce; professional groups of estate agents; architects and solicitors; Religious organisations; industrialists; residents' and ratepayers' associations; allotment associations; community associations; Young Farmers Club; Coventry Trades Council; Area Political Organisations; Groups of persons affected by the draft proposals, etc.

(3) *Press explanation*

A series of explanatory articles on 'Topics' of the Review Plan was given wide coverage in the City evening newspaper, including publication of illustrations. A full page colour production of the 'Policy' or Urban Structure Map for the City was published separately by a weekly newspaper (circulation 32,000 copies).

The 'Draft Proposals' were then reconsidered by the Council in the light of the comments received, and amended prior to the approval of the 'Review Plan' by the Council in July 1966.

(4) *Civic affairs broadsheet*

Published monthly, circulation 27,000 copies, distribution by Public Relations Officers to local organisations and individuals. This publication was also used to illustrate Topics of the Review Plan.

In 1966 Public Ward Meetings were not held on the same overall basis that was adopted during 1961 and 1962, but only where elected representatives of Wards deemed it desirable or public demand was evident.

(c) **Following formal approval of review plan**

The process of informing the public of the provisions of the Review Plan proposals continued with further public and private meetings wherever requested to discuss (generally the more controversial) proposals. Since publishing the draft proposals in April 1966, at least 52 meetings have been held with the public attended by approximately 4,000 people.

The formal 'deposit' of the Plan in May 1967, was again covered by a comprehensive exhibition, with staff available for explanation. Following the formal deposit 732 objections were received.

As a result of these objections and further analyses, 24 major modifications were made to the Review Plan, together with 155 minor modifications. A further exhibition was launched when the major modifications were placed on deposit in July and August 1968. Approximately 1,700 people visited the exhibition, as a result of which 33 further objections were received.

Of the total of 732 initial objections received, 322 were withdrawn. Of the subsequent 33 objections to the modifications 4 were later withdrawn.

(d) Permanent council public relations

In addition to the above procedures organised to involve the public in connection with the Development Plan Review proposals, ad hoc meetings often took place with ratepayers' and residents' associations to discuss specific matters. In addition to the Civic Affairs broadsheet (which is now serialising the Written Analysis and Statement of the Review Plan), the exhibition hall adjoining the Planning Department offices is devoted to planning matters whenever required, and a permanent exhibition kiosk is devoted to civic affairs in the central shopping area.

Coventry Planning Authority has also adopted a procedure whereby various studies have been published for sale in regard to survey and analysis methods of topics which have been investigated in connection with the work in reviewing the Development Plan, i.e. Coventry City Region, The Coventry Road System, Work in Coventry, People and Housing, Shopping in Coventry, Coventry '66 (The Making of a Development Plan), etc.

(e) Voluntary organisations participation

The interest of the public and the extent of their attendance at meetings organised to discuss local planning matters has been materially affected by the participation of voluntary labour in 'sponsoring' local organisations—in printing and distributing thousands of leaflets to houses, listing particulars of the time, place, speakers and topic. They have also booked halls for meetings, made arrangements for the local display of exhibition material (provided by the Council) for some days before meetings, advertised meetings and arranged press coverage. This local voluntary work is a major factor in attaining successful 'local Plan' discussion meetings, as is adequate chairmanship.

The effect of public participation on the plan making process

It is not yet possible to finally assess the results that public participation has had and is having upon the Development Plan making process in Coventry. In connection with the committee which has been set up by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to consider "the best methods, including publicity, of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their areas", the following information may be of assistance.

A study has been carried out of one particular area in Coventry.

Potters Green

Potters Green was chosen for no reason other than that the area is subject to change and yet the existing residential development is comparatively modern. At the time of the first series of Ward Meetings, Potters Green was a new community, and the residents, it can be assumed, would have been more likely to have had stronger views in regard to the lack of facilities and amenities within the area than in an established older community. Potters Green is, therefore, not representative of other districts in Coventry, but neither is it completely atypical. A meeting was held in Potters Green on the 8th January 1962, to obtain residents' comments and ideas on what they would like to see take place within their area within the next 20 years.

At that time, the population of Potters Green was between 2,500 and 3,000 approximately, and the meeting was attended by 33 residents. One Alderman, four Councillors and four officers presided.

Prior to the request for comments, a Planning Officer explained the provisions of the 1957 Development Plan. The following is an analysis of the 27 comments made at the meeting:

- (a) Seven requested that social and recreational facilities be provided in the area.
- (b) Five were concerned with the type and layout of the development to be provided on the east of Woodway Lane.
- (c) One requested that larger type shop units should be provided in the proposed local centre.
- (d) One requested that a footpath be provided between Potters Green and the neighbouring Wood End Estate.
- (e) One required information as to the future use of the canal arm.
- (f) One suggested that the land at either end of Venton's Lane might be used for old persons dwellings.
- (g) The remaining 11 comments were concerned with such matters as vehicle speeds, unsatisfactory road surfacing conditions, standards of work carried out by private developers, etc.

All the comments made at this meeting were noted and those that were relevant were referred to the appropriate Council Committees.

Following the Ward Meetings which took place in all parts of the city, a sum of £8,000 was set aside by the Council to carry out small items of work raised by the residents. It was finally decided that the whole of this money should be allocated to the Parks Department to be used to improve public open space and recreational facilities throughout the city.

Comparison of provisions of 1957 plan with the 1966 plan

The following is a comparison between the provisions of the Approved and the Review Plan.

(1) The road pattern

The road pattern has been the subject of greatest change as a result of national and local change in transport policy.

In 1959, Coventry was aware that the M.6 motorway would cross Sowe Common, but the exact line was not settled until 1963. The proposed 'outer connector' broadly follows a line of the outer ring road, suggested on the 1957 Plan. A major change immediately to the south of Potters Green is that the A.46 is not now to be improved, but shall form a by-pass to the north of Walsgrave Village; and that

environmental areas shall be separately defined for Walsgrave and Potters Green by the primary road pattern.

(2) Residential development

The increased acreage of other land uses to the east of Woodway Lane has reduced the area available for residential development. No detailed layout is yet available.

(3) Education

A further comprehensive school is proposed immediately to the south of the M.6. A primary school is planned at the junction of Shilton Lane and the proposed outer connector. A re-assessment of the area to the east of Woodway Lane has resulted in the abandonment of proposals to construct two schools (one primary and one special) in this area.

(4) Shopping facilities

In 1957, no shopping centre existed on the Potters Green Estate, and the 1957 Development Plan indicated that shopping facilities would be provided in the form of local centres, both to the west and east of Woodway Lane. In addition, a district centre was indicated on the east side of Woodway Lane opposite the junction with Henley Road.

In the 1966 Review Plan, the provision of the local centre to the west of Woodway Lane was confirmed, which includes a church and a site for a public house which is at present under construction.

In view of the substantial amendments to the structure of the area, however, the district centre proposal was abandoned, and shopping facilities and a nursery are notionally indicated in the heart of the proposed residential development lying to the east of Woodway Lane.

(5) Clubs

In 1964, it was proposed that the Walsgrave Working Men's Club should be relocated from its existing unsatisfactory site on the east side of Woodway Lane, just to the north of its junction with Hinckley Road, A.46, to a site within the area shown as a district centre on the 1957 Approved Development Plan. The relocation site is owned by the Corporation and approval in principle has now been given to this development.

(6) Community centres

The Potters Green Residents' Association was formed following the Ward Meeting held on the 8th January 1962, possibly as a direct result of this meeting. They originally sought a site for a community centre on Sowe Common, but this proposal was abandoned due to common land agreements. The Corporation site was then proposed immediately adjoining the southern boundary of the proposed comprehensive school on the east side of Woodway Lane, as indicated on the Review Plan.

Outline planning permission has been given for this development, which will have the benefit of a £10,000 loan from the Corporation.

(7) Cemetery

The cemetery is to be slightly extended under the provisions of the 1966 Plan.

8) Public open space

The overall area was reduced within Potters Green as a result of the M.6 and the proposed primary school at Shilton Lane, but a major recreation centre is now proposed immediately to the north of the M.6.

Results of the comments made at the ward meeting

As a result of the comments made at the Ward Meeting, two were acted upon immediately. Firstly, that relating to the provision of a footpath link between Potters Green and Wood End. This footpath was constructed at a cost of £483 by the General Works Committee, following a resolution by that Committee on the 12th February 1963. Secondly, it was suggested that the areas adjoining the bus stops along Woodway Lane should be paved. This suggestion was accepted and implemented by the City Engineer.

The Review Plan, and subsequent planning approvals, provide for the social and recreational facilities requested. The local concern regarding the draining and filling in of the canal arm has resulted in the Council approving proposals for this to be done.

The development plan review

Following the approval of the provisions of the Development Plan Review by the Council, a request was received from Ward Councillors that a public meeting be sponsored by the Potters Green Residents' Association to explain the provisions of the Plan.

Prior to the meeting, plans were exhibited for one week at the church hall where the meeting was to be held. The meeting, which was held on the 7th September 1966, was attended by two Ward Councillors and five officers. The attendance was 357 persons, and after the provisions of the plan had been explained a motion was carried, with only four votes against, that the Development Plan Review proposals be approved in principle. (At that time, the population of Potters Green was approximately 3,600).

Objections to the review plan

Of the 732 objections received, only three relate to the Potters Green Area:

- (a) An objection to land being earmarked as an extension to the cemetery—suggested that it be rezoned for residential purposes.
- (b) An objection that the small tongue of land adjoining the south-west corner of Sowe Common should not be allocated for public open space, but for residential purposes.
- (c) An objection by allotment holders in regard to the effect of the Walsgrave by-pass road on the allotments site.

Costs

The subsequent interest of the residents of the Potters Green Area was reflected by their high attendance at the 1966 meeting. This necessitated the preparation of a considerable amount of information. Six large plans were specifically prepared for the meeting, plus special officer reconnaissance of the area, the preparation of notes on special

topics by various officers, and a pre-meeting discussion between officers and Councillors. The cost of the plans, including prints and tracers' time would have been approximately £10. The number of planning officer man-hours expended is difficult to assess.

However, it is probable that the assembly of the information provided necessitated approximately 20 (planning officer) man-hours to prepare. In addition, five senior officials attended the evening meeting. This probably entailed an additional 15 man-hours, including travelling time. Reconnaissance and the pre-meeting discussion involved five man-hours, and mounting the exhibition some four man-hours.

Conclusions regarding the Potters Green study

It is evident that the policy effect of public participation in the evolution of a plan for the Potters Green Area was slight. The road pattern, the future layout of the land to the east of Woodway Lane, and the educational provisions all reflect, or will reflect national and/or local policies. The general acceptance of the Development Plan Review proposals by the residents could be indicative of the competence of the planning process in Coventry, in association with a reasoned and comprehensible explanation of the plan; it may, however, be due to a lay audience being unable to make objective criticism regarding the content of the plan. There is no doubt, however, that the residents' views accelerated the provision of certain facilities, e.g. the community centre and the rectification of certain detailed matters which were causing concern.

Public involvement in the future

The Town and Country Planning Act 1968 requires a Local Planning Authority to involve the public in the plan making process at two specific stages, in respect of both Structure and Local Plans.

- (1) To place on deposit the Report of Survey, in order that the public can make representations regarding the scope of its contents.
- (2) The deposit of plans in order that formal objections can be lodged.

The first stage possibly implies objective criticism, and the second stage subjective criticism.

The attitude of the public *affected* by the provisions of a plan is very positive and may react politically against the sponsors of the plan, and has the corollary that adequate communication between the officers and the elected representatives is essential on the issues involved. Whilst it is imperative that the principle of full public involvement in planning proposals at the formative stage is adhered to, there are limits to public reaction in regard to the consideration of major issues affecting the city as a whole.

The cognisance that a Local Planning Authority should take of observations made in connection with any planning proposals must depend upon the degree of public representation that these observations embody. It is essential that a Local Planning Authority does not bow to pressure from an articulate or vociferous minority to advance the cause of a locality to the possible detriment of other areas in the city which do not at such point in time appreciate the implications and do not, therefore, possess a militant faction.

At the present time, investigations are proceeding into the ramifications of the Town and Country Planning Act with a view to ascertaining how public involvement can best be achieved in the local plan making process. The basic procedure that Coventry has so

far adopted in liaising with the public is capable of further extension and development, perhaps on more formal lines allied to a local committee. Planning and Redevelopment Committee in July 1966, minute 154/6 resolved that public involvement in formulation of local plans be implemented immediately where possible, by linking representation of local communities in consultation with Ward Councillors. Such groups would be guided by technical officers of the City Council, and a new form of community interest in local affairs might be encouraged. There could be co-option of persons with specialist knowledge and views to deal with certain elements of the plan, e.g. Secretary of the Residents' Association, Headmaster of the local comprehensive school, representative of the Chamber of Commerce, industrialists within the area.

General comments

- 1 It is impossible to cost effectively the procedures which have been adopted to involve the public in the plan making process. This would ideally entail an assessment of the 'benefits' which have accrued to the community and the planners as a result of their participation. A straightforward estimate of the man-hours involved in public participation does not represent the cost to the Local Authority—again, ideally, an assessment should be made of the opportunity costs of staff time.
- 2 The 1962 series of meetings possibly served to identify the role of the Planning Office in the minds of residents. The meetings also resulted in the establishment of lines of communication between the residents and the Planning Authority. In this connection, during the ensuing period, the number of queries and requests for information apparently rose considerably, and were mainly directed to specific officers who had attended the ward meetings.
- 3 It is essential that pressure groups, e.g. an amenity organisation or ratepayers association, are not assumed to be representative of local opinion. Such a pressure group may make representations to expedite action which may be in the interests of one particular locality, or one particular element of environmental planning; but when such action is viewed within a total programme of priorities for the city as a whole, it may be premature or completely unjustifiable.
- 4 The sponsoring of Ward Meetings; the Ideas Competition; The School Children's Competition; the display of planning schemes and proposals; and the information on the planning process contained in the local press and in Local Authority bulletins, have had the result of engendering a sense of public involvement in, and an awareness of, the planning process. A distinction must be drawn however, between involvement, i.e. an awareness of policies through consultation, and participation, i.e. active participation in the decision making process. It is apparent that certain sectors of the community, usually group organised, are anxious to participate in the decision making process. It is apparent, however, that the majority of the public are largely apathetic towards planning issues or are content to leave matters in the hands of the Authority provided that they themselves are not affected by proposals. It is also evident that participation will only function efficiently if means are found of awakening total public interest in the planning process.
- 5 As a corollary of 4, it is evident that the majority of the general public have hitherto been unable, or unwilling, to criticise a Development Plan objectively. With the development of scientific and objective techniques, e.g. spatial interaction models, cost

PART 2

Evidence submitted by Washington Development Corporation

Methods used to secure public participation

benefit analysis, it will be extremely difficult for the public to debate or question the decision making process in the future. For this reason, it is important that Local Authorities include in their plans, in addition to their chosen strategy, statements indicating the alternative strategies that they have considered and discounted, in addition to an explanation of the evaluative techniques that were employed.

It is vital to allow people the opportunity to express their views as well as to inform them of plans for, and progress of, the New Town. One cannot work in a vacuum and expect to have the support and confidence of the public in the area.

Involving the public is both costly and time consuming. Both commodities being in short supply it could easily be put to one side in favour of other exercises. This is short sighted in the extreme. From its earliest days the Corporation has always gone out of its way to meet people and to explain in simple terms (or by using visual aids), not only the proposals for development, but also the function and working of the Corporation itself. If one considers the unnecessary, and unfortunate, ignorance shown concerning central and local Government one can hardly expect the public to understand the mechanisms of a complex body like a Corporation.

The Interim Plan for the New Town was produced in October 1965. At that time the Corporation only had twenty-four staff, but nevertheless it was felt to be essential that these plans be put to the public before they were crystallized. Already the public had been kept informed by means of talks, articles in the Press, etc. of the general line of development.

The Washington Grammar School was chosen as being the most suitable building for mounting the Exhibition. The sixth formers and some teachers in the school were involved, after briefing, by acting as extra guides to the public. The Exhibition was open from 11.00 a.m.–8.00 p.m. for one week with two Public Meetings at 7.30 p.m. Nearly 2,000 people attended the two meetings where they were able to put questions to the Consultant Planners, members of the Local Authorities in the designated area, Board Members and Chief Officers of the Development Corporation. A total of 4,247 people visited the Exhibition, and some 600 suggestions and comments were made, some of which were later incorporated in the Master Plan.

The period October 1965–January 1967, when the Master Plan was shown to the public, continued to be used for a two-way process of communication with the public. Enquiries were then coming in on numerous subjects. They arose as a result of talks, letters, articles in the press, on the radio and television, etc. All were handled as speedily as possible.

The Corporation was aware that when the Master Plan was exhibited many people would be worried as to the future of their property. To lessen anxiety, letters were delivered to the homes of those known to be affected by future development the day before the Master Plan. The letter requested attendance at the Corporation's offices. Transport was arranged to bring the people from their homes to the Corporation offices and to return them. Light refreshments were also given. It should be remembered that these people came the evening of the first day of the Master Plan Exhibition, nevertheless the General Manager, Chief Estates Officer and Social Development Officer welcomed these people and advised them of the situation and what the Corporation could and would do in the way of rehousing them. Many problems were dealt with on the spot. During the next few days a member of the Chief Estates Officer's Department accompanied by one of the Social Development Officer's Department visited the homes of those people unable to attend. There can be little doubt that this action forestalled any grave upsets and allayed any great anxiety. It is so much more efficient to do this and be honest with people than leave them wondering on their future prospects. It naturally brought to light individual problems which were also solved or ameliorated.

The Corporation opened an Information Centre at the same time as the presentation of the Master Plan (January 1967). This is adjacent to Washington shopping precinct and bus station and is housed in a Terrapin building. Throughout its two years of existence some 17,925 persons have visited the Centre for one reason or another. Many enquiries are still those concerning property and a written reply is given to all these within seven days. (Written replies are given in case of any possible future legal need). The Centre always has on display maps, models, photographs, plans, etc. of forthcoming development. It is also used for mounting Exhibitions from the Bowes Museum, Civic Trust, local Arts Society, etc.

A more recent exercise has been the holding of a 'mini' Exhibition in the Fatfield area. This is the area in the New Town furthest away from the Information Centre and it was felt that an on the spot viewing of progress, with particular reference to Fatfield, would be appreciated. The Exhibition was open for five days from 3.00 p.m.-8.00 p.m. and had over 400 visitors. There was always at least one official of the Corporation in attendance to handle queries. In view of the response it is now planned to hold a similar Exhibition every six months.

A most effective method of stimulating public interest is by means of coach tours of the designated area. This the Corporation has done (free of charge) for the local Councils (3), the general public, clubs and schools in the area. A detailed itinerary is given to each passenger and a member of the Corporation's staff explains items of interest along the route. This was so much appreciated by the public that a future series of tours is to be arranged this year starting at the end of March. (This exercise was also carried out for the majority of Corporation staff with the General Manager acting as guide and commentator).

Schools in the area have been, and will continue to be, involved in a tree planting programme. Each school taking part is visited by members of the landscape and forestry section and a talk, accompanied by colour slides, is given on the importance of trees. Arrangements are then made for the children to be taken to the site where young trees are to be planted. The schools provide the coaches but the organisation of the entire programme is the Social Development Officer's responsibility.

Schools and students both inside and outside the designated area have also been involved in a "War on Dereliction" programme. To date, six successful work camps have been held and a considerable amount of minor dereliction has been most successfully tackled. This is also a continuing programme and is carried out with the assistance of the Civic Trust. (In view of its success the Ministry of Housing and Local Government has requested the Corporation to provide details of the way in which this work was undertaken. The local Councils too have been of considerable assistance in loaning equipment.)

The Corporation produces a considerable amount of literature and this includes a Quarterly Review. The Review is placed in public buildings, shops, schools, etc. as well as the Information Centre and is available free of charge. In simple terms and by use of photographs and maps it explains current work being undertaken by the Corporation.

Daily letters are received from the area and outside and indeed abroad from school children through to Professors asking for information about the New Town and its progress. It is essential, therefore, to have a stock of up to date literature which can easily accompany an explanatory letter. Many individuals and groups of people also spend time at the Corporation offices where they can be shown plans, etc., and where they have an opportunity to ask questions. Industrialists and their wives also fall into this category.

It is a well-known fact that residents in new housing areas can be critical of their new surroundings. This is so for a variety of reasons and it is essential to forestall problems in this direction by having a member of staff on the spot a month or so before the first residents arrive. In its first village—Donwell—a house was put to one side for use as a site office. At ground floor level the Community Development Officer has his offices and the first floor is used by the Housing Department.

For the Community Development Officer it serves a joint function, as it is also a meeting place where he can get to know residents (and vice versa) and act as a catalyst for developing community activities. New residents are invited in small groups to the office—generally in the evening or at the weekend—and housing and allied subjects can be discussed. Residents started moving in last April and a very flourishing Residents Association is now in a position to take on the responsibilities of running the new village social centre which the Corporation has built and just handed over to them. Already two play groups, a women's group and a Keep Fit Class have been in operation for some time by using the site office.

The Community Development Officer is not intended to be a leader. This would destroy local initiative. Furthermore, he must be able finally to leave the residents without their organisation collapsing on his departure.

A Community Development Officer will work for approximately two years in a village by which time it is believed that the Residents Association will be able to function without background support.

The above describes the main methods by which the public have been involved in the development of Washington New Town.

APPENDIX 4

List of bodies represented at a meeting in Croydon on 10th May 1968

Meeting held at Eldon Hall on Friday 10 May 1968

Platform

Mr M. G. Wardley, ARIBA,
Chairman
Mr D. Lowman,
representing London Council of Social Service.
Mr J. H. Clark,
representing Norbury and District Ring Road Association.
Mr E. R. Tite,
General Secretary, Croydon Guild of Social Service.

Some forty persons were present, representing the following Organisations:

The Rotary Club of Croydon
The Croydon District Chapter South Eastern Society of Architects
Addington Tenants Association
Norbury and District Ring Road Association
Standing Committee of Women's Organisations
Croydon Guild Executive Committee
Croydon Citizens' Advice Bureau
Clock House Farm Estate Residents Association
Croydon Auctioneers and Surveyors Association
Auckland Ridge Residents Association
Croydon Advertiser
South London Press
Shrublands Tenants Association
South Croydon Liberal Association
Bromley Trades Council
Sanderstead Chamber of Trade
The Norwood Society
Croydon Citadel, Salvation Army
Sanderstead Preservation Society
Purley Branch, Croydon Guild of Social Service
Kenley and Whyteleaf Residents Association
Toc H, Addiscombe
St. Pauls Presbyterian Church

APPENDIX 5

Examples of involvement by activities

(a) Survey stage

- (i) Information collecting
- (ii) footpath analyses
- (iii) historic buildings records
- (iv) tree preservation or planting surveys
- (v) leisure surveys
- (vi) shopping surveys (Chamber of Trade)
- (vii) collection of opinions

(b) At early stage in formulation of ideas

- (i) Debates on objectives—especially with universities and groups of professionals.

(c) During formulation of proposals

- (i) Assistance in organisation of exhibitions
- (ii) giving talks at exhibitions
- (iii) registering comments at exhibitions, e.g. Barnsbury
- (iv) providing forum for discussion
- (v) service on community forum
- (vi) service on specialist advisory committees
- (vii) formulation of representations on proposals and giving evidence at preliminary inquiries

(d) All stages

- (i) Service as co-opted member of planning committee
- (ii) service on advisory panels
- (iii) service on community forums and as delegate representatives
- (iv) general 'ideas' competitions
- (v) distribution of material
- (vi) arranging for press coverage
- (vii) making local films
- (viii) competitions for schools

APPENDIX 6

Note on the Deeplish Study

Deeplish is a part of Rochdale which was the subject of a study and report about the ways to improve an old urban neighbourhood and what disturbance the rehabilitation would entail. The study was carried out by a team assembled in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government including architects, planners, traffic engineers, research workers, sociologists, quantity surveyors and estates officers. A social survey was carried out to discover, for example, the length of residence and intentions of the inhabitants about moving; it sought also to find out what were people's attitudes to the existing conditions of their home and neighbourhood, and their attitudes towards improvement. The Deeplish study is not an example of direct participation as between the public and the local planning authority, although the study could not have been carried out without the help of the Rochdale County Borough Council and the local residents; but it demonstrates the kind of improvement that can be achieved.

The Deeplish Study HMSO 12s. 6d.

APPENDIX 7

Authorities invited to prepare development plans under the new system as at 30 April 1969

- 1 Gateshead County Borough Council
Newcastle County Borough Council
Sunderland County Borough Council
South Shields County Borough Council
Tynemouth County Borough Council
Durham County Council
Northumberland County Council
- 2 Teesside County Borough Council
Durham County Council
Yorks. North Riding County Council
- 3 Lancashire County Council
Cheshire County Council
Manchester County Borough Council
Liverpool County Borough Council
Bootle County Borough Council
Birkenhead County Borough Council
Salford County Borough Council
Wallasey County Borough Council
- 4 Birmingham County Borough Council
Dudley County Borough Council
Solihull County Borough Council
Walsall County Borough Council
Warley County Borough Council
West Bromwich County Borough Council
Wolverhampton County Borough Council
- 5 Leicester County Borough Council
Leicestershire County Council
- 6 Norwich County Borough Council
Norfolk County Council
- 7 Hampshire County Council
Southampton County Borough Council
Portsmouth County Borough Council
- 8 Glamorgan County Council
Monmouthshire County Council
Newport County Borough Council
Cardiff County Borough Council
Swansea County Borough Council

A statement of choices—Los Angeles

1 The Los Angeles Planning Department sought to involve the public in determining what the city should look like in the 21st century. Their programme envisaged that by 1970 the Goals, Concept Plan and the Policies Plan together with more detailed plans for public facility and transportation systems and the various communities of the city would be integrated into a comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Los Angeles.

2 This appendix describes just part of the Concept Plan which may be said to equate with an examination of choices. The authority produced a simple leaflet illustrating four ways described as four concepts, in which Los Angeles might develop. They were:

(a) Centres Concept

This concept envisages large regional concentrations of residence and employment which would be the focal points for solidifying new growth in the metropolitan study area. It proposes a city of highly urban character while preserving single-family residential areas and natural amenities. It attempts to minimise travel distances between home and places of work.

(b) Dispersal Concept

This concept seeks an even distribution of activities which would accommodate growth while preserving existing characteristics. The concept attempts to keep travel distances from home to work and other daily activities at a minimum by having jobs, consumer services, recreation and public facilities located close to the resident population.

(c) Corridor Concept

This concept proposes a highly urbanised metropolis with concentrations of employment, commercial services, recreational facilities and high density apartments located in corridors extending outwards from the metropolitan core. This concept would require a mass rapid transit system.

(d) Low Density Concept

This concept seeks to preserve the present residential patterns of the city. It emphasises the single-family detached house. The motorcar would continue as the predominant means of transport. Under this concept the city could not accept growth beyond specified population limits.

3 These issues and relevant facts were put to the public who were invited to comment on them.

Costs

This appendix contains two parts. The first describes how two authorities have set about their publicity and participation activities—and seeks to give an indication of the cost. The figures, of necessity, contain several estimates since separate records are not kept distinguishing the cost of those activities from the general planning work of the authority. But they do indicate the scale of activities and what the cost was in terms of money and man-power. The second part of the appendix states the cost of material for various media of communication.

PART 1**(a) Notes prepared by Hampshire County Council**

1 (a) The Authority has not submitted a Statutory Development Plan since 1962.

(b) Non-Statutory Plans, of which there is a considerable programme, are published in draft form for public comment after confidential consultations with the District Council concerned, and, in some circumstances, the Parish Council. A press conference is held, followed by a public meeting at which the draft proposals are explained and questions answered. Objections in writing are invited by a fixed date, usually about two months later. The objections are considered both by the District Council and County Planning Committee. The plan is then adopted subject to any modifications agreed, or, if substantial alterations are proposed, republished for further public comment. One plan has been completely withdrawn at this stage. The plans are produced both at draft and adopted stages in booklet form and sold. This is the normal procedure; it is, however, regarded as sufficiently flexible to allow variations in appropriate circumstances. For example, a plan with far-reaching implications may be published in draft by stages, or it is possible to consult Local Amenity Societies at the draft stage in the case of Conservation Areas. It is the usual practice to address meetings of the Chambers of Trade, Amenity Societies, etc. following publication of all draft plans.

2 Until recently it has normally not been customary to consult local organisations etc., until draft plans have been published. Some experiments on prior consultation have been made, it is thought with success.

3 The object of publishing draft plans is both to inform and seek views, particularly since it is doubtful whether the views of the public are likely to be of any great value unless some trouble is taken to ensure that they are informed. The public can:

- (a) explain a view or draw attention to a specific problem at the public meeting;
- (b) write to the Authority to give their views;
- (c) write to the press;
- (d) express a view through a local association, such as a Chamber of Trade, Amenity Societies, etc.;
- (e) consult the members and officers of County or District Councils personally on individual problems.

4 The Authority employ a Press Officer whose duties include giving such advice as handling the press, arranging press conferences, etc.

5 A 'campaign' (of sorts) was mounted to explain the South Hampshire Study, when it was published in 1966; the costs of this are given. In addition, an attempt has been made to evaluate the cost of that part of the Department's normal work concerned with publicity for non-statutory plans. This is a continuous 'campaign' and is expressed as an annual cost. It covers attendance at public meetings, reading and evaluating letters of comment, meeting individuals and a good

deal of correspondence. This is thought to take approximately 5% of working time of the particular staff concerned.

South Hampshire Study

- (a) Exhibition (2 weeks)
Materials, rents, advertising and man-power £120
Attendance 300–400
Cost per head 6/- to 8/-
Talks, etc. (60) ; staff salaries and travelling £425
Attendance about 2,500
Cost per head 3/6.

Note: If each person is assumed to have discussed the subject with one other, cost per head is halved and between one and two persons per hundred of the adult population affected in the Administrative County was reached.

- (b) Exhibition :
65 man/hours by professional staff
38 man/hours by technical staff
Talks :
116 man/hours by professional staff.

Normal office programme: typical year

- (a) Cost :
Arranging and attending public meetings
Receiving and evaluating letters
Corresponding with objectors
Meeting objectors
Talks with associations, etc.
at 5% of time of 14 staff involved, p.a. £1,570.

- (b) Staff involved :
Approximately 158 man/days per annum by professional staff.
Note: 1 Some of this time is overtime, for which the staff concerned are not directly paid. 2 Other departments of the Authority may also be involved, e.g. the County Surveyor's Department on road proposals and the Clerk's Department. An official letter is sent to each objector after adoption of plan.

6 The population covered by non-statutory plans ranges from six figures to a few hundred.

It is not possible to give the cost of publicity for individual plans, but a typical annual cost (1967-68) to the Authority (excluding travel and manpower) is as follows:

(a) Press advertising	£919
(b) Exhibitions	—
(c) Pamphlets:	
Loss on publication of plans,	£407
posters, etc., say	£15
(d) Other media—public meetings	—
	£1,341

7 The Authority have mounted several exhibitions in connection with more general planning matters (e.g. design, for which there is a permanent 'campaign'). Their experience in an area of medium or small towns and many villages is that the limiting factors on the scale of the exhibition are usually the size of the available exhibition space and the availability of staff time for preparation. An exhibition space must be supervised; this rules out many Parish or Church Halls, often the only available accommodation. Space in Libraries and Museums is strictly limited, and often booked up well ahead. The provision of adequate supervised exhibition space in public buildings of this kind is the exception rather than the rule.

As a result, an exhibition of more than about 40 ft. run of panels is very difficult to place.

On exhibitions generally, amongst the advantages of the Authority holding a stock of suitable exhibiting material, is the possibility of loaning material to outside private bodies, which has been done on a number of occasions in Hampshire. This is a very economical method of publicity, since it involves little or no staff time.

8 It will be apparent from paragraph 5 that the publicity for the South Hampshire Study reached only a limited number of people at a relatively high cost. Nevertheless, the 'campaign' as a whole was thought to have had considerable success in allaying public fears, even if to succeed wholly in this task was beyond expectation, and to promote some discussion on the role of South Hampshire in the South East and in relation to national planning. It is felt that the possibilities of reaching a much wider public through television have not been adequately explored. It has been evident that where even a relevant 2-minute item in the regional television news programme has been screened (often due to fortuitous circumstances) the public response to the publication of a plan has been much more marked. Here again, the resources employed are largely those of the B.B.C. or I.T.V. and place a far smaller call on staff time than exhibitions and talks.

(b) Notes prepared by Liverpool County Borough Council

1 Although the Authority have not produced a Statutory Development Plan since 1953, a series of non-statutory plans have been produced foreshadowing in form and content the new style development plans.

The structure plan

2 Starting in 1963, a series of 17 Research and Policy Reports were produced, covering the main city problems, such as employment, population and housing, social patterns, retail trends and transportation, the last of which was a summary report, roughly equivalent to the Report of Survey referred to in Sections 1 and 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1968. The reports were used for consultations with organisations and interest groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, and provided a basis of mutual confidence for subsequent collaboration. They did not succeed generally in stimulating a lively public debate. Following this appraisal of broad strategies for the city, the Liverpool Interim Planning Policy was produced demonstrating some of the alternative choices available and the application of the preferred policies to the city's structure. It was 'interim' because it needed testing and adjusting in the light of further data, but primarily because it was a 'discussion' document.

3 On publication, the Structure Plan received a good deal of publicity through television, radio, newspapers and technical journals. The Structure Plan and the City Centre Plan, which was produced at about the same time, were both made the subject of a major exhibition which, during the two years it was open, attracted 200,000 visitors.

4 Very little of the reporting on the Interim Planning Policy was critical, perhaps due to the broad policy approach of the document itself, and none of this led to any real public debate of the major policy issues which were involved.

Local plans

5 A remarkable feature of the community life of Liverpool is the strength and variety of voluntary organisation, ranging from the Liverpool Council of Social Service through an ever-growing number of community councils to residents' groups, lunch clubs and 'interest' groups of all kinds. They are concerned with all kinds of social and welfare matters affecting the community; members and officers co-operate closely with them, often serving or sitting on their Committees. For residential areas particularly, these organisations provide a very useful channel of communication and an opportunity for the public to take a constructive part in the planning of their community, and in the framing of local plans. There remains the 'silent majority' of people who still may not be reached, but whose interests must be safeguarded.

6 Currently a series of District and Action Area Plans are being produced. The main activities in the preparation of local plans are shown (in the network on page 32). What this network can mean in actual activity may be illustrated by the amplification of a section of this network in the preparation of a District Plan for Speke. This is a rather isolated municipal housing development of 25,000 people built between 1937 and 1954 with a major shopping centre and a number of other amenities such as a swimming bath, library, meeting hall, etc. A report of survey, appraisal and sketch proposals was prepared and used for a programme of consultation and participation before any other decision was taken.

7 The first step was to contact local community organisations, and initial meetings were held with these groups. In Speke, the Executive Committee of the Community Council was particularly active and functioned as the liaison committee on behalf of all other groups. It was decided that the residents groups themselves should be responsible for organising a public meeting, for publicising the Plan locally, and for holding local exhibitions. The Planning Department agreed to contact the press and to prepare the display and publicity material. (The problems and proposals for Speke were also displayed at the Liverpool Show, which was attended by people from all parts of the City).

8 A major feature of the publicity material was a summary pamphlet and questionnaire, distributed to every household in Speke. This gave a summary of the major problems and proposals and invited written comment, in addition to publicising the public meeting. At the public meeting, held in November 1968, response was good from the hard core of people interested in community organisations or with special grievances. This was also the case with replies to the questionnaires; there seems to have been little response from the vast majority of families with no particular interests or grievances.

9 Press coverage of the Plan for Speke and of the public meeting was disappointing, in contrast, for instance, to press coverage of district plans for redevelopment areas which has been extensive. The Speke Community Council have now set up 'Action Committees' to study the problems, and to consider future actions.

10 The next step will be to collate the comments of the public and those of other Corporation Committees and Departments. The exercise was most useful in finding out what people in Speke felt their main problems to be, and to which they gave priority. Specific suggestions were most effective at a detailed level.

*Typical costs*11 (a) *Interim Planning Policy (a City Centre Plan)*

Exhibition (2 years) £17,000

Attendance 200,000

Cost per head 1s. 8d.

A large scale model which cost about half the total cost of the exhibition has been up-dated and retained as a feature of a permanent exhibition at the Planning Department.

The main publication is sold at cost price of 36s, research and policy documents between 5s and 8s a copy. They are distributed free to the organisations most immediately concerned.

(b) *A District Plan (Speke)*

Materials for exhibition £15

750 copies of main publication £215

7,000 handouts incorporating a questionnaire £60

150 posters advertising public meeting £1

Staff time:

47 man hours by professional staff

38 man hours by Technical staff

Annual costs (Planning Department only)

12 Exhibition:

The permanent exhibition (3,000 sq. ft.) was mounted at a cost of £1,800.

The annual maintenance for this and other exhibition materials is between £500-£1,000 (excluding rent).

Publications:

Main reports are sold at cost price, handouts are distributed free.

Annual production cost approximately £1,500.

Staff time:

It has not been possible to allocate annual staff time to participation.

Attendance at public meetings and giving talks runs at about 200 a year.

These costs for exhibition material and publications may seem to indicate that these are the main techniques employed as such. In fact, publicity achieved through the press, radio, television and other means is usually most effective when supported by display and published documents and participation needs a similar stimulus.

Appraisal

13 The Liverpool experience may be useful because the City has made efforts to pursue participation fairly actively. In producing the Interim Structure Plan the main effort has been 'advocacy' publicity while at the Local Plan level, it has been through participation by the planner in community development. The next steps to be taken will be those leading to the approval of the Structure Plan for the city. The survey and testing studies to up-date the plan for this purpose are just beginning and must take account of experience gained through the Local Plans. The continuous involvement of the public which has been of benefit at the Local Plan Level may be a pointer to what is required for the City as a whole.

PART 2**Costs of materials for various media for communication***(i) Exhibitions*

1 A large exhibition for an area with a population of a million may well cost in the order of £20,000 and additional exhibition material cost in the order of £1,000 per annum.

2 Smaller exhibitions are far cheaper. Estimates are given below for two information displays, one having 10 panels and the other 16. If each panel had fairly straightforward graphics work the average cost would be about £30. No estimates are included for models as these would in many cases be produced by local authority staff, perhaps with other uses in view.

3 The estimates, which cover operational expenditure only and do not include staff are:

- (a) one set of 10 panels (5ft. by 4ft.) complete with metal uprights, text, photos, etc., £300
- (b) one set of 16 panels similar to (a), £480
Site costs are estimated at £40 per site.

(ii) Exhibition trailers

4 As a long-term asset, a 22-foot exhibition trailer caravan fitted with an interior which could be used for showing plans and models would have the advantage of mobility—taking the plans to the people. It would also be used for other subjects involving local affairs, and for encouraging health, welfare, road safety and crime prevention campaigns. The cost of such a trailer (equipped to show slides or films) would be between £3,000 and £4,000. It would be hauled by the local authority's own prime mover, such as a Land Rover or other suitable vehicle. Touring would cost on an average about 2s 6d per mile including generator for lighting. Slides would cost around £1 each, including elementary art work. We have recommended the publication of booklets and pamphlets.

(iii) Printed material

5 Estimated printing costs of a single leaf pamphlet (8ins. by 5ins.) in one colour only would be:

10,000 copies £25, and 28s per 1,000 run-on.

A booklet in two colours (8½ins. by 5½ins.) would cost:

10,000 copies £175, and £7 per 1,000 run-on.

A newsletter in one colour only, 4 pages (11¾ins. by 8¼ins.), would cost:

10,000 copies of one issue £125, and £6 per 1,000 run-on (for two issues multiply by two and so on).

A wall newspaper in two colours (16½ins. by 22ins.) similar to The Department of Economic Affairs' 'Upswing' would cost:

500 copies £100, and 16s per 100 run-on.

The cost of such items as photographs or drawings or contributors' fees is difficult to estimate. It is, however, unlikely to be less than £25 for one edition of the pamphlet and £75 each for one edition or issue of the other items.

(iv) Film

6 A professionally produced film, to illustrate the new system might well cost in the order of £20,000. This cost probably puts it outside consideration by the local planning authorities. The average life of

such a film would be about 10 years, it would cover a subject relevant on a national scale, and because of the phased introduction of the Act could have a value to each group of authorities as they were authorised to produce a plan.

(v) Filmstrips

7 The cost of filmstrips which would be suitable for putting over facts or ideas varies considerably depending whether existing or specially produced material is used. If it is the former the cost might be about £200 for fifty or more illustrations; if the latter the cost will be nearer £800. Filmstrips with their own synchronised commentary and sound track can often cost £1,000 to be produced, but copies would be about £10 each for both picture and sound prints.

APPENDIX 10

The Barnsbury Exhibition

1 This Appendix contains passages describing an exhibition held in Barnsbury. It is taken from the report of the Barnsbury Environmental Study.

2 The Exhibition had the dual purpose of letting the public know about the Study Team's tentative ideas and at the same time experimenting with methods to elicit direct public response to the proposals.

Setting it up

3 The exhibition was conceived by the Study Team and was presented as their responsibility. The main display was mounted by the Architects Department Display Group of the Greater London Council. It was thought essential to hold the exhibition in the heart of the study area, and a centrally situated school was chosen. This choice limited the period of the exhibition to 8 days during the school's Easter Holiday. It opened daily from noon until 9 p.m. on weekdays. The intention had been to close the exhibition all day on the Sunday but, in response to requests, it was open for three hours in the afternoon on that day.

4 The school hall and a classroom opening off it were used for displays, and a third was used as a staff room and office. The main part of the exhibition, erected in the hall measuring 58 feet by 14 feet, consisted of a series of 28 display panels. These, and a false ceiling made of muslin, enclosed a completely remodelled space within the hall. All photographs, maps and enquiry sheets were on projecting boards mounted and lit by angled lamps. A large aerial photo of the study area and an 'atmospheric' photomural of people waiting in a local bus queue were erected at the two ends of the hall. In the classroom were displayed examples of the Team's suggestions for dealing with some of the housing, parking, traffic and open space problems of the district.

Staffing

5 At least one member of the Study Team was present at all times to give advice, answer questions and enter into discussion on the exhibits or the Team's proposals with interested visitors. A member of the staff of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, not a member of the Study Team, was also on duty, to give whatever help he could to the simpler enquiries, to count the visitors with a hand-held device and to see that the exhibits came to no harm at the hands of children. Children were not discouraged from looking around the exhibition. Indeed many of them took a great deal of interest in it and some, after being supplied with pens and paper, produced some very graphic ideas of the houses and surroundings in which they would like to live.

Cost

6 The Greater London Council (through the Inner London Education Authority) made the school available free. The G.L.C. also contributed the services of the Display Group. The cost was kept within a budget of £1,500. The major items of expenditure were on labour and materials for stands and display frames (£700), photographs and enlargements (£400), printing posters and leaflets (£100).

Publicity

7 About a month before the opening of the exhibition a press notice was circulated, and contact was made with the local newspapers and a press agency in the district. At the same time letters were sent to 16 local associations. Only one or two of these were known to be directly concerned with environmental and amenity problems but they were all potential publicity agents for the exhibition.

8 During the week preceding the exhibition a leaflet with details of place and opening hours was delivered through the letter box to each household in Barnsbury, and posters were displayed throughout the area, mostly in the windows of members of the Barnsbury Association, who helped in other ways to give publicity to the exhibition.

9 On the eve of the exhibition national and local newspapers, and a wide range of professional journals were invited to a press preview. Press folders were provided containing a descriptive summary of the exhibition, reproductions of drawings and a glossy print suitable for reproduction of a typical pair of terraced houses before and after restoration.

10 A visit by the Minister and Members of the G.L.C. and Islington London Borough Council on the opening day was made the subject of another press notice.

11 During the exhibition paid advertising was inserted in one local newspaper to encourage attendance during closing stages and a loudspeaker van toured the district for two hours on the Saturday afternoon to announce that in response to public demand the exhibition would be open from two until five on the Sunday.

The display panels and public response

12 To encourage active response from visitors from the beginning, the first display panel, a large aerial photograph of Barnsbury, invited visitors to 'stick a pin to show where you live'. New photographs were found to be necessary after two or three days; different coloured pins were used daily. From the panel the Team was able to deduce that some 12.2% of the households situated in the immediate neighbourhood of the school visited the exhibition. The farther away from the school area, the more the percentage of households which visited the exhibition fell. For Barnsbury as a whole the percentage was 3.15. About 1,150 Barnsbury people came to see the exhibition from about 1,000 households. Another 100 came from further afield including planning officers and architects from various parts of the country. Several people made more than one visit. In all, there were 1,304 visits, by 1,250 individuals.

13 After the first 'visitor-participation' panel there came four panels depicting the environmental quality of Barnsbury—the contrast between an old lady's post-war flat and the bareness of the noisy space outside; an improved house and how the owner's attitude towards it had been affected by the surrounding traffic noise; a picture of a housewife who suffered a lorry skid over the pavement and through the wall in front of her house; the effects which a heavy lorry depot has on families living in a nearby tenement.

14 These panels prepared viewers for the next step in participation. Under the general heading of 'what bothers you most in Barnsbury?' visitors were asked to put a tick in the spaces provided against the following items:

- (1) having to share a toilet?
- (2) being without a bathroom with hot water?
- (3) not having enough room?
- (4) the traffic noise?
- (5) anxiety about their children in the road?
- (6) the need for better school facilities?
- (7) having nowhere in the open air for a pleasant chat or a place to sit down and rest?
- (8) anything else?

15 The second public participation panel was followed by pictorial examples of the anxiety and disturbance caused by traffic, a map showing the black spots for pedestrians and road users, a diagram of traffic flows and the team's proposals for the creation of environmental areas in Barnsbury. Then came a panel on car parking—how much space it required in Barnsbury now and the extra demands it would make in the future. The visitors were then asked to say how much rent they would be prepared to pay for a garage.

16 A panel on public transport in the district was followed by a questionnaire on changes and improvements most wanted.

'Which would you put first:

- (a) priority for buses over other vehicles?
- (b) more comfortable transfer between bus and underground railway?
- (c) a rapid shuttle service between the Angel, Nag's Head and King's Cross?
- (d) express bus services to the City and West End?
- (e) anything else?'

17 In the next section of the exhibition dealing with housing, visitors were asked to say, after looking at photographs of several types of houses in a variety of settings, the kind of house they would prefer to live in and where they would like it to be.

18 At this point, the exhibition opened into the second room, where examples of the Team's ideas for overcoming some of Barnsbury's housing, traffic and open space problems were on display. Four examples related to particular streets in Barnsbury, each one comprising photographs, plans, a written description of the aims to be achieved and, where appropriate, a model of the scheme.

19 The side room also housed a large model of a housing scheme based on the traditional Barnsbury terraced house with direct access from basement and ground floor to the pavement and garden. The model incorporated a paved deck over garages and a service road to provide a safe place where neighbours could meet and children could play. There were no questionnaires or comment sheets in this second room but most people found something of interest in the display and the Team members spent much time discussing it with the visitors. The presence of officials responsible for the ideas set out at the exhibition stimulated the interest and curiosity of the visitors, and provided team members with a valuable insight into public reactions. After leaving the side room the visitor returned to the main hall for the last few panels of the exhibition which depicted a number of the characteristics of the area, the open spaces, the schools and the social services. The final question asked, 'What do you need most in Barnsbury?' Two hundred people entered their suggestions. The absence of open space in the district figured in a large number of them.

Appraisal of results of the exhibition

20 The range and volume of comment provided evidence of the success of the experimental methods adopted and of intense interest in the area. Inviting people to record their views generally or on particular subjects proved successful. A mass of detailed, thoughtful comments resulted. There were no more than 3 or 4 flippant comments. One interesting aspect of the written comments was the interplay between one writer's comments and those that followed. Later visitors read the earlier remarks and were stimulated either to agree or disagree. A range of views was thus obtained on topics which were of general concern, and it was possible to distinguish these from the subjects on which only one or two individuals held strong views.

21 Attendance at the exhibition represented only 3.15% of the total number of households in Barnsbury. It was clear that the publicity arrangements had not the desired effect. The lesson is that interest needs to be built-up well beforehand and that sustained efforts to enlist the interest of the local newspapers and other media must be made. The response to the leaflets was disappointing. People evidently take little notice of leaflets, even of any eye-catching kind, put through their letter boxes. A loud-speaker van sent round the streets on a busy Saturday afternoon brought in no more than 30 people for the Sunday opening.

22 It seems that most people are only willing to give up time to go to an exhibition if it is fairly close to where they live. It would have been necessary to hold the exhibition in several other places in Barnsbury to obtain a level of attendance from all parts of the study area equivalent to that achieved from the area adjacent to the school.

23 It is clear that great care is needed in selecting photographs and pictures which are just right. The 'before' pictures in a panel exemplifying "before and after" treatment need to show not the most dramatic change that can come but a change which ordinary people can visualise as a credible possibility.

24 Panels containing drawings and plans of proposals need to be supplemented by pictures, in order to bring to the minds of people not used to plans how the areas look now. In some parts of the exhibition there were not nearly enough photographs of houses and streets as they are to-day.

25 The method for eliciting direct public reactions whilst viewing an exhibition like this can obviously be improved and refined with experience. The success of this particular experiment suggests that it would be worthwhile to do so.

