# Understanding the Processes of Policy Delivery for Sustainable Urban Transport

# DISTILLATE: Formal Deliverable D1

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Where this Report fits within DISTILLATE

The DISTILLATE ("Design and Implementation Support Tools for Integrated Local Land use, Transport and the Environment") programme of research is one of 14 research programmes funded under the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's (EPSRC) overarching research programme on the development of a Sustainable Urban Environment (SUE). The vision of DISTILLATE is of a step change in the way in which sustainable urban transport and land use strategies are developed and delivered. We are trying to achieve this through a focused programme of research in the UK context, in such a way that the more generally applicable tools and approaches can be widely disseminated. Given this vision, the principal objective of DISTILLATE is to develop, through a focused, inter-disciplinary research programme, ways of overcoming barriers to the effective development and delivery of sustainable urban transport and land use strategies. The scope of DISTILLATE has been defined to include all passenger transport policy interventions, both large and small, which have a significant impact on sustainability, as well as those land use interventions which have a significant impact on transport. While focusing on urban areas, we will also be considering their regional context.

Within DISTILLATE we have specified the following seven sub-objectives:

- to document and review the barriers to the delivery of sustainable strategies;

- to develop new methods for generating appropriate strategy and scheme options and for designing integrated strategies;

- to establish an effective set of core indicators and targets as an input to strategy formulation, forecasting and appraisal;

- to support the more effective collaboration between the agencies, organisations and individuals responsible for transport strategy development, both internal and external to local authorities;

- to develop approaches for overcoming the financial and other barriers to effective implementation;

- to enhance existing predictive models to reflect the impact of the wider range of policy instruments, and to facilitate interactive strategy development; and

- to improve the methods used for appraisal to reflect more effectively the requirements of sustainability.

The first two project D reports (D1 and D2) form part of the first formal deliverable designed to help us meet the fourth of these objectives: improved effectiveness in organisational delivery. D1 and D2 (Forrester, Snell et al, 2006) review the knowledge base on how internal organisational and inter-organisational mechanisms shape how actors decide upon strategies in order to inform the empirical work undertaken as part of Project D.

## 1.2 Report Introduction

These reports review the factors, identified in the DISTILLATE Inception Report (DISTILLATE, 2004: 22), that contribute to the success of organisational delivery. These are:

- the values of key actors,

- the assumptions they hold,

- their organisational responsibilities,

- the range of resources available to them,

- actors' interpretations of formal and informal 'rules',

  and

- internal mechanisms and practices.

A justification for the focus on these factors, which are inter-related in multifaceted ways can be found in the Project D Logical Framework Analysis (www.distillate.ac.uk).

D1 (Processes Report) and D2 (Structures Report) together aim to examine this list of factors in a logical and interlinked way. Whilst D2 outlines the organisational structures of delivery, the focus here is on the processes and the interactions that take place at the local level to secure the effective delivery of transport and land-use policies. This distinction between process and structure, employed in D1 and D2, is illustrated in Table 1.1 below.

| Processes report D1 | Structures Report D2 |
|---|---|
| internal mechanisms and practices | the values of key actors |
| | the assumptions key actors hold |
| | key actors' organisational responsibilities |
| the range of resources available to key actors:<br><br>finance<br><br>use of time<br><br>political process<br><br>staff<br><br>knowledge and skills | the range of resources available to key actors:<br><br>finance<br><br>structural allocation of time<br><br>political context (including political cycles)<br><br>access to the 'action arena' (i.e. Knowledge and Power) |
| actors' interpretations of formal and informal 'rules' (at the micro-level, a.k.a. rules for *individual* behaviour) | actors' interpretations of formal and informal 'rules' (at the macro-level, a.k.a. rules for *institutional and organisational* behaviour) |

**Table 1.1: The relationship between process & structure and the issues influencing organisational delivery**

This report draws on social science, political science, policy implementation, organisational behaviour and social psychology literature to understand better the causes of the internal cultural and structural *barriers* within LA/PTEs and to suggest ways of overcoming them (Hull, Tricker & Hills, 2006). Following the introduction, Section 2 summarises the different types of processes identified in the literature on transport and public policy delivery. Section 2 concludes with a list of processes/ interactions/ trigger points where miscommunication and inaction is most likely to occur in policy delivery.  Section 3 the goes on to describe in brief the Project D case studies, and Section 4 concludes with recommendations how the analytical insights and the analytical structure laid out in this report will be used in the continuation of the DISTILLATE Project D fieldwork. One way in which this analysis may help is in suggesting how – and when and where – Project D may assist in best introducing ands applying the new 'products' that DISTILLATE is developing in other Projects (see http://www.distillate.ac.uk/projects/projects.php for a full list).

# 2.  PROCESSES IN TRANSPORT POLICY DELIVERY

## 2.1  Where this report fits within the literature

### 2.1.1  Where this report fits into the management science and psychology literature

This research spreads itself across many academic fields - management science, psychology, decision and organisational sciences, and implementation theory (which includes an element of political science). We draw upon *organisational behaviour* and *work psychology*, in particular, to contribute to our understanding of how organisations and the people in them work and function (see Table 2.1).

| Academic field | Relevance of field to process |
|---|---|
| **Organisational behaviour** | "…the impact of group and other social influences on role-related behaviours, on personal feelings of motivation and commitment, in communication within the organisational setting." (Furnham, 2005:1) |
| **Work psychology** | "…the individual at work, working groups, and structure and behavioural processes […] [that occur] within the physical boundaries or contexts of organisations." (Furnham, 2005:5-15) |

**Table 2.1: The disciplinary scope of Organisational Behaviour and Work Psychology**

The existing literature is characterised by the following areas of discussion:

- Networks – formal vs. informal relationships between actors in the policy process

- Rationality – rational or highly objective processes vs. intuitive or interpersonal (relationship-oriented) approaches

- Policy processes – top-down (centrally controlled) vs. bottom-up (e.g. street-level bureaucracy or locally-driven) policy formation and implementation routines

- Logistics of policy delivery – structural vs. processural approaches to change as pre-eminent

Barratt's book (1988) revealed the inner workings of local government in the 1980s, whilst Goss (2001) emphasises external and interpersonal factors (i.e. the 'relationship organisation') as more recent focuses in studies of management in local government. Other authors such as Mintzberg (1996; 1999; 2001) and Wilson (1992) have written about organisational issues from a management science or business-oriented perspective examining the factors which influence policy pathways and strategic decision-making processes. In the public policy field, Hill & Hupe (2002; 2003) have extended the study of policy delivery to examine the effect implementation has on the delivery of policy outcomes, particularly regarding the layers and levels which policy passes through between the conception of ideas and operational outcomes. Schofield (2001) reflects on the importance of using processural approaches in research methodologies, whilst also summarising the top-down/bottom-up arguments.

Rydin's work (2003) focuses on rationality and the communication between different actors. Also linking theories of policy delivery to the integration of environmental aspects into decision-making are a number of papers which have been produced to highlight the different processes by which environmental (and other types of) policy issues may be integrated into decision-making processes (Caratti, 2004). Although there is a long history of authorship in many of these fields, publications by Hill & Hupe, Parsons, Rydin, and Furnham provide a useful synthesis of the existing knowledge on process-related aspects of policy delivery. The remainder of Section 2 draws substantially on these synopses.

### 2.1.2   Where this report fits into the transport policy literature

A number of recent studies of processes within transport policy delivery have been commissioned and published by the European Commission, and other national and supra-national research programmes. These include GUIDEMAPS (which homed in on participation in transport planning and implementation and also included a detailed review of decision-making processes) and PROSPECTS (which used a logical or objective perspective to research and interpret transport planning processes). Most studies combined the analytical (of what is currently the practice) within the prescriptive (i.e. ways of improving current practice). National Government-funded research also blends best-practice studies with guidelines on expected policy outcomes to cover these two areas; Government guidance in the UK tends to focus on the technical aspects of policy implementation, over and above the organisational or institutional challenges which must also be addressed. The latter are largely taken care of in independent studies (e.g. Steer Davies Gleave, Atkins; see Table 2.2) funded by Government departments and research councils (e.g. ESRC, EPSRC). Research carried out in other countries (e.g. Meaken, 2004) is also increasingly easily available via the internet.

| Studies (UK) | Decision-making model used | Emphasis |
|---|---|---|
| Atkins (2005) | 'Theory of change' model | Improving performance against LTP objectives |
| Steer Davies Gleave (Palmer, 2004) | 'Vigilant' model of limited rationality (alongside others) | LTP guidance (part descriptive/part advisory) and processes of decision-making |

**Table 2.2: Key pieces of recent process-related research published in the UK by the Department for Transport.**

## 2.2   Introduction to Processes in Policy Delivery

It is helpful to think of processes as having three dimensions, as shown in Figure 2.1 below.

- A time dimension, e.g. the tasks and actions may happen over a longer period of time than even actors may be aware;

- Decision making which stretches over several *layers* of organisational structure and of government (EU, national, regional, local); and

- The 'policy cycle', which refers to the overall order in which policy decisions are made, and the strategic frameworks and *levels* within which policy is delivered
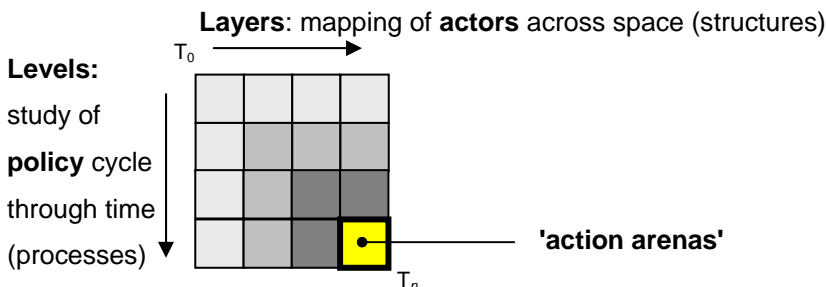


**Figure 2.1. Processes of policy delivery as manifested through space and time.**

Thus, processes may be 'prescribed' in terms of policy cycles and layers of organisational delivery (see Section 2.3). The 'action arena', however defines the space within which actors (individuals, groups, organisational entities) communicate, think, and act, and where processes may be complicated by interpersonal and contextual variables. The latter is dealt with in Sections 2.3.5. The three main types of

process as dealt with herein are summarised in Table 2.3. It is useful to distinguish between three types of process.

| Type of process | Layer and FOCUS of people when working in teams (Furnham, 2005:478) | Research interest | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | System | Loci for focus (Furnham, 2005:36) | Structure/process importance |
| 'Prescribed' (or sequentially-defined) processes – dictated by guidance or other advice. | Organisation<br><br>TASK | Inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes | Structure<br>Culture<br>Market | STRUCTURE<br><br><br><br><br><br>PROCESS |
| 'Interactive' (i.e. discursive) processes – for example the processes of scientific or social/political debate, as may occur in meetings or other forums; and | Group<br><br>OTHER PEOPLE | Rewards, procedures, policies and penalties* | Cohesiveness<br>Leadership<br>Communication pattern | |
| 'Mental' (or psychological) processes – i.e. internal to the actor such as changing one's own opinion or other mental decisions/decision making calculations. | Individual<br><br>THEMSELVES | Beliefs, values, attitudes and norms<br><br>personalities, perceptions, abilities, motivations | Traits<br>Abilities<br>Needs | |

**Table 2.3. Research questions to ask of different types of Process**

Of these, prescribed and interactive processes are the easiest to study within the confines of the current research project and expertise available. The use of tools as an ancillary process which may be used to support all other aspects of organisational delivery (including management processes, knowledge, and politics) are discussed in Section 2.6.1. The background literature to each of these types of process in Table 2.3 is explored in the following sections.

## 2.3    Prescribed processes
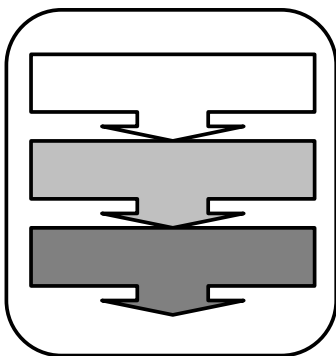
- Prescribed processes tend to be clearly rational (i.e. logical, objective, ordered, mechanistic, stepwise, sensible, sober, scientific, and sequential) as espoused in guidance and many 'textbook' examples.

Processes are often set out as 'rational' procedures, where sequential steps (often set out as a flow chart or checklist) are followed, in an orderly process, until an end point is reached; these processes are often aimed at ideal, optimum, or best practicable policy solutions. The 'logic' model is the most straightforward description of this rhythm, consisting of 'inputs', 'processes', 'outputs', and 'outcomes'. 'Systems' are the things that transform inputs into outputs, and include social or technical aspects, or both (Furnham, 2005:15). While the application of a logical model is useful, both accounting and organizational theory has often assumed that individuals operate in a "closed, rational system of organisation" (Wilson, 1992: 65) but this is not often the case.

Burke (1987) criticises prescription as being used essentially as a 'top-down' concept, to limit (or otherwise manage) discretion within the policy process. Goss (2001:110) states that this can have adverse effects, such as: limiting the scope for local negotiation and management; sacrificing horizontal collaboration for

vertical accountability; disrupting networks; and leading to bureaucracy rather than creativity and the real engagement of strategic decision-makers. Thus, we argue, that the application of a logical structure should be used to *guide* decision making and to suggest the place for different stages within the overall process, not end up as a stymie to individual action. In other words, logical structures are 'good to think, but not to do': the action takes place in the action arena and even if it is informed by the logical structure it should not be constrained by it. The DISTILLATE model of process stages (DISTILLATE, 2004) – used as a heuristic and analytical device rather than a representation of reality – represents a rational or logical-view model of how transport policy outcomes should be delivered (Figure 2.2) but within each stage processes should not be proscribed. Other useful examples of prescribed processes can be found in the Appendix.
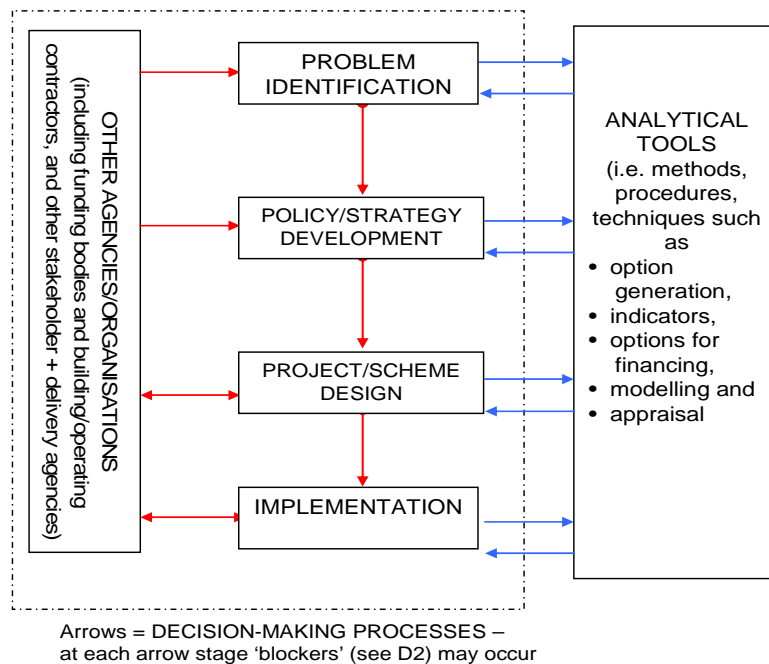


Arrows = DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES –
at each arrow stage 'blockers' (see D2) may occur

**Figure 2.2. DISTILLATE Model of Transport Decision-making Stages**

### 2.3.1  Transport process guidance

Processes for the delivery of policies, plans, and projects are sometimes prescribed in statute or otherwise through government guidance and publications. These can be procedural, i.e. affecting how plans are formulated and implemented (i.e. the guidance is *procedural*), or can – more subtly – direct resources, the way effort is to be integrated or collective control applied. Within these general processes, there may be specific 'formal' written procedures of "fairness" (Simon, 1985) which must be followed according to law, e.g. SEA and EIA, and particularly for land-use plans (e.g. public enquiry/consultation, test of soundness, right to appeal). Local authorities are also concerned that where they do not follow process guidelines they may be leaving themselves open to some sort of legal challenge over their chosen course of action (Palmer, 2004).

In the UK, the Department for Transport (DfT) has issued a number of guidance documents for local authorities (listed in Box 2). This also includes guidance on specific aspects of (or steps in) the process (e.g. monitoring indicators) and also the WebTAG [Web-based Transport Analysis Guidance] series. This is paralleled by similarly comprehensive guidelines from the Scottish Executive in Scotland (www.scot-tag.org.uk). This is set within a context of law (i.e. Acts and Regulations, e.g. Transport Act 2000) and policy (e.g. Green and White Papers, e.g. Future of Transport White Paper), thereby forming an 'operational expression' of relevant legislation as interpreted by the Government of the day and its political priorities. Wades (1982) states the connection between law and policy implementation is one of the foundations of the top-down approach (Hill & Hupe, 2002:20). However, it is now also common for these types of document to at least be subject to consultation before they are issued or revised, so that they take in bottom-up ideas and concerns.

**Box 2: Examples of current guidance on process as issued by the Department for Transport**

See www.dft.gov.uk)

- Good practice guide for the development of local transport plans (2003)
- Full guidance on local transport plans: second edition (2004)
- 'The LTP Process' (two-page synopsis) (2005)
- Guidance to local authorities seeking DfT funding for transport major schemes (2006, draft)
- Transport Analysis Guidance (published on the web as WebTAG, and updating and replacing the previous Guidance on the Methodology for Multi-Modal Studies (GOMMMS) and incorporating the New Approach to Transport Appraisal (NATA))
- Highways Agency Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (1992)
- Transport and Works Act 1992
- Environmental Assessment (SEA, EIA) (2004)
- WebTAG : Overall steps in the process (2003)
- Technical Guidance on Monitoring the LTP Mandatory Indicators (2006)

DfT claims that:

"The transport planning process has evolved over time to become a *well-established sequence of steps*. … It has become familiar to local transport planning professionals and is *generally recognised* by those actively involved in transport strategy development. However, it may seem *confusing* to wider, non-technical audiences."

DfT (2003a:12)

### 2.3.2   Processes of performance management in local transport planning

Processes in transport planning are highly dictated by the need to attract funding from central Government, which can also have a similar effect of shaping the systems used. The planning of transport has, since the LTP system was introduced in 1999, evolved around a five-yearly rounds of decision-making, i.e. plan writing followed by funding to deliver the elements of the plan, alongside yearly bids to central Government for major projects above £5M in capital costs and annual monitoring of progress against objectives (and indicators). The failure to win government funding through this process has caused the revisiting and realignment of a number of local councils' strategies for transport and the search for alternative solutions. Regional agencies such as the Regional Development Agency (RDA), Regional Assembly, and Government Office play a key role in this process, particularly for major schemes. Passenger Transport Executives (PTE), established mainly in urban areas, play a coordinating role between the regional and local levels. Government Offices are seen as key as 'gatekeepers' to the LTP process, working between local authorities and central Government to clarify aspects of process, LTP and APR guidance, and comment on early draft documents prior to submission. They also assess the quality of LTPs and therefore act as a gateway through which LTP funding passes. In the context of large amounts of top-down control, individual judgement is subordinate to performance compliance (Goss, 2001:68). Goss (ibid:107) states that performance management systems can be a barrier to lateral thinking in modern local government.

"…a performance culture within organisational structures has reinforced departmental and organisational boundaries, … individual departments or business units have business plans, performance management systems and service targets which make it impossible to contribute easily to crosscutting goals. … heavily enforced but relatively poor measures of performance add to the problem, since [their use] intensifies the danger of perverse incentives."

Goss (2001:107)

Indicators can be used to set objective standards or subjective targets for performance across and within individual authorities, to encourage improvements in performance through rewards and penalties. Project A also remarked upon the use of personal targets to build in sustainable development around the whole system of local government (Hull, Tricker and Hills, 2006: 13-15). However, Jarvis (2002) suggests that performance management may be limited in public sector organisations (such as local authorities) because evaluation and resource allocation based on money, cost efficiency and service delivery outputs (i.e. economic criteria) and the measures used may be at odds with public "value" and social and community benefits.

Performance management is used to minimize the effect of deviations from policy trajectories, giving some sort of corrective action or 'adaptive feedback' (as illustrated by Wulfhorst in Figure 2.3, below). Sometimes stark reminders of ineffectiveness have to be visible before managers take note of the need for change, in the meantime muddling-through as the situation and problems gradually worsen (Hage, 1975).
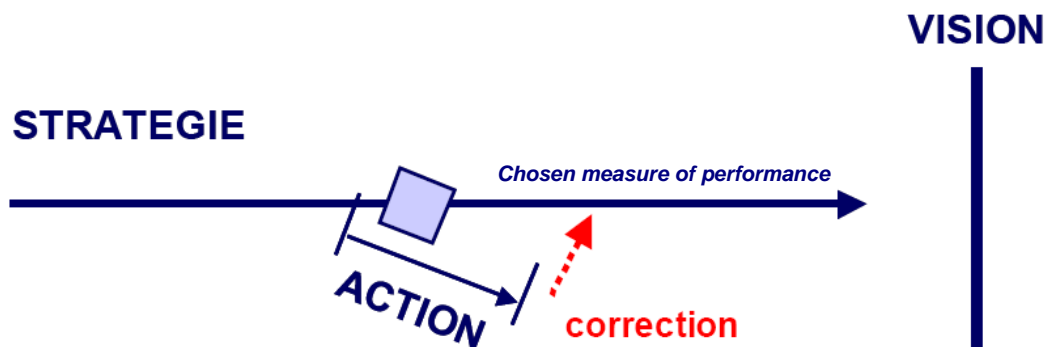


**Figure 2.3. The Role of Performance Management in Strategy Delivery**. Adapted from Wulfhorst (2005)

However, we should not underestimate other measurements of performance, such as political, media and public opinion which may be used more subjectively to judge 'success' and decide on the continuation or abandonment of particular schemes or policies. The links between politics and 'objective' information is an interesting one, and will be further studied in Project D's case studies. The use of indicators in decision-making is fully discussed elsewhere in DISTILLATE (2005).

### 2.3.3    Guidance issued by other departments and agencies

Guidance is published by the Department of Communities and Local Government (formerly ODPM) which has relevance to land-use planning, and therefore links to transport more widely through spatial planning concepts. Pertinent guidance includes the Planning Policy Guidance/Statement (PPG/PPS) series. Best practice and recommendations are also formulated and/or disseminated by the government's IDeA Knowledge and LTP Network groups (See 2.6.3), as well as the Audit, Sustainable Development, and Integrated Transport Commissions, plus parliamentary scrutiny committees which exert critical appraisal upon processes of delivery of sustainable transport. Independent lobby groups (e.g. Friends of the Earth) play a role in interpreting and communicating guidance issued to local authorities to a wider audience, and further illuminating its content in terms of its process and failings (e.g. FOE, 2005).

### 2.3.4    Limitations to prescribed policy processes

A number of factors limit the extent to which rational processes represent reality. These include:

- How problems are defined
- The involvement of politicians
- Interruptions to the process
- Clarity in which processes are set out

- Mindsets of receiving actors and attitudes to mandate

- Contextual factors


Walker (2006 :39 ) defines three 'features of the landscape' which affect process:

- Keepers of the purse (i.e. funders and authorizers)

- Drivers and barriers

- Existing strategic commitments (i.e. we are not starting with a blank sheet of paper)


Experience and the literature suggests that rather than being a linear rational process, decision making takes a tortuous, circular (or iterative), or backtracking process. A number of authors have made attempts at presenting a generic order of stages for organisational decision-making; some of these, varying in their degree of assumed rationality, are shown in Table 2.4 below. March & Olsen (1996) suggest that processes are designed to deal with alternatives, values, and the consequences of alternatives for those values (e.g. "anticipatory action").

> "In organisational settings, teams don't spend a lot of time on process. On the contrary, they usually leap rapidly (perhaps too rapidly) into the task they think they have been given. Then they have alternate periods of getting on with their work and changing the way they do it. It's hardly surprising there's no fixed sequence or pattern."

Herriot and Pemberton (1995:13)


### Some alternative models of decision-making



| ← highly rational | | Examples of studies | | less rational → |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Meyer and Miller, 2001 af** | **Tonn et al, 2000** | **Mintzberg et al, 1996** | **Norton & Mumford, 1993** | **Hill & Hupe, 2003** |
| | | Identification | | |
| | | - recognition | | |
| | | - development | | |
| Define goals and objectives | Issue familiarization | ↓ | Problem   Options | |
| ↓ | ↓ | Development | ↓   ↙ | |
| Identify problems | Criteria setting | - search | Perception   Objectives | Policy formation |
| ↓ | ↓ | - design | ↓   ↓ | (design) |
| Generate alternatives | Option construction | ↓ | Assessment and Evaluation | - thought, cognition, formulation |
| ↓ | ↓ | Selection | ↓ | ↓ |
| Evaluate alternatives | Option assessment | - screen | Choice | Policy implementation |
| ↓ | ↓ | - evaluation-choice | ↓ | (bureau-political struggle) |
| Select 'optimal' alternative | Reaching a decision | - authorization | Outcome | - action, social interaction, decision-making |

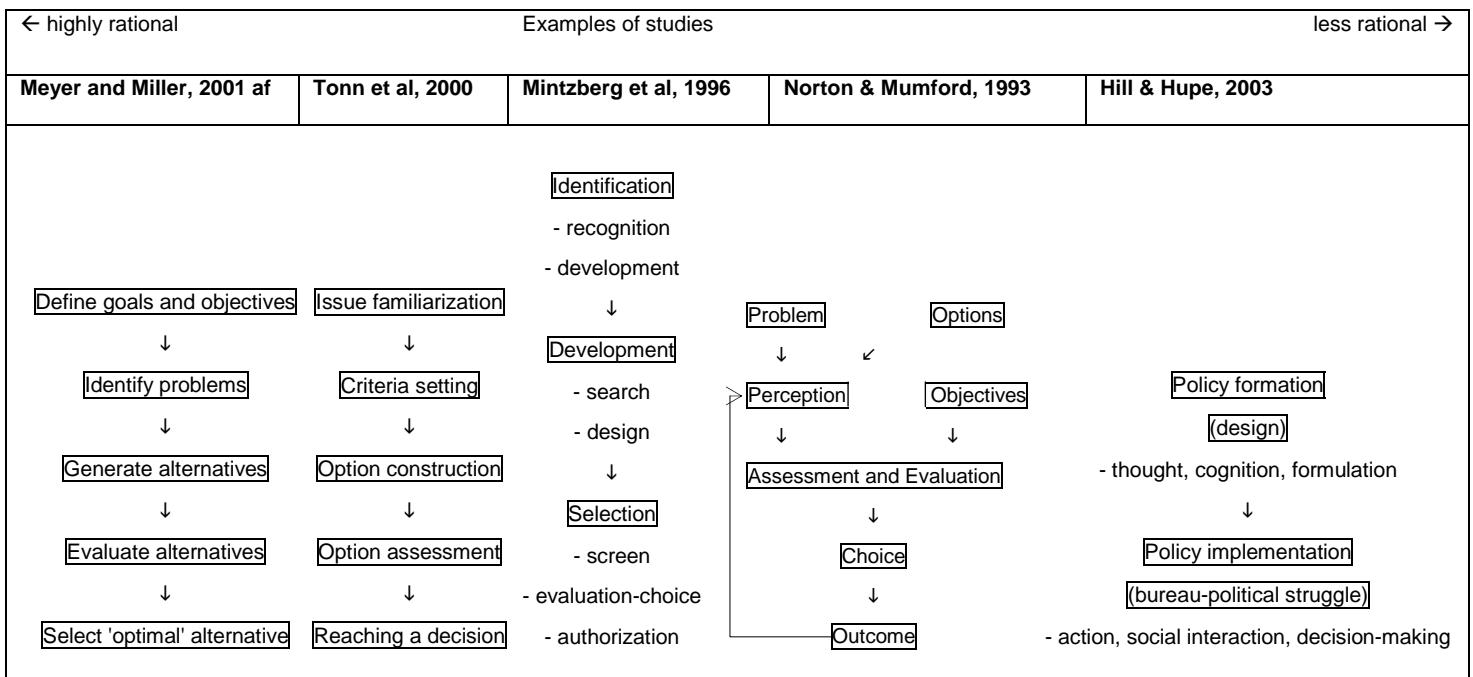**Table 2.4. Different approaches to the analysis of stages in decision-making.**


Several models have been put forward to examine the ways in which 'problems' meet 'solutions', including decision-making as rounds, streams (i.e. political), or phases. Included in Montgomery's review (1993) is a 'dominance' model of decision-making, used particularly for repeated decisions and similar choices It consists of three phases:

1  **Pre-editing –** selecting relevant attributes for solving the problem, using them to screen alternatives and find a promising one

2  **Dominance testing –** insuring that the chosen 'solution' is not inferior to any others

3  **Dominance structuring –** reinterpreting information to *confirm* the superiority of the solution selected.

A number of limitations to the prescribed processes set out in transport policy guidance and literature can be put forward. Furnham (2005:479) summarises a number of limitations of stagewise process theories. In particular, they:

- Do not clarify how long each stage lasts

- Do not explain what determines the change from one stage to another

- Do not determine whether the sequence is always linear

- Do not determine whether one can skip a stage etc.


Palmer (2003: 396) states that the ideal of rational decisions (characterised by forethought and planning, and the systematic exclusion of avoidable bias) is limited by organisational resource constraints, and human cognitive ability. He argues that decision-making is influenced by a number of factors:

- importance and complexity of decision

- consequences of making the "wrong" decision

- experience and training of decision-makers

- information

- time available

- characteristics of the decision-maker(s)

- organizational culture


### Limited authority of centrally-issued policy

Official guidance and policy may not be interpreted correctly by implementers because of its level of clarity (Hill & Hupe, 2002:162), realism (Goss 2001:1), or excessive detail (Palmer, 2004:65). Schofield suggests that public documents are merely an expression of "elite beliefs" (2001:253), and as such do not form a sound starting ground for objective decision-making. This may lead to feelings of resentment, obstinacy and contrariness (Walker, 2006).

"Government policy inhibits an imaginary world in which interests never conflict, outcomes never contradict each other, and power is never used by the powerful for their own ends."

Goss (2001:1)


Hersh (1999, 39) also states that goals and options change as levels of understanding and learning increase through the policy process; Hill & Hupe suggest this means that a comparison to the objectives' set at the start of the policy cycle may not necessarily be the best way to measure policy success. Hill & Hupe (2002:140) consider some degree of change, compromise and shortfall in outcomes versus expectations or objectives to be a natural phenomenon, and the expectation of a "1:1" (ibid:483) relationship between intention and outcome unrealistic.


"policy intentions at the beginning of a process are not the best indicator of public interest."

Teisman (2000: 944)

### *Clarity of stages in the process*

In a study of transport implementation, Teisman (2000) found that actors did often not agree which stage in the policy process they were in, be it formation, adoption, or implementation, as different points in the process represented inputs or outputs depending on the actor's role (e.g. if passing between the sub-systems of the business's internal environment and stage in the process. A number of authors have stated how it is often difficult to actually separate out policy formation from implementation (e.g. Barrett & Fudge:1981) and that there is a continuum between policy and action (Hill & Hupe, 2002:478; Schofield, 2001). Although phases may exist, they are just as likely to be overlapping and concurrent, rather than serial (Minzberg, 1976:252). Furnham (2005:483) suggests that the process of delivery, such as of the Local Transport Plan, may be more usefully framed in terms of the phases the LTP preparation goes through. He gives priority to the following tasks in the process over the life of a team, thus putting an emphasis on social aspects (see Section 2.4.2):

- issues and ideas identified at the beginning of strategy-making

- managing boundaries when selling the "solution" to the "problem's owners"

- motivation and momentum during the middle period

- constant evaluation against objectives

- universal learning, which cannot occur unless progress and outcome are reflected upon ['process as progress']

### *Initiation of policy*

At the beginning of 'strategic' decision-making processes, Minztberg 1976 puts forward that decision-making processes may be stimulated by an opportunity, pressure, or crisis (in increasing order of pressure to act); in reality, and in local government transport planning, it is likely to be a combination of all of these. Policies may also be implemented for different reasons, which may or not be related to the pursuit of rational *senso stricto* outcomes; i.e. policies may be delivered for administrative, political, experimental, or symbolic reasons (Matland, 1995). Problem re-identification may also be used to satisfice – i.e. changing the 'problem' in order to better fit a preferred or chosen set of policy solutions. Hersh (1999) adds that problem formulation, or reformulation, is an important step as it can act to restrict the choice of solutions or push decision-making in an "undesirable or inappropriate" direction (ibid:395). In their framework Norton & Mumford (1993) state much more time and effort should be spent on defining the problem, then specifying constraints to improvement (see Hull et al, 2006), and only then searching for appropriate solutions. Project A found that the problem identification stage was weak, particularly in terms of monitoring data and the use of community strategies. Table 2.5 shows some of Project A's findings on process; note the feedback of 'later' stages in terms imposing constraints on earlier ones is recognised.

| Stage in transport planning process | Examples of constraints on process (Project A) |
|---|---|
| Problem ID | Centrally dictated by government guidance |
| Strategy development | Thinking skewed by public and political acceptance of schemes needed for strategic solutions; organisational structures and funding for implementation; operational aspects (e.g. legal powers to enforce measures); time constraints on strategy development; professional predilection; cost |
| Scheme design and development | Nous and skills; knowing effectiveness of schemes; cost |
| Implementation | Working with private bus operators; engineering aspects; cost |
| Operation | Funding silos (capital/revenue); ability to enforce measures and restrain traffic; system integration; long-term (political) commitment/abandonment/short-termism |

**Table 2.5: Examples of constraints by stage of transport planning**

In thinking experiments, Mintzberg & Westley also found that "Almost no time is spent is discussing *how* to go about analysing the problem." (2001:91). Simon (1957:xxv) also stated that some actors do not believe that they need to collect all facts to understand the situation they are facing, especially where they perceive

short and simple connections between issues, or where one 'proxy' can be used to predict another. Dewey (1935:108) however, suggests that problems can only be defined in exact terms once solutions have been found, i.e. the chosen solution redefines the existing problem.

### *The processing of alternatives*

"Due to insufficient time, money or knowledge, only a limited number of alternatives are identified and the consequences are only partly assessed. Decision-making processes are therefore often finalised before the best possible alternative has been identified."

Caratti (2004:31)

Naturalistic (as opposed to classical) decision-making models imply that "there is no benefit in generating a large number of options, particularly for the experienced decision makers under time pressure" (Hersh, 1999: 396). In addition, some 'alternatives' may be dismissed as quickly by decision-makers as they are found (Mintzberg, 1976).

"We believe that human beings cannot gather information without in some way simultaneously developing alternatives. They cannot avoid evaluating these alternatives immediately, and in doing this they are forced to a decision."

Mintzberg (1976:180)

Hersh states that decisions are rarely taken at the end of the process, and instead "intermediate" summary representations of the evidence are taken by decision-makers as the basis for the final decision (1999:396). Solutions and problems are intrinsically linked. The result in transport planning is that:

- "a full range of potential options is not usually evaluated" (e.g. previous funding commitments)

- "new information is rarely sought and objectively assessed to inform decisions"

- Alternative plans are not prepared at the same level of detail.

Palmer (2004:5)

### *Interruptions in the process*

The linear procession of these decision-making stages may be redirected by legitimate or illegitimate additions to, or withdrawals of issues from the policy process at different levels of policy-making and implementation.

**Box 3. Interruptions to linear decision making processes**
(Palmer, 2004:58)

"Several events can be critical in influencing decisions.  These include:
- Change of portfolio holder;
- The budget meeting of the cabinet;
- Intervention by central government;
- Elections and a change in political control;
- Lobbying by pressure groups;
- Local authority internal re-organisation
- Multi-modal study outputs;
- Development control decisions; and
- Funding application deadlines."

Therivel comments:

> "Only in guidelines and pipe-dreams does environmental assessment follow an elegant rational procedural path…"

(Therivel, quoted in Caratti, 2004: xv)

'Implementation' is seen as more difficult than (earlier stages of) planning and document writing, although some authors concentrate on this strategy development phase (e.g. Mintzberg) they largely ignore the feedback implementation has on strategy development (e.g. political and public acceptance). Implementation is seen as highly significant for transport planning within the overall programme and project development process (Meyer & Miller, 2001).

### Involvement of actors

Lindblom (cited by Hill & Hupe, 2002) saw non-rational aspects of policy making as involving the use of power, social interaction, and the connecting between phases and stages. Rational models of decision-making have been criticised in relation to the expectation that decision-makers seek or are able to maximise the utility of decisions. Norton & Mumford (1993) add that there are two areas potentially at fault in decision-making in the delivery of policy outcomes:

a) It is aimed at answering the wrong questions or at developing inappropriate responses (i.e. a 'design' fault)

b) It is well targeted, but outcomes are not delivered (i.e. an implementation failure)

Hill & Hupe (2002:27) suggest that there is a situational logic or "logic of implementation" to what goes on the ground during implementation. Simon stated that people generally acted rationally, i.e. "they usually have reasons for what they do" (1985:295) but that this is more related to individuals' own logic and not always in the sense of following rational procedures. Street-level bureaucracy is part of a coping strategy or satisficing approach, which shows some sort of situational logic.

> "The logic of political-administrative practice is different from the one expressed in academic knowledge. It is often driven by position or 'situational logic' rather than knowledge."

Hill & Hupe (2002:174)

Even where policy is 'set', changes to policy direction at the implementation stage may occur where front-line delivery staff ('street-level bureaucrats [ref]) exercise power over the outcomes delivered by imposing their own values, desires, or wants on implementation. Sabatier (1998) also refers the role of "deviants" in the system who subvert "true" policy intent. Street-level bureaucrats may be relatively free to operate and alter the outcomes of chosen policies during the front-line implementation phase. This is likely to affect outcomes, even where processes may have been followed up until that point.

> "the content of … policy, and its impact on those affected, may be substantially modified, elaborated or even negated during the implementation stage."

Hill & Hupe (2002:7)

Some argue that limited bureaucratic obedience (Schofield 2001:254) has its benefits. On the other hand local level discretion allows adaptation to prevailing circumstances as they change. According to Mazmanian and Sabatier, however (cited in Schofield 2001:256) "the exercise of discretion acts as a check and a balance to hierarchical control and offers the possibility of innovation and creativity within implementation."

> "It is a vain hope for executives to believe that a message poured down from the top of the organisational tree will cascade down in an orderly fashion through all the tree's branches to its roots."

(Nicholson, 2001:207)

Hence, models of rational decision making can often be seen as flawed where they rely on an unrealistic level of 'objectiveness' being exercised in 'subjective' and 'political' group decision-making settings. Because of interaction between actors, "decision-making is often messy, unpredictable, non-sequential" (Therivel, quoted in Caratti, 2004:xv). Section 2.4 therefore concentrates on intra- and inter-group behaviour.

### 2.3.5    Contextual constraints

Wilson (1992:84) draws attention to the wider context in which the organisations operate and which influence how they interpret opportunities and threats. Knowing the respective determinants of both organisational behaviour and the character of its operating 'environment' (i.e. context) therefore becomes more important. The importance of context in transport planning processes mainly relates to governmental parameters - 'top down' objectives, access to funding, and timescale – which shape the LTP process and yield critical periods for funding and decision-making (Palmer, 2004).

Many of the limitations on rational policy delivery are imposed by context. Hage (1975), suggests that only large and well-resourced business organisations are actually able to develop and drive forward effective strategies in response to the context within which they operate.

"…the choice of strategies is a luxury of the rich… [only the largest corporations] have the time and the specialists to map some coordinated attack on the problem of organisational-environmental control."

Hage (1975:217)

A common device for thinking about the organisational or the individual in its external context is 'PESTLE'. PESTLE is a development of SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) and focuses on current impacts/actions and potential opportunities/constraints.  It looks at each of these under the following headings:

- **P**olitical – what are the key political drivers?
- **E**conomic – what are the most important economic issues?
- **S**ociological – what are the main societal, social and cultural issues?
- **T**echnological – what technologies are available/possible/realistic/needed?
- **L**egal – what national/international legislative structure apply?
- **E**nvironmental – what will be the environmental costs and/or benefits?

We will come back to PESTLE later when we discuss the case studies in the conclusions to see what it has to offer institutions in helping understand the external environment in which they have to work.

"Few local authorities exhibit … a systematic, logical approach to decision-making. … exogenous factors often influence decision-making in authorities. As a result many decisions may be suboptimal…"

Palmer (2004:5)

Furnham states that many popular books on organisational success and failure focus on the role of leadership and staff and, "…*grossly* underestimate particular *situational* factors that play a *major* part." (2005:19). However, external constraints do not determine organisational processes and procedures in a unilateral and mechanical way. Some organisations *are* able to shape their own context of decision-making and thereby gain policy results other organisations would not make attempts at. Such organisations are termed autopietic (see Morgan, 1993). Project A2 also identified this phenomenon.

The existence of 'opportunities' may further undermine rationality. Aided by 'political brokers' who help to frame issues and link solutions with problems, these may be the prime time for advocates to push pet schemes forward (Mintzberg et al., 1996).

> "…decisions are often opportunistic, responding to funding opportunities that are presented rather than necessarily keeping to the agreed programme of addressing identified problems. Thus the agreed strategy can be re-shaped, implicitly, in order to acquire any available finance."

Palmer (2004:6)

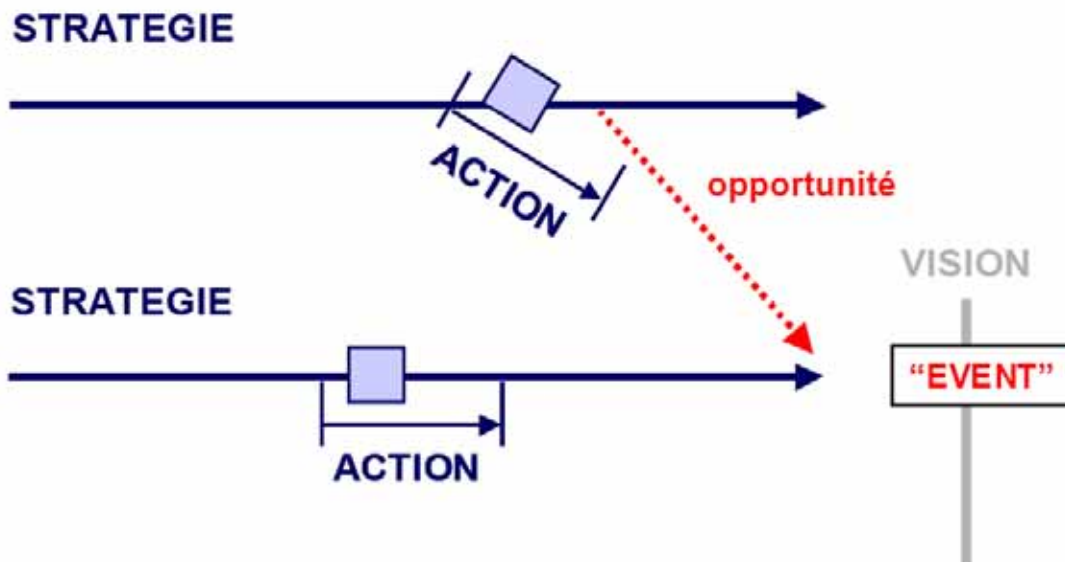Wulfhorst illustrates how events (e.g. funding opportunities) can direct decision-making processes:



**Figure 2.4. Changed events create opportunities for a different policy response or vision**.
Source: Wulfhorst, 2005

### *Local pressures*

Open-minded processing of information and detailed analysis of elements of problem are also often subsumed by responding to local pressures. Processes have to follow a pathway which balances government incentives and penalties with locally generated pressures and outcomes (Goss, 2001:91). Hence, the need for a political response of some kind, vs. a causally-led approach to problems and policy (Hill & Hupe, 2002:139).

## Summary of prescribed processes

Processes are often depicted as being linear or sequential. Often they represent a version of partial reality due to a number of factors being overlooked. These include the perceived objectiveness of government policy, the clarity of the content and boundaries of 'stages' in the process, the ways policy is initiated or obviated (i.e. problem identification), the extent to which the generation of alternatives is seen to be relevant, interruptions in the process, the involvement of actors, and contextual constraints (including local pressures). As a result of confusing the beneficial usage of logical structure to *guide* action and using logical structure to *proscribe* action, policy guidance sometimes does not take enough account of the non-institutional and non-proscribable factors in local authorities' ability to meet their objectives.

Because of the importance of actors of actors in the process, the following section deals with the ways in which the social and organisational processes of policy delivery can affect policy trajectories and outcomes.

## 2.4    Interactive processes

Interactive processes (i.e. social, discursive, behavioural, deliberative or collaborative) processes tend to be dominated by 'human' factors and the relationships between people.
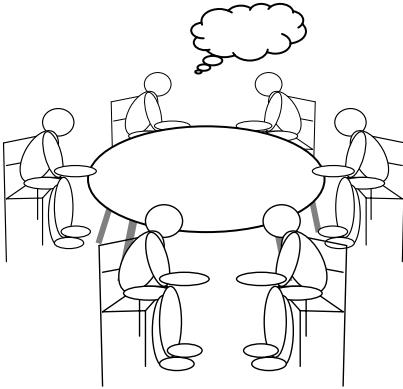
A fact often overlooked in prescriptive guidance are the risks imposed by people's own ways of working with one another and the way groups interact to deliver policy results within and between organisations. In order for policies to be delivered at the local level, interaction must take place between individuals or groups, within the same organisation or between different organisations, and this may be formal or informal. Partnerships are arrangements between representatives of different organisations to devise policy objectives and/or help deliver policy outcomes. Meetings are common discursive fora used by partnerships and organisations to report progress or discuss ideas etc. Meetings may consist of people from within the same group, or may occur between people with different interests, organisational affiliations etc. These may help punctuate everyday working practices in which communication occurs both formally through structures and informally through chance meetings and spontaneous get-togethers. These processes are commonly not dealt with in prescriptive guidance, although their effects on policy delivery may be profound. The following section examines these collective decision-making processes in more detail.

### *Why might individuals be induced to interact?*

Project A2 identified 7 motives for interacting in decision-making processes for sustainable transport (Hull et al, 2006: 13-15). Ostrom (1996) and Rydin (2003) state that there are a number of reasons which might encourage actors to participate in decision-making processes:

- material inducements
- opportunity for prestige
- desirable working conditions
- pride
- personal comfort and satisfaction
- conformity
- the feeling of participating in important events


Social processes (i.e. networks and relationships) are affected by a number of factors (Rydin 2003:72):
- obligations/expectations
- local knowledge
- trust
- norms of behaviour
- sanctions


Hewstone & Brown (cited in Furnham,1986: 520) argue that:

"…in addition to contact, two groups need superordinate, shared goals, real motives to cooperate (rather than compete), and ways of grouping or classifying people that cut across the old in-/out-group categories."


In Amir's discussion of race relations, Amir (1976) came up with a number of notable findings relating to favourable conditions for interaction. Two of these include (cited by Furnham 2005:514):

1. when the contact is between members of a majority and higher status members of a minority group

2. where there are shared activities, or common or subordinate goals that are *more important than the individual goal of each group*

Furnham suggests people to tend to categorize people into groups on the assumption that people in that group will behave in the same way and will be closely connected to each other in terms of both communication and beliefs. The latter is said by Furnham (2005:514), to be both dangerous and misleading to any business activities, and is not helped by certain aspects of organisational structures.

### 2.4.1  Modes of interaction

#### *Partnerships*

Partnerships are set up to bring people together to devise policy objectives and/or implement policy. They are usually from different backgrounds, hence a period of getting to know each other is inevitable. Partnerships go through a number of generic phases, as in Table 2.6 below.

| Stage | Description |
|---|---|
| **FORMING** | "sniffing" out other group members to see how long they are going to be involved |
| **STORMING** | "conflicts often emerge over task behaviours, the relative priorities of goals [dominant], who is responsible for what, the task-related guidance and direction of the leader [dominant]." |
| **NORMING** | Sharing of info; acceptance of different opinions; positive attempts to reach mutually agreeable decisions (or compromise) on the group goals<br><br>"…different groups under *very similar circumstances* find very different solutions to their *psychological processes*, and hence develop spectacularly different behavioural norms." |
| **PERFORMING** | Interdependence; problem solving |
| **ADJOURNING/ MOURNING** | *Cycle may repeat when new members arrive/old ones leave* |

**Table 2.6. Phases in the formation and development of Partnerships**
Source: Quotations from (Furnham, 2005:483)

In the early stages, processes are dominated by negotiation and the exchange of ideas and information (Rydin 2003:72-73). Buzzwords for their subsequent activity used in the literature include compromise, trade-offs, conflicts, brokering, trust, and expectations (see also Figure 2.7), all within a structure of 'arenas, roles, rights and duties, rules, and language' (Rydin 2003:72-73; D2 has more on this).  Time lag may occur between the establishment of shared objectives and the delivery of measurable results because of continuing getting to know each other, data sharing, and processes relating to problem identification, resource identification and action planning (Goss, 2001:94).



**Figure 2.7. Social 'processes' of organisational delivery which occur alongside more 'bureaucratic' planning practice**
Source: Rydin (2005:15)

Successful intergroup working may be encouraged by the following factors (Furnham 2005:514 citing (Brown, 1997; Hewstone & Brown 1986):

- Clear unequivocal support from the organisation for the contact
- Close, frequent contact of appropriate duration for members to really get to know each other
- Equal status (i.e. rank, position) within the organisation
- Cooperative (cf. competitive) activities occurring within the group

Meetings as far as intergroup partnerships are concerned require explicit agreement about the following to avoid antagonism (Goss 2001:98):

- who attends meetings
- at what level of seniority
- what is the policy regarding substitutes
- the authorisation of actions outside meetings by bilaterals

The Smarter Partnerships toolkit (LGNT0, 2005) sets out the following advice for partnership meetings:

**Box 4: Ethical Practice In Meetings**

Ideally, these are for policing by the partners themselves, not the chair or a facilitator…

- avoid use of jargon and abbreviations
- take time to explain concepts
- don't hesitate to ask questions
- don't make assumptions about others (their positions, understanding, etc)
- respect the contributions of others
- listen
- don't interrupt
- no side chats
- don't jump to criticise, or dismiss innovative ideas
- be open to challenge and being influenced
- be constructive at all times
- be willing to accept and give feedback
- keep to time
- all mobile phones off

Local authorities see partnerships as beneficial to their struggle to implement effective policies which require cross-boundary organisational working:

"Each local authority also has the possibility of extending its influence and creating additional synergy in pursuance of its purposes by linking with other public authorities and public-spirited private bodies active within the local community."

Barratt, (1988:23)

The Friends of the Earth (2005: 3) consider that the LTP provides an opening, or opportunity, to build links across organisations with different interests such as transport, environment and social justice. But even where there are common interests, barriers to effective intergroup working may include (March and Olsen, 1996):

- the transaction costs involved in maintaining coalitions;

- difficulties of finding policies that avoid distributional costs within the coalition;

- dangers of free-riding.

Partnerships may be very effective 'or a bloody mess' (Rydin2003:93). Members also need to be aware what else is going on in their own organisations (Barratt1988:23), and what resources they can bring to aid policy delivery. All too often, senior managers back in the sponsoring organisation may not share the same level of enthusiasm for committing resources to a project as the individual officers liaising in the partnership itself. The effects of the complexities of collaborations (e.g. competing departmental goals, financial systems, service targets, and professional interpretations means that partnerships only have a relatively small 'space' to work within (Hull et al, 2006).

Among other issues, "groups often engage in strategic lobbying and act to protect their interests, rather than trying to reach mutual understanding" since key stakeholders are often unwilling to cede control (Rydin 2005:36-7). Both Powell (2001) and Bardach (1977) suggest the existence of a game framework ('game theory') in the way that organisations work together, consisting of goals, instruments, and resources (i.e. money), and that understanding of the stakes, strategies, and implicit and explicit rules will determine the action and outputs.

### Teams

Particularly in terms of innovation, teams need the time, trust and creative energy to learn how to work together.

"Groups can work without one another; teams cannot."

Furnham (2005:478)

"South east Asians seem to spend more time on socio-emotional activities (such as a shared lunch) than westerners. Because it is very important for all individuals to get along with each other, group solidarity is a goal in and of itself."

Furnham (2005:520)

Such interaction may therefore not be as simple as it might seem, however, as working practices in organisations need to fulfil both formal task needs as well as more socio-emotional contact needs between individuals. Furnham also emphasises the 'affective' nature of organisational effectiveness:

"…group processes and dynamics in the team, which they [workers] may refer to as morale or team spirit, is often a major determinant of that team's work."

Furnham (2005:477)

Empirical work has found that, "stable extraverted teams were more likely to experience positive *intragroup* interactions that led to greater social cohesion and hence a greater capability to maintain itself." Furnham (2005 :504).

### *Meetings*

Whereas structures of communication determine group-to-group communication, individual aspects of thought process are much more important at the level of meetings between people. Here, we are talking about formally arranged meetings (informal meetings are discussed in Section 2.4.2). Meetings are a key mechanism for interacting both internally within organisations and in partnership contexts. They are the main formal mechanism for individuals (representing themselves as individuals or as wider corporate entities come together for reporting and discussion (and decision-making) and the management of ongoing activities and process. In the context of local government such discussions are tricky, particularly where they are of an explorative and confidential nature, because of the need to maintain transparency, openness and accountability but without raising stakeholders' and the community's expectations too highly or too early, or running the risk of negative publicity from the wider discussion of underdeveloped ideas (e.g. Barratt, 1988:17).

Meetings are often seen as formal, because of the way they are recorded – in agendas, minutes, and labels in files. However, this only represents the tangible or tacit inputs and outputs of decision-making (Langley et al, 1995) and may not record the processes behind the actual decision to act (which may have been taken before or after that meeting). This may well be psychic, dependent on trust, non-verbal communication, and other intangible variables (Mintzberg et al., 1996).

> "People will always desire face-to-face dealings. No amount of virtuality will replace the irreducible experience of physically being in the presence of other people, especially in small groups. From boards of directors to project teams, meetings will continue to be conducted in this manner, even where there are highly sophisticated alternatives. …people in business will [continue to] find reasons to meet and gather physically."

Nicholson (2001:275)

Barnard (1976:192-3) (cited in Mintzberg 1976) said that "most executive decisions produce no direct evidence of themselves". Meetings can be convened by individuals in the same group/team and organisation, and between individuals from different groups, teams, or corporate entities. Lindblom (1959) suggested that the social interaction which occurs during policy making to some extent makes up for the individual cognitive limitations of decision-making (see Section 2.5). The complexion of meetings may vary, according to the following facets of individuals:

- interests
- seniority/status/experience
- motivations and enthusiasm
- familiarity with subject and knowledge
- interdependency of task, resources, or targets
- historical relations/depth of trust/degree of conflict
- how their organisation is perceived in terms of the above, and how this reflects upon the individual or representative

> "People in groups of more than 12 members find the mutual interaction difficult and tend to split into separate groups of 7 or 8 [optimal]."

Furnham (2005: 485)

Mintzberg and Westley (2001) suggest that communication is enhanced by simply being together, although it is noted that the 'structure' of 'board table' meetings can constrain collaboration; they cite a study which found that so-called "adversaries" had much more in common when they were brought out of the boardroom and into the environment they were discussing (see Table 2.12). Reflecting Axelsson's ideas of the additional need for power 'activation' (Axelsson in Warner, 1973), Therivel states,

> "… In practice, effective environmental assessment is all about making the right comment at the right meeting to get the right person to consider something that they had not thought of before."

(Therivel, cited in Caratti, 2004:xv)

The constructionist theoretical viewpoint would also emphasise that social and cultural processes shape actors' own perceptions of the way discourses are presented through image and word (Rydin 2003:16). Mintzberg and Westley (2001) highlight the importance of knowing how people approach problems when studying how people interact within processes of strategy development. They separate groups out into those that 'see' first, those that 'think' first, and those that 'act' first. Thinking first was said to encourage 'linear, rational and rather categorical arguments'. Seeing first, on the other hand, encouraged group members to reach consensus and distil the essence of issues; it was said that having a 'vision' and trajectory gave people energy and stimulated action, and that the impression remained for far longer.

> "When [it was] suggested they create a picture of their common concerns, they finally were able to connect."

Mintzberg and Westley (2001:92)

### *Interactions of stakeholders around the LTP*

In terms of LTP partnerships, participation tends to be often restricted to the early stages of policy delivery.

> "[of the stakeholders without] …a direct involvement in taking forward the elements of the LTP, most are involved only at the strategic stage, helping to set objectives and identify potential interventions, perhaps contributing to the debate regarding future priorities."

*Palmer (2004: 56)*

Some actors will choose to bypass consultation processes feeling that they already have the answers or will not benefit from the more laborious process of striving to reach consensus or agreement with others. On the other hand, there are those individuals (and organisations from certain business sectors) who feel they may gain significant kudos by being involved in certain decision-making processes (Barratt, 1988, Wilson, 1992). Organisations can act in this way (i.e. 'as individuals') when they form part of a business sector. The concept of power relationships requires the activation of power, i.e. the act of trying to get others to do something:

In a European scoping study, PROSPECTS (2001: 4) found that "… transport users are considered to have the least influence on decisions" of all stakeholders. In the US, children, the elderly, those on low incomes, industry, educators, and public health officials were said to be underrepresented in terms of active participation in decision-making processes (TRB, 2005:5). Walker (2006:115), in the Table below, present an overview of two approaches (top-down; bottom-up) to decision-making processes, which focus on the involvement and participation of the general community affected by policy.

| Model | Stages in process | Description of model |
|---|---|---|
| DAD(A) | Decide, announce, defend, abandon | Top-down<br>Can produce hostile feedback and resentment |
| IAI | Involve, agree, implement | Participative<br>Stakeholders are involved in refine details early on in the process. Decision-making is longer, but 'selling' takes less time and resistance to implementation less likely |

**Table 2.7: Categorisation of approaches to decision making.**
Source: Walker 2006)

### *Negotiation and communication for change*

People adopt different negotiation strategies, depending on their concern for human relationships. These approaches, descending in the negotiator's desire to maintain a relationship with their negotiating partner are agreement; collaboration; compromise; competition; defeat; and/ or avoidance and denial.

In such fora, tensions may also arise between the collective (viz. synergistic) good and individual (and potentially antagonistic) goals. "Pathological or ambitious leaders … may deliberately encourage conflict for their own ends" (Furnham 2005:511). Walker presents some 'dangers' that may affect the ultimate success of negotiated agreements (2006:43):

- Crying wolf

- The emperor's new clothes

- Insincere mandates/motherhood and apple pie

- Succession planning

Successful communication therefore involves adapting to how each listener learns and communicates. This may be related to their personality and norms of behaviour. As Walker (2006:106) states, people may prefer "punchy presentations, big ideas described by gurus, detailed written evidence on costs, [or] one-to-one conversations in the corridor." Some even prefer visits to projects or sites ("show and tell" thinkers "seeing is believing" approaches (ibid:110-111). Whilst some people may expect deference and respect during interactions, others may prefer being treated like 'one of the crowd'. Some people respond to emotion, whilst others may be more receptive to more sound and measured arguments (ibid:106). To get over some of these personality barriers, Walker recommends a generic framework for increasing the effectiveness of interpersonal communication (citing Fisher, Rooke and Torbert, 2000).

| Stage in conversation | Purpose of stage |
|---|---|
| 1. Framing | Explaining briefly and clearly what the subject of the conversation is about |
| 2. Advocating | Expressing an opinion, option, feeling or justification for a proposal |
| 3. Illustrating | Exploring how it will have an effect, e.g. storytelling |
| 4. Inquiring | Explicitly questioning of audience to ascertain their reaction, arranging the next steps |

**Table 2.8. Framework to clarify the purpose of each stage of communication.**
Source: Walker et al (2006)

Walker says that one part of the process may be actually getting an item to appear on the agenda in the first place, or getting a group of people together. She suggests using existing fora for discussions, i.e. "slip some sustainability thinking in [i.e. where it had been missing] to a change which is happening anyway". Walker states that people need to learn to 'let go' of their ideas, and let other people (who may have different ways of seeing and doing things) interpret and refine them; this marks the change between "guru (lonely but right) and facilitator (keeping your mouth shut whilst others are talking)" (ibid, 2006:117). She suggests where there is no group structure through which to communicate, people may need to be approached individually. Hence, it is likely to require having the same conversation with different people over a number of times (bearing in mind individuals' tendencies to receive the same argument in different ways, as above).

However, Walker argues that having to convince sceptics can make you work harder on the argument, and helps identify potential weaknesses, and results in more effective solutions as a result. Walker states that resentment occurs because people do not like losing control. Interestingly, Mintzberg et al (1996) suggest it may also be easier to negotiate with "enemies" rather than between people who quite like each other (see below). Brunsson (1982) suggests that agreement can arise without a formal decision in contexts where actors share the same or similar general expectations, values, and experiences. Mintzberg et al. say that (although too much 'individualism' can lead to isolation) too much 'integration' can also have deleterious effects as perspectives become merged to such an extent that parties have nothing new to offer each other. The lack of preparation of detailed alternative plans may be a symptom of the need to generate consensus in decision-making (see discursive processes, below); Furnham (2005: 509) states that "… striving for

unanimity overrides [group members'] motivation to appraise alternative courses of action realistically", referring here to the concept of "group think". In any case, a political decision may override a consensus.

## *Management skills*

Managers have to confront a number of challenges, particularly when attempting to get things done in new or different ways. Skills needed include the ability to win the consent of other by means of persuasion, being able to explain things, and sharing responsibilities. Managers must also be prepared to operate in a potentially explorative or experimental ("unstructured"; Mitzberg, 1976) fashion (Goss, 2001:162) – i.e. getting things done differently by *not* following procedures. This brings with it questions of risk and legitimacy, as well as the need to manage a accountabilities to different bodies (e.g. central government, politicians, staff, and citizens) and solve other dilemmas posed by 'colliding voices' (Goss, 2001:162). Within this, the following political skills are needed:

- negotiation
- bridge-building
- visioning
- facilitation
- empowerment
- inspiring

Goss (2001) says it is this local process of exploration and discovery that may have the potential to be transplanted across organisations.


### 2.4.2  Models of interaction

## *Models of communication*

Communication therefore occurs both within organisations and between them. At the intra- and inter-organisational scale, effective means of sharing, giving, and receiving information must be in place. Bavelas provided the following framework in 1950:
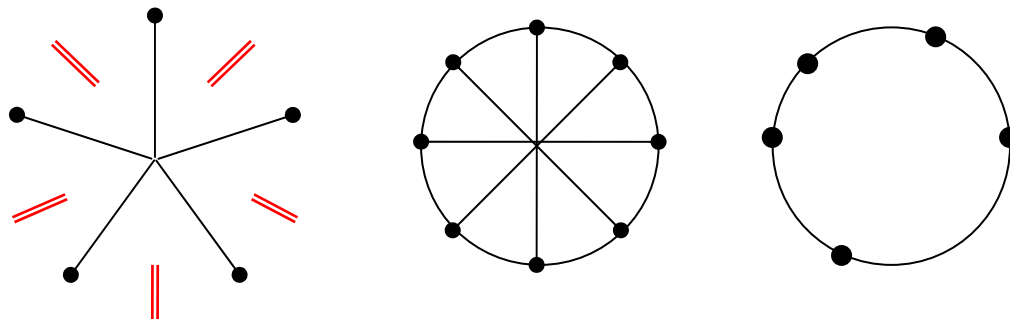


| | WHEEL | COMPLETELY CONNECTED | CIRCLE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Speed* | HIGH | HIGH-LOW | LOW |
| *Accuracy* | HIGH | HIGH | LOW |
| *Satis-faction* | LOW | HIGH | HIGH |
| *Leader-ship* | YES | NO | NO |
| *Central-ization* | YES | NO | NO |
| *Use* | for simple tasks | complex tasks | |
| [e.g. | [shared priority working groups] | | |

**Figure 2.7.The effectiveness of communication styles.** After Bavelas (1950)


Goss (2001:98) states that holes are needed between organisational structures that make it easy for people to meet and talk. Project A2 highlighted the use of communication via intermediaries to get round the problems of communication in 'wheel' type settings such as occurs with shared priority working groups in

some PTE areas, to build the circumferential links between working groups in addition to the centre. Mintzberg et al (1996) suggest a lot of collaboration emerges from peer-to-peer counterpart communications at the 'middle levels' of organisations, and is informal, but may meet resistance at the more senior level (see Hull et al, 2006:39). However, Walker states that in participatory decision-making middle managers are the most difficult to involve, e.g. in workshops.

In terms of inter-action, "in so far as we expect these acts to be understood and responded to, we need to ensure that the communication is not just sent but also received. … the generation of discourse must take into account the interrelationships between actors within specific contexts and society in general" (Rydin, 2003:17). The process of 'decentring' involves actors having to try to understand what it must be like to be on the *receiving end* of a communication (Furnham, 2005: 33). Being open to the receipt of information and 'signals' during times of high work and time pressures is seen as being particularly key to effective organisational delivery (e.g. jazz musicians; Mintzberg & Westley, 2001:92).

Because of physical constraints (distance, walls, buildings, floors, storeys, doors i.e. lack of proximity), people may find it difficult to interact with each other, and contact between individuals (and group cohesiveness) may be reduced (Furnham, 2005). This is covered in more detail in D2. Currently, "many of the communications people find most satisfying are the least 'efficient' for getting business done." (ibid:33).

### *Informal communication*

The components of organisations consists of individuals organised formally or informally into groups, teams, and sections (Furnham, 2005:1). Workgroups may be structured according the following formal vs. informal framework, as laid down by Furnham (ibid:482) (see Table 2.9).

"[Formal arrangements] provide the context within which [informal] social arrangements are established and take place."

Furnham (2005, 484)

"…local authorities are particular organizations, structured into departments, committees, or other units. But these organizational structures do not determine working practices.

Rydin (2003:39)

Whereas prescribed guidance often tends to reflect formal expectations of structural responsibilities within an organisation, in practice much of what goes on in terms of policy delivery is actually based on the informal relationships and interaction between actors. Walker argues that even planned change can take advantage of those informal moments – "…the precious two minutes in the life or at the bike racks to talk to the boss" (2006:105). Being listened to gives credibility and builds up relationships, and does not necessarily strictly rely on line management arrangements (ibid:105).

"The organisational arrangements include not only the structures and jobs, formal and informal, but also the *processes* which bind the structures and jobs together. Understanding the informal arrangements means coping with how people actually behave."

Barratt (1988:15)

Informal processes may improve responsiveness through their ability to self-adapt. Barrett acknowledges that 'formal' processes may be changed subtly by people's own behaviour (Barratt, 1988:18), sometimes subverting the need for wholesale changes to organisational structures to be made by those in charge. In this way, Barratt (ibid:71) suggests that "almost any structure" can be overridden and made to work by 'clear directions, effective collaboration, and purposeful planning, control and review processes'. Barratt (1988) and Tonn et al (2000) suggest that interactions between people are often complex and unplanned. However, informal processes may also be vulnerable in the sense that they are subject to change or dissolution by the members that make them up (rather than formally in the same way that structures have to be changed (e.g. Barratt, 1988: 21). For example, members move on, or other priorities take over.

| *Formal working practices* | *Informal working practices* |
|---|---|
| EXPLICITLY CONSTITUTED<br><br>• Controlled by senior managers | NATURAL/SPONTANEOUS/CASUAL<br><br>• Between individuals |
| Perform a specific task | Function supports friendship, mutual help, and confirmation of specific beliefs and ideologies |
| • formal rights and obligations<br><br>• behaviour formatted and constrained<br><br>• formal group leaders<br><br>• codified structures, rules and procedures<br><br>• behaviour based on division of labour, through filling of well-established/historical roles<br><br>• roles have titles, job descriptions, contracts<br><br>• more or less permanent and relatively stable<br><br>• organigram<br><br>• networks well-defined and follow formal lines<br><br>• interpersonal relations are *prescribed* | • develop through a variety of forces<br><br>• contain people from various sections/levels who have something in common (beliefs, fears, aspirations, energy)<br><br>• may be formal members of other workgroups<br><br>• "cliques" – horizontal/vertical(different ranks)/sundry employees<br><br>• may be ephemeral or unstable<br><br>• sociogram<br><br>• networks poorly defined and *cut across* regular channels<br><br>• interpersonal relations are spontaneous |

Sub-types of group orientation: -

| *COMMAND* | *TASK* | *INTEREST* | *FRIENDSHIP* |
|---|---|---|---|
| e.g. standing committees/boards | e.g. ad hoc/expert groups/<br><br>commissions | e.g. voluntary and common issue | e.g. for social/ interpersonal needs |

**Table 2.9: Comparison of formal and informal working practices**
After Furnham (2005:482)

"The informal organisation emerges to fulfil those needs neglected or ignored by the formal system."

Furnham (2005: 484)

Informal patterns of working may also (driven by motivation, service needs, and pseudo-convention) suggest how formal structures might need to be reshaped (Barratt, 1988:22). As processes of informal working build up over time, this may lead to the bypassing of the inept, i.e. the preference of actors to deal with their friends to solve issues, rather than those whose job description it is to do so (Barratt, ibid:21). However, Mintzberg et al. (1996) suggest that formalising informal roles into formal structures may, in fact, work against the successes of informality and in fact reduce their capacity to collaborate. This is because many people may not even realise they are 'collaborating' and, once formalised, may feel side-tracked by the formality of their action arena rather than the outcomes they are trying to deliver.

"…during breaks at work and in after work activities, they form into informal friendship groups based on common interests. The social relationships that occur in these formal and informal groups can have a significant effect on the way people work together and ultimately the quality and quantity of their work output."

Furnham (2005:478)

Having informal relationships is seen as very important when it comes to 'emergent' change, and seen as more able to deal with changes to cultural aspects than planned change can be. Emergent change is a feature of "…complex systems with multiple feedback loops interacting with each other". It is often 'bottom-up', and results from the quantum effect of "…all the tiny conversations, actions and responses that go on every day in and around the organisation" (Rydin, 2003:131). Fuzzy logic systems are designed to better represent how people interact in this way in the real world, as compared to traditional logic models.

## Summary of interactive processes

Interactive processes describe how processes of policy delivery are carried out in organisations. Arenas for interaction include partnership working, physical meetings, team-working, and stakeholder consultation processes around the LTP. These have their own processes and they can affect overall policy trajectories (i.e. macro-scale processes).through the way decisions are made. Negotiation, management, and communication skills and strategies are important. Communication structures help define the interactions between actors, but much of the important interaction that takes place is actually informal and not defined solely by organisational structures.

## 2.5 Mental processes

- Mental (or cognitive, psychic, psychological, or intra-personal) processes are those which affect the way individuals internally make decisions or take part in group or other activities.

There are a number of internal (i.e. human) aspects of decision-making which may affect the way actors engage in prescribed and interactive processes. They may be inherited from the institutional or organisational context and structures within which processes takes place.

### 2.5.1 Norms and culture

***Norms and learning***

What actors consider to be 'normal' in their workplace affects how they behave, and their ability to adapt and learn to do things differently (or breaks free from these norms) can affect process. People bring their own ideas, values and attitudes to work (Goss, 2001:9), but also perceive and learn from the actual, implied, or imagined behaviour of other people in the workplace (Furnham:1). Norms develop from shared beliefs, values, and shared attitudes to work (Furnham, ibid:490). We can also pick up behavioural traits directly, selecting from others "… those aspects of the behaviour we can usefully incorporate into our own repertoire of appropriately scripted behaviours" (Goss, ibid:167). Role modelling is a way individuals choose to learn from one another (:167). Furnham says that (ibid:490)

- Precedent: people tend to repeat behaviour patterns/models they have seen before. This leads to habits, e.g. sitting in the same place, doing things in the same order

- Many group members bring a pattern of behaviour with them; newcomers get socialised into "how things are around here."

- Successful behaviours are repeated; unsuccessful ones are not.

> "…individuals who model their behaviour upon other individuals whom they admire or respect. Individuals try to emulate the behaviour of those they admire in the hope of becoming like them and enjoying the rewards and benefits that they are perceived to accrue."

Wilson (1992 :87)

Norms are 'unwritten and unspoken', and represent absorbed "…perceptions about what is wise, what works, what is possible and what are the limits to action" (Goss, 2001:167).

> "…a local authority … officer may be subject to [three] institutions [of, 1] local government generally, [2] with this particular local authority, and [3] with her professional affiliation … the actor might be subject to considerable tensions between the norms, expectations, and [the multiple and overlapping] routines suggested by these three institutions [and the choice between them]."

Rydin (2003:39)

Organisations may also implement practices such as mentoring, work-shadowing and 'buddying'. Thus, both passively and actively, organisations are able to "…shape, discipline and socialize individuals to work in a particular way or style" (Furnham, 2005:20). Norms can therefore present a strong resistance to learning once embedded (see table 2.12). They can include norms (or expected standards) for loyalty, rewards, dress, performance, language, technical slang, in-jokes etc. (Furnham, ibid:490). Some individuals' personalities may mean they resist these norms more than others. People may use norms deliberately to justify underperformance (e.g. satisficing; see page 16), or my be unaware of their relative underperformance (i.e. they are unconsciously incompetent; Walker (2006). In strong, formal (rule-bound) situations there are also fewer major differences between individuals (having implications for the choice of board-type meetings; see Section 3).

| Focus of acting out change | Subjective barriers | Objective barriers |
|---|---|---|
| **Collectively** | Group culture, shared mindsets, shared norms, predominant fashion or beliefs | 'PESTLE' factors |

**Table 2.10: Barriers to group action**. Adapted from Ballard, (cited in Walker, 2006)

> "Not all long-standing members of a group are aware of the implicit group norms they follow and obey. However, newcomers are acutely aware of the dictates that strong norms afford."

Furnham (2005:490)

In order for organisations to retain top-down (centralised) structures and still be successful, high-level managers must move with the times and be responsive to needs lower down in the organisation and externally. Old solutions may no longer be applicable where problems in the outside have moved on, e.g. changing policy agendas from central government, but may continue to be applied. Unless managers learn from what is going on 'on the floor' they will become isolated and unable to learn from experience and adapt their strategies and decisions accordingly. Sometimes management can be resistant to the need to change what their organisation does or change organisational structures to reflect new operational needs.

### Individual logic of decision -making

As well as cultural influences, Isabella (1990) viewed individual cognition as paramount in the study of how organisations change over time,

> "…to understand organizational change fully requires more than just analysing the sequence of process. Individual cognition and interpretation are the key to understanding change."

Wilson (1992:81, citing Isabella, 1990)

Processes are determined by individuals' own internal logic, as well as their strategic response to the problems they face. This may be determined by individual characteristics such as ability, demographic/biographical factors (sex, age, class, education), intelligence, motivation, and personality traits (Furnham, 2005:160). Ability is "the extent to which a person can efficiently carry out multiple processes in coordination to achieve a specific goal." (op.cit.). Rydin (2003:111) states that in groups, different 'rationalities' (i.e. scientific, economic, communicative) affect the ways individuals perceive the world and perceive the logic in what they are doing. I.e. "artists, craftsmen or technocrats" may do things differently (Pitcher cited by Langley et al, 1995:272). Ballard says individuals may have a number of both subjective and objective reasons for not acting out change in the way processes may require:

| Focus of acting out change | Subjective barriers | Objective barriers |
|---|---|---|
| The individual | Personal values, world view, assumptions, agency | Authority, skills, knowledge, resources |

**Table 2.11. Barriers to individual action**


### *Intuitive decision-making*

Nicholson (2001:2), working in the field of evolutionary psychology, claimed that our brains can make snap judgements, although this process was passively accepted rather than understood and managed within organisations (Furnham, 2005:33). Mintzberg and Westley (2001) add that much real-life decision-making goes on internally, within the subsconscious mind, which having prepared itself mulling over the issue can come up with flashes of illumination, or "sudden crystallisations of thought" (Langley et al.1995), for example during and after a period of sleep. Mintzberg also states that ideas may remain "dormant" in the mind of a decision-maker until they find themselves in a position to act on it (1976:50). This idea then has to be verified over time by the conscious mind, so that it can be elaborated on and reasoned out "in a linear form" (Mintberg & Westley, 2001:90), and later become "analyses frozen into habit" or heuristic tools (or "shortcuts") that can be used in repeated decisions.

"…in sleep, rational thinking is turned off, and the unconscious mind has greater freedom. The conscious mind returns later to make the logical argument."

Mintzberg and Westley (2001:90)

"The division of [in decision-making] approaches into analytical classical ones and intuitive ones parallels the division between the left and the right brain [Benziger & Homes, 1995], showing that there is an important role for decision strategies that combine analytical and intuitive approaches."

Hersh (2002:397)

Langley et al (1995:261) emphasise the 'arational', or 'extrarational' responses that emerge during decision-making. These include feelings and sensory skills and responses such as: emotion, passion, affect, mood, feelings, anxiety, intuition, instincts, judgement, sixth sense and gut feeling, imagination, insight, inspiration and deeper meaning (Parsons (1995) also lists Freud, Pareto and Laswell within this school of thinking).

### *Dominant person-situation behaviour*

People adapt their behaviour to the situation they are in to different extents. Their disposition affects the degree to which norms are developed and transferred between the different situations individuals find themselves in (see 2.12 below).

| Focus of individual behaviour | INDIVIDUAL | ORGANISATION | BOTH INDIV. & ORG. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Classification of individual behaviour | TRAIT | SITUATIONIST | INTERACTIONIST |
| Description of individual behaviour | People behave similarly in different situations (e.g. wrt intelligence, competency, skill) | Behaviour varies from situation to situation | Behaviour falls between the person (i.e. traits) and the situation (i.e. culture) "social behaviour [is a] function of a continuous process of multi-directional interaction" |
| Comment | If trait (dispositional) determinants hold strong, then *organisational change* may be more difficult (:20) | | …*group* behaviours become affected by *specific individuals* |

**Table 2.12. Adaptive behaviour in different contexts.** After Furnham (2005)

### *Organisational behaviour*

In reality, organisations are not a single organism but consist of interacting individuals who have their own goals which they might not share with others (Furnham, 2005:15). The action arena (Ostrom (1996) Laswell (cited in Parsons, 1995:340) describes the space where interaction generates patterns of behaviour and therefore outcomes (Rydin, 2003:42).

| Level of organisational culture | Manifestation | Examples | Easiness of change |
|---|---|---|---|
| Artefact | Physical, observable | Logos, symbols, annual reports, advertisements, business cards, physical interior arrangement/decoration/use of buildings and facilities | Simple |
| Values | Conscious, espoused | Mission statements, policies, press releases; explain purpose and actions of an organisation | |
| Assumptions | Underlying, taken for granted | Unexamined/unexplored beliefs people have about the organisation, how it relates to the outside world and its purpose | Intractable * |

* but important! (e.g. through learning)

**Table 2.13 The manifestation of organisational culture.** See also: http://www.onepine.info/pschein.htm

Organisational cultures and overall organisational climate develop as a result of formal rules and norms (Furnham, 2005:15), thus determining organisational behaviour. Edgar Schein's (1980) work on organisational psychology shows how assumptions and values can be manifested within organisational cultures (Table 2.13). Schein talked about three levels of organisational culture. Feedback can happen in small and large groups, and in the wider organisation (Furnham, 2005:1).

### *Leadership, ambitions and tactics*

Leaders also emerge in organisations and behave in ways which separate them from other members of staff (Furnham, 2005:1). Tempered radicals and mavericks (Walker, 2006:56) can emerge as leaders when conditions become favourable; Ken Livingstone is a good example. Cultural factors in the UK also place an emphasis on individual strong achievers over collective outputs. In some situations, a "personality clash" can arise in situations where there is competition for particular roles (Furnham, 2005:505).

Goss (2001:162) suggests that managers find a 'safe' space to operate which is limited by politics, professional expertise, managerial action, and financial responsibility. It may also be in the interest of some managers to move resources around without actually achieving any measurable results on the ground, for example game-playing (or blocking tactics). Goss (ibid :112) suggests the social loafing problem, where the continual setting up of marginal projects, and endless evaluation through which nobody learns, is a form of "displacement activity" which avoids disturbance to the overall status quo (whether or not this tactic is conscious or unconscious). Sometimes emotional strategies are developed to deal with processes, which lock people into patterns of behaviour and safe routines. People may (Goss, 2001:172) routinise decisions or involve larger numbers of people in decision-making in order to minimise their own responsibility for decision-making.

## Summary of mental processes

Individuals exert their own influence on processes by their level of acceptance of proposed changes to overall processes and organisational working practices designed to alter outcomes of decision-making. Because sustainable transport requires a shift in thinking and outcomes, these mental processes may prove to be particularly intractable. Individuals' behaviour is differentially affected by the norms of the people who work around them (dependent on their inclination to learn and/or adapt to different situations), as well as affecting and being affecting by wider organisational behaviour and cultures. Individuals have different processes for mental decision-making (i.e. classical vs. naturalistic) and their behaviour in leadership varies.

## 2.6    Other factors in policy delivery

### 2.6.1    Tools and the use of tool outputs in the decision-making process
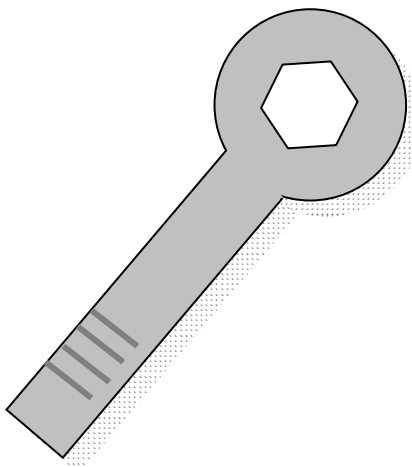


- Tools are intended to affect decisions and the way people make decisions (Hersh, 1999:395).

The use of tools relates to the field of engineering psychology, which views humans as machine-like systems (see Furnham, 2005:4). Tools are sometimes criticised for building a meritocracy (i.e. a technocratic, black box, esoteric) system around certain subject areas in terms of decision-making, or contributing to processes which are technical in their task-orientation, forsaking a people centred focus and including the need for interaction and personal motivation and satisfaction in organisational decision-making. Increasingly, authors are attempting to 'blend' the two aspects together, producing decision-making cycles which are participatory but which are also aided by inputs from tools integrated into and responsive to the organisational needs of decision-making.

> "Transport planning is growing unnecessarily more technical, creating barriers on a subject important to everyone."

FOE (2005:3)

It is recognised that individual perceptions about issues and even their ideals are rarely 'absolute' (Barratt, 1988:17; see page 34) hence the need for the introduction of informed, robust, and balanced evidence into decision-making. Tools are particularly needed where existing alternatives are unsustainable, i.e. in 'naturalistic' modes of decision-making; they must be able to reason and come up with new solutions (Hersh, 1999 :396). Tools have inbuilt processes, often designed around systems, as well as being used to facilitate other organisational, group, and individual decision-making process. Hersch adds that their use helps to even out the field between experienced and inexperienced decision-makers, and moreover allows the bias of decision-makers who are experienced but who were trained in a different 'issue-era' to be minimised. New tools can help highlight what the additional and unemphasized sustainability aspects of some otherwise unpopular policy options (e.g. road user charging's disruption to car use vs. its environmental gains) (TRB, 2005).

"…expertise may be based on old decision-making patterns that exclude consideration of sustainability."

Hersh (1999:397)

Tools, by consisting of a framework of 'important' issues which require inclusion in decision-making, can also act to broaden existing decision-making processes in terms of the issues considered. Examples include NATA, although the extent to which such processes 'integrate' rather than simply broaden the focus of decision-making are open to question (see, e.g. Hersh, 1999). Particularly, tools allow explicit trade-offs between important issues, which may have previously been implicit in the mind of the decision-maker (e.g. Mintzberg, 1976). It is argued by some that the cognitive abilities of decision-makers can be strengthened by the provision of tools (Wilson, 1992:52). Such systems may therefore help counter human bias (Furnham, 2005:33). The role of tools may also be heightened in significance in partnership working, where (Goss, 2001:116):

"…transparency and clear decision-trails may be more important … than they are for ordinary organisations which have default systems of accountability."

Goss (2001:116)

Technical 'solutions', however, must integrate other aspects into decision-making which determine whether or not options are able to be taken forward, alongside technical criteria (e.g. engineering considerations). These criteria include (Rydin, 2003:21):

- TECHNICAL feasibility
- VALUE acceptability within the policy community
- tolerable COST
- anticipated PUBLIC quiescence
- reasonable chance for receptivity among ELECTED DECISION-MAKERS

### 2.6.2   Knowledge processes

Policy choices are often dependent on the timing of different decisions and the timeliness of information received. Processes may also be viewed as structure where networks of communication in effect act as "holding environments for knowledge" (Goss, 2001:178) (see Forum for the Future, below). Hage comments how strategic choices can be 'institutionalised' in this way, as organisational-environmental reactions produce a "causal chain" of events. Walker suggests that best practice from other similar organisations might be useful (2006:108). However, learning through best practice guides and manuals can occur in a way that is over centralised, simplified, and standardised (Goss, 2001).
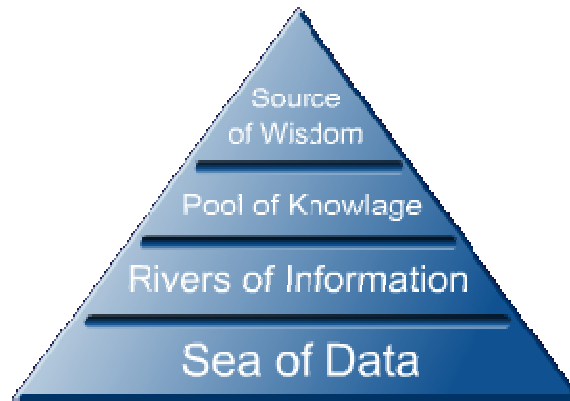
**Figure 2.8. Relationship between data and wisdom**
Adapted from Forum for the Future (2006)

The role of technical information is also critically linked to the roles individuals take in reporting and disseminating this information. Project A2 research found that evidence from third parties may carry a lot of weight in decision-making, particularly around option generation.
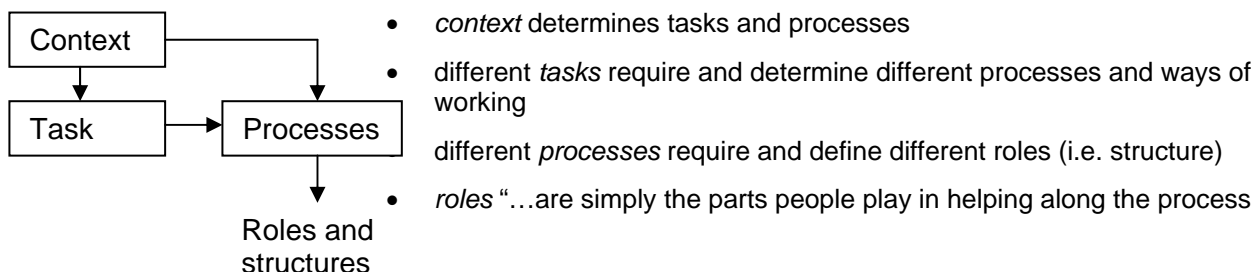
### 2.6.3 Impact of structures on process and working practices

Formal processes, particularly as defined in law, can sometimes encourage a stalemate or status quo in organisations, in which the capabilities of councillors and employees of local governments are both shaped and limited until such formal processes are reviewed, thereby enabling change to happen (Barratt, 1988:15). Rydin (2003:42) states that there is a cascade of rules (from the metaconstitutional, to constitutional, collective-choice, to operational rules) which govern over day-to-day working practices and decision-making. Procedures as 'rules' form part of the structure of the organisation in a formal sense. A lack of change in formal processes as delimited by rules and formal structure may come despite changing needs in terms of community values and expectations (Barratt, ibid:15). At the heart of what is known as 'institutional analysis' is the question of the extent to which human actions are, indeed, structurally determined in this way (Hill & Hupe, 2002:33).

"Various approaches [to the LTP process] are adopted in different local authorities but the local government structure is not the determining feature of decision-making in local transport planning. The LTP process itself is a key driver in the decision-making process."

Palmer (2003:4)

Herriot & Pemberton (1995: 504) clarify that:



- *context* determines tasks and processes

- different *tasks* require and determine different processes and ways of working

  different *processes* require and define different roles (i.e. structure)

- *roles* "…are simply the parts people play in helping along the process

To a certain extent, both institution and networks form the bridge between process and structure. Report D2 goes into more detail about actors 'formation' of problems and they way they structure (and interpret) problems inside their own heads.

### 2.6.4    Vertical management

There are two aspects of structure which may affect process: vertical (management) layering, and degree of horizontal (functional) integration. These are dealt with in turn.

Structures define who is at the 'top' and who is at the 'bottom', and who are next to each other. Thus, different people (and power) may also be engaged in different stages of the process, for instance policy formation as compared to implementation. Furnham (2005:654) observes that two themes are emerging in organisations: structures are becoming flatter (i.e. less hierarchical), and organisational processes are (in sympathy) being joined up horizontally. Furnham states that saying:

"Organisations today stress teamwork and participation, and downplay authoritative, superior-subordinate [line-managed] relationships. […] If virtually all decisions or orders come from "the top", organization members tend to act as unthinking executors of someone else's commands."

Furnham (2005: 664-668)

Hence, all levels of the organisation are charged with decision-making, not just the top. This process, known as "delayering", has met with some resentment as many employees do not wish to take the responsibility it befalls upon them – "freedom to decide means the possibility of accepting personal failure" (Furnham, 2005:668).

### 2.6.5    Lateral divisions

Structuring, particularly through the division of work between departments, involves a process – called 'departmentalisation' (Furnham, 2005:666). However, structures may begin to  "…separate and isolate people, close down communication or prevent the exchange of ideas" (Goss, 2001: 73). The categorisation of people and activities can immediately begin to imply 'differences' which may later impede efforts to work collaboratively, i.e. a 'them' vs. 'us' type attitude. 'Classic' inter-professional barriers can therefore remain (Barratt (1988:71).

The organisation chart may encourage people to categorize between different groups/departments in terms of values, behaviours and personalities; this might be the beginning of mistrust and stereotyping."

Furnham (2005:513)

In a slightly top-down model, Barratt states how Heads of Departments "…are not paid to operate in isolation … but together" to create "integrated policies and programmes" which "give effect to the directions of the council" (1998:67). Hence, structural solutions such as enabling "…people to work together on a day-to-day basis, sharing buildings and offices and databases" are seen as a way forward (ibid: 87-88). In organisational working, an appreciation of other people's constraints can also help to get past "biased preconceptions of other departments" (Mitzberg et al.1996) (see also Hull et al, 2006). In organic structures, a number of ways are used to bring together people with diverse functional expertise. Horizontal relationships are emphasised using:

- project teams
- matrix structures
- integrating or liaison roles
- task forces

Organisations which combine being both decentralised and organic (after Gordon, 1990:258-9 [in Furnham, 2005]) may have the greatest benefits, in terms of speed and local relevance of decisions, freedom and time for top managers, and level of enthusiasm and participation in problem-solving, based upon "skill, ability and knowledge rather than rank…".

### *Levels of strategy and intra-project management*

Like mountains and social science itself, strategies – if carried out successfully – contain the seeds of their own destruction. The delivery of outcomes from central to local government follows the following causal chain, decreasing in strategic scale from left to right.

STRATEGY → POLICY → PLAN → PROGRAMME/PACKAGE → SCHEME → PROJECT

Between levels, layers of organisation and planning are also passed through. Project A2 suggested that different timeframes at each of these layers could mean that strategic processes across levels or layers were not as linear as they might seem- [limitations to prescribed processes]. They are also subject to political decision-making and scrutiny at each level, which can undermine any logical progression from one level (or layer) to the next. The increased use of project management tools in local government somewhat reflects the 'new public management' agenda which in concentrating on generic processes of delivery, and management rather than political or sociological sciences or the way policy is actually put into effect (Schofield, 2001:245).

Processes in time can be tracked out to plan and measure the progress of policy delivery. These typically involve GANTT charts, flow diagrams, or other charts of "schemes" or "programmes". Local authorities are increasingly using PRINCE2 methodologies to manage the implementation of transport schemes, a generic framework which is being used across different services in authorities. It was developed by the Office of Government Commerce for organising, managing, and controlling projects in the private and public sector (see www.ogc.gov.uk/prince2).

### 2.6.7    Impacts of politics on process

"…the planning of transportation systems is as much a political process as it is a technical one."

Meyer &Miller (2001: 58)

Teisman's 'streams' model of decision-making (2000:942) characterises the decision-making situation as solutions looking for problems, and politicians looking for both solutions and problems. Barratt & Hill (1981) suggest that political compromises within the policy process are paramount. Political rhetoric may also cloud what the intentions of policy actually are, making evaluation of policy success and outcomes more problematic (Hill & Hupe, 2002:140; Schofield, 2001:251). Hill & Hupe emphasis citing Allison 1971:

"A policy document is as much the product of a bureau-political struggle as a rational answer to a political or social problem … [and] is seldom the fruit of one single actor sitting behind his or her desk."

Hill & Hupe (2002:162)

'Institutions' are a certain types of systems with a political bias (Furnham, 2005:15). Wilson distinguishes between three political models affecting process in organisations (seeTable 2.9 below) – 'overt', 'covert', and 'contextual'. Politics, therefore, need not be restricted only to partisan politics.

Goss (2001:8) suggests that the language of management smothers the highly political nature of local governance. On this note Wilson (1992:14) suggests two ways to deliver change: the first is simply through management training; but the second involves devoting more effort to understand the context and political processes operating in organisations.

There are also officer-politician relationships. The LTP process is driven forward by local government officers (Palmer, 2004), with members active in overseeing the process and sanctioning action – such as approving financial bids and key reports such as the APR.

"In theory, [an officer's] job is to advise councillors on how to take the best decisions, but the fact they are full-time professionals gives them a huge advantage."

FoE (2005:42)

| a) overt | b) covert | c) contextual |
|---|---|---|
| "local rationality" (Cyert and March, 1963);<br><br>local attempts are made to influence preferred processes and outcomes, by individuals, departments or organizations in defence of their position in the network" | "non-decision-making" limitations on power and influence (Bachrach & Baratz, 1970), e.g.<br><br>agenda setting<br><br>limitations on participation in decisions<br><br>defining parameters over what is and what is not open to decision to others in the organisation | dialectic between individual action and economic (or contextual) determinism |

**Table 2.9. Bias in institutions**


## 2.7    Summary of processes

There are three types of process which deserve study in order to understand how 'effective' organisations can be in carrying out processes to deliver transport policy. These are:

- 'Prescribed' processes – dictated solely by guidance or other's advice in which the individual actor is little more than an automaton

- 'Interactive' processes – dictated by interaction with others: for example the processes of scientific or social debate, as may occur in meetings or other forums, and the external expression of individuals' own behaviour

- 'Mental' processes – those which happen 'within the actor's own mind': for example, changing one's own opinion or other mental decisions or decision-making calculations


Section 3 explains these processes in more detail using case studies of situations where organisations are working on trying to resolve transport policy-related problems. Each of the case studies illustrates, in varying degrees, these three processes at work. Section 4 summarises the commonalities and the synergies identified between the case studies and brings together recommendations for further work.

# 3.    INTERIM CASE STUDY FINDINGS: AN OUTLINE OF THE KEY PROCESSES

## 3.1 Introduction to the Case Studies

This section introduces the case studies through a description of the prescribed, interactive and mental processes which documentary evidence suggests are at work in each case study area. In transport delivery, prescribed processes are laid out in government guidance through advice on local transport planning and criteria for government financial aid. The interactive processes tend to be associated with the networks and meetings an organisation or an individual is linked into. Whilst the mental processes which may influence the delivery of transport policy tend to be influenced by the cultural or professional ties an individual has.

We have seen from the above review (Section 2) that prescribed processes can be a useful way to think but that they should not inhibit lateral thinking and action.  However, may organisations do not spend enough time on working out good working processes.  They way organisations – and individuals – actually work within the prescribed process is looked at now.  The case studies have been chosen by the DISTILLATE team because each of the organisations are introducing more effective processes of decision making in their organisation.  Introducing changed ways of 'doing things' is, on its own, often seen as a major stumbling block in many organisations, despite knowledge of desired outcomes and examples of what may be seen as effective delivery elsewhere. Maintaining the status quo can be the easy option. The case studies are introduced here to illustrate the processes at work in a more concrete (rather than abstract) way. They also present an introduction to the further work which will be undertaken through interviews, observations and focus groups to present a more detailed analysis of good practice and ways ideas can be transferred between organisations involved in local transport delivery. As such, they are preliminary findings based on archival research and initial primary research.

## 3.2 Upgrading the quality of buses and transit infrastructure

Bus enhancement schemes provide an interesting example of the process issues relating to the interface between strategic level policies to improve bus transit and the implementation of individual schemes on the ground. These include partnership working, the use of planning tools and research, and the delivery of organisational responsibilities for different aspects of scheme delivery. They also extend to the relationships between officers, members and other stakeholders (including the private bus operator, other layers of government in the region and centrally, and other affected public services) and how they interact during the decision-making process. This first case study shows how lessons learnt from an earlier Showcase bus route are also being taken into account during the implementation of future routes. This includes activities from the planning stages, through the design and consultation phase, to implementation.

**The Local Transport Planning process**

The two bus routes along a central corridor were included as part of the Provisional LTP1 in 1999. They were funded as part of a total LTP1 settlement for integrated transport of £4.5M, and subsequently included within the final LTP1 approved by the council on 17th July 2000, and submitted to the Minister for Transport on 31st of that month. This was set within the context of meeting national transport policy objectives in the July 2000 Ten Year Plan and in advance of restraint-based measures which were then under consideration. Showcase bus routes were seen as a 'key element' within the LTP1 programme: "Buses are, and will remain for the foreseeable future, the main form of public transport in the city."

The council had the lowest levels of bus use for work journeys of the 8 core cities in England (whilst being comparatively strong in terms of walking and cycling benchmarks). The bus routes proposed serve the north-south corridor passing through areas with the most severe social exclusion issues in the city. LTP1 stated that the council felt it was likely to need to draw on the provisions of Quality Bus Contracts to secure bus service improvements. Targets contained within the LTP were for a 15% increase in bus passengers over 5 years, and a frequency of 4 buses an hour within 400m of 98% of the population. The plan was also set within the context of an LRT line, which has subsequently after thirty years been abandoned as a realistic concept to pursue by the council.

A further third route, now the subject of public consultation, was also planned to be upgraded within the LTP1 period. The publication of LTP1 also preceded the publication of a Bus Strategy which covered the

2003-06 period. A causal chain analysis of bus priority measures in LTP1 predicted the following outcomes from the process of installing bus priority measures:

- reduction of conflict between buses and traffic

- buses able to bypass peak hour congestion

- improved journey times greater service reliability

- increased relative attractiveness of bus services in corridor

- increased bus/public transport patronage

- Increase public transport capacity/Reduced car travel

- Reduce accidents [safety]

- Improve air quality [environment]

- Reduce congestion [economy]

- Enhance level of public transport services [accessibility, integration]

Of these impacts, the collection of 'before' and 'after' evidence on travel times, travel times, traffic counts, and retail impacts was to be included within the monitoring programme.

**Scheme implementation processes**

A number of steps in the process of scheme delivery were identified in a project management timetable produced in Figure 3.1 below. This shows the legal and political processes through which improvements were required to progress. Note that 'liaison with bus company' occurs throughout. Some of the interactive processes within this overall process are further developed in the next section.

**Figure 3.1: Example of Showcase Bus Route Management Timetable**

SHOWCASE BUS ROUTE
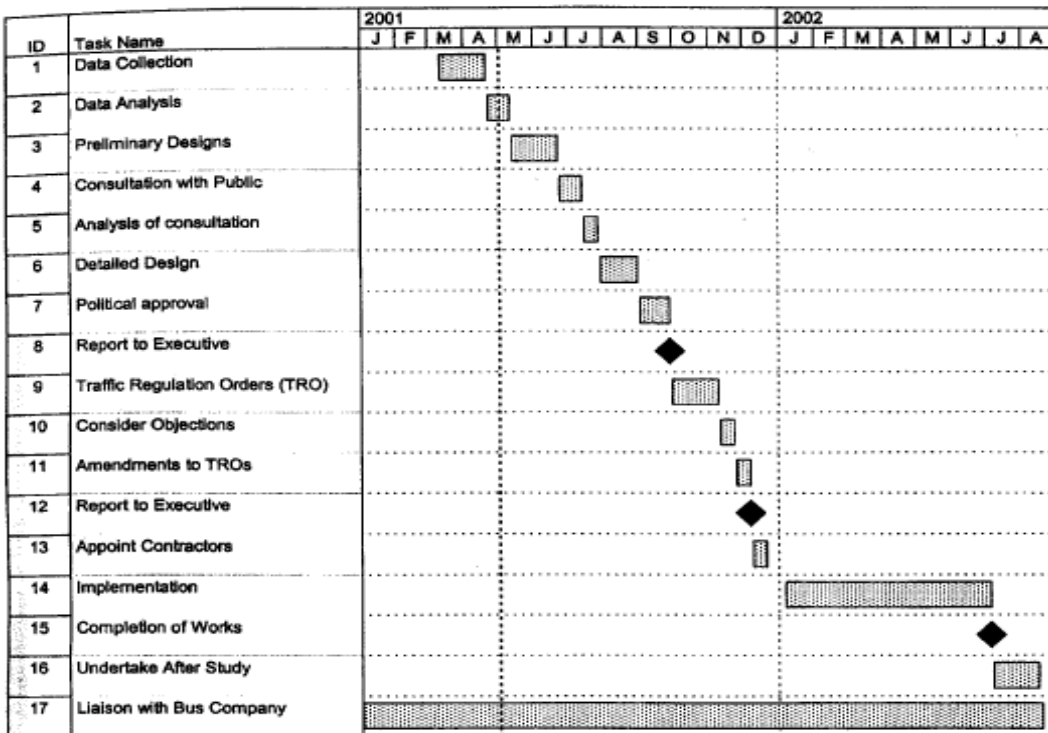
The council is involved in a Bus Quality Partnership (BQP) with the one main bus operator in the city, with ongoing discussions to improve bus services, information, and ticketing. The LTP1 identified the organisational and administrative conditions which might place difficulties in the way of sustainable transport planning, including monopolies in public transport provision, a lack of competition, and a lack of national regulatory body relating to buses. However, the mood of the LTP was hopeful in that having one operator may help to coordinate the improvement and development of the public transport network in a proactive public/private transport partnership. The council hoped for a 'significant increase' in the number and reliability of bus services, as well as a 'general reduction' in fares. It also proposed to introduce emissions standards into the BQP. The council was also said to have been working with an adjacent council in a well established relationship to take forward policies in the Regional Transport Strategy. Examples of such joint working including information provision and branding for the showcase bus services and development of bus priority measures.

### Interaction with council

All teams within Traffic and Transport Services were consulted, as well as the departmental finance manager, the legal services division, and neighbourhood and housing services. A seminar was held for ward members on 30th October 2001 on the nature and progress of works, and the outcomes of the public consultation; "general support" for the scheme was indicated.

A report on the non-statutory consultation on draft bus priority and parking measures was prepared by transport officers and presented to the council at a departmental Executive meeting of the council on 9th January 2002. The report sought to authorise progress to the statutory consultation phase, and thereby prepare and advertise draft Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) with representations (from the consultation) to be reported at a future meeting.

### Interaction with the public

A non-statutory consultation process was carried out between 3rd July and 17th August 2001, followed by a meeting with local traders on the 11 December, and separate meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and local Civic Society on 21 December 2001. External consultation involved the distribution of 12,000 leaflets and letters to residences and businesses along the main proposed quality bus corridor and adjacent side streets. Information was also sent to interested organisations on the council's mailing list, exhibitions were held in three locations, and proposal details were added to the council's website (itself, a relatively new innovation at the time). Half-page colour advertisements were placed in two local newspapers. The city's transport forum was also consulted with, and was 'generally supportive' of the measures.

### Role of operators

The bus company's role was assisting in the preparation of the proposed measures. It was said to be in 'full support' subject to priority measures and parking/loading restraints being put in place by the council, and would purchase £1.75M's worth of new double-decker, GPS-enabled buses to run along the route. This agreement was "binding in honour only and does not form any part of a legally binding contract between the two parties" (as noted in the council's minutes). The council considered that there was "a risk, albeit small, that [the bus company] may not deliver on the new buses". The PTO also provided information on the number of trips currently on all services serving the core bus route (at 94,000 journeys per year).

### Role of the local authority

There were two stages in the implementation of the routes, the second of which could not proceed without further statutory consultation. This was followed by two further phases of monitoring and upgrading of a further route sharing the same corridor (Table 3.1 below). As the latter route upgrade was planned in advance, and ventured into a neighbouring authority, discussions with the other authority were said to have been held regarding timetabling and design standards on the showcase bus routes.

The local authority included the showcase buses in LTP1, with funding for them acknowledged in the final version of the LTP. In certain locations, land had to be formally adopted for highways use before bus priority measures could be installed. TROs were also needed for red surfaces (bus stop 'clearways') to discourage parking at bus stops.

The council viewed improvements to bus services as "key" in their achievement of local and national objectives for transport. Other options considered were taking no action (which would be "unacceptable"), but the bus options were considered to be the "only effective and proven way of securing substantive improvement on congested urban roads". Before a final decision was taken however, the council stated it would go through the statutory consultation process, but had already given the measures "careful consideration" itself. The need to change the design, costs, and timescale of the measures after the statutory consultation was identified as a risk if the council gave an early approval. Conversely, rejecting the proposals prior to the formal consultation stages would undermine the LTP which had already been written and

received financial support from government for its programme; it was speculated that this could undermine the whole strategy and future government support for the council's transport proposals.

| Phase 1 | Upgrading bus stops |
| | Consulting on bus priorities and parking |
| Phase 2 | Implementation of: |
| | Bus priorities |
| | Parking changes |
| | New buses |
| | Real-time information equipment |
| Phase 3 | Review of remaining parking/loading restrictions along route |
| Phase 4 | Conversion of further bus service as in Phases 1 and 2 |

**Table 3.1: Stages in the Implementation of the Bristol Showcase Bus Services**

Further risks to agreeing to press ahead with the measures were:

- Limited staff resources in the council's legal services department for progressing TROs, thereby possibly extending implementation and the delivery of benefits
- Requests for council tax re-banding for properties where car parking spaces had been removed

However, the council was bound to implement transport improvements through the Transport Act 2000 and the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, the latter of which conferred TRO powers regarding traffic movement and parking onto local authorities. It was recommended to the council meeting that the following duties lie within the council's transportation remit:

- Securing access to premises
- Effects on amenities
- The national air quality strategy
- The passage of public service vehicles
- Safety and convenience of passengers
- Any other relevant matters including national policy

The advice given by officers to the council, as recorded in the minutes, was that "the council has to take them all into account and balance them. … the council cannot be expected to eliminate [all adverse effects] where the proposals will bring substantial benefits overall."

**Role of stakeholders and consultees**

As part of the consultation, the council sought the views of the following groups:

- Fire, police and ambulance services
- Local traders' association along the core part of the route
- Chamber of Commerce
- Civic Society

All of these stakeholders were in support of the proposals, some strongly and other conditionally/in principle, apart from the local traders whose concerns were around negative impacts on trade from parking and loading restrictions. They were also of the view that there was a need for compensatory off-street parking facilities should the scheme be put in place. The consultation results from 116 correspondences were as follows:

| Opinion | Site-specific comments (no) | General comments (no.) |
|---|---|---|
| In support | 17 | 44 |
| Objecting | 63 | 9* |
| Other | 21 | 28 |

* including one 236-signature petition

**Table 3.2 Summary of Consultation Exercise held in 2001**

**Response of the local authority to the consultation findings**

To address the issues raised in the consultation, the local authority were required to mount a defence of their plans, and change, justify, or mitigate them. To address concerns over parking, officer surveys were carried out in side-streets along the route to judge their ability to cope with displaced parking from the bus route. The case for priority measures was also added upon by data on levels of reliability of the current services. These were found to be poor: 65% of buses travelling south were more than six minutes late in the AM peak (6% were on time), and 90% in the PM peak (no buses were on time).

# 3.3 Processes of railway planning

The second case study illustrates the decision making process involved in securing enhancements to a specific railway line used by commuters. The PTE in question used consultants to investigate the options for the future development of the line, including both heavy rail and tram-train technologies. The report gave support to the future use of more innovative tram-train technologies, and a number of short and long-term recommendations were produced for a phased process for the implementation of upgrades and improvements. This parallels the bus example (above). The main benefits of tram-trains over heavy rail options were seen to be on the following grounds:

- Cost
- Flexibility of future systems development
- Penetration of the city centre
- Cost-effectiveness of additional links to airports
- Potential for future links to and across employment areas
- Less onerous maintenance due to lighter vehicles
- Contribute to the long-term vision supporting City Region and economic growth in the PTE area

Both the PTE and the additional two local transport planning authorities through which the line passes outside of the PTE accepted the recommendations of the consultant's report. This report included a delivery plan and a causal chain of recommended improvements over time.

**Causal chain process approach to delivery process**

A causal chain was produced running from 2005-2021, illustrating the processes which would ensue for the implementation of different scheme options, i.e.:

1. Heavy rail improvements only
2. New technology improvements only
3. Either heavy rail or new technology

The elements of this process include:

| For heavy rail option: | For light rail tram-train option: |
|---|---|
| Short and medium-term station improvements, including some new stations and platforms | Trial suitability of tram-train vehicles |
| | New alignment into city centre |
| New and additional rolling stock* | New city and City Region rapid transit network |
| Upgraded service frequencies and line-speed enhancements* | New tram-train vehicles |
| Rail line electrification | Upgraded service frequencies |
| Possible line extensions | Possible line extensions |

**Table 3.3: Elements in the delivery process for heavy rail and light rail options**


The timing of key decisions and the commissioning of new feasibility studies and design work was clearly indicated in the management plan. Key decisions include:

- Decision to extend link to airport and secure its funding
- Decision on trial of new tram-train technology
- Confirm long term options for line technology
- Confirm wider network components and technology
- Confirm institutional arrangements for new network


These decisions are supported by:

- Four completed working papers
- Further studies and feasibility/ design work:
- Set up joint Network Rail/ operator/ PTE project to develop and implement short-term enhancements
- Technical and feasibility work for airport extension
- Feasibility studies for PTE-wide tram-train network including defining network and phasing
- Heath and Safety Executive safety case
- Review trial depot provision
- Detailed design work for new stations, possible new extensions and proposed airport link
- Technical and financial feasibility work, securing of funding and detailed design work for City Region rapid transit network
- Review of signalling
- Further technical and financial feasibility study into electrification and future route development (for case study line)
- Confirm decision to proceed with electrification and secure funding (for case study line)
- Detailed design of electrification works (for case study line)

The City Region aspects were initially not part of the study, but have become necessary following initial investigations that the original study scale was too limited to properly address travel patterns.

Thus, two possible processes may ensue – hinged around the choice between heavy rail or light rail options in 2010. These are analysed in a separate delivery plan in terms of: actions; constraints; outline costs; possible funding sources; responsibilities. The relevant parts of the table for these two options are reproduced below:

| Actions | Constraints | Outline costs | Possible funding sources | Responsibilities |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Heavy rail option | | | | |
| Vehicles (short-term): Investigate options and costs | Availability and finance | Unknown at present | LTP RDA | PTE Rail operator |
| Vehicles (long-term): Investigate options and costs | Availability and finance | Unknown at present | LTP Major Scheme TIF RTB RDA | PTE Rail operator |
| Line (long term): Detailed technical and financial feasibility study required | Costs of delivering clearances Need for re-signalling | £100M | LTP Major Scheme TIF RTB | PTE County Councils Network Rail |
| Light rail option | | | | |
| Vehicles (short term): Detailed technical and financial feasibility study required Agree vehicle specifications Procure vehicles | Network Rail safety case and type approval required | £15-20M for vehicles Other costs unknown at present | LTP Major Scheme TIF | PTE County Councils Network Rail Rail operator |
| Line (medium term): Detailed technical and financial feasibility study required | Technology needs to be tested on UK rail network | £15-35M | LTP Major Scheme TIF RTB PFI RDA User charging/demand management | PTE County Councils Network Rail |

**Table 3.4 SWOT Analysis of different options**

## 3.4 Regional-level transport decision-making and prioritisation processes

The third case study explores new processes of interaction around regional strategic priorities for transport. Regions have been asked to allocate funding from a Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) for transport, housing, and economic growth by central Government. In order to prioritise spending in the area of transport, one region has set up a Regional Transport Board (RTB) to facilitate this process. It achieves this through quarterly RTB meetings, to discuss priority schemes and the use and outputs of a prioritisation methodology. This methodology has been developed by a Regional Assembly officer group which supports the RTB. The idea is that,

"The prioritisation methodology does not seek to provide the answer, but rather present information to the Regional Transport Board such that it is able to determine its advice to Government on investment priorities from an informed position." (RTB Minutes 8.5.06)

The prioritisation process excludes existing commitments which the RFA must fund and are not subjected to further review, as well as other types of schemes which may be funded by other sources. The following schemes are not subject to prioritisation:

- National schemes, e.g. Highways Agency road schemes (i.e. committed)

- Government funded schemes with construction committed to begin by 2008

- Major schemes being progressed by local government, or having provisional approval from Government with no further advice needed

- Transport Innovation Fund (TIF) schemes, and those funded by other sources

- LTP schemes less than £5m

- All rails schemes

- Additional schemes which the RTB considers to be of such strategic importance they should be considered as a commitment to be implemented without delay and where no other funding sources are available for such schemes.

Growth area schemes are included to avoid them "falling through the cracks" but are marked as priorities for the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF). A 'headroom' amount of money is therefore available to be spent which is the difference between committed schemes and the total RFA. Sub-regional groups of local authorities were asked to suggest schemes which contributed to sub-regional housing growth and economic development with a five-year time horizon for delivery (i.e. 2007/08 until 2011). This was then compiled into a prioritised list. There are three elements to the prioritisation methodology (Table 5 below). Those in categories 1 and 2 are mostly those taken further forward. It should be noted that the prioritisation methodology was originally set up to identify all schemes of regional significance, and only as a secondary step identify funding sources. It has subsequently been applied to the RFA process because of the contemporaneous nature of the working being carried out by RTB.

| Element (low(9)/medium/high(1)) | Description |
|---|---|
| Policy compatibility rating | 80% on level of support for regional objectives (assessed using a questionnaire to scheme promoters/local authorities) |
| | 20% on level of support for national policy (from the assessment carried out by the promoter, i.e. derives a single score) |
| Deliverability score | Two key factors: |
| | Public acceptability ✕ Funding certainty (related to timing and readiness) |
| | This score can be improved by schemes being taken further forward in the development/appraisal process by their promoters |
| Value for money | Cost-benefit analysis |

**Table 3.5: Indicative scoring system for Regional Transport Board prioritisation of schemes**

### Process of design for regional priority questionnaire

The context of the questionnaire used to assess congruence with desired regional policy outcomes was debated with the Transport Advisory Group (TAG) and the Regional Transport Co-ordination Group (RTCG) of the Regional Assembly (RA). Particularly documents to which policy compatibility is compared are the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). The outputs were typically binary data (yes/no) giving a 1/0/-1 rating for the support given to various policy outcomes by specific transport proposals put forward. Overall, this gave a high/medium/low ranking for schemes for the policy compatibility component.

### Use by RTB of prioritisation evidence

The initial output of the prioritisation was reviewed by the RTCG for apparent anomalous categorisations of proposals. The prioritisation was then explored with promoters to identify issues for the board to consider. The RTCG then drafts the Forward Plan for the RTB to consider. In the longer term, the monitoring outputs of the RTS may be used to advise the board on the criteria they should use to judge future investment priorities. There are a number of interactive processes between members of the RTB which will be subject to further research. The membership of the RTB is depicted below in the form of the boardroom set-up used for RTB meetings (indicative only*).
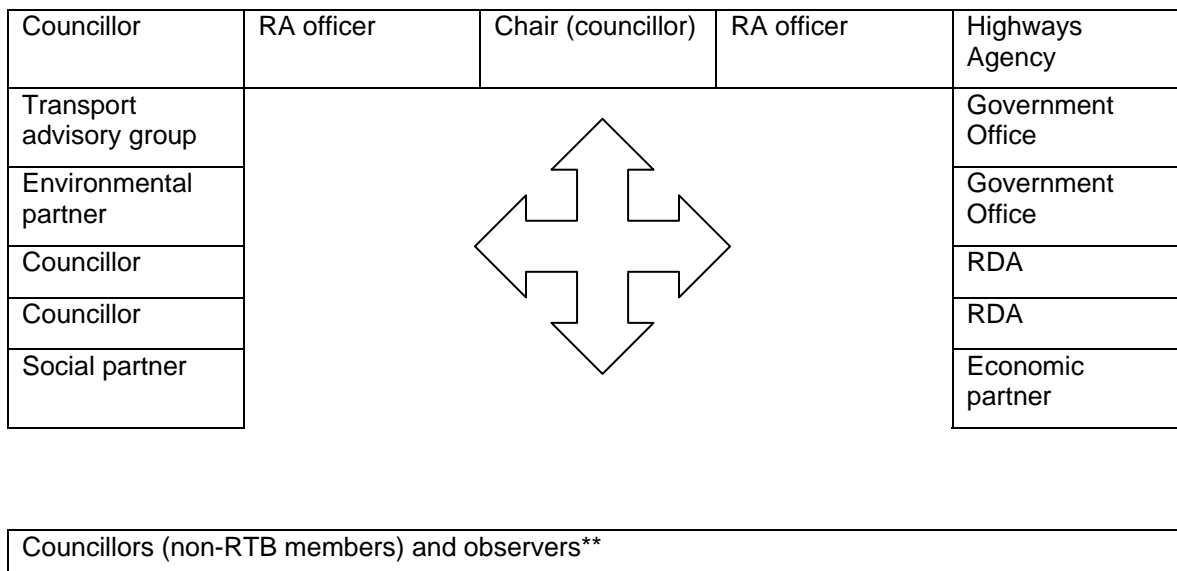
| Councillor | RA officer | Chair (councillor) | RA officer | Highways Agency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Transport advisory group | | | | Government Office |
| Environmental partner | | | | Government Office |
| Councillor | | | | RDA |
| Councillor | | | | RDA |
| Social partner | | | | Economic partner |

| Councillors (non-RTB members) and observers** |
|---|

**Figure 3.3. Indicative composition of Regional Transport Boards**

* Network Rail member is pending

** May speak for up to 3 minutes, for a totality of not more than 45 minutes in each meeting, preferably through advance notification to the Chair of the RTB

The RTB is a partnership body which uses evidence to make decisions, to directly advise Ministers, and to report back to the Assembly through assembly members on the RTB. Other RTB members are only accountable to their own organisations. RFA advice from the RTB was submitted by the RA to the Government on 31st January 2006 [check].

## 3.5 District-tier land-use and transportation planning and county interactions

The fourth case study investigates the interactions between a county council, its constituent district authorities and the private sector in order to manage housing growth, associated land-use development, and transport.

*Divisions of responsibilities*
In order to understand how decisions are made, the division of responsibilities between tiers must first be understood.  At the County level, the Executive is responsible for day to day transport decisions and consists of a leader and up to nine other councillors (who are appointed by the council). Policy development is delegated to the select committees, and the real decision making power for the local transport plan (LTP2) lies with the *County Council transportation select committee*.  Within this select committee there is an LTP2 Task Group with delegated responsibility for LTP2.  LTP2 developments are taken to the task group, back to the select committee, and then onto the executive for approval. LTP2 has been driven by the County Strategic Partnership (transport sub group).

At the district level local, committees also play a role in decision making. The local committees comprise of county councillors with a responsibility for a particular borough or district.  In this instance there are 11 boroughs, and 11 local committees. The local committees act as the bridge between the country lead LTP2 and borough/district transport issues that require representation in the LTP.  The local committee has a transportation sub committee, and a number of district/borough councillors sit on this.  The county council LTP group requires each Local Transportation Service (LTS) to review its integrated transport scheme programme in light of current priorities (i.e. LTP2 priorities), and extend the existing programme to cover the final year of LTP1, and the 5 years of LT P2 (2006/7-2010/11). This then forms the basis of the annual bid submission from each LTS, which determines the annual LTP capital allocation to each LTS District. The borough LTS has to submit an integrated transport project programme and theme bid (6 year scheme) for capital funds from the integrated transport block allocation to the **local committee** for approval.   LTS areas need to provide 25% towards the cost of intermediate schemes valued up to £1.5 million. The bid submission document is reviewed by the **County Executive**, which looks for demonstrated links between the locally assessed priority projects and the key aims and objectives of the LTP.

However, the number of different players involved in decision making can prove problematic.  The process outlined above does not include the current negotiations under way with housing developers concerning the section 106 agreement, or indeed the integration of the borough level Local Development Framework (LDF) with the council level LTP2. In minutes of the county council lead executive committee, problems with divided responsibilities in the development of the transport plan (as raised by one borough) include:

- Boroughs do not appear to have been individually consulted throughout the process, although there has been indirect consultation through the local strategic partnership (LSP) and the local committee[1]
- The draft LTP2 refers to 'partnership working' but there is no reference to direct working with boroughs/districts, except through the LSP processes.

The effectiveness of policy development despite the fragmentation of policy duties between sectors and departments (and the private sector) has been the focus of DISTILLATE research in this case study area. How successfully working practices, both informal and formal, have allowed the different tiers, departments, and sectors to work together has been investigated (and is also presented in the Project D sister report, FD2).  Some initial findings suggest that interdepartmental land use and transport issues are more likely to be dealt with jointly if:

- The relevant departments have common goals
- There is sufficient motivation to work together – for example concern about plans or decisions falling through can act as an incentive
- There is drive at both the officers and more senior levels to take things forward
- There is political support in the right places – including the council leader
- Staff retention is good – high levels of staff consistency encourages good working relationships with other departments, and helps to build knowledge about the process
- The processes are specifically shared between departments, sectors or tiers such as accessibility planning

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[1] It is worth noting that this situation is mirrored in another case study, see section 3.6.

In our county council case study a large scale housing development has encouraged different tiers, departments and sectors to work together. A number of the factors outlined above, especially those relating to motivation, drive, retention and shared responsibilities, have played a key role in encouraging cooperative working. Factors working against this cooperation include some resistance from members, and a lack of explicit and immediate financial incentives to do so.

## 3.6 Partnerships for city-centre regeneration

*The Urban Regeneration Company*
Central to this case study is the investigation of the interactions of and between an Urban Regeneration Company (URC), Council, RDA, English Partnerships, and private sector. The URC is a three way partnership between English Partnerships, the City Council, and the Regional Development Agency (RDA). The process of interaction involves board meetings which are facilitated across the various interests by a high ranking chair who has strong roots in the local area (a previous chair held a senior management position at a major City bank). Both English Partnerships and the RDA sit on the board. The URC has its own staff and budget – with about 15 staff; making it an organisation that is distinct from the council, with its own identify and ethos. Research findings to date imply that through its private sector business nous, the URC is able to engage effectively with both the council and other private sector organisations in service procurement and delivery. This includes using brokering skills to bridge the cultural gap between planners in the council and developers.

*The role of the council and private sector*
The URC has been set up in a way that deliberately distances it from direct day-to-day council activities (even though a number of staff have been seconded from the council). Clearly, whilst the URC has been distanced from direct council activities it does have similar constraints to policy development and delivery, albeit more focused on time and resources rather than directly political.

In terms of financing, the council has contributed limited funds to the running of the URC, although it provides a substantial level of support 'in kind'. Instead, the URC has attracted notable levels of private sector funding, and this has had significant implications for policy development and delivery; working practices have been modified in order to appeal to the private sector including a focus on project management, leadership and compromise. Project management tools such as benchmarking and the use of expertise brought in from outside have been used in developing elements of strategy. Initial fieldwork suggests that this focus has been essential to the development and maintenance of private sector links:

> 'The URC sits between the public and private sectors. It is very distinct from the council because of it's focus on project management, which has distanced the URC from the baggage usually associated with a local authority, and provided managerial practices that are appealing to the private sector' (Interview with URC Director of planning and regeneration).

However, these differences in management practices have caused some tension between the URC and planning team within the local authority which does not have the same adaptive capacity.

*Management structure*
DISTILLATE research in this case study area also considers the internal workings of the URC. As outlined earlier, the size and clear management structure of the organisation are described by those involved as contributing significantly to its success (see below for a diagram of the management structure). Initial findings suggest that the task orientated activities of the URC are less focused on giving individuals credit for specific aspects of delivery compared to a local authority; as a result, URC officers not only conceive of projects, but also go out and 'knock on doors' to get the funds, firms, developers and businesses necessary. This approach is considered by URC officers to be highly successful.

In another, comparable, case study, a County Council works both with the private sector and its constituent district authorities in managing housing growth and associated land-use development. An example of co-working with a district council is in the development of a cycle route and the acquisition of relevant planning permissions. This has involved physical meetings between members of the two organisations [positions/ranks/disciplines?] to aid cooperation on planning and funding processes which cross local government tiers. Examples of reasons why this relationship is seen to be successful include:

• common goals

- concern about things falling through in the context of limited resources & time
- drive of officers to take things forward, including the time spent by the director of policy & environment on coercing people into action
- political support in the right places – including the council leader
- excellent staff retention (giving staff a good knowledge of earlier stages in the process)
- shared processes (such as accessibility planning)

Factors working against this cooperation include some resistance from members, and a lack of explicit and immediate financial incentives to do so.

## 3.7 A PTE's role in ensuring access to employment

The focus of this case study is the process relationships between a Passenger Transport Executive (PTE) and one of its borough local authorities (see Forrester, Snell et al (2006) section 3.1 for more description of roles). The relationship is an asymmetrical one in some ways in that the PTA (the *de facto* management group on the PTE) is made up of members from the local authorities so there is a clear formal relationship at the political level; however, the PTE has its own staff and these officers work day-to-day with officers from the local authorities.  So, while there is a single agency – the PTE, in order to get anything done the Executive needs to work with the authorities.  It could be argued that the Executive really does not have agency on its own behalf.  Further, while the PTE is responsible for transport planning (particularly with regards to LPT2), it is only responsible for transport implementation with respect to public transport so there are elements of the authority's transport planning for which the PTE does not have formal responsibility.

Working relationships between the LA and the PTE are regarded as excellent by both parties and by outside observers.  However, there are strata at which this working relationship takes place and these do not necessarily mix awfully well.  The Executive is a relatively small organisation and has a small and ideologically homogeneous staff.  At one stratum, officers from the PTE work on day-to-day with technical and transport officers from the authority on a wide range of matters from planning through to implementation. At another stratum, officers from the PTE engage with members and senior officers from the authority and other local organisations on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) meetings.  The discontinuity within this working relationship often occurs within the local authority where there is a lack of ideological consistency.  It must be emphasised that in the particular case study that was followed the working relationships within the local authority were good, and the relationship between the PTE and the Authority was good as a result, but it was perceived that this working relationship was not mirrored equally within all of the other local authorities within the PTE's region.  This presented a particular problem for the PTE in that it is a regional organisation – it needs to work well with all of the local authorities within its region: not just with one or two.  In some ways, uneven relationships are even more problematic than poor ones.

The relationship between the PTE and the LA was good with respect to the production of LTP2.  Role and responsibilities were clearly defined and the PTE took a lead on the actual writing, setting up a secretariat within the PTE office to be responsible for the LTP.  This secretariat took responsibility for the writing of the document – with full and apposite inputs from the transport and technical officers from the LAs – and it also took responsibility for consultation with the LA members and other local stakeholders within the LA areas through the relevant LSPs.

One important issue is that the PTE values its staff and works on staff training and retention. This makes it easier for LAs to have good working relations with the PTE.  For example, at LSP meetings, one PTE officer is delegated responsibility to attend each LSP.  Thus there is continuity from the perspective of the LA.

One interesting area where it could be argued that working processes have failed is with respect to accessibility planning, or should we say the attempt to make transport planning responsible for accessibility to goods and services. This is by no means unique to this PTE and this LA but transport – and by transport we mean the PTE, LA transport planners and, indeed, transport providers – is perceived is providing the **means** by which accessibility is attained.  Responsibility for accessibility remains on a day-to-day basis with more powerful sectoral interests such as economic development, education, and health.  One could further argue that in this particular PTE this has not presented a problem in that the PTE is good at working to other sectors' agendas thus it has always produced the 'joined up thinking' that the recent interest in accessibility planning and the use of the 'modelling' tool, *Accession*, was supposed to produce.

This case study is about one PTE's role in ensuring access to employment to further social inclusion.

# 4. CONCLUSION

The empirical work on these case studies is on-going. To date, the case study research and the literature review lead to the following conclusions to be made:

## 4.1 Summary from the Literature Review

Decision-making processes vary across local government and at the different scales of government. Certain processes are prescribed by DfT with local government being part of a delivery chain between central Government and local communities. In this respect, Local Authorities neither control policy or outcomes – they have to accept influence as well as exert it. Prescribed policy processes rely on processes of communication within organisations to be effective and interactions between individuals.

Local authorities involved in the delivery of transport projects have a number of things they must do. This forms part of the process by which projects are delivered, which includes interaction, information exchange, and thinking. Items which provoke the initiation of processes include (see Figures 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 in the Annex):

- Strategy development – LTP

- Strategy assessment – e.g. SEA

- Scheme assessment – e.g. EIA, HIA, NATA, feasibility studies etc.

- Responding to outside interests and communities – Statutory and non-statutory consultations

- Scheme implementation – funding, statutory provisions (e.g. Transport and Works Order, TROs etc.)

- Monitoring– various reporting mechanisms (CPA, PSA, APR etc.)

The 'processes' in action are multi-layered and multiplex. Prescribed processes overlay interactive processes which are influenced by individual characteristics and behaviour (Table 4.1).

| Type of process | PRESCRIBED | INTERACTIVE | MENTAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| Descriptors | <ul><li>taught</li><li>tiered</li><li>tools and technocracy</li><li>timing and tightness</li></ul> | <ul><li>coordination and cooperation</li><li>conflict</li><li>consensus</li><li>choice</li></ul> | <ul><li>interest</li><li>intuition and insight</li><li>inspiration and imagination</li><li>intellect</li></ul> |

**Table 4.1 Types and aspects of different levels of process.**

**Prescribed processes**
We know already from the review that prescribed processes subordinate individual judgement to performance compliance and that performance management systems can be a barrier to lateral thinking in modern local government (Goss, 2001:68). We also know that there are factors which limit the extent to which rational processes, or rational models – can actually represent reality. These include how problems are defined; involvement of politicians; interruptions to the process; clarity in which processes are set out; m mindsets of receiving actors and attitudes to mandate; and contextual factors. With respect to the latter of these, [external] contextual factors, we know that PESTLE can be used to focus on strengths and weaknesses in relevant areas.

We also know from our research and from the literature that organisational teams often do not spend a lot of time on process issues other than those laid out by the prescribed process, instead leaping rapidly into the task they think they have been given.

**Interactive processes**

A fact often overlooked in prescriptive guidance are the risks imposed by people's own ways of working with one another and the way groups interact to deliver policy results within and between organisations.  Social processes and norms of behaviour are also important and D2 deals with these norms as they fit into the structure.  Walker (2006) has noted that people respond to different stimuli and to get over some of these "personality barriers" she Walker recommend a generic framework for increasing the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.  In a sense this is finding institutional responses to non-institutional problems and this was one of our [unwritten] aims within Project D.  The final report, D4, will report on the reception of these ideas by transport practitioner community.

The importance of partnerships and how partnerships actually work (see case studies and see D2) and can be made to work is critical and will form a significant part of the remainder of Project D's fieldwork.  It is true to say that the importance of *how partnerships work* is often overlooked in less successful partnerships.

Furnham (2005) has provided us with a structure within which formal and informal interactive working practices can be compared…

| *Formal working practices* | *Informal working practices* |
|---|---|
| EXPLICITLY CONSTITUTED<br><br>• Controlled by senior managers | NATURAL/SPONTANEOUS/CASUAL<br><br>• Between individuals |
| Perform a specific task | Function supports friendship, mutual help, and confirmation of specific beliefs and ideologies |
| • formal rights and obligations<br><br>• behaviour formatted and constrained<br><br>• formal group leaders<br><br>• codified structures, rules and procedures<br><br>• behaviour based on division of labour, through filling of well-established/historical roles<br><br>• roles have titles, job descriptions, contracts<br><br>• more or less permanent and relatively stable<br><br>• organigram<br><br>• networks well-defined and follow formal lines<br><br>• interpersonal relations are *prescribed* | • develop through a variety of forces<br><br>• contain people from various sections/levels who have something in common (beliefs, fears, aspirations, energy)<br><br>• may be formal members of other workgroups<br><br>• "cliques" – horizontal/vertical(different ranks)/sundry employees<br><br>• may be ephemeral or unstable<br><br>• sociogram<br><br>• networks poorly defined and *cut across* regular channels<br><br>• interpersonal relations are spontaneous |

| Sub-types of group orientation: - | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *COMMAND* | *TASK* | *INTEREST* | *FRIENDSHIP* |
| e.g. standing committees/boards | e.g. ad hoc/expert groups/<br><br>commissions | e.g. voluntary and common issue | e.g. for social/ interpersonal needs |

**Table 4.2:  Comparison of formal and informal working practices (also used as table 2.9)**

… and this will be explicitly followed up and used to relate the three 'types' of processes: prescribed, interactive and mental.


**Mental processes**

Throughout all of the above, we will try to be *aware* of the mental processes, and how they impact upon action.

**The use of tools**

The use of tools (design and implementation support tools – the DIST of DISTILLATE – in particular: see fig 2.2 on page 8 where tools are used in the right hand box for option generation, modeling and appraisal in particular), and how their use is influenced by the processes involved will be central to the next major DISTILLATE Project D report[2]. This interrelationship between tools and processes will involve not just tools producing 'reliable knowledge' but their being accepted into the process sphere(s) by producing what is termed 'socially robust knowledge'.

Although the knowledge produced by the other DISTILLATE projects may be technical correct knowledge, for it to become treated as reliable knowledge by actors outside the immediate circle of its creators involves process. Further, for it to become socially robust involves a complex interplay between the knowledge itself, and the structure in which it is used and the processes by which this happens. Thus our work in DISTILLATE Project D will be informed by data in this Report and in D2.

Where changed ways of working are required, there are sub-processes at work which include local organisations' (and individuals) deciding how to react/ act. Organisational culture is determined by a number of factors, including management styles and the personalities and beliefs, values and attitudes of key staff. The culture is reinforced as a result of a feedback cycle. Individuals may alter or change their behaviour as a result. The involvement by elected members appears to be weak with the process of decision-making being led by transport planners who understand DfT requirements and have the technical knowledge to support decisions. But critical points (e.g. elections) in the electoral cycle impact on transport decision-making and can reverse or stall previous decisions.

But there is evidence of individuals using their informal networks to cut across impersonal structural boundaries and barriers. The case studies provide an opportunity to assess how closely these suggested governing dynamics match 'reality'. The research is complicated because of the need to understand the context in which implementation takes place, and the need for change processes as well as processes of effectiveness and efficiency. Sustainable transport implies a normative approach to change. The values of actors in this process of change will have a large bearing on the outcomes achieved. Thus research needs to find out what happens when people from different backgrounds and with different personal characteristics are brought together and the conditions under which they can best interact to deliver process-derived outcomes. The research should look for behaviours that remove cultural/ structural barriers to change.

## 4.2 Focus on process in the case studies

The research on processes in the case studies has concentrated on the following aspects of delivery with emphasis on the relationships between actors themselves through the process and through the use and development of evidence:

- The stakeholders involved

- The layering and relationships between actors

- The processes of decision-making

- The sequence of decision-making

- The initiating forces of the 'problem'

- The enabling forces for the 'solution' and how the support of the public is quantified.

- How and by whom barriers to delivery and implementation were overcome.


The problems that the case study schemes are trying to address may be characterised by shifting, ill-defined, or competing goals. Project A1 has already alerted the DISTILLATE team to the difficulties of engaging with multiple players who have particular organizational goals and norms. The arrangements for collaborating with these external stakeholders will be important.

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[2] This next major report, D4, is the final report but there will also be a literature and data review, D3, in the interim.
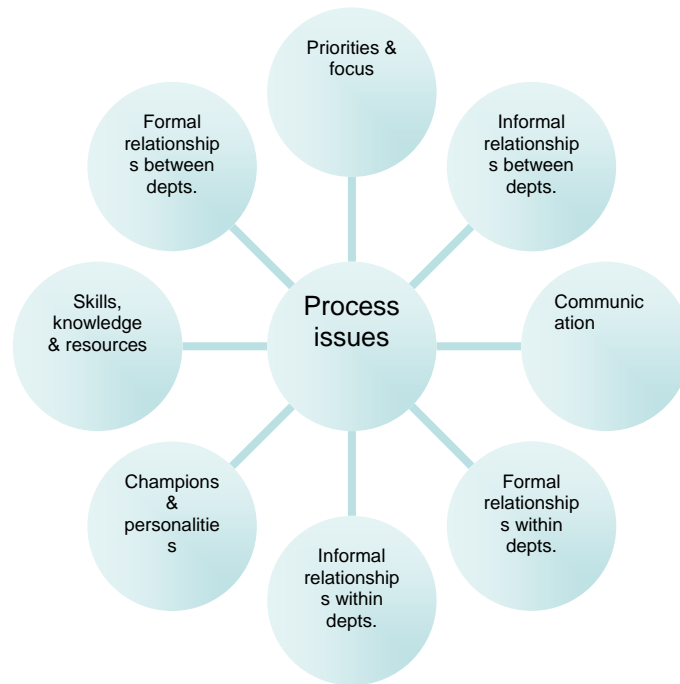
**Figure 4.1 Summary of the emergent process issues from our DISTILLATE project D case studies**

The PTE/employment case study, for example, tells us that THE action arena (see section 2.2) is important but that the action arena of an essentially regional organisation such as a PTE can be different from an essentially local organisation such as a local authority.  Further, the PESTLE matrix almost acts like a hierarchy with political and economic factors dominating partnerships such as Local strategic partnerships. Transport, like environment, often gets relegated to last place and this can lead to 'sub-optimal' decisions being made from the transport point of view.  Interactive processes (see section 2.4) are important but are rarely planned.

Section 2.4.1 tells us that for partnerships there should be 'clear unequivocal support from the organisation[s] for the contact' and this is the case in both the PTE/employment and city regeneration case studies and thus partnerships work well on the ground. However, in both cases, the factor of actors having equal rank within their organisations is not present thus leading to decision making being drawn out over several action arenas rather than being made in one.

The involvement of stakeholders and the general public appears inconsistent across the case studies. The research should critically assess the timing and effectiveness of consultation processes to identify best practice for dissemination. Whilst there are a number of sources of documentation which tell us about good practice in decision making processes, there is value, in this research, in identifying things that are not working, as well as those that explicitly are. This may well throw as much light on what success might be like and how trigger factors can be transferred and applied to other organisations.

Initial findings from one case study suggest that interdepartmental land use and transport issues are more likely to be dealt with jointly if:

- The relevant departments have common goals
- There is sufficient motivation to work together – for example concern about plans or decisions falling through can act as an incentive
- There is drive at both the officer and more senior levels to take things forward
- There is political support in the right places – including the council leader
- Staff retention is good – high levels of staff consistency encourages good working relationships with other departments, and helps to build knowledge about the process
- The processes are specifically shared between departments, sectors or tiers such as accessibility planning

Figures A.1, A.2 and A.3 in the Annex illustrate different processes that are prescribed by central government departments in making decisions on planning, transport, and environmental issues.

In the light of these initial findings the propensity to share goals and objectives within and between departments and between officers and politicians should be investigated in the other Project D case studies. Further research should investigate the following subjects:

- The arrangement of and involvement in meetings
- The preparation of strategies
- Integration of plans with other policies
- Engagement of delivery agencies
- Assignation of responsibilities and structures for policy delivery
- Use of limits of discretion to choose pathways and priorities within processes which are 'formally' set out
- Engagement between politicians and senior managers.

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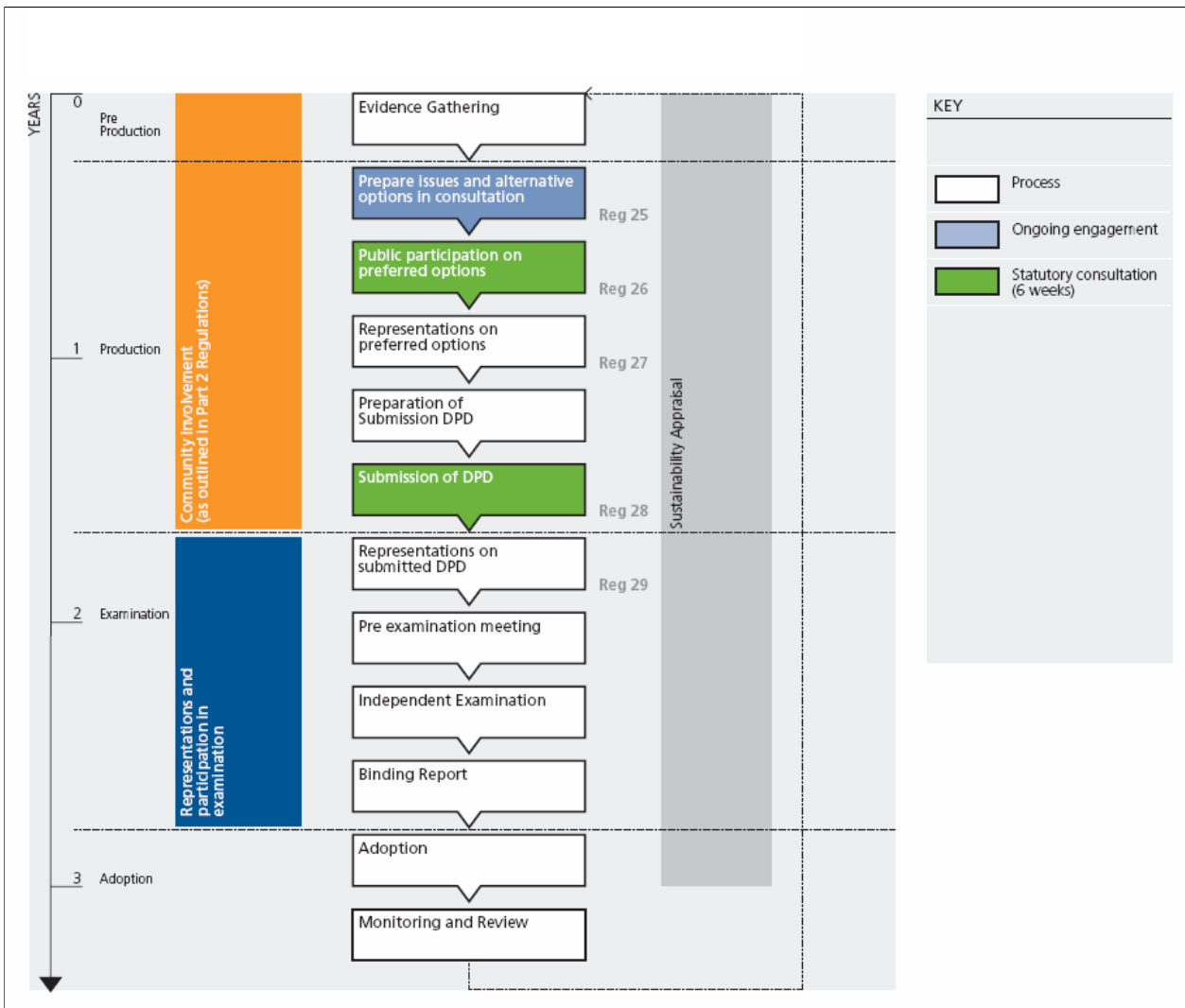
# ANNEXES



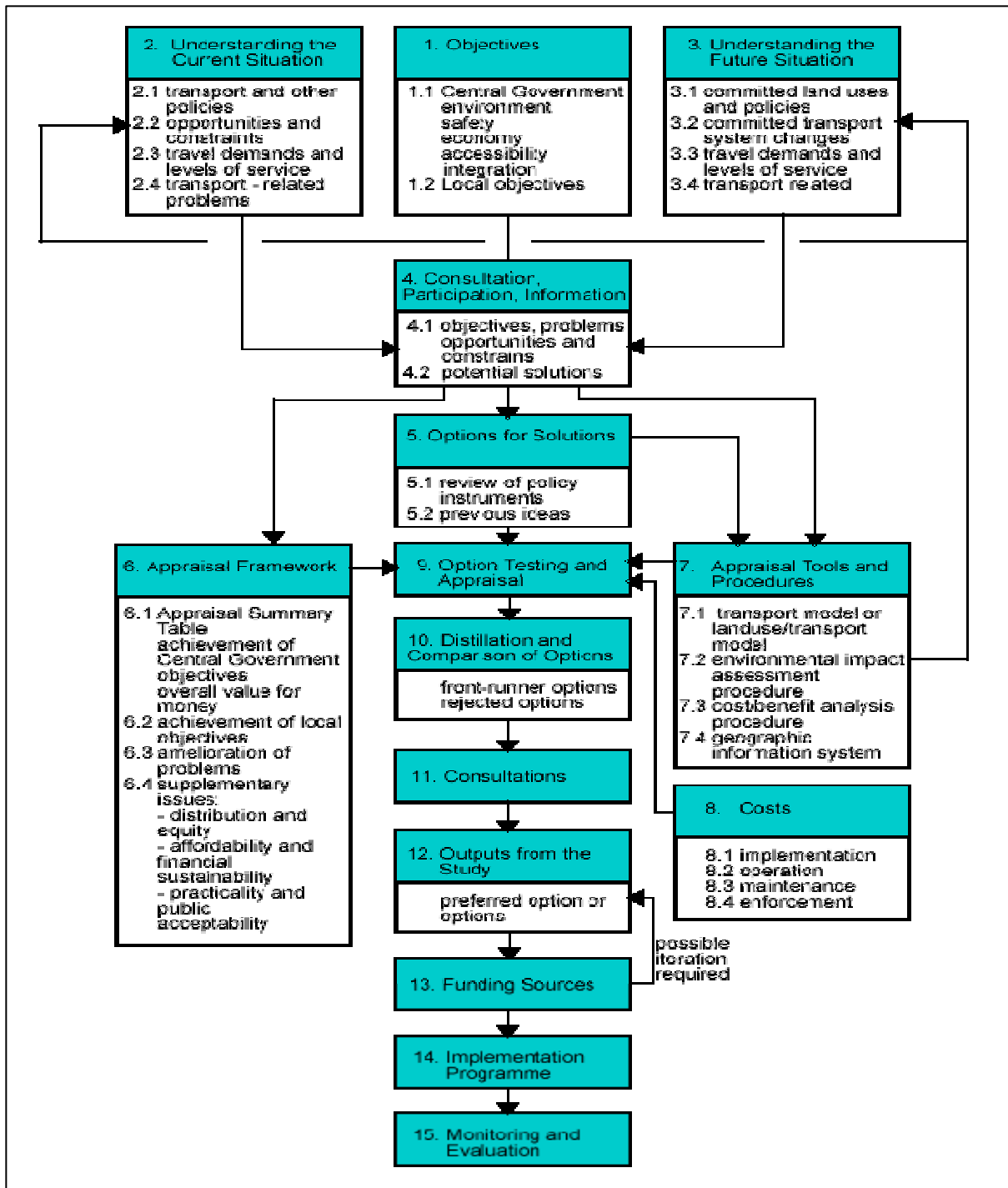Figure A.1: Land-use planning 'process'. Source: ODPM (2004:41)

**Figure A.2: Transport planning 'process'. Source: DfT (2004)**

**Figure 6 – Relationship between the SEA Tasks**

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope

A1: Identifying other relevant plans, programmes, and environmental protection objectives

A2: Collecting baseline information

A3: Identifying environmental problems

A4: Developing SEA objectives

A5: Consulting on the scope of SEA

Stage B: Developing and refining alternatives and assessing effects

B1: Testing the plan or programme objectives against the SEA objectives

B2: Developing strategic alternatives

B3: Predicting the effects of the draft plan or programme, including alternatives

B4: Evaluating the effects of the draft plan or programme, including alternatives

B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects

B6: Proposing measures to monitor the environmental effects of plan or programme implementation

Stage C: Preparing the Environmental Report

C1: Preparing the Environmental Report

Stage D: Consulting on the draft plan or programme and the Environmental Report

D1: Consulting on the draft plan or programme and Environmental Report

D2: Assessing significant changes

D3: Decision making and providing information

Stage E: Monitoring implementation of the plan or programme

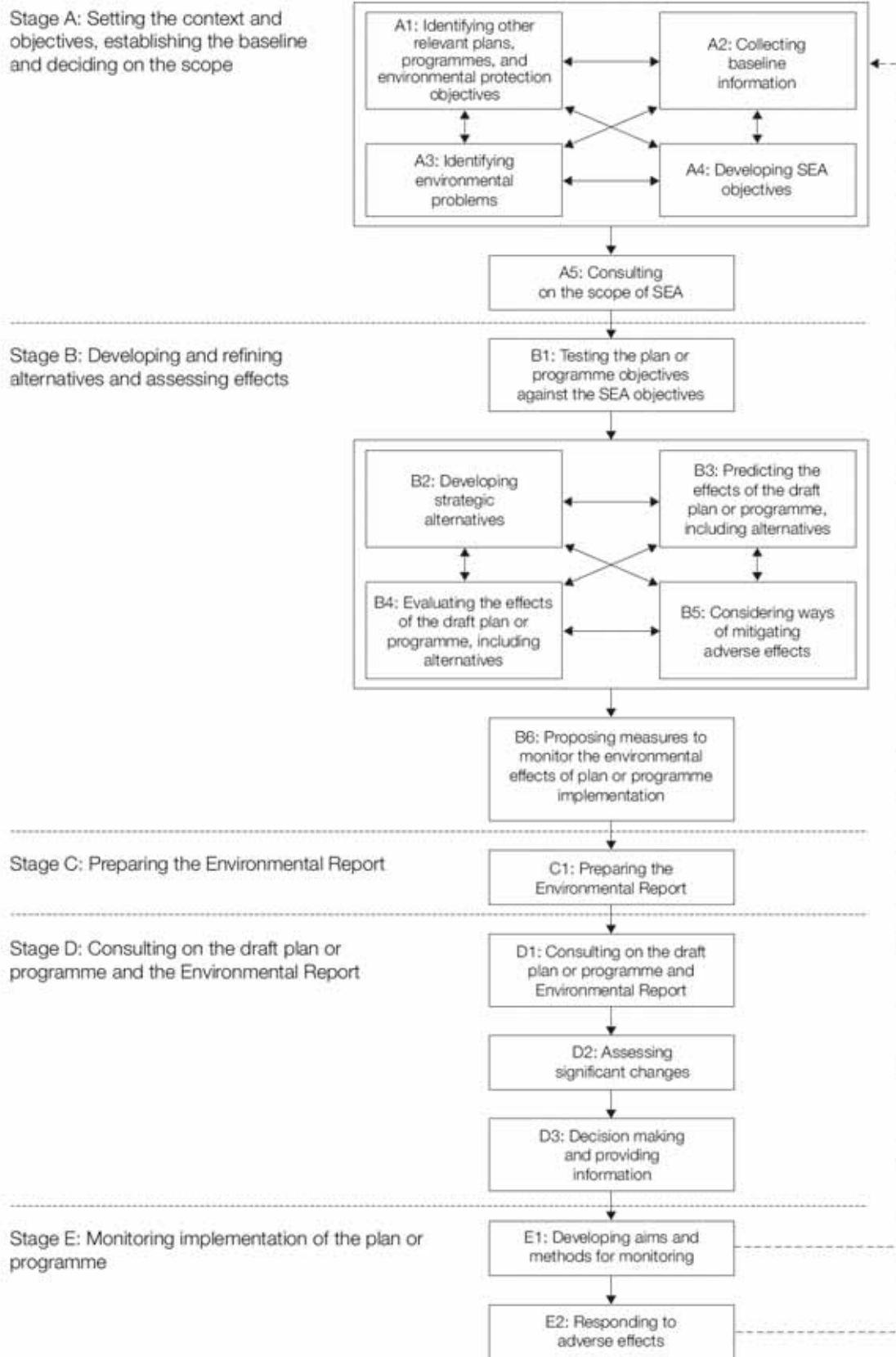E1: Developing aims and methods for monitoring

E2: Responding to adverse effects

**Figure A.3: Environmental planning 'process'. Source: ODPM (2005:25)**

61 of 61.