

From Multiple Deprivation to Social Exclusion -

a case-study in ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND POLITICAL AMNESIA

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"To have a new vision of the future it is first necessary to have new vision of the past" (Zeldin)

"Thinking historically provides an effective safeguard against collective amnesia (and the associated problems of repeating the same mistakes or endlessly reinventing the wheel) and provides invaluable learning from past experiences. It helps people to become aware of the vicious circles in which their thinking is trapped; and also leads them to a different awareness of their present, which in turn leads them to ask different questions about their future - Why this, and why now? How did we come to this? Have we done anything like this before? Why are we doing it again? What became of it last time and will the same thing happen again?" (Bate)

Preface - what the paper tries to do

The Nineties saw a growing concern by West European governments about "social exclusion" - the living conditions of those without regular employment (Madanipour). One of the early acts of the British New Labour government was to establish a special Cabinet Unit to deal with the problem; more recently the Prime Minister made a commitment to "end child poverty in 20 years".

One of the early issues for the new Scottish Parliament elected in May 1999 to consider will be a "social inclusion" strategy drafted over the winter of 1998/99 by a working group under the aegis of the Scottish Office.

*That Parliament will also be establishing its own structures and operational system; and would be well advised to look at the lessons - not 100 miles away - of **an attempt, sustained over 20 years, to make government systems and resources more relevant to the needs of particularly its low income citizens.** The starting point of this story was the recognition in 1975 by a newly created Region (which covered one half of the Scottish population) of two things -*

- *the scale and intensity of "disadvantage" or "eviction" of a significant section of the population not only from the labour market- but from the democratic process.*
- *the way that the operations of public services sustained that exclusion.*

The strategy which was developed and implemented by the new Strathclyde Region, in the following two decades, tried to use elements of managerialism (Pollitt) and communitarianism (Etzioni) to provide new opportunities and mechanisms for the significant section of its population which was, in the language of the 1970s, "multiply deprived". The policies it developed now form the basis of New Labour's strategy for the "socially excluded" - although one finds little reference to that earlier work.

This paper focuses on the formulation, implementation and lessons of Strathclyde Region's "Social Strategy"; and, more specifically, on -

- *the conditions which allowed the leaders of a government organisation to put "social justice" as their key priority and to sustain that focus over a 20 year period*
- *the critique of public services on which it was based*
- *the learning processes used.*
- *how they saw the role and legitimacy of other agencies and people in the achievement of those tasks*
- *the lessons they felt they were learning*
- *implications for government structures and policy-making processes*

Twenty five years on, the language may be different - "holistic government" (Perri 6) and "joined-up thinking" instead of "co-ordination" and "joint initiatives" - but the concerns about such things as integration, prevention and initiative-taking remain the same.

The 25 years has seen rich experience of community action and brave attempts at decentralised service delivery and inter-agency work. Rewarding work for some, the results have more often than not disappointed the original hopes, the culprit increasingly seen as the wider organisation and assumptions of the public management and budgeting system.

A system, of course, which has been in a state of major and continuous structural - indeed philosophical - change (Foster and Plowden; Peters). The fashion has become - and remains - sharply-focussed agencies with budgets structured to encourage the achievement of specific targets. One result, however, has been to make it more difficult to deal with the "wicked" problems of social exclusion.

This paper is written by the politician who helped design Strathclyde Region's "Social Strategy" and was responsible for it throughout the 1980s. It is written out of a concern that the literature on such a key subject is always "vicarious"- generally academic and conveying little sense of the political and moral dilemmas and intellectual confusion which surrounds policy innovation. An earlier draft was presented in 1995 in Bratislava to the annual Bratislava Symposium organised by the local branch of the European Institute of Human Rights - and a fellowship with Glasgow University's Urban Studies in 1998 helped locate the experience in a wider theoretical context.

Hopefully this paper will be useful to reformers in both Central and Western Europe alike - and at both levels of government since the political system concerned - although a Region - had an annual budget of 3 billion dollars and employed more than 100,000 public servants.

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4. DEVELOPING THE DETAILED POLICIES

5. WHY THE GOOD START?

5.1 DISSATISFACTION

- of a small number of leading politicians and officials with the prevailing structures for making and implementing policy; and a desire to make the government machine and resources more relevant to the "disadvantaged". Given the extent of local government control of housing, educational and other resources - and the dominance of the Labour party - there was no-one else who could be blamed!
- the fact that most of the public organisations and leaders were new - creating an atmosphere encouraging innovative thinking and reducing defensiveness
- attacks on the size of the Region - forcing the leaders to search for legitimacy
- media discovery of a major problem (also making the introduction of new approaches easier to sell)

5.2 ALTERNATIVES

- the existence and work of the Clyde Valley Plan group.
- apparent successes of the community development approach in helping challenge the inertia of departments.
- The emphasis on local structures also gave the political answer to those who questioned the size of the Region

5.3 PROPELLANT (ie support sufficient to outweigh the attractions of doing nothing)

- several key figures had been involved in this "alternative" work and were therefore already working to establish new priorities and practices
- support for urban innovation from central government from 1974-79
- media concern expecting a response to the "scandal" uncovered by the "Born to Fail" Report

- the themes of prevention, co-operation and participation had been established in the late 1960s in various national reports and were beginning to influence the thinking of professions. And were consistent with democratic Scottish traditions.
- the possibility of a Scottish Assembly had given some public opinion reason for suggesting that the life of this enormous Region would be short-lived. This created a certain incentive toward radical policies.

5.4 SUPPORTING MECHANISMS

- the intensive dialogue at 3 levels (internal : citizen : inter-agency) encouraged both by the Regional Report system helped develop the understanding of the need to reallocate resources to the older urban areas.
- the Policy sub-committee and the member-officer groups were the new structures legitimising the new search
- new Scottish Social Work legislation had given a "proactive" role to the departments of Social Work which allowed many of them to identify strongly with the strategy. And they had policy entrepreneurs who rose to the challenge
- the area structures and initiatives which then proliferated were chaired and serviced by individuals who were committed to the strategy
- the stability of the political leadership allowed the strategy to take a long-term perspective : and to be open (eg the Open Forum)

6. NEW CHALLENGES - NEW FORMULATIONS

- Some initial results
- "Generating Change"
- "Social Strategy for the 90s"
- A draft strategy for "Social Inclusion"

7. A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESEMENT

This paper tries to do several things

- to suggest some preconditions for coherent and robust policy-making
- to lay out the "assumptive world" and ongoing learning of some key policy influentials in Britain's largest local authority as they chose to apply some principles common to both social justice and organisational development to the changing political and social context of the West of Scotland in the 1980s and 1990s
- to use this experience to pose more general questions about political learning and government structures in the new millennium.

8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - WHAT EXACTLY WAS BEING ATTEMPTED?

- The Objectives
- What exactly was expected from Community Action?
- Community Business

9. "JOINED UP" THINKING AND WORKING (inter-agency work)

Co-ordination (lack of) has been the perpetual cry of reformers for most of the century. Like other reforming Councils, The Region used various techniques to try to achieve this - with minimal effect. The wider implications of this are explored in para 13.

10. POLITICAL LEARNING - some processes, dilemmas and messages

It has never been easy for local authorities to handle ideas. They have historically been devices for allocating resources to fairly independent agencies whose "products" were beyond question. As, however, the fragility of these products - and their interrelationships - have become more obvious; and as new approaches are introduced, it becomes more important that we develop the tools to learn from what we are doing. This is, of course, the message about "organisational learning" which has become so fashionable in the management literature of the 1990s. Paragraph 3 has indicated the dissatisfaction with the Committee system and the more open processes of policy development which were used. It should be put on record that one of the first things the new Convener attempted in 1974 was to persuade his colleagues that the "shadow" Council should operate in its first year without the traditional Committees - to give it a chance to look more "holistically" at issues. The critique behind this is elaborated in paragraph 13.

This section explores two questions -

- How, in the absence of recognised experts, did a coherent policy emerge - and develop over time?
- What were the "lessons" key policy-makers felt they were learning from the experience? About both good and bad practice.

11. IF YOU HAD THREE WISHES.....?

The lessons as they were seen at a more personal level in the late 1980s/early 1990s

12. REINVENTING THE BROKEN WHEEL?

Another checklist (this time from the 60s)

13. TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS

- Some fundamental constraints
- Why don't professional bureaucracies work?
- How realistic is the rhetoric about "holistic" government?

14. CONCLUSION

1. A MISSING MANAGEMENT AND STRATEGIC CAPACITY

In the 1960s British local government was felt to be in crisis (Maud: Stewart). The criticisms levelled against it in various official reports were that -

- local services such as education, housing, leisure had grown rapidly in the post-war period, with national legislation giving significant responsibility and resources to the local councils for this : who did not, however, develop **proper coordination or financial control**.
- there was **no coherent Executive figure** : there are no elected Mayors in Britain - and then only a legally qualified Clerk as "primus inter pares". Leadership, basic management and strategic direction were missing.
- the **councils were too small** : failing, as a result, to attract good quality professionals and politicians : this being suggested as one of the reasons for a noticeable drift of power to central government and to (democratically unaccountable) Boards
- local elected **politicians interfered too much in detailed administration** : through a Byzantine, time-consuming committee system.
- all of which meant that **local authorities were increasingly seen** (by both the public and central government) as continuing practices and offering products which were no longer wanted.
- incapable therefore of dealing with the **challenge of modernisation** which was very much the theme of the 1960s in Britain.

The local authorities in the older industrial areas such as the West of Scotland were particularly bad: working class loyalties consistently elected Labour party working class "grandees" to power. Given the disparity in qualifications and education between them and their professional staff, the latter effectively had the "real" power (of agenda creation).

The average local politician was satisfied with being able to bend a few rules to give individual voters marginal advantages in such things as house allocations and repairs and school bursaries. And, otherwise, leave it to the professionals.

The scale of municipal power was particularly comprehensive in Scotland where, until the 1980s, the local council owned three quarters of the housing stock, 90% of education and most of the local services - including buses. Only health and social security escaped its control: these were handled by Central Government. Local government simply could not cope with such massive responsibilities (although such a view was rejected at the time).

This was particularly evident in the larger housing estates which they had built for low-income "slum" dwellers in the immediate post-war period -

- there were few services in these areas
- employment was insecure
- schools in such areas had poor educational achievement and were not attractive to teachers/headmasters
- local government officials were not trained in management : and treated their staff in a dictatorial way
- who in turn treated the public with disdain

The contemptuous treatment given by local council services seemed to squash whatever initiative people from such areas had. They learned to accept second-class services. Behind this lay working and other conditions so familiar to people in Central Europe

- work was in large industrial plants
- for whose products there was declining demand
- the culture was one of waiting for orders from above. There were few small businesses since the Scots middle class have tended to go into the professions rather than setting up one's own business (Steel)
- rising or insecure unemployment
- monopolistic provision of local public services
- and hence underfunding of services - queues and insensitive provision
- and hostility to initiatives, particularly those from outside the official system.
- even elements of a "one-party state" (the Labour party has controlled most of local government in Scotland for several decades).

Special committees of experts was set up by central government in 1971 (Bains: Paterson) to produce - as guidance for new local authorities then being created in England and Scotland - organisational guidelines for better management and policy-making.

The main criticism of the reports they produced was the way that local government decision-making focussed too much on-

- (a) on the past (ie continuing to do what it had done in the past)
- (b) on itself (making no attempt to explore what those receiving its services thought or wanted).
- (c) on single services - rather than the corporate.

The reports were concerned to ensure that the structures of local government -

- were more sensitive to the **needs of the community it was supposed to be serving** (rather than the interests of the various departments). These **needs are constantly changing and do not respect departmental boundaries**
- had an **effective (political and management) capacity to be able to question the continued relevance** of existing policies and procedures.
- recognised the need for a variety of coordinating devices.
- separated more clearly the roles of politicians and professionals

The new local authorities were therefore recommended to -

- appoint a Chief Executive
- set up a Policy Committee (Cabinet)
- establish strategy processes (to ensure a focus on policy issues and on the future)
- have inter-departmental groups (to help that strategic work)

All this reflected what was considered best practice in business and was concerned to concentrate administrative and political power in new structures and posts which were to be used to stamp a strategic purpose on the "ad-hocery" which passed for management.

Corporate management and planning structures became fashionable: and, despite some critiques from those working at a neighbourhood level (Benington: Cockburn) and others (Dearlove), it took almost a decade before local government realised that it had adopted the worst - rather than the best - practices of big business (Mintzberg), relying on centralised (and internal) sources of intelligence and strategy-making to sustain the insensitivity of Departments to the changing world outside!

2. THE SYSTEMIC CHANGE in SCOTLAND

2.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Between 1966 and 1968 independent Royal Commissions in England and Scotland took evidence about some (the more technocratic) of these problems - and issued recommendations which, after intensive debate, were largely accepted for Scotland: and led, in 1974, to the sweeping away of its 625 municipalities and replacement by 65 - 53 Districts Councils and 9 Regional Councils and 3 all-purpose Island Councils.

In the West of Scotland, this meant new people - with new energy: and a clearly defined set of manageable tasks.

Strathclyde Region was created to concentrate on

- infrastructure (roads, transport, water, sewage)
- human resources (education and social work)
- police and fire
- strategic planning
- economic development

Glasgow District on

- housing
- routine municipal services
- culture
- local planning

The Scottish Development Agency on

- inward investment
- strategies and resources for sectoral development
- being a catalyst for local economic partnerships.

Strathclyde Region had been created to give a **strategic dimension and powers** (and a financial base!) for local action to deal with the crisis in the West of Scotland. Its infra-structural responsibilities, however, went far beyond the technical - they included running schools and colleges (with more than 50,000 staff) and all social work services (with 20,000 staff). The Region had therefore a **strong local presence**; and social work departments had been created just a few years earlier to take forward the **values of participation, prevention and co-ordination particularly at a neighbourhood level**.

The results of this reorganisation were particularly significant for Glasgow. Before 1974 its City Council was an enormous, centralised megalith unable to do anything well.

After reorganisation -

- the task of dealing with the City's problems could be dealt with by 3 properly organised - and resourced - agencies.
- Each could now concentrate on certain tasks
- While, equally, realising that it was now in competition!

An unmanageable problem had been made (at least more) manageable!

2.2 DELEGATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING - and DIALOGUE

A new system of decentralised planning (the so-called "Regional Report") was introduced at the same time by the new Labour Government.

This did two things -

- put the responsibility for drawing up a regional strategy on the new Regions
- laid down very clearly the **consultative processes with other agencies and people which were to be followed to ensure broad consensus**. In other words, agencies were actually encouraged to talk with one another!

Here is a very good - but unfortunately all too rare - example of central government understanding that effective action comes from central government setting a (light) framework. And then encouraging local people to take decisions - but in a way which respects good practice.

The Regional report process was a contributory factor in the strong partnership spirit which became such a feature of the urban regeneration work in the Glasgow area in the 1980s. The process **built on the work of an ad-hoc team planning team which had been created voluntarily in the late 1960s** by the old local authorities to produce recommendations on how West Central Scotland could get out of its crisis (Wannop). The team produced its recommendations in 1972, two years before the first elections to the new Region: this helped achieve a consensus about the basic principles of the new Regional strategy - particularly that the focus for development had to switch from the establishment of new "green-field" sites to that of regenerating the older urban areas, particularly Glasgow.

The Labour Government of 1974-79 accepted this: and quickly demonstrated its own commitment by establishing what was Britain's first major programme of urban renewal - in the east end of Glasgow (GEAR).

The physical transformation of the area was a major contribution to the subsequent successful reshaping of Glasgow's image. The aims were, however, entirely physical - with no reference to the underlying economic or social realities (Donnison/Middleton). I remember going for a personal discussion with the Labour Secretary of State for Scotland who subsequently became the successful EU Commissioner for Regional Development) and his Minister of State to share with them my experience of such corporate efforts (on a much smaller scale) in my own town (McKay and Herman): and the misgivings I had about a structure which continued to ignore the community dimension. They listened with interest and some sympathy: but the machine at their disposal could not respond in those days. That took more than another decade - and another Government!

3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION in the West of Scotland

The systems in which we work are "givens" - they may make our work more or less difficult: they may or may not be capable of change - but we have to work for the moment within their limits. The issue is how creatively we use them. Structural changes (reorganisation, bringing larger local councils: and new management systems) are generally necessary conditions for improved performance - but clearly they are not sufficient in themselves. Those in charge of new systems have to choose what to do with them

3.1 New-Style LEADERSHIP

The first elections of 1974 gave Labour a handsome majority in Strathclyde Region - 72 of the 103 seats. And on the first Sunday of May 1974, the newly-elected came together to choose the

leadership of what was the largest unit of local government in Europe (with a staff of 100,000 responsible for services for half of Scotland's population: an annual budget of 3 million dollars). The powers of the new Region had attracted a good calibre of politician - the experienced leadership of the old counties and a good mix of younger, qualified people (despite the obvious full-time nature of the job, we were expected to do it for a daily allowance of about 15 dollars. Clearly the only people who could contemplate that were the retired, the self-employed or those coming from occupations traditionally supportive of civic service - eg railwaymen and educationalists)

With a strong sense of heading into the unknown, a dual leadership was created - with the public persona (the President and Policy Leader) being someone fairly new to politics, a Presbyterian Minister (without a church) who had made his name in "urban ministry" working with the poor. Geoff Shaw inspired great respect - particularly in the world outside normal politics - and brought a new approach. He was determined to have more open and less complacent policy-making: particularly with respect to social inequalities (Ron Ferguson).

Appointed as the Leader of the Majority Group (and therefore holding the patronage powers) was an older and politically much more experienced man - an ex-miner. Dick Stewart may not have had the formal education and eloquence of Geoff but he commanded respect (and fear!) amongst both politicians and officials of the Council for his ability to get to the heart of any matter and for his honesty. He readily grasped the key elements in any issue: and would not easily deviate from policy. To persuade him to change, you had to have very strong arguments or forces on your side - and a great deal of patience. This made for policy stability: occasionally frustrating but so much more acceptable than the vacillation and fudge which passes for so much policy-making! Geoff stood for moral direction: Dick for order.

Both had a deep sense of justice: and utter integrity to their principles. And the new political structures unusually adopted for this most unusual of local authorities gave them both an equal share in policy leadership.

The difference in perspectives and styles occasionally caused problems: but both approaches were very much needed in the early years. In some ways one saw the same dynamic in the early years of the Czech Republic - between Havel and Klaus. It raises interesting questions about whether - and how - such dualism could be institutionalised in local government.

Sadly, when 4 years later, the Convener died, the tensions led to a rethink of the concept: and all power concentrated in the hands of the Leader.

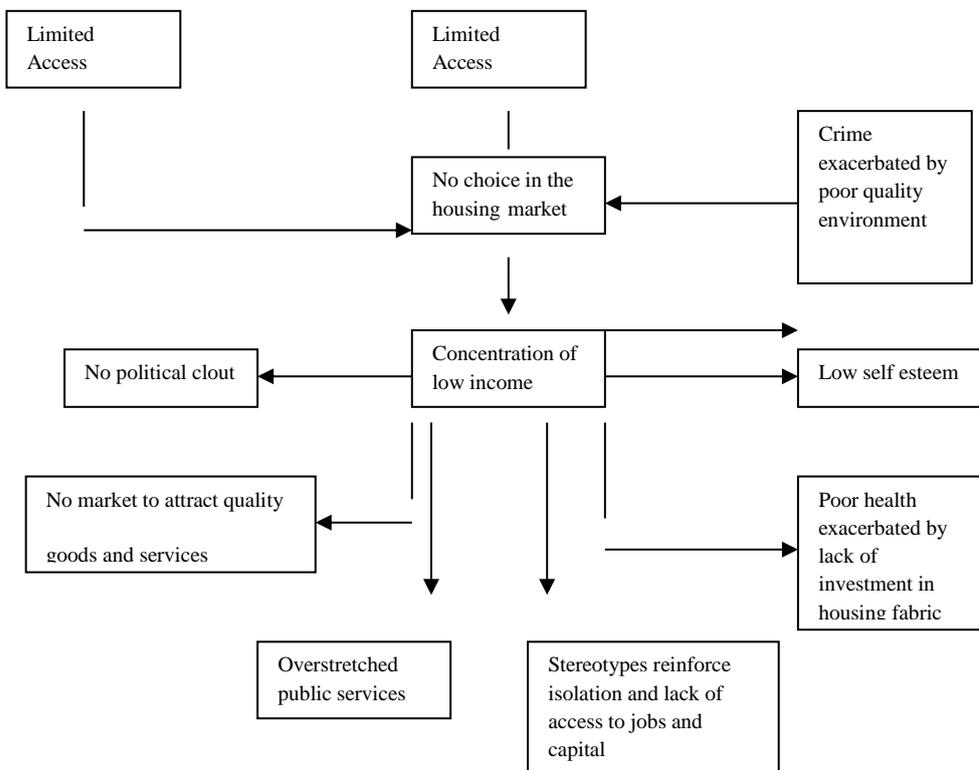
3.2 A NEW AGENDA

3.2.1 Local Conditions in the national spotlight

Within months, the new agencies in the West of Scotland faced pressures from the media and central government to respond to a **newly discovered problem** - "multiple deprivation". In 1973 a national Report was published - "Born to Fail?" - by the National Children's Bureau (NCB), a major Children's Charity - which demonstrated statistically that -

- children living in certain housing estates (and inner-city areas) which had concentrations of poor housing, unemployment and social problems were "disadvantaged" in their subsequent life chances
- Glasgow and the surrounding Clydeside area had a disproportionate number of families living in such conditions.

At this stage, explanatory theories were in short supply - although "inner City" research soon became an industry in itself (Hall). As far as more policy-oriented explanations were concerned it was, in fact to be 20 years before the simple diagram below was used in a Rowntree-funded series.



From Rowntree (1992/3)

The NCB report was a great advantage to a few politicians and officials who had come into the new Region with positive experiences of working with residents in these areas and determined to use its power to change the operation of local government (Ferguson; Gibson; McKay; Young).

3.2.2 The wider Context

Reformers may have been small in numbers at a local level in Scotland: but they were not alone - and had some powerful inspiration and support

- The 1966-1970 Labour Government and the Heath Government of 1970-74 had both taken important initiatives relating to urban poverty. The British Government had created in 1968 a Special National Fund which was to be crucial in the following 20 years for urban development - the Urban Programme (Higgins; Edwards). This has been influenced by the American "War on Poverty" of the early and mid 1960s (Marris and Rein) and encouraged local groups in poorer areas to develop local initiatives. One of the most challenging of these programmes was the Community Development Programme which was beginning to produce their initial publications by 1975 (Benington).
- The critique of the welfare state was underway - from left (Townsend; Illich) and right alike. Governments were felt to be trying to do too much (Rose). Although some of this was to lead on to neo-liberalism and severe spending cuts, other parts supplied legitimisation for small-scale community initiatives.
- people such as John Stewart at INLOGOV were spelling out and legitimising a more ambitious role for local authorities than simply that of administering services : one which indicated the possibility of it being the catalyst for partnerships of the public, voluntary and private sector in the area (Stewart).

This thinking was, however, based in England. Scotland has its own traditions of legislative processes; professional systems of training; and politics. It was these which shaped perceptions of need and change in local government - not English fashion!

In one case, at least, Scottish developments were ahead of English: the mission of the new Social Work Departments established in 1969 in Scotland was explicitly to "promote social welfare" - through better co-operation between local services and the involvement of people in improvement processes.

3.2.3 Changing the Policy Climate

But there were strong forces in local government unsympathetic to change! In those days the mythology was that the urban ghettos (which were actually the new housing schemes on the periphery of the towns and cities) had a disproportionate amount of money spent on them. The opposite was in fact true: it was the middle class who benefited disproportionately from state spending - particularly education and housing subsidy.

Up until then the attempts of a few of us to persuade our political and officer colleagues that (a) the conditions in the housing estates were unacceptable and (b) that there were better ways of using local authority resources had met with indifference and hostility. There was, we were patronisingly told, nothing we could do to change the behaviour of such people.

Now, however, the Report gave us proof that the conditions were much worse in the West of Scotland: each town had its collection of housing schemes which were seen as problematic. They could not therefore be fatalistically accepted. They were not God-given!

And, furthermore, this was not an internal report with confidential status and restricted circulation. It was a public report which had aroused the interest of the regional and national press. It could not be ignored. Some sort of response was called for.

In trying to develop a response we faced strong resistance from two sources - first the left within the Labour Party who argued that economic realities meant that there was nothing that could be done at a local level (and in this they were joined by Keynesians). Growth and redistribution were matters for national Government and would have therefore to await a reforming Labour Government.

The second difficult group was the staff of the public sector whose loyalties were to their particular profession rather than to a local authority, a neighbourhood or policy group! And many staff had deeply-held prejudices about the capacity of people in these areas - and the desirability of working participatively with them - let alone other professional or local politicians.

How we devised a policy response - and its focus - had to be sensitive to these attitudes. The search for policy was also made immediately more difficult by the absence of any "experts" in the field. We knew there were none within the Council: and appeals to the local Universities produced no responses in those days.

We could, however, vaguely see **four paths which had not been attempted** -

- Positive Discrimination : the scope for allocating welfare State resources on a more equitable basis had been part of the "New Left" critique since the late 1950s (Townsend). Being a new organisation meant that it was to no-one's shame to admit that they did not know how exactly the money was being allocated. Studies were carried out which confirmed our suspicions that it was the richer areas which, arguably, needed certain services least (eg "pre-school" services for children) which, in fact, had the most of them! And, once discovered, this was certainly an area we considered we had a duty to engage in redistribution of resources - notwithstanding those who considered this was not for local government to attempt.
- Community Development : one of the major beliefs shared by some of us driving the new Council (borne of our own experience) was that the energies and ideas of residents and local officials in these "marginalised" areas were being frustrated by the hierarchical structures of

departments whose professionals were too often prejudiced against local initiatives. Our desire was to find more creative organisational forms which would release these ideas and energies - of residents and professionals alike. This approach meant experimentation (Barr; Henderson; McConnell).

- Inter-Agency Cooperation : there needed to be a focussed priority of all departments and agencies on these areas. Educational performance and health were affected more by housing and income than by teachers and doctors! One agency - even as large as Strathclyde - could not do much on its own. An intensive round of dialogues were therefore held in 1976/77 with District Councils, Central Government, Health Boards, Universities and Voluntary Organisations: it must be said that considerable time elapsed before there were material results from this eg it was 1984 before the Joint Area Initiatives in the larger Glasgow Housing Schemes were up and running.
- Information and Income-Maximisation : the Region could certainly use its muscle to ensure that people were getting their entitlements : ie the information and advice to receive the welfare benefits many were missing out on. The campaigns mounted in the late 1970s were soon pulling millions of pounds into these areas: and served as a national model which attracted the active interest of the Minister at the time.

3.3 THE EMERGENT STRATEGY

Some elements of a different approach were discernible - and it was the political leaders themselves who had set it out. A small group of the most senior councillors was set up - as the sub-committee of the Policy Committee. This gave a clear signal to the system of the overriding priority the Council was giving to positive discrimination in favour of the people of these areas - as had been signalled in the Convener's first address to the new Council when it took up its operations in May 1975.

Conditions in 114 problem areas were reviewed (using Indices of Multiple Deprivation) and a research group from the Tavistock Institute supplied a written assessment of the lessons from the few experiences which existed on community planning (including the negative experiences of Government-led programmes). Various dilemmas sketched out in para 11 below were confronted. It was then decided that the manageable thing to do was to designate 45 of them as "Areas of Priority Treatment" (APTs); to try to work differently in these areas; and to learn from that.

Basically the approach was that local residents should be encouraged to become active in the following ways -

- **have their own local forums** - where, with the local politicians and officials, they could monitor services and develop new projects.
- **have access to a special local initiative fund** - The national "Urban Programme" Fund. It was not a lot of money - 10 million dollars a year from a total development budget of 300 million and had problems referred to in section 11.1 below. But without it, there would have been little stomach for the innovative (and risky) projects. At the best of times, senior management of most departments would have been a bit ambivalent about locally designed and managed projects: and these were not the best of times!
- **have their own expert advisers** (more than 300 community workers (Henderson) and more specialist advisers (in such fields as housing, welfare benefits, credit unions, community business) in what were initially 45 designated priority areas of, on average, 10,000 people with unemployment rates of about 20%)

Such an approach allowed "a hundred flowers to bloom" - and the development in 1982, after an intensive and inclusive review of the experience of the first five years, of the principles and framework of the Social Strategy for the Eighties.

3.4 FEELING THE WAY TO A NEW POLICY DYNAMIC

At the end of Strathclyde Region's first year of existence in 1976, a major weekend seminar of all the councillors and the new Directors was held to review the experience of the new systems of decision-making. The exhilarating experience a few of us had had of **working together across the boundaries of political and professional roles** first to set up the new Departments and second on the deprivation strategy was something we wanted to keep. And other councillors wanted that involvement too.

Our answer was "member-officer groups" (Young 1981). These were working groups of about 15 people (equal number of officials and councillors) given the responsibility to investigate a service or problem area - and to produce, within 12-18 months, an analysis and recommendations for action. Initially social service topics were selected - youth services, mental handicap, pre-school services and the elderly - since the inspiration, on the officer side, was very much from one of the senior Social Work officials.

The council's organisational structure was also treated in this way in the late 1970s (the extent of external assistance sought was that every member of the group was given a copy of a Peter Drucker book as text!) - and a group on Community Development helped pave the way for the first local authority Committee for Community Development.

And eventually, in the mid-1980s, even more traditional departments such as Education succumbed to this spirit of inquiry!

The member-officer groups broke from the conventions of municipal decision-making in various ways -

- officials and members were treated as equals
- no one was assumed to have a monopoly of truth : by virtue of ideological or professional status
- the officers nominated to the groups were generally not from Headquarters - but from the field
- evidence was invited from staff and the outside world, in many cases from clients themselves
- the reports represented a political statement that certain issues had been neglected in the past
- the process invited external bodies (eg voluntary organisations) to give evidence
- the reports were written in frank terms : and concerned more with how existing resources were being used than with demands for more money.
- the reports were seen as the start of a process - rather than the end - with monitoring groups established once decisions had been made.

The achievements of the groups can be measured in such terms as -

- the acceptance, and implementation, of most of the reports : after all, the composition and the openness of the process generates its own momentum of understanding and commitment !
- the subsequent career development of many of their chairmen
- the value given to critical inquiry - instead of traditional party-bickering and over-simplification.
- the quality of relations between the councillors : and with the officials

With this new way of working, we had done two things. First discovered a mechanism for continuing the momentum of innovation which was the feature of the Council's first years. Now more people had the chance to apply their energies and skills in the search for improvement. We had, however, done more - we had stumbled on far more fruitful ways of structuring local government than the traditional one (the Committee system) which focuses on one "Service" - eg Education which defines the world in terms of the client group: of one professional group and is producer-led. And whose deliberations are very sterile - as the various actors play their allotted roles (expert, leader, oppositionist, fool etc).

As politicians representing people who lived in families and communities, we knew that the agendas of the Committees we spent our time in were not really dealing with the concerns of the public: were too narrowly conceived; and frustrated creative exchange. For this, we needed structures which had an "area-focus" and "problem focus". We were in fact developing them - in the neighbourhood structures which allowed officers, residents and councillors to take a comprehensive view of the needs of their area and the operation of local services: and in the member-officer groups. But they were running in parallel with the traditional system.

3.5 UNEASY CO-EXISTENCE

The structures we developed gave those involved (not least the officials) a great deal of satisfaction.

The challenge, however, was to make those with the conventional positions of power (the Chairmen and Directors) feel comfortable with the challenges raised by the new structures.

We were aware that our basic messages to professional staff about.

- the need to work across the boundaries of departments
- the need for consultative structures in the designated priority areas
- the capacity of people in these areas

represented a fundamental challenge to everything professional staff stood for. This was expressed eloquently in an article in the early 1980s - "Insisting on a more co-ordinated approach from local government to the problems of these areas, trying to open up the processes of decision-making and to apply "positive discrimination" in favour of specific (poorer) areas challenge fundamental organising beliefs about urban government - viz the belief that services should be applied uniformly, be organised on a departmental basis; and hierarchically" (Hambleton)

What we were doing was in fact running two separate systems - a traditional one and a more innovative one which defied traditional lines of authority. The latter was more challenging - but, paradoxically, left with the younger officials and politicians to handle. And, during the Eighties, more "alternative" systems were developed - such as 6 Divisional Deprivation Groups which to whom the Policy sub-Committee passed the responsibility for managing the urban programme budget in their area.

4. DEVELOPING THE DETAILED POLICIES

The first "Multiple Deprivation" policy document of 1976 had contained a statement that there were no experts in the issue. The implication was that policy dialogue had to be open to all: lines of hierarchy could not be allowed to interfere with the development of understanding.

This was particularly evident in the unusual way in which the major review was carried out of the experience of the first five years of the strategy.

Six Community Conferences, involving more than a thousand residents and staff of the Priority treatment Areas, were organised over the winter and spring of 1981/82 to consider a tentative assessment of the experience of the previous few years; and draft proposals for further development.

And the timing was carefully chosen - with the final session, at Regional level, being held just a few weeks before the May 1982 Regional Elections. This ensured that almost the first act of the 1982 Council was to consider a detailed and coherent Social Strategy for the Eighties which then became the "bible" for the strategy (Young 1987).

This spirit was also evident in the informal Open Forum held in the Regional Headquarters on a monthly basis for several years in the 1980s - and allowing a dialogue between the policy-makers and those officials and community activists who cared to come along. Attendance would generally be about 60.

Social Strategy for the Eighties is too long to be a mission statement: too eloquent to be a normal policy document. It was rather an element in a continuing policy dialogue.

Social Strategy for the 80s-

- gave a strong political justification of the need for reallocation of departments' mainline resources (eg for Roads to spend less on motorways and more on street lighting in these areas!)
- clearly stated the reasons for supporting community action
- outlined new policy structures for each APT
- indicated the intention to set up, with relevant District Councils, Joint Initiative Structures for the ten or so major Housing Schemes
- listed the themes (eg community business, pre-school services, adult education) to which priority would be given in urban aid submissions. With this came a new "negotiated" model of policy development.
- Gave a commitment to bring forward new systems of support for the long-term unemployed. The Region was the first government body in Britain to recognise in the early 1980s that this was now a permanent feature of society.

The document was printed as an attractive booklet (complete with poems!) and widely distributed, as was a shorter version in the internal staff Bulletin. The Region's free Newspaper distributed to every household - and more selective monthly "Digest" sent to all Community groups - were both intensively used in the years to come to explain the details of the work.

Workshops were held in a variety of public and professional settings over the following years to get the key messages across. And these were simple - if challenging-

"The existing inequalities in service allocation did not happen by accident: they are mediated through the administrative machine by generally well-intentioned professionals and administrators practising apparently fair and neutral principles. To tackle these inequalities therefore requires more than a general

expression of content handed over, in traditional style, for implementation. It demands the alteration of structures and the working assumptions".

"What we were asking our staff to do in 1976 was to accept that fairly simple things were needed from them in the first instance; not massive spending but just a commitment, firstly to those who lived in the APTs; secondly to attempting new relationships both with their colleagues in other Departments and with residents. We were also asking for imagination and courage ; in encouraging staff to bring forward proposals for better practice despite the discouragement we knew they would encounter from the rules, traditions and prejudices which seem deeply engrained in certain departments"

"The majority of staff are discouraged from joint work with councillors, other professionals and residents in APTs by the way the traditional departmental system of local government works. Career advance depends on one's work as a professional or manager in a particular department - and not on the collaborative ventures emphasised in this and the 1976 document. That is the crucial issue which must now be faced and resolved. Exhortations and good intentions are no longer enough"

5. WHY THE GOOD START?

"In any organisation that has people with divided loyalties; leaders with short tenure; and pervasive but subtle control being exercised from many quarters, bringing about strategic change can be a formidable challenge" (Nutt and Backoff 1993)

We have reached the point in the story where it would be useful to try to identify those factors which allowed Strathclyde Region at least to engage in strategic change: to begin this very novel and ambitious attempt to get public resources used more effectively and sensitively for the average citizen. And a strategy which understood the paramount need for a new relationship to be built between citizens, professionals and politicians.

- What were the conditions in the Strathclyde context which inspired a politico-bureaucratic system to undertake over a twenty-year period such a variety of innovations?
- And what lessons do these give to those who wish to shake up bureaucracies elsewhere?

We are now besieged by texts on "Managing change" offering guidance on how most effectively to transform our organisation (see Senior for a good up-to-date overview).

It is obvious that, for significant policy change to take place, at least three things are needed -

- people have to be "dissatisfied" with the status quo
- there has to be an "acceptable" alternative ie one which is "feasible" and supported
- these forces need to outweigh the total costs (including psychic) of the change.

Of course, this simply provides the favourable preconditions : whether anything relevant then happens then depends on a mixture of political will and skills - and good management. The writer who has most influenced recent thinking about planned organisational change is Kurt Lewin who suggested it involved the management of a three-phase process of behaviour modification -

- **unfreezing** : reducing those forces which maintain behaviour in its present form, recognition of the need for change
- **movement** : development of new attitudes or behaviour and the implementation of the change
- **refreezing** : stabilising change at the new level and reinforcement through supporting mechanisms - policies, structures or norms.

I have used a variant of such headings to suggest that the elements which were critical in allowing us to construct a strong strategic drive were -

5.1 DISSATISFACTION

- of a small number of leading politicians and officials with the prevailing structures for making and implementing policy; and a desire to make the government machine and resources more relevant to the "disadvantaged". Given the extent of local government control of housing, educational and other resources - and the dominance of the Labour party - there was no-one else who could be blamed!
- the fact that most of the public organisations and leaders were new - creating an atmosphere encouraging innovative thinking and reducing defensiveness
- attacks on the size of the Region - forcing the leaders to search for legitimacy
- media discovery of a major problem (also making the introduction of new approaches easier to sell)

5.2 ALTERNATIVES

- the existence and work of the Clyde Valley Plan group. Concern about the viability of the Region had already persuaded the leaders of the previous Counties to co-operate in establishing in 1970 a small team to produce the basis of a new Regional plan - whose recommendations, one year ahead of the new Region being created, strongly urged a focussing on the older urban areas.
- apparent successes of the community development approach in helping challenge the inertia of departments.
- The emphasis on local structures also gave the political answer to those who questioned the size of the Region

5.3 PROPELLANT (ie support sufficient to outweigh the attractions of doing nothing)

- several key figures had been involved in this "alternative" work and were therefore already working to establish new priorities and practices
- support for urban innovation from central government
- media concern expecting a response to the "scandal" uncovered by the "Born to Fail" Report
- the themes of prevention, co-operation and participation had been established in the late 1960s in various national reports and were beginning to influence the thinking of professions. And were consistent with democratic Scottish traditions.
- the possibility of a Scottish Assembly had given some public opinion reason for suggesting that the life of this enormous Region would be short-lived. This created a certain incentive toward radical policies.

5.4 SUPPORTING MECHANISMS

Authority is a perennial problem for government - with its complex professional and political networks and sources of power. The private sector has a more straightforward power structure - and yet the change literature abounds with titles such as "Why Change Programmes Don't Produce Change". It is now accepted that effective change needs structures and processes which make people feel involved in the change.

In this case there were a range of people and processes to allow the new thinking to be both immediately supported - and taken forward -

- the intensive dialogue at 3 levels (internal : citizen : inter-agency) encouraged both by the Regional Report system helped develop the understanding of the need to reallocate resources to the older urban areas.

- the Policy sub-committee and the member-officer groups were the new structures legitimising the new search
- new Scottish Social Work legislation had given a "proactive" role to the departments of Social Work which allowed many of them to identify strongly with the strategy. And they had policy entrepreneurs who rose to the challenge
- the area structures and initiatives which then proliferated were chaired and serviced by individuals who were committed to the strategy
- the stability of the political leadership allowed the strategy to take a long-term perspective : and to be open (eg the Open Forum)

6. NEW CHALLENGES - NEW FORMULATIONS

6.1 Some initial results

- As a result of the first decade's work, each of the 88 priority areas had, by 1990, about 6 innovative, locally-managed projects (employing in total some 23 staff, about a quarter local) - focussing on youth, employment, adult and pre-school education, the elderly or general advice.
- certain areas of work had been identified as so promising as to deserve organisation into special strategic programmes involving the establishment of small Central Support Units to develop good practice. Community Business and Pre-School Education were two such topics.
- Negotiations with 3-4 District Councils - and with Scottish Office - allowed the establishment of Special Joint Social and Economic Initiatives in several larger Housing Schemes, on a properly managed basis. And with specially dedicated resources.

These are, of course, inputs only - not policy results. After ten years it might have been reasonable to start asking questions about the impact these were having on the originally-defined problem of "multiple deprivation". Were life chances increasing?

Two factors made such questions muted - first problems of measurement - what exactly would be measured, over what period of time? No agreed conceptual framework was actually to hand on this.

The second factor was the realism of expecting tangible results at a time when global and Government forces were reducing the flow of income into the households in these areas: was it not sufficient that we had no riots! But sustaining such inputs was increasingly difficult financially. The 75% Exchequer support for the funding which sustained this work ended after each project reached the end of five - at most seven - years: the financial consequences therefore of simply continuing such projects added more than a million pounds each year to the Region's budget. This at a time when Government had placed legal limits on each council's spending - and was exacting financial penalties for "overspending". Such work could therefore be continued only if spending elsewhere in the Region's budget was reduced. Even after a decade of financial restrictions, there was scope for such budgetary reallocations eg many schools which were operating at almost half capacity. And, unlike most authorities, Strathclyde took up this challenge with some enthusiasm.

6.2 The Wider Context

A social strategy for the Eighties was clearly not relevant for the Nineties! A new strategy was needed - not only to deal with the frustrations indicated above - but to reflect the implications of the changed socio-economic and political conditions.

Poverty had more than doubled over the period - and the financial circumstances of the poor had deteriorated particularly when compared to the rest of the population. In 1971 male unemployment in Castlemilk, on of the larger housing estates, was 10 percentage points above that of a middle class area - by 1991 the gap had grown to 35%. The number of households with a car rose in the latter from 73% to 83%. In the former it actually dropped from 19% to 14%.

Nearly 150 primary schools in the Region have more than 80% of children eligible for clothing and footwear grants.

And new problems had emerged as major concerns such as drugs, fear of crime and lack of safety on which a range of initiatives had been established (in 1978 a social survey in these areas had identified "dogs" as one of the major anxieties).

On the broader front, the Conservative Government had been determined, from 1979, to break the power of the local self-governments - initially by rate-capping and then by a variety of legislation which forced the "contractualisation" not just of technical services and housing but, from 1987, of educational and social services (Farnham and Horton). Even schools have been encouraged to "opt out" of local government control: although few, particularly in the West of Scotland, have chosen to do so.

The initiative for urban change moved from local self-government professionals to central government and to consultants in development agencies established at a town level by Government - who lack understanding of and access to some of the relevant local authority services and any real accountability. And any reason for getting involved with the long-term unemployed. During the 1980s the government had abolished the metropolitan counties in England - and, from the end of the decade, Ministers began to talk of a reorganisation of Scottish local government along single-tier lines. And even if the general election of the 1990s brought in a Labour Government, it had a major commitment to establish a Scottish Assembly. Clearly the days of the Region were numbered!

6.3 "GENERATING CHANGE": new packaging - or a new package?

The mid 1980s saw new administrative and political leadership take over in the Regional Council - at a time when the Conservative government was moving into a strongly ideological strategy of reducing the power of local politicians in local public services. Both of these factors had an influence on the Social Strategy.

In 1987 the small group of officials in Strathclyde Region who had been working on the strategy since the start tried to identify what they felt they had learned from more than a decade of work about successful urban/regional strategy work.

This was sparked off by the statement that Margaret Thatcher made from the steps of Downing Street on the night of her re-election at last promising action in "the Inner Cities".

Suspecting that those who had been working on such issues for the previous decade in local authorities and in community organisations would be the last to be consulted by her (and that QUANGOES such as the Scottish Development Agency) would be given an increased role, we quickly drafted "Ten Principles for Success" in difficult urban areas, included these in an attractive 4-page note and distributed it carefully to key policy-makers in London.

And went down to London to talk with business leaders and editors of national newspapers about it.

Principles for Success

- long-term commitment to the problem area (minimum of 10 years)
- genuine partnership

- community participation from the outset
- a few visible (relevant and realistic) projects which would generate confidence
- working from a local base
- shared training of staff
- need to find new ways of operating

By the early part of the following year the Region produced, with the help of consultants, a more definitive (and glossy) statement of its urban policy - this time for private sector partners who were clearly going to be given by the Government a stronger role in urban policy - whether they wanted it or not.

The document described the nature of the economic and social initiatives undertaken **by the public sector** since 1976 to deal with urban dereliction; emphasised the partnership approach which had been adopted by the local agencies; and listed what were considered from the work to be the essential features for successful local partnerships.

SUCCESSFUL LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS NEED TO -

- develop a clear mission
- negotiate on agreement
- set a realistic timetable
- define targets
- adopt a holistic approach
- promote good communications
- build up trust
- empower local people
- create local forums
- clarify the scope of decision making
- train people and build capacity
- create leverage

from "Generating Change" (Strathclyde Region 1988)

The document then, somewhat cheekily (in view of the known Government preferences) invited the private sector to become involved in four main areas of work -

- land and property development
- community enterprise
- finance and investment
- education and training.

Some people felt that the Region had gone too far in the direction of economic and commercial objectives in the search for new partners and had ditched social welfare. But enterprise had always been a central part of its approach.

And we were well satisfied when the government report which was eventually published in spring 1988 ('New Life for Urban Scotland') reflected the key concepts (even to the phrases) of the Region's report.

Unlike the English document, local government was given a continuing role in regeneration - even although it was from this point beginning to be clear that the relative freedom we had enjoyed to take our own initiatives would now be severely constrained.

It was from this point that some of the motivation and commitment was in danger of seeping away: for that reason alone a celebration of achievements was in order.

The government policy showed great realism by choosing to concentrate its urban initiatives on only 4 out of 144 possible housing schemes: and indeed selecting those which had already been the subject of considerable community and local authority work in the previous decade.

This concentration of government action in areas containing only a tiny percentage of those who were "disadvantaged" took place at a time when other parts of government policy were very seriously reducing spending on key aspects of life and services for the poor.

"Generating Change" was therefore a reaffirmation of the Council's original principles, a celebration of achievement, an indication of its readiness to move into a stronger relationship with government and the private sector and a statement of the terms of such partnerships. It was not, however, entirely opportunistic since Glasgow's private sector had already played a crucial part in Glasgow Action, the force behind the city-centre strategy.

6.4 Social Strategy for the 90s

In 1991 a major review was undertaken - using a process designed to increase the sense of ownership of departments, residents and politicians alike. Social Strategy for the Nineties reaffirmed the policy priorities of fighting deprivation and unemployment : but was able to produce more detailed indications of aims and proposals for action.

Reflecting the budgetary crisis, some of the frustrations with traditional Departments and the experience of closing schools, a new budget system was established - Strategic Management of Resources - which gave groups of members the responsibility of identifying savings in each department from "low priority" activities as a precondition for any bids for new development. And, following on reviews undertaken in the late 1980s by academics such as Stewart Ranson and Robin Hambleton of the educational and area systems respectively, a more formal system of area decentralisation was set up.

7. A FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESEMENT

This paper does not attempt to make an overall assessment of the 20 years' experience. This clearly is not a simple story - indeed there are at least five different "stories" in the policy sense (Stone) in what has so far been recounted -

The Preconditions for coherent, relevant and robust policy-making

These have been summarised at para 5 above - and offer a possible checklist against which to test, for example, the chances for current Social Inclusion efforts in, for example, Scotland. The new Parliament clearly gives a new beginning; and detailed policies which build on a broad consensus borne of experience are in place - but is there enough commitment and external pressures?

The Scope for Local Autonomy - "what the Lord giveth, he taketh away"!

Few local authorities have been endowed with such powers and resources as Strathclyde Region. Within four years, however, government started the process of constraining them - and ultimately destroyed the entire Region. For the past 30 years, local government has been a favoured play area for British Central Government. In the 1960s and 1970s the gangleaders were essentially civil servants driven by rationalistic notions of scale and coherence.

In the 1980s, the leader of the pack was a Prime Minister driven by a mixture of ideological animosity to local professional power and of political inability to stomach the pluralism embedded in the very concept of local government.

The games played were many and diverse and will doubtless in future inspire Central European Governments. They fall into three basic categories

a. Reorganisation - first in 1974, with the *ab initio* establishment of a two-tier system in both Scotland and England. Later by the abolition first of the offensive Greater London Council and then of the large English Metropolitan Counties which exercised largely strategic functions. Finally by the abolition of the Regions.

b. Financial starvation - through penalisation of "excessive" spending; setting legal limits on spending and, ultimately, by abolishing the property tax (which had given the Region almost 50% of its expenditure) and replacing it by a Poll Tax (which gave it only 20%). This reduced the local political function to that of "executioner"

c. Stripping of functions (or assets) and transfer of functions and resources to the private sector and central government created and controlled agencies (in training and local economic development in the 1980s; in urban regeneration in the 1990s). However, nothing more will be said about this crucial issue here!

- **The Content of a Social Inclusion Strategy**

There were, basically, four strategic principles in this work (positive discrimination; community development; income-maximisation; inter-agency cooperation,). How the first three of these were understood - and the sorts of lessons were learned are discussed in paras 8 and 9. The inspiration for such work on this had been the earlier Labour Government's Community Development Programme (Higgins) and a later Labour Government's 1977 White Paper on Inner Cities represented official thinking at the point national urban strategies closed down for a full decade. More considered national thinking on that experience had to wait on the work of the Standing Commission on Social Justice and of the Rowntree Foundation's special series in the 1990s - and very much reflects more local initiatives of the sort covered here.

- **The possibilities for inter-agency co-operation which such work demands**

"Joined-up action" is now the jargon for an issue which is back in fashion after almost two decades in which the market was seen as the answer. Para 9 spells out the issues. The paper has already indicated at 3.2.3 the adoption by the Region of more open and dynamic structures of policy design and implementation at both HQ and local level. The implications of these for traditional policy mechanisms are further explored in para 13).

- **The ways politicians can learn from experience about the impact of government policies and/or structures**

One of the my consistent concerns is how politicians - as elected representatives of the people - learn about their roles and work. Suspicion of established civil servants has been shared by both left and right - and much use is now made of special advisers and consultants. Para 10 indicates a different approach.

8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - WHAT EXACTLY WAS BEING ATTEMPTED?

"A programme is what it does: not what it would like to do or was established to do. The distribution of funds and staff time are good indicators of what an organisation actually does rather than what it believes it does or tries to convince others that it does" (SM Miller)

8.1 The Objectives

In a sense, the Region's early policy statements were no more than an indication of the need for change: and an invitation to join a more open process of moving away from some undesirable states and procedures toward an undefined goal.

One of the earliest reviews of deprivation strategies by INLOGOV had suggested that a key to effective work in this area of urban deprivation was "generating understanding and commitment" in the various parts of the local government system - understanding, that is, about the scale of human waste and commitment to change those things that sustained such waste.

Rhetoric and new structures are easy!

The question is whether people really understand the reasons for any new policies and structures introduced? And are they committed? That is the key to real change.

The Strathclyde goals were expressed, variously, in the following terms

- "reallocating resources to APTs"
 - "responding to and resourcing community initiatives"
 - "encouraging dialogue and co-operation between local officials and councillors"
 - "transforming the way people think about themselves and what they are capable of"
- (conclusion to Social Strategy for the Eighties)

If one wanted to be cynical - or if you are hold to the Public Choice critique - namely that public policy serves the interests of such policy "actors" as professionals and politicians rather than consumers - you would find little surprising, in times of financial constraints, about politicians moving away from "big projects" and supporting a strategy which gives them local control over small neighbourhood budgets!

Bureaucratic interests are also served - since new posts are on offer. And everyone basks in the free publicity of a grand new endeavour - which does not really challenge the basic position of the powerful - and the things they hold dear. Systems survival - rather than policy achievement - is the name of the game!

The real questions are -

- whether this really added up to a policy which affected the detail of what officials were doing
- whether the policy mechanisms had the relevant resources and focus : and continuing political and managerial support.

8.2 What exactly was expected from COMMUNITY ACTION ?

Two rationales can be seen for the community action approach in the early years.

The first assumed that, if structures and support were made available in areas with such concentrations of problems, then ideas for better local services would be developed - including self-management. People in small working-class neighbourhoods knew one another - could identify more easily than any outside professional those who needed special attention: and had a distrust of outsiders. They were therefore an important resource to ensure a more effective focus for services for such groups as teenagers and the elderly - if not for such general services as policing.

And they were the people actually living in the houses which were then the subject of rehabilitation: it clearly seemed sensible to involve them in the planning! Far from such involvement leading to expensive options, it generally kept both immediate and more long-term costs under control.

And, if better models of practice emerged from this local work, it could inspire others and be adopted elsewhere.

The second strand of thinking was more radical; that local authority services were designed to deal with individuals - pupils, clients, miscreants - and did not have the perspectives, mechanisms or policies to deal with community malfunctioning. No immediate solution was in sight on this - but it clearly involved building up structures and skills at a neighbourhood level.

Such was the thinking - nothing here about social engineering. The implicit logic was that if local government could recommit itself to the people in areas of high unemployment, treat them as individuals with rights and responsibilities, then they would surely respond and help create an environment of raised expectations for their children from the local schools, services and labour markets. And if, in the process, new more corporate models of service were produced which could be replicated elsewhere this might help reshape a clearly outdated bureaucratic system. This was very much a pluralist way of thinking.

Of course, in a neighbourhood of 7,000, one would expect no more than a handful of individuals to dedicate themselves to the improvement of the area as a whole: and, as adult education and health activities got underway, another 30 or so activists might find themselves playing a leadership role. A big conference in the neighbourhood might attract 60 or so people.

Clearly this left the vast majority of the neighbourhood - particularly those whose lives were most devastated by the absence of such structures as formal work.

How, then, was the work of the statutory services and of the community initiatives supposed to break into their cycle of despair? Was there any theory of "transformation" - individual, group or area - underpinning the work? An answer of a sort can be found in a major article published in Social Work Today in 1977 entitled "Community Development - the administrative and political challenge" (Young 1978) which argued that our democratic and political mechanisms no longer worked in such areas.

Problems were never defined by local people there - professionally-dominated agendas were rather imposed on them in a variety of more or less subtle ways. Community development staff were the shock-troops to help make the pluralist system work again! (that was also evident in the "enterprise" rhetoric of community business).

And, although it was never said explicitly, the first stage of the strategy was kept loose and unplanned to allow the build-up of local self confidence to such a stage as would permit more of an equal agenda.

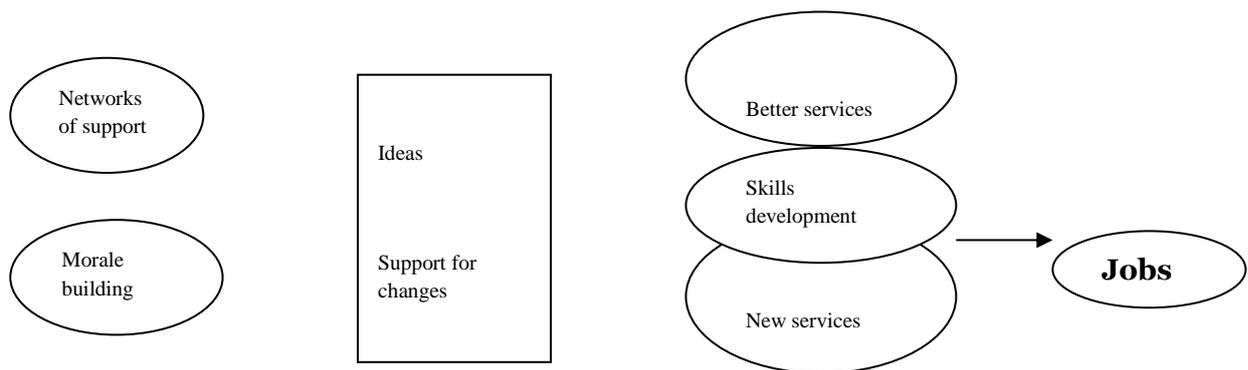
It was only with the establishment in 1985 of the first wave of Joint Social and Economic Initiatives for the larger estates of 50,000 plus population where the unemployment rates were above 25% that the more managerial language of "transformation" began to be used. These, after all, were projects established formally as Tripartite Partnerships - of Region, District and Community - which carried the commitment of the major spending departments of housing and education: and had dedicated management and project resources.

And, in 1988, the Government moved into a stronger role in a few of these areas (see section 9) - setting up another Partnership Structure which brought in three additional sets of actors - civil servants, the private sector and consultants. Few of them had any experience of this sort of work - and, while they were building on a decade's experience, they are working with limited time-scales and their own criteria of "success".

Although, therefore, there has been an official policy of "positive discrimination" for 20 years, it is only in the last ten years that the issue has moved to the centre of bureaucratic concern - subject to serious resources and expectations of impact and defined change, whether measured in terms of school performance; unemployment rates; image of areas and inward investment Quite

where that leaves community action is an interesting question which may be relatively new for local government but is a common dilemma for development work elsewhere (Hulme and Edwards 1997).

Certainly there was naivety in the early expectations that community workers would be "working themselves out of a job": and that community businesses in these areas could become normal commercially viable concerns. The hard reality is that the number of people evicted from the formal economy will not fall and that, given the way the British housing market still works, they will be concentrated in those housing areas with the poor reputations. This will create permanent problems of motivation, facilities and behaviour. The issue then becomes one of how the quality of life in these estates is made acceptable (Pahl): and how, in particular, the life chances of the young are protected. This points to the importance of community support for "ladders of opportunity".



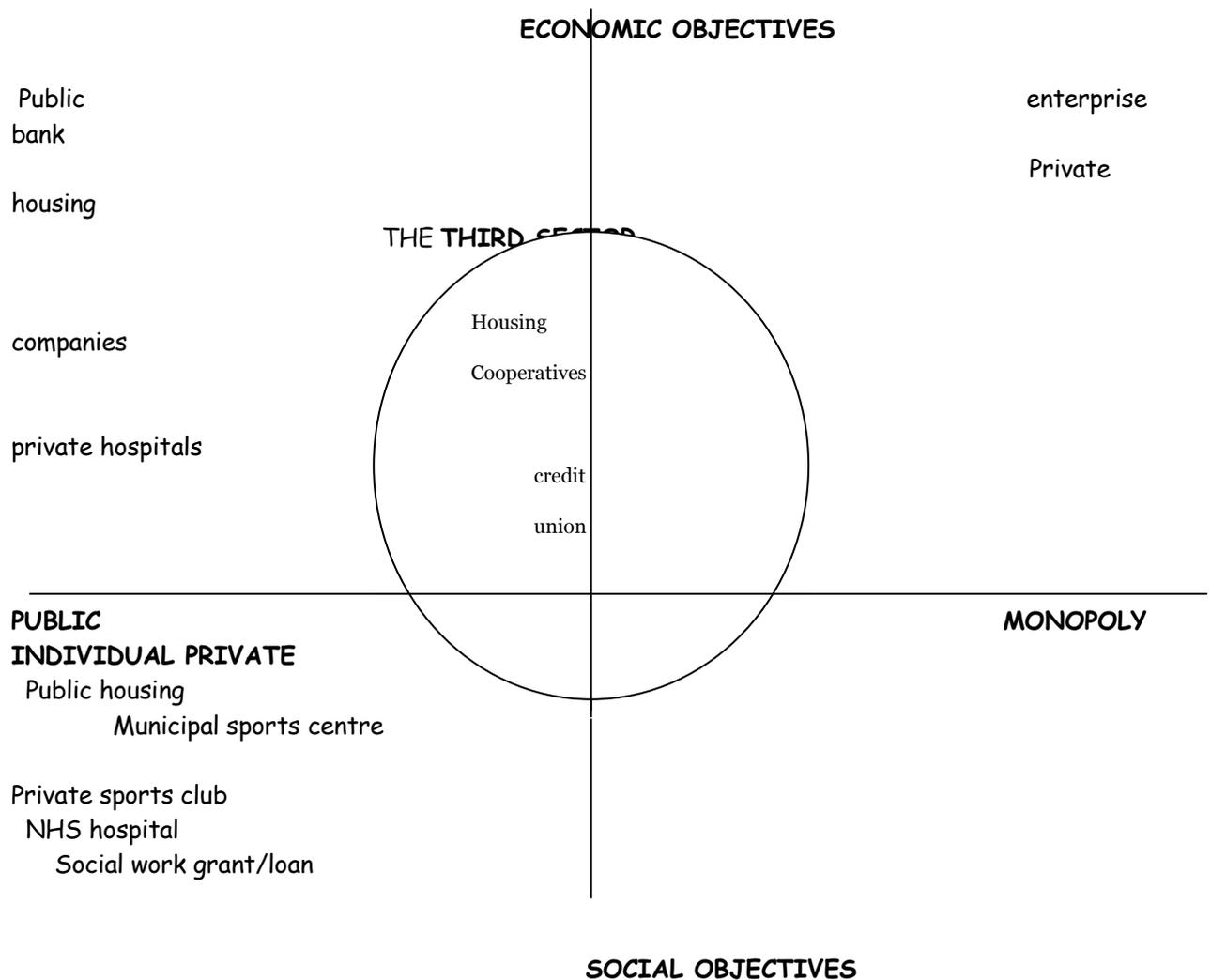
The story of the range of policies actually used in the pursuit of these objectives, how they were managed and interacted, the role of residents in all this and, most critically, the impact: all this remains properly to be told - although the various publications of the Training and Employment Research Unit of Glasgow University and the Planning Department of Strathclyde University do give considerable insights into community economic development.

8.3 COMMUNITY BUSINESS

In the early 1980s the Region and several other local councils established a Foundation to encourage and assist the creation in these areas of high and long-term unemployment of business ventures which were conceived, set up and managed by the local people to supply missing services. This was the result of a modest initiative some of us had started in 1978 as a local response to the increasing unemployment of that period - which, understandably, had seen the focus of neighbourhood action begin to shift from the improvement of housing to that of local income generation - whether initiatives in welfare rights, credit unions or employment.

Strathclyde Community Business Ltd (SCB) was, by the late 1980s, a development agency in the West of Scotland with some 30 staff who encouraged and advised local community organisations in the municipal estates establish commercial ventures.

These had the dual objective of providing jobs and much needed goods and services in those areas which the private sector was not, for various reasons, providing - eg security services, stone-cleaning, pre-school services, laundrettes.



SCB Ltd was a Partnership of various public agencies, not least successive governments - with the involvement of the private sector and very much blazed a trail for the concept of community business (Hayton; MacArthur ;F Stewart; Teague). By the mid 1980s, almost 50 community companies were operational.

The average business employed about 25 people unemployed people from the area and was run by a manager with an annual grant from urban programme of 60,000 pounds: and had a Board of about 10 local people.

By the mid 1980s the initial period of grant support was running out for many of the businesses, and few were showing any profit - which was hardly surprising, given the constraints they faced of management, work-force and market. These were, after all, the areas the market itself had bypassed - despite the opportunities - and the workforce lacked work-experience.

For us, however, there were three big pluses: local people who had been unemployed were now working - developing their work skills and helping improve the area.

The immediate financial costs to the Exchequer of unemployment benefit was about three times the subsidy to the business: and clearly the social costs of unemployment (in health and crime) were also being reduced by such ventures. During the 80s, however, despite the rising unemployment, such arguments and calculations about social benefit were not permissible.

The language of accounting and market success was the only acceptable one - and so we fell into the trap of using the language of commercial viability. And, inevitably, began to believe ourselves that commercial sustainability could and should be achieved.

It is interesting that, by the mid 1990s, the language has become that of "intermediate labour markets" - with less emphasis on local community control and provision; and more on managed programmes to move specific individuals in a planned way back into a wider labour market.

A series of reviews were commissioned on various aspects of the work started in 1986. None of the reviews challenged the basic assumptions of the work (one of the problems about such innovative, exploratory work is that it is not easy to write Terms of Reference - and external consultants stick to their brief!) but rather emphasised the need to sharpen the business side of the operations. Most of the development workers had a community development, rather than business background. People with a combination of both were rare indeed.

And, at this stage, hostility from surprising quarters began to surface: one member council with active support for community business in its own area clearly wanted more active control directed over businesses. And the Economic unit of our own council started to resent the scale of money going to these businesses over which they had no control.

That some of the ventures were actually daring to think of tendering for some of local government's own functions as they were put out by new Conservative legislation on Compulsory Competitive Tendering just added to the ambivalence about community business in certain quarters of local government. Of course complaints would occasionally surface from small business about "unfair competition" - and Scottish Office was, of course, most sensitive about the danger of subsidised social activity preventing private enterprise. The logic of this tended to mean autarchy - that is the restriction of business activities to the APT rather than connecting the area to the broader economy.

The need for SCB to separate the development from the banking function also became an issue during the review discussions. Development workers could hardly be expected to be totally objective in comments about bids which they had encouraged and assisted! And several community businesses had spectacular failures, some of which might have been prevented (MacArthur).

Separate structures for development and funding were duly established - and attempts made to find retired people from the private sector who had the time needed for Board service properly to assess and monitor the business activities.

The Board began to explore, with the assistance of sympathetic members of the private sector, the possibilities of establishing a local community bank to bridge the gap we felt existed for many local ventures. Not just a financial but a psychological gap: the difference between getting a grant of public money and negotiating a loan of other people's money which you will have to pay back. In this review we drew on initiatives in Europe and America: the way in which North American neighbourhood organisations negotiated complex financial packages for development projects in such fields as housing, shopping and even hotels was impressive. The Community Bank was duly established in 1990 - but in 1992 the funders (seizing the opportunity of the departure of most of the original political supporters) seemed finally to lose patience with the model and replaced it with an agency with the less ambitious aim of supporting "community enterprise".

Rather ironically this was at precisely the time the European Union's concern about long-term unemployment and "social and economic cohesion" was reaching its height. The community business model clearly fitted the Delors philosophy and had attracted interest in Brussels from an early stage partly from the active role played by the Region from the mid 1980s in the Executive of RETI, the European lobby for older industrial regions : and then through the bilateral dialogue of the past decade which got underway via the mechanism first of the Integrated Development

Programme (one of Europe's first) and, then under the expansion of the Structural Funds and the operation of Single Programming process, of the Strathclyde European Partnership. In the 1990s the European Union published two important studies - the first indicating the importance of non-mainstream activities in the environmental and social areas to new job creation (EU1992) - the second which examined closely the Strathclyde experience and how crucial the community development input over a ten-year period had been to establishing the preconditions needed for effective labour market interventions in areas of high unemployment (EU1996).

9. "JOINED UP" THINKING AND WORKING (inter-agency work)

Generating a commitment and action at a local level to social inclusion efforts is a most complex process **for three reasons**.

- Different groups of people were, and are, involved
- working, secondly, in different sorts of agencies
- engaged, finally, on different tasks.

The **groups** include -

(a) professionals - highly trained specialists each with their distinct language (generally developed in academia), ways of looking at the world, boundaries and networks. Understandably policeman, for example, will generally have different implicit prescriptions for "excluded", "marginalised" groups and areas than those trained as teachers.

(b) Politicians - who have their own styles, accountabilities, stereotypes, ambitions and networks - as do

(c) community activists and

(d) business people some of whom were getting involved in urban initiatives in the late 1980s.

These people are situated, secondly, in different sorts of **agencies** -

- national/local
- elected/non-elected
- statutory/voluntary
- permanent/temporary
- profit-making/non-profit
- each of which has its own cultures, procedures, constraints, loyalties and language,.

And, finally, many different **tasks** are of course involved in urban renewal - economic and social, relating to housing, health and behavioural and skills issues (Young 1977).

In such a situation, it is a miracle that anything happens! The table below sets out the main actors involved.

The wider structure of agencies and local initiatives

Name	Focus	Purpose	Established by	When	Partners	Annual Budget
Area Initiative	Neighbourhood	To encourage co-ordinated approach to local problems	Region	1978	District Councils	None
Community Business	Strathclyde Region	To set up ventures in poor Areas which provide services and employ unemployed residents	Region	1978	Scottish Office District Councils	1 million
Enterprise trusts	Town	To advise and assist creation of new companies	Confed of British Industry	1984/85	Companies Districts Region	50,000 each
Highlands Islands Development Board	North West of Scotland	To promote economic activities in the area	Government	1965		22million
Housing Corporation	Neighbourhoods in Scotland	To help local residents improve housing stock	Government	1965	Voluntary housing associations	123 million
Joint Economic Initiatives	Towns in Strathclyde	Integrated economic Revitalisation	Region	1982	Districts Scottish Development Agency	10 million plus
Joint Social and Economic Initiatives	Large municipal housing estates in Strathclyde	To create an economic infrastructure in areas of high and long-term unemployment	Region Glasgow District	1985		1 million
Liaison Committees	Each of 19 Districts within Strathclyde region	To discuss and resolve issues of mutual interest	The local councils	1975		None
Manpower Services Commission	Company Individual in UK	To provide training	Government	1974		140 million
Mixed Ventures	Neighbourhoods	To improve housing in inner-city areas	Private sector	1980s	Districts Private sector	Variable
Structure Plan	Regions	To zone land and identify local planning problems and solutions	Government	1981	Region Districts New Towns	None
Scottish Development Agency	Companies in Scotland	Economic development Environmental improvements	Government	1975	Local councils	26 million

9.1 CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

The Region was fortunate in its early years to have a Labour Government which shared its commitment to action on urban problems: the high point being the publication in 1977 of the White Paper on Inner Cities which remains one of the clearest governmental statements on the issue.

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister and, influenced by the critique of the "Public Choice" school, soon demonstrated her mission to destroy the power of the professional and political groups in the public sector. Local government was high in her "hate-list" - particularly because of the confrontational left-wing profile of local authorities such as The Greater London Council and Liverpool.

Scottish councils, however, were more pragmatic and somewhat protected by the special constitutional position the country has enjoyed for the past century - which has given it a separate Ministry (The Scottish Office) based in Edinburgh, which has the budgetary authority for all Scottish public spending. This - and Scotland's size (5 million) - creates more intimate professional networks across the boundaries of central-local government than is the case in England.

And many of the most senior Civil Servants had been strongly supportive of the Region's creation - and its new urban strategy. That support was able to continue during the Eighties - made easier by three factors -

- the pragmatic, non-confrontational tactics adopted by the Region's leadership to the Conservative government
- the bipartisan nature of both the member-officer policy structure and of the community development values at the heart of the urban strategy. The language we chose to use was not political or confrontational - but that of enterprise. Interestingly we had strong support from traditional (and new) conservatives not only from within the Council but from Conservative Councils such as Tayside Region who were the first to copy our approach.
- the critical approach it too took to the operation and performance of the big spenders such as Education.

Sadly, however, no sustained dialogue about the aims and structures of the Region's strategy ever took place between Scottish Office and the Region.

9.2 OTHER LOCAL AGENCIES

Such community initiatives - and power - were not to everyone's taste! Health Boards, who met with the Region on a regular basis, found it very difficult to understand or accept the invitations to them to join in neighbourhood-based preventive work.

And many District councillors, with their responsibilities for housing, were distinctly unhappy to find themselves dealing with well-briefed and organised groups of tenants campaigning for improvements in housing conditions! The reaction of Glasgow councillors was particularly ambivalent since they could never accept the downgrading of their empire represented by re-organisation: and had their own brand of "managed" community development (co-option to some) which caused some initial problems in our joint working. But the housing work of Glasgow City Council led the British field in imagination and effectiveness - and they had quickly come to pragmatic terms with the increasing role of the private sector in such provision.

A sustained dialogue between 1982 and 1984 between a few of the more reformist leaders of the two Councils did lead to the establishment of several major Joint Economic and Social Initiatives for some of Glasgow's larger housing schemes.

9.3 MEDIA and LOCAL PARTY

The newspapers were quick to support this work - the efforts and successes of local groups were good copy: as there was no political challenge to any of the elements of the work, coverage was focussed on projects - rather than strategies.

More analytical - and provocative - pieces had to be placed in national professional journals such as *Community Care*, *Social Work Today* and *Local Government Studies*: and did not, therefore, produce any debate, despite the profound issues they raised for political and professional practice alike.

Councillors had structures of accountabilities to three levels of the Labour Party - (a) the branch (generally the neighbourhood they represented on the Council, which would select them every four years: and to whom they generally reported on a monthly basis).

(b) the Constituency - although its locus was more parliamentary, it was the traditional focus of local political dialogue and power.

(c) the Strathclyde-wide Party which was responsible for approving the official list of candidates; for drawing up and approving the Manifesto; and which constituted the forum for ongoing policy exchange with the Regional leadership. Those exchanges related to the contentious matters and crises of the moment - relating to the Government's financial restrictions, privatisation and replacement in the late 1980s of the local property tax used by local government with a much-hated and short-lived **Poll Tax** - rather than long-term strategic issues.

9.4 WIDER DIALOGUE

English Councils such as Bradford City, Nottingham and Lancashire Counties expressed active interest in the community development and member-officer group experiences and structures - and, after two-way visits, adopted elements of the strategy. And dialogues at both political and officer level were held with Lothian Region and, in the early 1980s, with the progressive Conservative leaders of Tayside Region who then set up similar structures and strategies.

Later in the 1980s a national lobby for "peripheral housing estates" (RIPE) was established by several local authorities - with the Region in a leading role.

The business sector of Strathclyde also proved to be responsive. When the Region began, each sector had its own perspective - and was just beginning to find ways of talking with one another. Business leaders now recognise the need to tackle the various problems of marginalised groups and areas ("social and economic cohesion" in Euro-speak). Here, the European Union has played a critical role - from the late 1980s through what is now called The Strathclyde European Partnership.

And the 1997 New Labour Government produced in 1999 a Scottish strategy for Social Inclusion - with all the same elements and principles. The one major difference was the more sophisticated approach to labour market intervention which a committed government could bring - in this case its "New Deal" policy.

Against that, however, must be put the political attitude of the Labour party leaders of some of the new councils of 1996 whose long-harboured resentment of the Region and its community development policy could at last find expression. One expression of this was the use made of the major financial crisis caused by the 1997 funding settlement to sack scores of community workers. And also of potential significance is the absence of elected politicians from the working group which produced the Government strategy.

What emerges from this brief overview of perceptions and processes of some of the groups and structures whose support was needed for strategic development is the restricted nature of the

serious dialogue. Formal structures were simply unable to handle the complexity of what was involved - and preferred to keep to the "simple" negotiable issues.

10. POLITICAL LEARNING - some processes and messages

One of the purposes of this paper has been to lay out the "assumptive world" and ongoing learning of some key policy influentials in Britain's largest local authority as they chose to apply some principles common to both social justice and organisational development to the changing political and social context of the West of Scotland in the 1980s and 1990s.

It has never been easy for local authorities to handle ideas. They have historically been devices for allocating resources to fairly independent agencies whose "products" were beyond question. As, however, the fragility of these products - and their interrelationships - have become more obvious; and as new approaches are introduced, it becomes more important that we develop the tools to learn from what we are doing. This is, of course, the message about "organisational learning" which has become so fashionable in the management literature of the 1990s (Pearn; Starkey)

Paragraph 3 (particularly 3.4) has indicated the dissatisfaction with the Committee system and the more open processes of policy development which were used. It should be put on record that one of the first things the new Convener attempted in 1974 was to persuade his colleagues that the "shadow" Council should operate in its first year without the traditional Committees - to give it a chance to look more "holistically" at issues. The critique behind this is elaborated in paragraph 13.

This section explores two questions -

- How, in the absence of recognised experts, did a coherent policy emerge - and develop over time?
- What were the "lessons" key policy-makers felt they were learning from the experience? About both good and bad practice.

10.1 Creative Processes for policy design

One of the perennial cries of reformers is how to generate the necessary understanding and commitment amongst the politicians for something new and risky. One device is flattery - for example to invite them on to the Steering Committee of a pilot project and make them feel part of a unique endeavour. This will generally make them more open to new ideas. I am not saying this was the intention of the Tavistock Institute in inviting the Region to join such a committee overseeing a research project exploring "inter-organisational relationships in the new system of British local government" - but it certainly had that effect. It created the confidence, for example, to allow the Region's leaders to invite the two Tavistock researchers to join the 1975/76 search process (Trist; Weisbord) for a strategy.

The coherence of the Social Strategy for the Eighties document is also due to its unusual drafting process. It emerged from six major Community references spread over a 6 month period and calculated to give the new Council of May 1982 an analysis which would help it build on the strengths and weaknesses of the work of the previous five years. But it also drew on some 24 informal workshops which were held during 1981 and early 1982 (The "Network for Urban Change Group") which I was able to organise by virtue of my dual role as Secretary of the majority Labour group and academic. Invitations were issued to those professionals and local politicians from any local authority (and local universities) personally committed to the principles of the strategy and willing to spend time learning the lessons from the initiatives. One theme was selected for each

session - with someone being invited to lead each session all of which were taped, with "creative summaries" being circulated by a researcher in advance of the next session. It was, in a sense, an early lesson of "Action-Learning" (Weinstein) and tried to find ways of bridging the boundaries between different professions (and the disciplinary divisions of academia which generally lie behind these).

More conventional methods of review - such as consultancy or departmental documents - were not used at that stage for two simple reasons. We could find no external agency which had any expertise in these matters. And our experience of member-officer groups had persuaded us that such external reviews and reports did not allow the necessary build-up of organisational understanding and support to change.

10.2 Some Dilemmas

Over the course of the 15 years we worked on the programmes, we encountered a lot of dilemmas which seem to be part of this sort of development work -

The "bottoms up" versus "top down" approach

Occasionally we felt some impatience with the pure community development model.

During one such mood, we described it as "drawing lines round certain areas, saying we could do better, dangling a small financial carrot and waiting for something to happen".

It was certainly at odds with canons of good management which wants clear goals and programmes.

But there was method in the madness -

- The exploratory nature of (and community base for) the strategy made it difficult to dismiss as a political dogma imposed from on high.
- The strategy reflected basic principles of common justice and was flexible enough to leave a lot of scope and allow a sense of ownership of the strategy to develop; as well as help develop self-confidence in community organisations they would need as more came to be expected of them in the 1990s.
- The strategy document, which did try to balance the initial approach with the adoption of a thematic "programme," gave the necessary support to reformist officers when they encounter bureaucratic inertia or professional suspicion about the unorthodox ventures their commitment to community development got them involved in.

But the dilemma is a central one. Politicians feel they have to produce tangible results - not hang around, being nice to people and waiting for them to produce results!

And schools, for example, were so patently failing the working class (failing - for example in simple marketing aspects - to engage the interest of the young) as to make us dissatisfied with simply a "waiting" role.

There were some "models of better practice" - particularly for the early school age-groups. A previous Labour Government had sponsored an "Educational Priority Areas" programme which ran until the late 1970s: but its lessons required changes in existing practice (Eric Midwinter). This, therefore, was a professional matter in which local politicians and corporate officers were not, in those days, allowed to trespass (Smart).

Need versus opportunity

If you are in the "confidence" game (boosting it) you do not initially take on the most difficult problems. Nothing, after all, succeeds like success. But, equally, serious reformers cannot ignore the intractable problems!

The pursuit of social development involves a tricky balance between social and commercial purposes. Too many localities are so concerned to project a good image to potential foreign investors that they pretend that social problems don't exist - and then quickly start to believe their own propaganda. Those on the "margin" of economic activity (young unemployed/immigrants) have energy and skills which need to be mobilised by any healthy society. Riots or alcoholism aren't a good advertisement for inward investment!

The Region developed distinctive Economic and Social strategies: and separate units within the Chief Executive Department for them. Normal bureaucratic politics ensured the growth of serious rivalry (for resources and status) and tension between the strategies - into which, sadly but inevitably, the politicians are drawn.

And in this case there was an ideological aspect too - since the economists brought a very different set of assumptions to their work from those with a planning and social service perspective!

This parallels a similar division elsewhere - even in World Organisations, with the World Bank explicitly limited to economic issues: and other organisation handling social development. One of the interesting current debates is that offered by the Human Development Index published annually since 1990 which very much challenges the ideological assumptions which lie behind conventional GNP indices (Haq)

Musical Chairs?

Whenever a new policy designates a group or area as deserving or requiring special resource attention, there is a risk that any subsequent "success" is achieved at the cost of other groups or areas, being starved of resources and policy attention, then becoming "problematic".

It is certainly a useful political argument for those who find themselves outside the Priority Areas! And designating low-income areas - rather than people - as the focus of "Priority Treatment" poses two other problems relating to "justice" or need. It is obvious, first, that not all "deserving" people will live within the particular boundaries of the designated areas.

Secondly such designation could serve simply to reinforce the "labels" they and their residents have already been given by employers and investors as a whole: and cause a political backlash for resources being given to the "undeserving poor"

Both intellectually and politically these are not easy arguments. However two things gave us a "window of opportunity" - the media coverage of "Born to Fail": and the respect which the Region's leadership quickly gained. And the work of the Member-Officer Groups ensured a structure for dialogue and response for constituencies such as the handicapped.

Single issue versus the all-embracing approach

Surely attacking on a single issue - whether incomes, house modernisation, community facilities, nursery provision etc. - is more likely to generate confidence (and results) than a complex all-embracing strategy? And yet the services and factors interact and cannot be divorced from one another.

As S.M. Miller put it: " People live in communities, in groups, in families. Programmes cannot successfully help them if they are treated as atomistic individuals." But where is the political or professional interest in - and capacity for - such a corporate overview?

Corporate consensus versus advocacy

Is it reasonable to expect real change to come from internal working groups composed of interested agencies or departments? More often than not, the representatives of such groups use it as an opportunity to defend or pursue the interests of their agency - rather than to engage in creative thinking!

Does organisational as well as political history not tell us that change is more likely to come from conflict - in the sense of a small, determined group of people using persuasion (of different sorts) to impress their particular perception or argument on others?

Collective versus individual motivation

The support of a group is crucial to the development of demoralised people: and meetings with diverse elements can be more creative than homogeneous ones. Sometimes, however, the stage is reached when the group can be constraining rather than liberating - when people want to achieve for themselves. And the management of many of the community projects was amateurish.

Realism versus hype

"How a programme starts is important: what it promises, the expectations that it raises. The poor are frequently both suspicious and deceivable - expectations can rise very rapidly and collapse suddenly" (Miller).

Initially a low key approach was adopted: no trumpets were blown, no promises made. But if the aim of the initiative is boosting self-confidence - individual or collective - this requires publicity and publicity material - although controlled by local people and striking the right balance between honesty and hype!

11. "IF YOU HAD 3-10 WISHES?"

The prevailing views of those involved in Strathclyde's strategy are caught in the author's published pieces of 1977, 1981, 1987 and 1989. "Social Strategy for the 80s" and "Social Strategy for the 90s" represented the official lessons. Two other documents, however, reflected some more systemic reflections.

In the conclusion of the report written for the Regional Council about a six-week German Marshall Foundation Fellowship to Pittsburgh and Chicago in 1987, nine features of their local development process were identified by the author as "worthy of study and replication" -

- more pluralistic sources of Local Funding (the scale of corporate and tax-free grants to Foundations)
- networking of people from the private and public sectors (eg Community Leadership scheme)
- scanning for strategic work : the active, participative role played by the private sector in the process of setting the regional agenda in places like Chicago was impressive
- coaching : the way community economic development skills were encouraged
- marketing : of voluntary organisations
- affirming : affirmative action in Chicago Council was handled very systematically in areas such as hiring and sub-contracting
- negotiating : the flexibility of the planning system allowed local councils to strike deals with developers to the direct advantage of poorer areas.
- persevering : the realism about timescale of change
- parcelling into manageable units of action: the British mentality seemed to prefer administrative neatness to permit a "coordinated" approach. American "messiness" seemed to produce more dynamism.

Four years later, with the perspective often brought by a departure from the work on which one has focussed for so long, I summed up the 15-year experience for the OECD's urban committee in five rather more bitter exhortations -

"(a) RESOURCE the Priority Programmes with "MAINLINE" money

"Where programmes are aimed at the short-run, are characterised by uncertain funding, high staff turnover and poor planning and organisation, it will be difficult for people to accept or benefit from them."(Miller)

Urban Aid - although essential for the strategy - had its downsides. Although initiatives often came from Departmental officials they were middle level - and very much negotiated at the community level - ie with considerable input from residents, politicians and other professionals. Senior departmental management did not feel a strong sense of ownership - and the subsequent project management generally had its problems. Not least because of

- the relative lack of experience of those appointed
- the complex community management arrangements of the projects
- the uncertainty about funding once the 5 year point was reached.

Processing the bids for Urban Aid money also tended to absorb the time of senior policy-makers - to the exclusion of their serious consideration of the changes needed in the operation and policies at the heart of the various Departments.

It was only in the last few years of the Region that a new budgetary system was introduced - the Strategic Management of Resources - which allowed this work to be done.

"(b) SUPPORT CHANGE AGENTS !

No self-respecting private company would introduce new products/systems without massive training. The more progressive companies will pull in business schools and even set up, with their support, a teaching company.

The time was overdue for such an approach from the public sector; for a new type of civic "entrepreneur". And certainly the reaction of much of the public sector in the 1980s to the various threats they faced - not least privatisation - has been to put new life into the public sector. Not for nothing does America now talk about "reinventing government ".

Strathclyde Regional Council recognised the need to help staff and community activists develop the skills appropriate to the new tasks and challenges they were being confronted with in community regeneration processes.

Very little however was done - although thousands of millions of pounds were being spent by central governments in this period on a variety of work-related training experiments. And subsequently in the preparation for privatisation flotations.

We do appear to be amateurs in many respects compared with the United States as far as **managing change** is concerned.

Many organisations exist there for training and supporting these, for example, in community economic development corporations. The Development Training Institute at Baltimore, for example, which - for major community investment projects - arranges a monthly three-way review session, of themselves, a local consultant and the local organisation when detailed planning for the

forthcoming month or so is done. A quasi-contract is then agreed -after which the local consultant checks and assists on progress (Young 1988).

At least 3 levels of training need can be identified for urban development - political, managerial and community. And the most neglected are the first and last, particularly the last.

One of our reviews of Strathclyde Region`s urban strategy decided there was a need to give more support to the development of local leaders - for example by giving them opportunities to travel to see successful projects elsewhere - not only in the UK but in Europe. This had multiple aims - to give the local leaders new ideas, to recharge their batteries, to make them realise their struggle was not a solitary one: to help develop links, as Marlyn Fergusson has put it, with other "conspirators" (literally - "those you breathe with").

Such a venture by an elected agency required some risk-taking - sending community activists not only to places like Belfast but to Barcelona ! - and one too many was apparently taken with the result that it was quickly killed off ! It might have been better to have established an arms-length fellowship but this would have taken interminable time and led quickly to a institutionalisation which would have killed the idea just as effectively. The Prince-of-Wales sponsored Community Architecture Award of 1989 was an opportunity to start a small national dialogue about the training needs of community leaders (Gibson). Typically for a British initiative, however, the resources it was given was goodwill rather than cash and soon petered out.

"(c) Set DETAILED TARGETS for Departments to ensure they understand the implications of the strategy for them

Information is power. It is only the last few years that information has been collected systematically about how the local authority resources in areas of priority treatment relate to the **needs**. Without such sort of information - and a continual monitoring of the effectiveness of action taken in relation to clear targets - any strategy is just pious good intentions.

"(d) Establish FREESTANDING Community Development Agencies

The combination of social, economic, environmental and housing objectives involved in regeneration requires local, free-standing agencies who operate from a position of equality and self-confidence: and can, as a result, challenge the narrowness and inertia which, sadly, tends to characterise normal public bureaucracies.

"(e) Be realistic about the TIME-SPAN the change will need !

The task we are engaged on is the transformation into a post-industrial world: the changes in skills and behaviour - and in organisational forms - cannot be achieved in less than 20-30 years. Hence the need for a learning strategy."

All these, however, were the musings of an individual - one admittedly in an influential position but operating in a culture and system unsympathetic to such perspectives.

12. REINVENTING THE BROKEN WHEEL

Two decades earlier, a brief paper entitled "Reinventing the Broken Wheel" - Lesson-Drawing in Social Policy" - which drew from experience of a variety of Government programmes supposedly aimed at dealing with poverty and inequality - had said it all more simply and eloquently (Miller). The points should be pinned up in every Cabinet Office throughout the world - viz

- How a programme starts is important: what it promises, the expectations that it raises. The poor are frequently both suspicious and deceivable - expectations can rise very rapidly and collapse suddenly.
- Social Policy cannot substitute for economic policy and actions. Many poverty programmes have attempted to avoid this issue - only to stumble late on this finding.
- General economic expansion may not present jobs for the low trained, particularly when dual or segmented labour markets exist. They made need additional help to get and keep jobs or to raise their inadequate incomes.
- If social policies do not control major resources in their areas - eg financing in housing - they will be severely limited in what they do
- The task is not to integrate the poor and unequal into existing structures eg schools. These structures have gross inadequacies and defects. They must be changed as well - frequently also benefiting the non-poor.
- Programmes should be aware of this danger of building up dependencies - and look for ways in which their users can assume responsibility for the programme and themselves.
- One-shot, one-time programmes will have limited affects. While the complaint is often made that the poor are handicapped by a short time-span, they who are more frequently handicapped by the short tome-span of public policies as policy attention wanders from one issue to another.
- Organisation is fateful. How programmes are organised affects what happens to those who deal with them. Where programmes are aimed at the short-run, have uncertain funding, high staff turnover and poor planning and organisation, it will be difficult for people to accept or benefit from them.
- People live in communities, in groups, in families. Programmes cannot successfully help them if they are treated as atomistic individuals.
- Ambitious, conflicting programme goals and activities lead to trouble. Most programmes have this problem.
- A programme is what it does; not what it would like to do or was established to do. The distribution of funds and staff time are good indicators of what an organisation actually does rather than what it believes it does or tries to convince others that it does

Local authority services were designed to deal with individuals - pupils, clients, miscreants - and do not have the perspectives, mechanisms or policies to deal with community malfunctioning. For that, structures are needed which have a "neighbourhood-focus" and "problem focus".

The Strathclyde strategy did in fact develop them - in the neighbourhood structures which allowed officers, residents and councillors to take a comprehensive view of the needs of their area and the operation of local services: and in the member-officer groups.

But we did not follow through the logic - and reduce the role of committee system which sustains so much of the policy perversities. That would have required a battle royal! After all, it took another decade before the issue of an alternative to the Committee system came on the national agenda - to be fiercely resisted by local authorities (Midwinter A). Even now, the furthest they seem to go in their thinking is the "Cabinet system" - which has been offered as an option several times over the past 30 years (Wheatley; Stewart) but never, until now, considered worthy of even debate. The system of directly elected mayors - which serves other countries well - still does not command favour. One of the great marketing tricks of the English is to have persuaded the world of our long traditions of democracy. The truth is that our forefathers so mistrusted the dangers of unacceptable lay voices controlling the council chambers that they invented a range of traditions such as the one creating a system of dual professional and political leadership in local government. As the powers of local government increased in the post-war period - this became a

recipe for confusion and irresponsibility. Little wonder that it was called "The Headless State" (Regan). Chairmen of Committees have been able to blame Directors; and Directors, Chairmen.

It is now interesting to see some local authorities now organised on the basis that was beginning to appear obvious to some of us in the late 1970s. The more progressive councils now have three different political structures -

- One for **thinking** - ie across traditional boundaries of hierarchy, department and agency (our Member-Officer review groups)
- One for ensuring that it is performing its **legal requirements** (the traditional committee system)
- One for acting in certain fields with other agencies to **achieve agreed results** (Joint Ventures for geographical areas or issues)

But such aspirations for community solutions are always stymied by the wider structure of national public services and budgetary systems and it is to this key issue that I now turn.

13. TRANSFORMING GOVERNMENT SYSTEMS

Six deadly sins in public administration

- giving lofty (unspecified) objectives without clear targets which could be measured, appraised and judged
 - doing several things at once without establishing, and sticking to, priorities
 - believing that "fat is beautiful" ie that abundance not competence gets things done
 - being dogmatic, not experimental
 - failing to learn from experience
 - assuming immortality and being unwilling to abandon pointless programmes.
- P Drucker (1980)

Government has generally been a graveyard for reformers: some of the reasons for this being that -

- the electoral cycle encourages short-term thinking : dealing with the crises of the moment
- the machinery of government consists of a powerful set of "baronies" (Ministries/Departments), each with their own (and client) interests to protect or favour
- the permanent experts have advantages of status, security, professional networks and time which effectively give them more power than politicians.
- politicians need to build and maintain coalitions of support : and not give hostages to fortune. They therefore prefer to keep their options open and use the language of rhetoric rather than precision!
- a Government is a collection of individually ambitious politicians whose career path demands making friends and clients rather than the upsetting of established interests which any real reform demands
- it is still not easy to define the "products" or measures of performance for government against which progress (or lack of it) can be tested.
- governments can always blame other people for "failure" : and distract the public with new games and faces : hardly the best climate for strategy work
- the democratic rhetoric of accountability makes it difficult for the politician to resist interfering with decisions they have supposedly delegated.

These forces were so powerful that, by the 1970s, writers on policy analysis had almost given up on the possibility of government systems being able to effect coherent change - in the absence of national emergencies. When the focus of government reform is social justice, the constraints are even greater: "blaming the victim" (Ryan) responses can become evident. My argument so far in this paper is that Strathclyde Region enjoyed in its first decade positive preconditions for effective change: and that it rose to this challenge. In its second decade, conditions became increasingly difficult - although it sustained its commitment to the original principles and tried to build on the early work.

At no stage did we find ourselves constrained by any attack on our redistributive mission! We were, however, constrained by the machinery of local government. And, from 1988, by the increasing encroachment of central government.

It was always clear that our pursuit of social justice required a balance between strategic work and local initiatives. And that the latter was easier than the former. Reference has already been made to the 1982 review which had clearly identified the operation of the departmental system of local government as a major constraint of the strategy.

An internal Labour Group memo of 1988 indicated that the issue had not been grasped -

"Creative work has had to fight all the way against departmental rigidities. It is, after all, there that the perceived administrative and political power is seen to rest. The trappings of corporate power - the Policy Committees and Chief Executive's Department - have not fundamentally affected the agendas of these departments.

The question must be posed: how well served are we by the departmental system which reflects one particular set of professional perceptions, is organised hierarchically, controls the committee agenda and makes joint work at a local level so difficult?"

- each professional discipline used by Government (Education : Social Work : Architect : Culture : Engineer etc) has been trained to a high level to see the world a particular way, with shared assumptions
- they are then put in segmented structures (Departments : Ministries) which confirm their superior understanding and set their perspective (and the resources they are given) in competition with other professions who have competing assumptions about what makes people tick
- they "capture" the politicians who serve on their "overseeing" Committees - by virtue of their technical expertise, information networks and job security
- they have strong representation on the local labour parties to whom local government leaders are responsible.
- when the world behaves in ways which seem to contradict the assumptions of their model, they have used a typology of arguments which defend them from the new reality : eg denial, blaming the victim, demanding more resources, new structures etc

The conventional wisdom of the mid 1970s had told us we needed new corporate systems to help bring more sense to such empires (the more progressive versions of this understood that this was done on more of a consultancy basis - rather than by the new corporate departments actually producing new proposals).

Strathclyde Region had been well served in the first decade - the staff of the Chief Executive Department had been a crucial element in the continued dynamism of the strategy. But a traditional administrative style returned in the mid 1980s - which regarded officers not politicians as the source of legitimacy. This was partly the individual style of the new Chief Executive: but it was very much in tune with Thatcher's determination to kill local political initiatives. And flagship projects - rather than challenging Departmental practice - became the order of the day. This meant that Social Strategy officers therefore did not enjoy support to allow them to operate as a powerhouse for radical ideas, helping policy innovators, whether political or managerial, identify ways, for example, of improving educational performance (Smart).

The logic of our work - and critiques - pointed in the same direction as the Conservative approach to restructuring the machinery of government - viz

- ensure that Departments are structured on the basis of tasks and NOT professional skills.
- use professional skills as inputs only, whether to brainstorming, design or delivery.
- develop management skills and approaches (eg challenge through benchmarking)

Margaret Thatcher had the same view as some of us in the Region about the ineffectiveness and inertia of much of public bureaucracy. We thought it could and should be reformed from within - by a combination of vision, rationality and opportunism. She thought otherwise - and chose to introduce new agencies and procedures calculated to subject it to competitive forces. And then to force it into radical decentralisation of its educational and social budgets.

Given the Conservative Government's unremitting hostility to local government - and the nature and scale of the changes forced on it without the normal consultation - it is hardly surprising that people in local government find it difficult to be positive about anything the Conservative Government did. However the inertia and indifference we met in our strategy - whether in housing departments, in education, from the health services or universities - were basically changed because of the Government's mixed strategy of starving these agencies of resources and establishing new Agencies (eg in the Training and Housing fields) which were given the resources for which the other agencies had to negotiate - requiring a more consumer-sympathetic approach in their work. The question is whether only such crude, negative mechanisms are available

For some positive answers I would urge people to read the booklet "Holistic Government" by Perri 6. He looks at the various devices which have been used in the attempt to achieve "joined-up action" eg

- Interdepartmental working parties
- Multi-agency initiatives
- Merging departments
- Joint production of services
- Restricting agencies' ability to pass on costs
- Case managers
- Information management and "customer interface integration"
- Holistic budgeting and purchasing (eg the Single Regeneration Budget)

He finds a place for all of these - but suggests that "the key to real progress is the integration of budgets and information; and the organisation of budgets around outcomes and purposes not functions or activities" (p44)

Hood has also reminded us that these by no means exhaust the repertoire - and that such mechanisms as are indeed under some circumstances far more powerful.

14. CONCLUSION

So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years -
Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
.....And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate.....
And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate - but there is no competition -
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again; and now under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

TS

Eliot (Four Quartets)

Strathclyde Region broke new political ground in 1975 in firmly placing "multiple deprivation" or "social exclusion" at the heart of its priorities. And the first strategy document on the subject in 1975 clearly stated three points which were to be crucial over the next two decades

- as there were "no experts in multiple deprivation", the issue required flexibility, humility and integration ("joined-up thinking" it's now called);
- local people needed a stronger voice
- results should be measured in terms of 20-25 years.

And so here we are - the twenty-so years are up. And what has been achieved? And what learned?

- Clearly the social conditions of "exclusion" are more extensive - but improvements were always understood to need a positive combination of local and national policies and resources.
- In the absence of national commitment, it was local councils who reached out in the 1980s and 1990s to try to "include" and to experiment with new ways of bringing together the required skills and services.
- The Social Inclusion strategy of 1999 which has come from The Scottish Office under New Labour clearly offers new opportunities - not least because it clearly draws on the experience of the local initiatives of the past twenty years
- although it is puzzling and worrying that there were no local elected politicians on the working group which produced it. This raises questions about the role and commitment of local government in the next stage - and indeed about the whole **process** of social change.
- Not least because yet another comprehensive local government reorganisation swept the Region away in 1996 and the financial framework of the new single-tier Districts which replaced it in the West quickly led to the sacking of many community workers
- political energies and excitement will now be concentrating on the operations of the Scottish Parliament elected in May 1999
- although such a "new beginning" - with the new strategy - offer two of the positive pre-conditions identified in this paper for robust and coherent policy-making, many of the other preconditions are missing.
- The content of policies is one thing - the will and systems to effect change something else whose absence dooms good policies to rhetoric and oblivion.

Too many people in the past assumed that the improvement of urban conditions was just a question of collective resources.

Now we think we know better. We seem now to understand, for example, that understanding and commitment by policy-makers are crucial ingredients of progress in social inclusion - which means developing a sense of policy ownership at a local level.

Obviously some people (specialists) have learned from all the programmes of the past few decades relating to "poverty"; "deprivation"; "marginalisation"; "exclusion" (Feiffer had a cartoon on this in the 1970s suggesting that the one thing achieved is a richer vocabulary).

Many books can now be read about the programmes. The question is who reads them - with what results. particularly the politicians make of it all. Those of you who have seen Robin Williams' film "Good Will Hunting" will remember his powerful diatribe against the book learning of the young genius! Where, he was asking, was the insight and passion which comes from real experience?

There are always seem to be new agencies, new vocabularies, new people, - and new beginnings (such as a Scottish parliament) - to make us believe that we are the first to tackle a problem. And which make for collective amnesia.

The question I am left wrestling with is whether we are indeed, as Eliot wrote poetically and SM Miller more prosaically, doomed to a continuous cycle of rediscovery - or whether we can construct and maintain political and democratic processes which properly connect the past, present and future.

Political learning requires such a connection. And that, in turn, requires new mechanisms of decision-making - and a more radical form of partnership than that touted in all the PR literature. One based on a redefined relationships between people, professionals and politicians. As an ex-politician, I am left despairing of the poverty of that transfer and learning.

1 May 1999
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