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Name: Joyce LIDDLE

Title: Local government and leisure: A study of two local authorities and their responses to the growth of leisure.

M.A. in Politics - April 1992

Abstract

Local authorities have a long history of providing recreation and leisure services, but since the 1970s leisure departments have expanded with a corresponding growth in the number and importance of professional officers to run them. Growing affluence and improvements in the quality of life have led to a recognition of the social importance of leisure provision, and more recently its economic importance has been established with the introduction of schemes aimed at rejuvenating local areas.

This thesis investigates the internal workings of two neighbouring local authorities in the North East of England. It is a comparative study of the District Councils of Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street, focusing primarily on the importance of leisure services in the public sector. It draws attention to the importance of leisure to justify local government as elected bodies concerned with the overall well-being of their local communities. After considering historical, philosophical and sociological perspectives on leisure, and examining the role of public bodies in the provision of leisure, the thesis proceeds with a detailed analysis of leisure services in Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street in a period of dramatic change. An evaluation of the differences in each District and their responses leads to a consideration of the 'Enabling' role now expected of all local authorities.

Although local government is an important element in the British political system, it has been subjected to a plethora of legislation since 1979, aimed at reducing public spending and questioning and controlling the role and purpose of local authorities. The comparison of the two Districts involves an investigation of their internal conduct and business. It finds that leisure services are an increasingly important reasons for maintaining elected local authorities.

Thesis for the Degree of M.A. in Politics,

University of Durham

**Name:** Joyce LIDDLE

**Date:** April 1992

**Title:** Local government and leisure:  
A study of two local authorities  
and their responses to the  
growth of leisure

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- 8 SEP 1992

1st April 1992

To:

**The Dean of the Faculty of Social Science,  
University of Durham**

This is to certify that the enclosed thesis, by myself, for the Degree of Master of Arts in Politics, conforms with the word limit in the regulations issued by the Faculty of Social Sciences.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

1st April 1992

To:

**The Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Durham**

This thesis is the result of my own independent work,  
and it has not been submitted for a Degree in this or  
any other University.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_



CHESTER-STREET

WEAR VALLEY

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It has been my good fortune that over the past ten years I have benefited from a wide network of personal and professional contacts throughout the country and within the northern region. Lecturing and researching in public administration and other fields has resulted in numerous friendships and acquaintances and I have used all possible links, no matter how tenuous, to obtain assistance in the search for data.

Time spent working as a professional researcher provided the confidence and equipped me with the necessary skills to undertake this research. A long standing interest in local government was deepened at the University of Durham where I was fortunate to be taught by Mr. G.A. Atkinson. Research experience and interest in the subject provided the starting point.

This research project would not have been possible without the assistance of literally hundreds of people. There are too many to name individually but I wish to record my thanks to the following people who have helped in various ways. Numerous council members, officers, pressure group officials and members of the general public at Wear Valley, Chester-le-Street and other districts gave generously of their time. In particular I would like to thank Mr. J. Richardson, Mr. C. Foote-Wood, Mr. A. Dobson and Mr. L. Morgan at Wear Valley and Mr. G. Staines, Mr. D. Pickford and Mr. J. Metcalfe at Chester-le-Street. Mr. Metcalfe has an interest in leisure that is infectious and he gave advice and assistance for which I am grateful.

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Friends and colleagues at New College, Durham have assisted in many ways, as have past and present students. Dr. I. Adams, a friend and colleague whom I assisted in researching for the Book on Leisure and Government<sup>1</sup> gave invaluable assistance throughout.

Mr. N. Mallabar, another lecturing colleague, experienced as a council member at Chester-le-Street and as a council officer, was most helpful. Students undertaking BTec H.N.C. courses helped in providing data, listening to extracts and making useful suggestions which stimulated me to alter both structure and content.

During 1990 I was fortunate to be employed as an examiner for BTec in the Northern Region and this gave access to the work of numerous colleges and local authorities in the region.

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Joan Guy typed this thesis at a time when she was preparing for examinations and I am grateful that she was able to undertake the task so cheerfully.

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### Research Methodology

A wide diversity of research methods was employed over a two year period between January 1989 and January 1991 in order to elicit as much data as possible and to provide an overview of the work of the leisure departments of two local district authorities.

The research literature on local government was useful as a guide to further reading but not really very useful as each council is unique. Preliminary investigations carried out before embarking on the main research indicated that there had been no previous research carried out on the councils of either Wear Valley or Chester-le-Street, save for a very small piece in an Inlogov journal on Chester-le-Street (this dealt with policy making).<sup>1</sup>

The usual problem of accessibility to the data in each unit of analysis (in this case the councils of Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street) was partially offset because a couple of councillors at Chester-le-Street were well known to the Researcher and they provided information and introductions. In addition, many employees from both districts had been taught by the Researcher on BTec H.N.C. courses. The research therefore commenced with a good network of contacts who were valuable for obtaining general information. Factual information on political complexion, budgets, personnel, etc., was obtained from many such documents as official guides, reports, minutes, working party briefs. Contacts in each authority were able to obtain a lot of information that would not normally be available to the general public, e.g., Consultants Reports, Management Feasibility Reports. Durham County Council Public Records Office was also a useful source of committee minutes and reports. A great deal of information was obtained from the local studies collection held at Palace Green Library in the University of Durham; this was especially useful for such structural elements as the department and committee systems. This data was supplemented by the many visits made to officials working for both councils.

As an examiner for BTec Northern Region the Researcher had the benefit of visiting many colleges and local authorities from Wansbeck in Northumberland to Cleveland in the south. This was a vital and crucial aspect of data collection. Fortunately employment by Btec in the Regional Collaborative arrangements to set the 1990 examinations enabled the subject of leisure and economic development in local government to be included in the examination syllabus. This proved useful because all Northern students undertaking BTec National and BTec H.N.C. in Public Administration spent up to three months collecting data on leisure and economic development in local government. Many of the H.N.C. students (some 120 in all) interviewed staff of leisure departments for assignments and a lot of this data was made available for this research project, with the full consent of the students concerned.

Although there are many books on various aspects of local government, on commencement of this research there were, as far the Researcher was aware, none on local government and leisure. However there was a small number of sociological and historical works on leisure and the last 10 years has seen the proliferation of journals on leisure management. Moreover, there had not been a thesis in any British University or Polytechnic on the subject of Leisure and Government. Helping a colleague, Dr. I. Adams, of New College, Durham, to write a book on Leisure and Government was useful in revealing data of a more general nature. Discussion of the material with Dr. Adams, students and other colleagues was an important part of the research process.

It was necessary to rely heavily on sociological, philosophical and historical writings of a general nature for the parts of the thesis concerned with definition and history. Much of this literature was available in the Durham University Library or was obtained on inter-library loan. Many publications in the form of journal articles, pamphlets, E.C. Reports, and higher degree theses were obtained from other libraries and by writing to INLOGOV, L.G.T.B., A.D.C., A.C.C., A.M.A., Departments of State, and the Departments of Politics in Strathclyde and Hull universities.

Between February 1989 and December 1990 open-ended interviews were carried out with all the leading members of each local authority, and all the leading professional officers and leaders of pressure groups. This information was supplemented by interviews with members of the general public, randomly chosen in both districts, employees of each council, members and officials from other local councils.

Arrangements were made for the admission of the Researcher as an observer at council meetings, at group meetings and other meetings within the leisure departments of each council. This experience was essential because spending time with individual actors allowed a comprehensive picture of the links each department had with its service committee, the relationships between officers and other officers, officers and members, members and the press and other bodies and agencies external to the council. Observing how Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street liaised with each other, with Durham County Council and with other neighbouring councils was also useful.

Throughout the thesis there is a heavy reliance on press cuttings from local and regional newspapers. This was mainly due to the fact that the research was carried out at a time of dramatic change and newspaper coverage provided vital information not otherwise available. It is important to note, however, that most of the press articles are in newspapers biased against the Labour Party in the North East.

Local newspaper offices and local town libraries were used extensively. It was also possible to persuade councillors from each local authority to visit New College where the Researcher, students and other colleagues questioned them on a range of issues pertaining to local government and leisure.

1 Tim Mobbs, "How Chester-le-Street manages with fewer managers", Local Government Policymaking, Vol. 8:3 Spring 1982, pp.121-6.

## I

INTRODUCTION

The work of British local government is a complex and important aspect of the field of public administration. Having evolved over the last 150 years it operates at various levels and provides a wide range of services. In some areas it is the biggest single employer, employing one quarter of the local population and spending a large part of the G.N.P. A crucial aspect of the British democratic system it is regarded as "close to the people" and responsive to their needs. Its complexity leads to difficulties and partiality in researching the system. Some studies have concentrated on structural aspects; others have dealt with individual actors; there are those charting the changes in the local government system as a whole, whilst a few have dealt with officer/member relationships or policy making. Some of the most important publications offer only a partial analysis because concentration on only one or at most a few important aspects leads to the neglect of other considerations.

The decision to research local government posed problems in choosing the unit of analysis. Choosing one service area within one local authority would be inadequate because it would be likely to have no wider significance. It was therefore decided to choose two district councils then to compare them, and, in particular, to focus on leisure provision.

Having decided to investigate the internal workings of local authorities it was then necessary to surmount the problems of accessibility, time and finance. Fortunately some of these difficulties were overcome by the decision to make a comparative study of Wear Valley District Council and Chester-le-Street District Council, two North East councils sharing an apparently similar economic, social and political complexion. The choice was a deliberate one for a number of reasons. First, the close proximity of each council: they were 15 miles apart and only 10 miles at the most from the researcher's home town. Secondly, it was useful to know individuals within each council who could be relied upon to offer assistance in the form of obtaining data and arranging meetings. These strengths were a vital part of obtaining good data. Experience as a professional researcher also enabled the use of the skills already developed.

Local government is a very important part of the British political system but has in recent years been losing responsibilities to central government by legislation aimed at changing its nature and form and indeed questioning its role. Many of the changes have stressed the significance of local government as a service provider and neglected to emphasise the democratic way in which it responds to local needs.

As a major spender of public finance and employer of millions of people local government is an important feature of the political landscape. The U.K. stands alone in Europe as the only country reversing the trend towards devolving power away from the centre.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of each new piece of legislation whittles away the powers at an alarming rate. It is within this context of dramatic change that it was hoped to establish the scale of the changes and the responses of each local authority and in addition ascertain whether the new Enabling role was real or cosmetic.

General theories on local government are never satisfactory explanations of the work of individual councils because the diversity in scope and range of services means that each one is unique in its composition. Bearing that fact in mind it was hoped that an analysis of the work of two district councils in the north east would provide a useful comparison and help to answer some of the many questions posed such as: How are changes in legislation affecting local authorities in the north east? What different responses are local authorities making to the changes? Have the changes led to increased political debate? What are the most significant consequences in terms of the provision of services? Are local authorities becoming Enabling Authorities or is this rhetorical?<sup>2</sup>

During the period of the research there was a great deal of local press coverage on the issue of leisure spending. This indicated the apparent political importance of leisure spending: in at least one local council it appeared to be receiving more prominence than all the traditional service areas put together. Given the accepted view that council finances were being restricted by central government limits and therefore resources should be scarce the following questions needed to

be addressed: Was money being spent on leisure services at the expense of traditional services? How is it possible for a small district council in the North East of England to spend the vast sums that Wear Valley was spending? Would recent legislation curtail spending levels? Perhaps there was some magic formula that enabled such spending? If so, why weren't other district councils doing likewise? What significant factors were apparent in this council that were absent in others?

Leisure was the focus for the research for a number of important reasons. Local authorities have a long history of providing recreation services, and like all services areas, the decision of whether or not to provide them increases political debate. There has been a growth in the perceived need for leisure services especially since the 1970s, a corresponding rise in size of leisure departments, and a growing body of professionals in the field. Raised expectations of the quality of life plus the economic importance attached to using tourism and leisure schemes to regenerate local areas has led many local authorities to jump on this apparently fashionable bandwagon. If it is true that leisure spending can bring about change by stimulating the local economy then perhaps it could rightly be regarded as the key service area which justifies the existence of local government. It is a service area relatively free of central government interference and one on which the legislation allows the use of discretion, but appears to have a high degree of political importance. If, indeed, it is politically important then comparing the leisure services departments of two district councils should show how important and why the significance attached to it. Leisure is currently fashionable and as such is achieving prominence in the work of local authorities. If it is so prominent perhaps this is the one service that could have a catalytic role in bringing about change. By providing for the all round well being of the local community, could not leisure departments be critical to the future role and justification of local government?

These questions provide the basis for the research. As there are over 200 definitions of leisure Chapter II summarizes some of them and throughout relies on philosophical, historical and sociological accounts of the term. The latter part of the Chapter describes how local authorities became involved in the provision of services in recreation

and leisure since the early part of the nineteenth century. Chapter III addresses the social, economic and political importance of leisure in the period 1870 to 1945. Focusing on an analysis of the role of central and local government involvement from 1870, it attempts to explain how leisure services were generally provided as a by product of other perceived needs rather than in their own right. Appendix A illustrates some of the important legislation, and other events that may have contributed to the development of leisure services. Chapter IV concentrates on the social, economic and political importance of leisure in the post-Second World War period with a discussion on the idea of a Ministry of Leisure and the important role of professionals in the leisure field. It concludes by addressing the changing culture of leisure services in local government.

In Chapters V and VI there are brief descriptions of each district followed by a more detailed analysis of the leisure service departments within them, including the committee systems, personnel and an account of current and future leisure plans.

The conclusion makes a comparison between Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street and indicates the critical factors explaining the major differences. It also offers tentative suggestions for the future role of leisure services in local government.

- 1 For a full analysis of this theory see the Chapter by P. Blair "Trends in local autonomy and democracy. Reflections from a European perspective?" Local Government in Europe Ed. R. Batley and G. Stoker, MacMillan Education, 1991, pp. 41-57.
2. For an analysis of the term "Enabling Authority" see R. Brooke, "The Enabling Authority - Practical Consequences", Local Government Studies, Sept/Oct 1989.

## II

HISTORY OF THE TERM "LEISURE"The Greeks

The English word "Leisure" appears to be derived from the Latin work "Licere", which translated means "to be permitted" or "to be free". The Greek work "skole" is taken in English to mean "leisure" and "education and schooling" combined; the Greeks did not separate leisure and education, as they were inter-related aspects of Greek life.

The Ancient Greeks placed a high priority on leisure as a means of gaining wisdom and achieving aesthetic, spiritual and intellectual enlightenment. The concept was associated with high culture and social and political standing and the Greeks were perhaps the first to make a deliberate distinction between work and leisure. It was felt that to achieve the good life it was essential to have leisure time for peaceful contemplation. Mundane work and the business of war were necessities of life, and combined with leisure and free time for contemplation, made up the sum total of all aspects of life. To have leisure time was to have the ability to develop unity of mind and body, in other words to achieve wholeness or completeness. Of course, Greek society was highly differentiated and based on functional roles which freed many from the necessity of manual labour, and allowed them to use their time intelligently in pursuit of the chief aim in life "eudaimonia", which translated means "well being" or "happiness". To obtain "eudaimonia" one had to achieve "ataraxia" or "peace of mind" - the supreme end.

This holistic understanding of leisure so characteristic of Ancient Greek life is experiencing a revival, having undergone many changes in focus and interpretation in the intervening period. Leisure is a frustrating and elusive concept, which presents considerable problems in definition and understanding, having most certainly been influenced by the work of sociologists. Their various theories, particularly since 1945, have added to an already confused literature. Leisure has been variously viewed in a narrow, objective way by focusing on free time or a range of activities or pursuits, or in subjective or psychological terms concentrating on "feelings" of self actualisation which individuals experience. To add to the confusion there has been an inter-mingling of theories of play, recreation and amusement with theories of leisure,

leading to a blurring of the definitional boundaries. Most sociological writings describe leisure as the antithesis of work and, as such, consign it to an inferior position; it is somehow "tagged on" to analysis of the work place. Not until recently has leisure been investigated in its own right as a pertinent subject of enquiry.

However, nearly all writers agree that leisure, no matter how it is defined, usually embodies positive connotations of enjoyment, lack of constraint, relaxation, freedom of choice and self fulfilment. There is a general agreement that the pursuit of leisure must aim chiefly towards achieving self actualisation.

In De Grazia's view: "The supreme goal of life is self-actualisation",<sup>1</sup> and to quote from Bertrand Russell: "to be able to fill leisure time intelligently is the last product of civilisation".<sup>2</sup> Similarly, an official Leisure Commission of Europe Policy Statement of 1950 states: "the tone of any Society is largely determined by the quality of its leisure".<sup>3</sup>

### Importance of leisure

The above quotations illustrate not only the importance of leisure in terms of individual self development but also show the benefits for the rest of society and for civilisation if leisure time is utilised effectively. According to the Report from the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Leisure, "Satisfaction with leisure is a predictor of overall life satisfaction"<sup>4</sup> and, as the following EC Policy Statement of December 1988 shows, leisure benefits individuals but increased leisure benefits the rest of society because it enshrines the notion of citizenship: "leisure, it is argued, has a central position within a civilised society, and is seen as a vital opportunity for individual personal development and a means to allow individuals to fully participate in society".<sup>5</sup>

Citizenship is currently a topic of general public debate, with both main political parties emphasising its importance. Indeed, the Conservative party is considering citizenship as a subject for inclusion in the core curriculum in schools and both main parties are advocating Citizen's Charters.

Furthermore, the holistic and broad approach to leisure evident in the writings of Plato and Aristotle, with their emphasis on citizenship, is influencing leisure thinking in the 1980s and 1990s. Increasingly, we hear of the intelligent use of leisure as the purpose of life, and as a means of achieving cultural, social, political and economic harmony and balance.

It appears that the Romans were the first to use leisure pursuits for utilitarian rather than purely aesthetic purposes. Activities such as chariot racing and gladiator fighting not only filled free time but also prepared Romans for war. The building of public baths and amphitheatres for the masses added to the already decadent lifestyle which many historians suggest may have contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire. An inability to cope satisfactorily with leisure time is sometimes thought to have had disastrous consequences.

After the fall of the Roman empire and during the Middle Ages, with the spread of Christianity throughout Europe, there was a move away from leisure as a spiritual and aesthetic aim in life towards a narrow understanding of the time left over from paid labour utilised for recreational activities. At this time the Church began to prohibit many activities and writers on this period often confuse recreation, play and amusement with leisure activities. Activities engaged in by individuals in their free time away from the work place in order to recuperate or relax, became emphasised as the means by which leisure time can be filled, rather than being, in themselves, leisure.

There are, in fact, well over two hundred published definitions of recreation, play and amusement and it is easy to see why confusion has arisen when writing about leisure. Despite the overwhelming confusion in the literature of the terms relating to leisure, many scholars with an interest in the period of the industrial revolution shift the focus of their analysis to encapsulate time and activity.

This approach may have arisen because the industrial revolution was the epoch when, for the mass of the population, time spent on work and leisure activities became rigidly controlled. An idealisation of the work ethic and a fear of the evils of leisure led many to emphasise

the need for individual devotion to work and rejection of frivolity and pleasure seeking. Samuel Smiles was one such writer and philanthropist who claimed that: "the prosperity of the people depends on individual exertion".<sup>6</sup>

Smiles and other philanthropists of the nineteenth century were keen for the masses to use their leisure time away from the work place constructively, by self education and engaging in rational pursuits. Leisure and recreation became increasingly regarded as compensatory time away from the drudgery of work. Working time was enforced and leisure was free time.

#### Towards a clear definition

For the sociologist K. Roberts "any satisfactory definition of leisure must incorporate

1. the time free from work; and
2. a feeling of freedom and choice".<sup>7</sup>

In this way, leisure is not only regarded as non-work time but is the time when individuals are free from work and feel "free" to do as they please. These guides to a definition imply the obligatory nature of working for economic gain and the way leisure provides an escape from work. By viewing leisure as the obverse of paid work there is an implication that work holds little intrinsic value and leisure is therefore a desirable state of affairs where individuals have freedom to choose in order to achieve gratification or self satisfaction. Time spent on leisure pursuits is therefore seen as surplus time left over when the work, sleep and other necessities of life are subtracted from the 24 hours in the day. As R.W. Vickerman has written "Leisure is the time left over after the completion of paid employment, housework or family duties but it is also the time available for the fulfilment of personal wishes and needs".<sup>8</sup>

A wide ranging definition of leisure which incorporates aspects of freedom, choice, time, activities allowing recuperation or education, both encouraging the achievement of a "state of being" and individual participation in the life of the community is as follows: "Leisure is

a number of occupations in which an individual may indulge of his/her own free will either to rest, amuse himself, add to knowledge, improve skills disinterestedly and to increase voluntary participation in the life of the community after discharging professional, family and social duties."<sup>9</sup>

Freedom and choice in leisure pursuits are integral to any clear understanding of the concept but unfortunately the terms "work" and "leisure" mean different things to different people. It is wrong to suggest that for all people work is associated with drudgery and boredom and only in leisure pursuits can intrinsic satisfaction be found. Large numbers of people obtain immense personal gratification from their work and may dread the thought of too much leisure time.

Some writers lay great stress on the negative aspects of work but there are a lot of jobs with a high degree of personal fulfilment. According to Proust, "Life may bring disappointments but in work is consolation. Work is thus seen as much more than a consolation but a reason for being which no amount of pleasure seeking can substitute".<sup>10</sup>

People involved with the creative arts seem to treat work and leisure as a flow of life experience, in the same way as the Ancient Greeks, and do not compartmentalise effort and idleness. Viewing work as something to be dreaded and leisure as an experience to be anticipated may be a false distinction.

Perception of work and leisure are not only fashioned by external factors like time available or chosen activities but also depend upon an individual's sex, age, employment status, education, geographic location, personal and social circumstances; they must also include a spiritual and mental attitude. Individuals differ considerably in the way they view the world and needs and satisfactions vary from person to person.

A comprehensive definition of leisure, incorporating the best points from the literature would need to read as follows:

Leisure is the time left after family, professional and social duties, including non-paid working time, in which individuals voluntarily choose to engage in pursuits or activities without constraint, which not only provide enjoyment, relaxation and recuperation, but which also fulfils some inner need. In order to achieve self actualisation it is essential to provide for peaceful contemplation in leisure time. This contemplation coupled with satisfactory work will provide the necessary inner harmony and balance to allow individuals to gain aesthetic, spiritual and intellectual wisdom. By having a purpose in life and achieving a 'state of being', individuals are then able to fulfil their role as good citizens thereby achieving social cohesion.

A satisfactory definition of leisure must include activities and choice, but must also show how different leisure is from working time. It must deal with the inner needs of individuals but take into account externalities such as the social and political unit. If the purpose in life is to reach aesthetic, spiritual and intellectual wisdom, then individuals within the social and political units need leisure time to pursue this aim.

### Leisure in the Nineteenth Century

Leisure and recreational activities became important for politicians during the course of the industrial revolution especially in relation to social control and public order. In the early part of the nineteenth century there was a general view that leisure or recreational time spent away from the work place could present a problem. It was considered vital for the urban working class to be shown how to use their limited free time constructively. Alcohol and rowdy pastimes such as bear baiting, cock-fighting and bare knuckle-fighting then played a very large part in the social life of the poor. The aristocrats have always used their free time by hunting, fishing and shooting but the urban working class amused themselves with noisy, uncontrolled and sometimes violent pastimes.

This period in history was one of social reform and innovative legislation, particularly after the 1832 Reform Act. Central and local government legislation at this time was not directly concerned with leisure and recreation but in fact did affect both. The temperance movement had been started in 1828 with the clear aim of challenging the centrality of the pub and during the first half of the nineteenth century many sporting pastimes were declared illegal. Bear and bull baiting were declared illegal in 1835, possibly due to the success of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals which had been established in 1824 with the primary aim of stopping blood sports. Cock-fighting was declared illegal in 1849 and bare knuckle-fighting declined in the 1860s. Attempts were made to limit alcohol consumption and constructively organise working class leisure pastimes. It was thought that the "Devil makes work for idle hands" and so leisure was perceived to be a problem to be dealt with.

After the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 many Public General Acts gave specific powers to local authorities to provide leisure and recreational facilities for local inhabitants and throughout the course of the nineteenth century each town began to accumulate powers through Private Bills or Local Acts. Apart from Public Health powers which were mandatory, most local authority powers were permissive. Richard Roberts identifies three phases of local authority activity.<sup>11</sup>

### Phase 1

In the beginning local authorities were concerned with public health and public order hence the emphasis on sanitation and the physical environmental aspects of urban living. This early period was characterised by poor relief, policing of public order problems and the building and maintenance of roads, sewers and lighting. Gradually the building of asylums and hospitals for the isolation of infectious diseases was followed by the construction of public baths. The Baths and Wash-houses Act 1846 empowered local authorities to provide baths to stop people swimming in polluted rivers. This Act was amended in 1878 and 1899 to include permission to provide music and entertainment subject to a license having been obtained under the Disorderly Houses Act of 1751.

## Phase 2

The second phase of local authority activity identified by Roberts was what he refers to as improving activities, those which encompassed the cultural and educational needs of the community. Between 1840 and 1870 there was a range of general legislation, such as:

\*Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847

Public Health Act 1847

Museums Act 1845

Public Libraries Act 1855

Recreation Grounds Act 1852

\* This Act consolidated 216 sections dealing with general town improvements.

The first park laid out at public expense was in Birkenhead in 1843. In the same period various municipal corporations such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds were granted extensive powers to improve their areas (by Local Acts). The Leeds 1842 Improvement Act, a pioneering Act was followed by a succession of others and this second phase increased the number of educational and library facilities. This was then followed by Art Galleries, Museums and Public Parks. Indeed, speaking at the Annual Conference of the National Association for the provision of Social Science in Bradford in 1859 the Vice President of the Board of Trade, W. H. Cowper argued that: "Central and Local Government had a wider responsibility to provide Recreational facilities from public funds".<sup>12</sup>

Between the years 1850 and 1870 the scale of local improvement in Liverpool such as the inauguration of public libraries and museums played an essential part in the growth of the council into an "all round local government" by cementing its functions into something like a coherent whole. Liverpool had the first Municipal Library in the Country, as the result of a Local Act and the Corporation levied a penny rate for it. By 1853 a Special Improvements Commission had been set up to oversee all civic improvements. Recreational facilities and amenities in the mid-nineteenth century appear to have given local councils a justificatory role in much the same way as leisure facilities are doing in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

### Phase 3

By the 1870s local government began to embrace new areas of commercial and industrial activity, resulting in the passing of many local acts to allow the provision of leisure and recreational facilities. In 1884 the House of Commons set up a Committee to consider all local authorities private bills. Additionally in 1888 a new system of local authorities grants, "the Assigned Revenue Grant System" had implications for the provisions of facilities. The system allowed local authorities to retain a percentage of receipts raised from sweets, beers and refreshments and to spend the amount on local amenities.<sup>13</sup>

The House of Commons Committee set up in 1884 concerned itself initially with police and sanitary arrangements but by 1909 its powers were widened to cover a larger range of legislation. If the local authority could prove to Parliament by petition, and to the Local Government Board, that it had a special need for a particular facility, leisure/recreation or otherwise, it was given what became known as "novel" powers to provide for the local area. This procedure was an uncertain process used mainly by resort towns to promote interest in their area. Sporting facilities, parks and recreation grounds were provided under such "novel" powers and many local authorities bought up spare land to provide facilities. For example Brighton Corporation took over the management of an important racecourse when aristocratic financiers pulled out.

From the 1870s onwards there was a transport revolution (i.e. rail and omnibus), educational provision, many inventions such as the ball bearing (used in roller skates) and the pneumatic tyre (for bicycling); and together with massive social change all these developments affected leisure pursuits. The massive extension of the railway system and a plethora of legislation which reduced the hours of work<sup>14</sup> and the organisation and codification of sports rules and regulations led to increases in participation and watching of sports.

The 1870 Elementary Education Act was aimed at filling the gaps left by voluntary and church organisations. State schools were not at that time allowed to teach games except for gymnastic drill. Sports coaching and instruction were evident in church organisations and voluntary bodies but middle class improvers agitated for local government to provide for working class organised recreation. Fresh air and exercise were seen to be vital since the rise of the new athleticism of the 1860s. Parks, gymnasias and swimming baths satisfied the need to contain rowdy behaviour and at the same time provide welfare for local citizens. Successive education acts armed local education authorities with permissive powers to create facilities to provide social and physical recreation (1918 Education Act).

By the 1890s local authority activity was entering what Roberts considered to be the era of municipal trading. Not only were local authorities concerned with providing housing and education plus recreational facilities but they also began to assume control over the public utilities of gas, water, electricity and transport. Bradford councillors were eager civic disciples of Joseph Chamberlain and, in the period of fifteen years between 1884 and 1899, not only assumed responsibility for public utilities but also provided public baths, art galleries and 700 acres of woodland for walking and general recreational pursuits.

Most councils after 1900 began to assume responsibility for the social welfare of local inhabitants, but the developments they sponsored were gradual and ad hoc. The large scale provision of leisure and recreational services never occupied a central place on the political agenda but came about as and when local needs arose. The next chapter outlines the social, economic and political importance of leisure in the period 1870 to 1945.

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## III

THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF LEISURE  
IN THE PERIOD 1870 TO 1945

Whereas according to Professor Philip Norton, the study of politics in the United Kingdom did not come of age until the 1960s,<sup>1</sup> the study of leisure had already established itself as a focus of interest in inter-disciplinary centres within institutions of higher education. However leisure texts concentrate on the social aspects rather than viewing the subject as an aspect of the study of politics. Consequently academic studies of leisure have dealt with issues such as - The Commercialisation of Leisure, Work/Leisure Patterns or Leisure in the Home.<sup>2</sup>

The few works dealing with the role of central and local government in leisure provision have resulted from studies in urban and regional departments of universities and research organisations. Very few have looked at the historical development of leisure in central and local government, probably because it is only since the 1960s that local authorities began to view leisure services as a whole rather than a series of unconnected, separate services. Local authorities only then began to satisfy the leisure and recreational needs of the community in the same way that they had in the past assumed responsibility for housing, education and social welfare.<sup>3</sup>

Until recently there were no local government services distinctively known as leisure services, so it is important to choose the most salient points from findings and show how each of them may have affected the development of local government services in general, and local government leisure services, in particular.

In order to have a historical appreciation of the way in which local and central government have become involved in leisure provision, and also to chart and understand why leisure is increasingly regarded in political and economic terms rather than purely social terms, it is necessary to review a wide range of social, historical, economic, political and biographical literature. Despite the difficulties arising

from such a review it is vital to attempt a historical ordering of disparate facts and by a slow process of "teasing out" create a framework or logical pattern for what is otherwise a series of seemingly unconnected issues, historical events and legislative acts.

Proceeding in this way, one can chart the development of central and local government organisational structures and assess the importance of the financial relationship between the centre and localities. In addition, there were many charismatic individuals, within and outside government at local and central level, who influenced the development of local administration and who may have influenced contemporary thinking on recreation.

The Treasury, in the early 1870s had, and indeed still retains, a key role in relation to local authorities and this inevitably influenced their development. It would be unwise, therefore, to look at the period 1870 to 1920 without considering the Treasury's role, and the role of the Local Government Board. The rise and eventual decline in importance of the LGB is of historical importance as the bureaucratic structures and relationship of central and local government formed during its lifetime appear to have provided the framework, much of which remains to this day. This will be discussed in three sections, historically: 1870 to 1914 and 1914 to 1945. The period after 1945 is discussed in Chapter IV.

### **The Period 1870 to 1914**

Between 1870 and the early 1900s the bureaucratic structures of central government were becoming very sophisticated as more and more demands were placed on the legislature and executive. As Appendix 1 shows, Parliament passed many acts concerned mainly with Housing, Education, Unemployment, Social Welfare and the relief of distress and poverty.

Provision for recreation came about mostly as a by-product of other social reforms. There was an enormous drive to effect local improvements to the physical environment but also to improve the living conditions of the population. Recreational facilities arose from the need to relieve distress, poverty, reduce unemployment, improve

health, provide adequate housing, and widen educational opportunities. So, for example, the Education Act of 1870 designed mainly to provide better education for wider groups of people, indirectly led to the provision of sporting facilities and gymnasia. By widening the reading tastes of the people a need developed for more libraries. Facilities for recreation were very rarely provided to secure purely recreational objectives, as local authorities and private and voluntary agencies also wanted to secure a profit on their investments. Local authorities had been given the powers, early in the nineteenth century, to plan, purchase and manage public parks, swimming pools, libraries, gardens and promenades, but much of the existing provision was managed by commercial, voluntary or philanthropic effort. There were many examples of joint ventures between commercial and local government recreational and entertainment concerns such as theatres and dance halls but there was huge disparity between areas. Many local areas benefited from considerable philanthropy whilst others had to rely on local landowners, commercial entrepreneurship or local appeals to the central administration.

It is simplistic to assume that the development of recreational and sporting facilities followed a tidy, linear pattern characterised by recognition of local need followed by local leaders applying to central government for both the powers and financial assistance to satisfy those needs. No such pattern emerges in the literature and in fact local administration at this time was characteristically suffering, as Christine Bellamy says, from: "A mass of overlapping areas with no rational structure."<sup>4</sup>

The large number of Public and Private Acts passed towards the end of the nineteenth century and throughout the early part of the twentieth century, were mainly of the social reforming character, but although not directly related to recreational amenities many of them affected contemporary thinking on leisure and also the provision of leisure facilities. Some of the most important reforms are referred to below, with an attempt to understand how they may have indirectly influenced leisure provision. In addition, many influential individuals were involved in the reformist zeal of the period.

(i) Housing

The period 1880 to 1930 was the era of building, in the form of hospitals, schools and houses. With regard to re-housing, people living in unfit conditions local authorities did not have the money for the necessary re-building programmes, central government took no responsibility and therefore the process was a slow one. The Artisans' and Labourers' Dwelling Improvements Act of 1875 led to the removal of many slums and the commencement of re-building projects. The Royal Commission on Housing of 1884 had highlighted the scale of unfit housing, but because of central government's apparent inability to respond to the need many local authorities were unable to raise the money to build and improve their areas.

Central financing of local government has never been straightforward and the relationships between central and local government have always been difficult. (The Layfield Commission in 1976 highlighted the mess and confusion of responsibilities.) At the latter part of the nineteenth century central government tried hard to impose national schemes in local areas, but without the required financial aid many areas were unable to respond. The building programme of housing and other local improvements was therefore very patchy and again dependent upon local leaders, and voluntary, commercial and philanthropic effort.

The Exchequer was concerned that local improvements should not impose too heavily on Imperial Tax so local authorities looked for ways of funding improvements locally. The Treasury allowed local authorities to borrow from money markets for public works and each one borrowed separately for each capital project. In addition, the Treasury and Public Works Loan Commissioners supported local initiatives by allowing cheap loans on a fixed payment period. Unfortunately there was an absolute deluge of applications, far too many for the exchequer to fund, so Parliament decided that loans could only be made for improvements which would have an immediate and direct connection with the salubrity of the district or the health of the inhabitants. Any other improvement schemes were not allowed to benefit from cheap loans. This led many local authorities to set up their own Improvement

Committees to find ways of funding public works, many of which related to recreational amenities. The need for social improvements, both in the physical living conditions and the quest for knowledge led to the need for building facilities like libraries, museums and art galleries and many social reformers were involved in this process.

The latter part of the nineteenth century was characterised by the virtues of self help and thrift and many local improvements were secured with limited state action. The Victorian laissez faire philosophy embodied the view that the state should always supplement self-help and never replace it. Man, it was argued, needed the minimum of state intervention. By his own efforts he should be able to provide for his family and educate himself.

Samuel Smiles said "there should be a class of men who live by their daily labour which is the ordinance of God, and doubtless a wise and righteous one; but that this class of men should be otherwise than frugal, contented, intelligent and happy is not the design of providence, but springs solely from the weakness, self indulgence and perverseness of man himself. The healthy spirit of self-help created amongst working people would more than any other measure serve to raise them as a class, and thus, not pulling down others, but by levelling them up to a high and still advancing standard of religion, intelligence and virtue."<sup>5</sup>

Smiles was reflecting the spirit of the age, the idea that by self-direction, men could achieve anything. In terms of local improvements it would appear that in the absence of sufficient financial aid from central government many localities had to rely on self-help and philanthropy. The building programme certainly aided the development of recreational amenities necessary for the growing desire for self improvement.

## (ii) Education

The 1870 Education Act had introduced State education for those aged up to 10, and between 1870 and 1900 there were hundreds of Board and Church Schools built.

Many individuals had been campaigning for years for education for the masses. One such individual was Robert Lowe who in 1869 became Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lowe had also been involved in reforming the civil service and had introduced open competition into the India Office. As Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education in 1859 Lowe had overall responsibility for the Department of Science and Art. Arts and design education had been considered by the Select Committee on Arts and Manufacture as far back as 1835 and, indeed, preceded the opening of many art galleries, some managed by local authorities. The 1851 Great Exhibition under Prince Albert's direction heralded the building of many museums and education establishments in London. In 1852 the Government established the Department of Practical Art under the Board of Trade, a Department which later became very influential in securing Treasury backing, unlike the Local Government Board, which is described later in the chapter. The Department of Practical Art was initially given £5,000 by the Treasury to purchase artifacts.

Robert Lowe had overall responsibility for the Department of Science and Art in 1859 and as such influenced the development of a growing complex of museums and galleries. He secured enormous sums of money in grant aid from Parliament and appears to have greatly enhanced some of those facilities necessary for education, recreational and leisure pursuits in theatres and the science field. When Lowe was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1868 and effectively on the other side of the fence as a paymaster rather than benefactor, he began to reduce grant aid and encourage local areas to charge fees for Scientific and Art schools and Museum entry. Local benevolence was highly encouraged and Lowe, like many of his contemporaries, stressed the need for limited state intervention. Many local authorities either solely or in conjunction with commercial, voluntary and philanthropic concerns became involved in the provision and management of science and art establishments.

The growth of public education which quickened after the 1902 Balfour Education Act led to the abolition of School Boards. The County Boroughs and County Councils became Local Education Authorities responsible for elementary and secondary education and the payment and training of teachers. The Cross Commission of 1888 had advocated such responsibilities, and increased local

administration led to the development of more school premises and recreational and sporting facilities.<sup>6</sup> The issue of educational finance dominated discussions on taxation between central and local government because the transfer of education costs to local education authorities meant that this service became the biggest proportion of counties' total expenditure. School meals were introduced in 1906, medical inspection in 1907, the youth employment service in 1911 and special arrangements for epileptic and defective children in 1913. All of these added responsibilities for local administration must have led to the need for increased facilities, both in physical constructions like premises and in the need for education and recreational expertise.

By the end of the nineteenth century many of the sports and pastimes undertaken by the wealthier people became readily available to poorer people. The spread of education and extension of the franchise in 1867 had led to the sharing of many Victorian pastimes such as cricket, tennis and cycling. Pastimes once the preserve of the wealthy became freely available for all and this led to the need for increased commercial and municipal provision. Music halls and holidaying by the sea both became fashionable and led to considerable municipal innovation.

### (iii) Unemployment

As the nineteenth century ended, increased educational opportunity and political enfranchisement developed in tandem with a failing optimism in the British Empire.

The Boer War had shown not only how physically unfit working men were and how physical education would improve their condition but it had shown how unpopular the British Empire was becoming. During the latter part of the 1890s a mood of pessimism had swept the country and there was a growing dislike of Victorian opulence. A slump in world trade at this time brought massive unemployment and with it poverty and starvation for many families. Traditional forms of unemployment relief such as unconditional alms-giving were criticised by

many and numerous local and charitable schemes were put into operation. Unemployment Relief schemes provided by local authorities, either solely or in co-operation with philanthropists, charitable organisations or guardians of the poor, were many and varied. Many such schemes had implications for the provision of recreational and entertainment facilities as the unemployed were set to work building public works in exchange for food, clothing and shelter. Schemes involving the conversion of derelict churchyards into pleasure grounds, laying out of public gardens, or conversion of wastelands into allotments were ways of keeping the unemployed gainfully employed but also indirectly affected provision of municipal amenities.<sup>7</sup>

### The Important Role of the Local Government Board

The increased awareness of social problems like unemployment, poor housing and welfare requirements such as education, led central government to seek ways of incorporating local authorities into national policy but it did so by limiting its own financial contribution to local initiatives. Local schemes were largely financed from rates, Imperial Taxes, loans and other revenues but there was no clear, consistent, central policy. There was, however, one single unitary department, the Local Government Board (LGB) which played a large role in the development and management of the local government system. Its central role in developing local services in general and leisure services in particular is worth noting.

The LGB was created in 1871 on the recommendation of the Royal Sanitary Commission and as Appendix 2 shows, during its lifetime absorbed an enormous range of domestic policy issues into its overall jurisdiction. It was originally a single department dealing with the poor law, public health and local government. The Board was assembled in a piecemeal and ad hoc fashion from various Whitehall offices, e.g., The Home Office, Local Government Act Office, Privy Council, Medical Department, Poor Law Board and Registrar General's Office and over its lifetime dealt with all local services including recreation and leisure. The Times commented on the LGB - "all life, all business, all enjoyment, all locomotion, all that we eat or drink, the breath we breathe and the ground we walk on are deal with by the LGB".<sup>8</sup>

The LGB dealt with a myriad of administration such as poor law, public health, town planning, housing, vaccination, food and drink, alkali inspection, highways and traffic management, and later in its life dealt with old age pensions and education. Indeed, anything dealt with at local level was also the responsibility of the LGB. Local administration was a product of Public General Acts and numerous Local Acts. The LGB most certainly brought a measure of coherence to a wide range of services and in its first couple of decades benefited greatly from the direction of charismatic individuals such as J. Lambert and C. Dalton, men who had been appointed by patronage and who seemed to relish their role in vigorously taking on the Treasury and Ministers to fight for grants to effect local initiatives. Many leisure facilities were public works facilitated by grants and loans secured by the LGB. Lambert, considered by many to belong to the same mould as Edwin Chadwick, believed that State intervention was essential for social progress.

The LGB suffered throughout its lifetime from Treasury interference and control, low departmental morale and a lack of Whitehall status. The Board of Trade was considered a far superior department and therefore secured greater sums from the Treasury. The growth of legislation affecting local authorities led to under-staffing and overwork in the LGB, and in its later years the LGB had the misfortune of being run by leaders less influential with the Treasury than their predecessors.

The LGB became the biggest department in Whitehall but the staff were amongst the lowest paid. The volume of demands placed upon the department caused many delays and the public began to perceive it as inefficient and the Treasury, then as now, wanted departments to obtain value for money and be cost effective but would not provide extra money to allow the LGB to do its work effectively.

It began as a department able to press for powers to sponsor local services and capital provision but increasingly after 1900 became a local Government treasurer mediating between the competing demands of imperial tax, taxpayers, ratepayers, local interests and the benefits of local initiatives. It had the added problem of having to compete for Treasury money with the influential Board of Trade, which was under the direction of Winston Churchill.

The LGB guaranteed the statutory rights of individuals and interests dealt with by local authorities, it reported to Parliament, and used statute law and internal diplomacy to mediate between public policy and private interests. It was also able to advise local authorities on the art of administering their localities within national guidelines. This was achieved by publishing blue books, gathering statistics and having a range of technical experts who could inspect local authority public works and service developments.

By 1910 the growing scale of liberal social reforms concerning housing, education, health and the aged population focused attention on the inability of the LGB to satisfy the demands placed upon it. Lacking the necessary leadership, status and finances it became unable to cope and many of the LGB responsibilities were diverted into other Government Departments. In 1918 it was transferred into the Ministry of Health. It was generally agreed that the LGB was no longer serving a useful purpose and one view was: "that the Home Office, the Board of Trade and the Board of Education were all helping the nation to go forward but the LGB, although it had the greatest opportunity of all remained for the most part anti-progressive."<sup>9</sup>

The LGB became in R. MacLeod's words: "The ageing Cinderella of Whitehall"<sup>10</sup> and became regularly criticised for inertia, conservatism and lack of innovation. Ironically, for a Department which was both in size and importance ranked only behind Prisons, Trade, Education, Ordnance Survey, and Insurance in 1906, the LGB seems to have suffered from its own earlier successes. It grew rapidly to cope with local demands and achieve so much, but eventually contributed to its own demise. By initially encouraging the setting up of local administrative structures and securing Treasury money to fund local initiatives it set the pattern for future demands and may well have been responsible for creating more demands leading to overload at the centre. Current local administrative structures owe a lot to the work of the LGB at the latter part of the nineteenth century and almost certainly would not have developed along the lines they did without its sterling work. Due to its heterogeneous mixture of administrative structures, salary structure, and departmental value system, with a mosaic of policies based on legal and administrative precedents, it was almost bound to fail; it never appears to have had a discernible clearly defined purpose, short of aiding the development of local administrative structures.

The structure of local government had been altered by the 1888 Local Government Act, which was warmly welcomed as a "work of safe, moderate decentralisation bound to invigorate the energies of our people".<sup>11</sup> The 1888 Act, introduced by C. Ritchie, later to become President of the LGB, had introduced large multi-purpose local authorities with wide powers and responsibilities and under the control of democratically elected county councils. This resulted in many new powers transferred from Justices of the Peace and local Boards. JPs were left with only judicial functions and local Boards supplying services to local areas were closed down. In 1894 the Local Government Act divided each county into Urban and Rural districts and parishes each with their own powers. Parishes became responsible for footpaths and burial grounds. The Allotments Act of 1887 and 1890 and the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1890 were dealt with by the parishes and counties, respectively.

Clearly, in the period under review in this chapter, 1870 - 1914, there was a plethora of legislation introduced to cope with growing social needs. Some provision had been instigated by philanthropic individuals of the period. Moreover the demands placed in particular on the LGB highlighted the inadequacies of the existent bureaucratic arrangements and the strained financial relationship between the centre and localities. It becomes evident that within such a context the provision of leisure and recreation facilities were, more often than not, introduced as a "by-product" of other changes, rather than being provided for their own sake.

### The Period from 1914 to 1945

The social and liberal reforms introduced in the early part of the twentieth century continued to improve the living and working conditions of the less well off members of society. However it would be inappropriate to evaluate the nature and scope of leisure and recreation provision in this period without reference to two very different, but in their own respect nevertheless significant factors of the period: the 1914 - 1918 World War and the growing commercialization

of leisure. World War One changed everyone's lives including their leisure pursuits and the escalating commercialization in this field dramatically altered the patterns of individual behaviour. Regional leisure became commercialized and integrated into national patterns of recreation.<sup>12</sup>

Not only were there more theatres, music halls and cinemas but there was a significant growth in choral societies, brass bands, amateur dramatics, etc. Commercial concerns grew to cope with demands for sporting and entertainment facilities. The range of entertainment facilities grew, especially during the war when there was an increase in the need for domestic and home based activities. In County Durham, as in many other regions, people entertained themselves in the home with such activities as needle and craftwork, toys and games, reading, music, the gramophone and wireless. Nearly all families grew vegetables in allotments and gardens and kept domestic animals to supplement family incomes and food supply. The number of allotments grew rapidly because legislation in the 1890s allowed councils to provide them but in this period there was a proliferation of horticultural societies and allotment societies. Gardening became big business with a growth in gardening magazines and heavy involvement of market gardeners and seedsmen. Many local areas had high prize money for gardening competitions. G.L. Murfin concludes in her thesis on Cumbria that the range of entertainments grew in this period, the commercial sector was able to identify new markets, e.g., women and children began to take an active part in leisure pursuits as they had never done in the past and this sector of the market became satisfied.

The 1920s and 1930s was characterised by economic depression, mass unemployment, gloom and pessimism but in terms of entertainment and leisure provision there were many regional disparities. During this time there was a massive expansion in the commercial provision of broadcasting, cinemas and dance halls. In fact consumer spending on leisure and entertainment grew from £56.2 million in 1920 to £64.9 million in 1938.<sup>13</sup> Leisure pursuits for working class women were basically home-based but men entertained themselves by going to the local pub, the football match or the racecourse. Leisure patterns were obviously dependent upon the economic health of particular regions.

The south east and midlands had growing motor manufacturing and engineering industries so the workforce had higher disposable incomes to spend on leisure. The depressed north east of England was already declining in production of coal, steel and shipbuilding, so had mass unemployment, low incomes, hence very little spare money to be used for entertainment. Consequently there was a greater reliance on home-based entertainment.<sup>14</sup>

Leisure was not a controversial issue in the 1920s but became so in the 1930s. The Labour movement and Trade Union Congress concerned itself with issues such as wages, conditions, holidays with pay, shorter hours and, during the 1930s, securing concessions on some of these issues influenced leisure patterns. The eight hours movement had already secured a reduction in hours from 54 per week in 1914 to 48 per week in 1919. This affected 6.5 million people so gave some of them more free time for entertainment and recreation. Female employment especially in light engineering, the winning of the right to vote and a decline in the number of children all affected leisure patterns. Increasingly sophisticated commercial undertakings such as broadcasting and gambling widened leisure pursuits. Gambling on greyhound racing and football pools increased greatly and became a real problem as bets staked trebled between 1918 and 1939, so the Government passed legislation to curb excessive profit making. There was also an increase in professional attitudes towards business organisation and marketing which affected the entertainment industries. Ideas emanating from F.W. Taylor were beginning to have an impact in Britain as organisations like the BBC began to expand. Broadcasting became a growing medium of entertainment and the BBC staff grew from 733 in 1926 to 5,100 in 1938.<sup>15</sup>

In the inter-war years central government began to interfere increasingly in the entertainment and leisure field. There were many Parliamentary Acts relating to controlling cinemas, gambling, drinking, camping, cycling and rambling. Sports and leisure became more significant during the 1930s and there was a massive growth in voluntary agencies for social welfare. Rambling, Youth Hostel

Association and many sporting clubs were set up because they were seen to be pre-requisites for physical fitness to prepare for war and also as a means of turning workers away from revolutionary politics. As far back as 1919 a Home Office report had referred to sport as a stabilising factor which could be used to dampen industrial unrest and revolutionary activities. Sport, in effect, could be a bulwark against socialism and bolshevism.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the social upheaval of the First World War and the economic gloom that followed, all available evidence suggests that the period saw a massive expansion in the types and scope of leisure pursuits, with central government introducing more legislation to regulate leisure and entertainment activities, and local government continuing to make provision within national guidelines. The structure of local authorities remained much as it had been since 1894 with little modification until 1974. However, after 1945, to which we now turn our attention, there was a steady increase in the range of responsibilities: welfare; housing; planning, provision of entertainment and other amenities expanded after the Second World War.

*This time-table, showing the most important Acts of Parliament effecting local government which have been passed during the last hundred years, has been prepared primarily with the object of correlating the developments of local government with other events and incidents of importance in the history of this country. Needless to say, the list does not purport to be exhaustive, but it may be found to be of value for purposes of comparison.*

## A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1830-40	Vestries Act Reform Act	Poor Law Commission	Accession of William IV  Outbreak of Cholera in London Chadwick appointed Assistant Commissioner for inquiry into the working of the Poor Laws
	Lighting and Watching Act Poor Law Amendment Act	Report of Royal Commission on Poor Laws Royal Commission on Municipal Corporations	Grant of £20,000 to education Board of Guardians, Poor Law Unions, and Poor Law Commissioners created Hansom designs his cab
	Municipal Corporations Act Highways Act Parochial Assessment Act Municipal Corporations (General) Act		Death of Macadam Accession of Victoria The People's Charter Chadwick investigated sanitary conditions of London First bicycle
1840-50	County Police Act Metropolitan Police Act City of London Police Act County Police Act Poor Rate Exemption Act		Artificial gas widely used for lighting  Cobden's Free Trade agitation
	Municipal Corporations Act	Royal Commission on Mines found that women pulled coal trucks on hands and feet, and children of 5 worked alone in the darkness	
	Theatres Act		

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Poor Law Board
1830		Duke of Wellington	R. Peel	
1831		Lord Grey	Melbourne	
1832				
1833				
1834		Peel	H. Goulbourne	Chadwick (Secretary)
1835		Melbourne	Lord J. Russell Normanby	
1836				
1837				
1838	<i>Oliver Twist</i> (Dickens)			
1839	<i>Paul Clifford</i> (Lord Lytton) <i>Nicholas Nickleby</i> (Dickens)			
1840	<i>Survey into Sanitary Conditions of the Working Classes of Great Britain</i> (Chadwick)			
1841		Sir R. Peel	Sir J. Graham	
1842				
1843	<i>Past and Present</i> (Carlyle) <i>Song of a Shirt</i> (Thomas Hood)			

A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1840-50	Metropolitan Building Act Poor Law Amendment Act Nuisances Removal Act  Baths and Washhouses Act Nuisances Removal Act Towns Improvement Clauses Act Poor Law Board Act  Health of Towns Act Justices Protection Act Poor Law Audit Act Commissioners of Sewers Act Public Health Act (created General Board of Health with power to establish Local Boards of Health) Metropolitan Sewers Act Sewers Act	Report of Royal Commission on Health of Towns and Populous Places  Poor Law Commission dissolved	First public meeting of the Society for the Improvement of the Labouring Classes  Stoneware drainpipe introduced  Corn Laws repealed  Poor Law Commissioners succeeded by Poor Law Board First Medical Officer of Health in Great Britain appointed by Liverpool Corporation
1850-60	Common Lodging Houses Act, 1851 Labouring Classes Lodging-Houses Act County Rate Act  Smoke Nuisance (Abatement) Act  Public Health Act Young Offenders Act		The first public free library opened in Manchester  Outbreak of Cholera  Crimean War began (February)

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Poor Law Board
1844				
1845				
1846		Lord J. Russell	Sir G. Grey	
1847				
1848	<i>Yeast</i> (Kingsley) <i>Principles of Political Economy</i> (J. S. Mill)			
1849	<i>Alton Locke</i> (Kingsley)			
1851	<i>London Labour and the London Poor</i> (Henry Mayhew)			
1852		Derby (Feb.) Aberdeen (Dec.)	S. H. Walpole Palmerston	
1853	<i>It's Never too Late to Mend</i> (Ch. Read) <i>Bleak House</i> (Dickens)			
1854				

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1850-60	Diseases Prevention Act Nuisances Removal Act Metropolis Management Act  County and Borough Police Act Metropolitan Police Act  Local Government Act Public Health Act County and Borough Police Act	Royal Commission on Education (Newcastle)	Education vote of £451,000 and a paid Minister of Education appointed to act as Vice-President of the Council  Functions of General Board of Health placed under supervision of Home Office and Privy Council
1860-70	Local Taxations Returns Act Nuisances Removals and Diseases Prevention Amendment Act Public Improvements Act General Pier and Harbour Act Land Drainage Act Metropolitan Police (Receiver) Act General Pier and Harbour Act Local Government Act Highway Act Poor Law Union Chargeability Act Metropolis Management Amendment Act  Local Government Act Amendment Act Waterworks Clauses Act	Report of Commission on Education	London Sewerage System Peabody Trust opens first tenement dwelling

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Poor Law Board
1855	<i>Military Hygiene</i> (Dr. Parkes)	Palmerston	Sir G. Grey	
1856				
1858		Derby	S. H. Walpole T. S. S. Eastcourt	
1859	<i>Essay on Liberty</i> (J. S. Mill) <i>Origin of Species</i> (Darwin)	Palmerston	Sir G. C. Lewis Sir G. Grey	
1860				
1861	<i>The Cloister and The Hearth</i> (Ch. Reade) <i>Representative Government</i> (J. S. Mill)			
1862				
1863	<i>Treatise on Education</i> (Herbert Spencer)			
1864				
1865		Russell	Sir G. Grey	Villiers

## A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1860-70	Nuisances Removal Act Metropolitan Poor Act	Committee on unassisted schools	Reform Bill passed Commissioners for Metro- politan Water Supply appointed Metropolitan Asylums Board constituted
	Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Acts Poor Law Amendment Act	Royal Sanitary Commis- sion urged the constitu- tion of central authority with adequate strength Royal Commission on schools	
	Poor Law Assessment and Collection Act Valuation (Metropolis) Act	Schools Inquiry Commis- sion Royal Sanitary Commis- sion	Endowed Schools Bill passed
1870-80	Elementary Education Act Gas and Water Facilities Act Tramways Act Local Government Board Act		Local Government Board, constituted, superseding and embodying the Poor Law Board of 1847
	Public Health Act Borough Funds Act	Royal Commission on Scientific Instruction and the advancement of Science	Ballot Bill passed
	Gas and Water Facilities Act Amendment Act		Judicature Act
	Endowed Schools Act Amendment Act Sanitary Laws Amend- ment Act		Powers of Endowed Schools to Charity Commissioners
	Explosives Act Justices' Qualifications Act Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improve- ment Act	Playfair's Special Report on Civil Service	

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Poor Law Board or Local Govern- ment Board
1866		Derby	S. H. Walpole G. Hardy	G. Hardy
1867	<i>Das Kapital</i> (Marx) <i>English Constitution</i> (W. Bagehot)			
1868		Disraeli Gladstone	G. Hardy H. A. Bruce (created Lord Aberdare 1873)	Goschen
1869	<i>Subjection of Women</i> (J. S. Mill)			
1870				
1871				J. Stansfeld
1872	<i>Erewhon</i> (Samuel Butler)			
1873	<i>Autobiography</i> (J. S. Mill)			
1874		Disraeli	R. R. Cross	G. Sclater-Booth
1875				

A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1870-80	Public Health Act Sale of Food and Drugs Act Local Loans Act  Rivers Pollution Preven- tion Act Elementary Education Act Divided Parishes and Poor Law Amendment Act  Prisons Act Local Taxations Returns Act  Weights and Measures Acts Highways and Loco- motives (Amendment) Act  Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improve- ment Act Public Health Water Act District Auditors Act Sale of Food and Drugs Act Amendment Act Poor Law Act	Royal Commissions on Working of Factories and Workshops Act	Invention of Telephone by Bell and Edison        Thames Embankment illuminated by electric light   Edison and Swan invented the electric lamp
1880-90	Employers' Liability Act	Royal Commissions on Agriculture; and on Education and Instruc- tion of Industrial Classes in Technical and other subjects	Committee of House of Commons appointed to consider desirability of authorizing Municipal Corporations or Local Authorities to adopt any schemes for light- ing by electricity   Godalming illuminated by electric light

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Local Govern- ment Board
1875				
1876	<i>Principles of Sociology</i> (Her- bert Spencer)	Disraeli raised to peerage as Earl of Bea- consfield		
1877				
1878				
1879	<i>Lectures on the Principles of Political Obligation</i> (Prof. T. H. Green)			
1880	<i>Progress and Poverty</i> (Henry George)	Gladstone	Sir W. Harcourt	J. G. Dodson
1881	<i>Justice</i> (edited by Wm. Mor- ris, 1881-84)			

A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

APPENDIX ONE

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1880-90	Municipal Corporations Act Electric Lighting Act		First Central Station for electric light began operation in U.S.A. First electric tramway cars were run at Leytonstone International Electrical and Gas Light Exhibition held at Crystal Palace
		Special Report on Canals	Electric tramcars first run from Kew to Hammersmith
	Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act	Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor Report of the Education Commission	Third Reform Bill was passed, extending household suffrage to county constituencies giving miner and agricultural labourer a vote Domestic electric light charged at Colchester
	Public Health (Shops), etc., Act Reform Act	Interim Report of the Commission on Housing of the Poor Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts; and on Depression of Trade and Industry	First Home Rule Bill
	Local Authorities (Expenses) Act Sea Fisheries Regulation Act	Royal Commission on Civil Establishments	
	Local Government Act ended patriarchal rule of the nominated Justices of the Peace and set up County and County Borough Councils		
	Weights and Measures Act Technical Instruction Act Infectious Diseases (Notification) Act	Royal Commission on Vaccination	Successful trial of an electric tramcar at Birmingham

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Local Government Board
1882				Sir Charles W. Dilke
1883				
1884	<i>Man v. The State</i> (Herbert Spencer)			
1885		Salisbury	Sir R. A. Cross	A. J. Balfour
1886		Gladstone Salisbury	H. C. E. Childers H. Matthews	J. Chamberlain J. Stansfeld C. T. Ritchie
1887				
1888				
1889	<i>Life and Labour of People of London</i> (Chas. Booth, 1889-1903)			



## A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1890- 1900	Workmen's Compensation Act (injuries received while at work)  Rivers Pollution Prevention (Border Councils) Act Inebriates Act  London Government Act (which set up Metropolitan Borough Councils in place of vestries) Board of Education Act Small Dwellings Acquisitions Act Electric Lighting (Changes) Act	Special Report on Old Age Pensions Royal Commission on Sewers appointed	Formation of the Garden City Association
1900-10	Isolations Hospitals Act Factory and Workshops Act Public Libraries Act  Midwives Act Education Act (which handed over management of primary and secondary schools to the County Councils)  County Councils (Bills in Parliament) Act Borough Funds Act Local Government (Transfer of Powers) Act Motor Cars Act  Weights and Measures Act Public Health Acts Amendment Act	Report of Royal Commission on Imperial and Local Taxation  Metropolitan Water Board established Report of Joint Select Parliamentary Committee on Housing  Special Report on Physical Deterioration  Royal Commissions on London Traffic and on Poor Laws and Relief of Distress	Death of Queen Victoria, closing a reign extending over 64 years Accession of Edward VII  Andrew Carnegie made large grants to aid and found free libraries  Site for Letchworth Garden City purchased South London Electric Tramway system opened by Prince of Wales  First Garden City founded at Letchworth by Ebenezer Howard

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Local Govern- ment Board
1897				
1898				
1899				
1900				Walter H. Long
1901				
1902		A. J. Balfour	A. Akers-Douglas	
1903				
1904		Sir H. Campbell - Bannerman	H. J. Gladstone	
1905				G. W. Balfour



A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committee affecting Local Government	4 Events
1910-20	Public Health(Prevention and Treatment of Disease) Act Mental Deficiency Act  County and Borough Councils (Qualifica- tion) Act Notification of Births (Extension) Act  Milk and Dairies Con- solidation Act  Local Government (Emergency Provi- sions) Act Public Authorities and Bodies (Loans) Act  Venereal Diseases Act  Representation of the People Acts (confer- ring almost equal franchise) Land Drainage Act Maternity and Child Welfare Act Education Act Midwives Act  Ministry of Health Act Police Act Ministry of Transport Act Land Settlement (Facili- ties) Act Housing, Town Plan- ning, etc., Act Ferries (Acquisition by Local Authorities) Act Acquisition of Land (As- sessment of Compensa- tion) Act  Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Act Public Libraries Act Nurses Registration Act Electricity (Supply) Act	Royal Commission on Coal Conservation Report on Machinery of Government Local Government Com- mittee Report of Committee on Public Assistance  Royal Commission on Agriculture Special Report on Adult Education Departmental Committee on Police (Desborough)	Birmingham Corporation obtained powers to establish the first Muni- cipal Bank in the coun- try

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 President of Local Govern- ment Board
1913				
1914		H. H. Asquith	Sir John Simon Herbert Samuel	Herbert Samuel
1915				
1916		D. Lloyd George	Sir G. Cave	Walter H. Long
1917				Rhondda
1918		D. Lloyd George	E. Shortt	W. Hayes Fisher
1919	<i>Heartbreak House</i> (G. B. Shaw)			C. Addison (Minister of Health)

A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1920-30	Gas Regulations Act Blind Persons Act Air Navigation Act Increase of Rent and Mortgage Interest (Restriction) Act Unemployment Insurance Act  Public Health (Tuberculosis) Act Police Pensions Act Health Resorts and Watering Places Act Education Act Railways Act Local Authorities (Financial Provisions) Act Public Health (Officers) Act  Electricity Supply Act Local Government and Other Officers' Superannuation Act Cinematograph Act Audit (Local Authorities) Act Celluloid and Cinematograph Film Act Allotments Act School Teachers' Superannuation Act  Agricultural Holdings Act Agricultural Rates Act Housing, etc., Act Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act (Onslow)  Local Authorities (Emergency) Provisions Act National Health Insurance Act Housing (Financial Provisions) Act	Royal Commission on Local Government of Greater London (Ullswater) Adult Education Committee Geddes Committee on Grants from Revenue  Royal Commission on Local Government is constituted Report of Royal Commission on Local Government of London  Royal Commission on Lunacy	Police Regulations

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 Minister of Health
1920				
1921				
1922	<i>Forsyte Saga</i> (Galsworthy)	A. Bonar Law	W. C. Bridgman	Sir Alfred Davis
1923		Stanley Baldwin	W. C. Bridgman	Sir W. J. Joynson-Hicks
1924	<i>Back to Methuselah</i> (G. B. Shaw)	J. R. MacDonald Stanley Baldwin	A. Henderson Sir W. Joynson-Hicks	John Wheauley Neville Chamberlain



## A CENTURY OF MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

1 Decade	2 Acts	3 Royal Commissions and Committees affecting Local Government	4 Events
1920-30	Local Government Act Gas Undertakings Act Bridges Act	Final Report of Royal Commission on Local Government	
1930-	Poor Law Act Railways (Valuation for Rating) Act Road Traffic Act Housing Act Public Works (Facilities) Act Mental Treatment Act Land Drainage Act London Building Act National Economy Act Local Government (Clerks) Act Town and Country Planning Act Rights of Way Act Children and Young Per- sons Act Local Government Act Housing (Financial Pro- visions) Act Metropolitan Police Act Unemployment Act	Local Government and Public Health Com- mittee set up by A. Greenwood, under Chairmanship of Lord Chelmsford  Committee on National Expenditure (May) 1931  Committee on Local Ex- penditure appointed, and issues its report (Ray) 1932 Report of Royal Commis- sion on Unemployment  Interim Report of Chelms- ford Committee and a draft Bill, which ul- timately became the Local Government Act, 1933  Report of Departmental Committee on Quali- fications, Recruitment, Training, and Promo- tion of Local Govern- ment Officers (Hadow)	

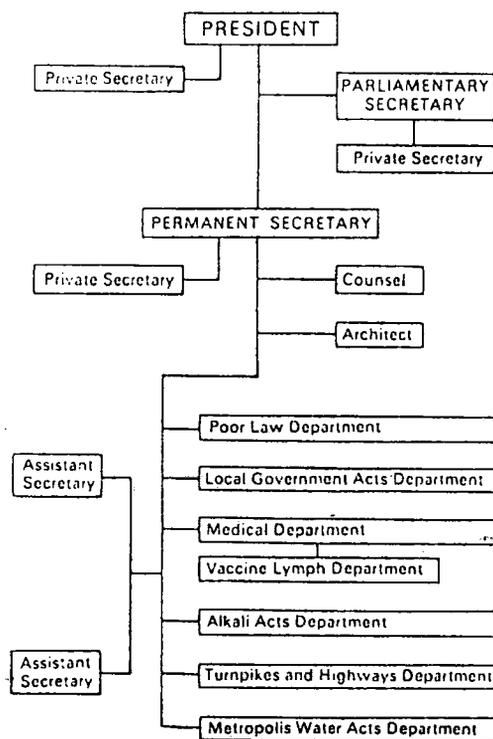
## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

5 Year	6 Publication of Books which had an influence on Social and Political Reforms	7 Prime Minister	8 Home Secretary	9 Minister of Health
1929	<i>The Apple Cart</i> (G. B. Shaw)	J. R. MacDonald	A. Henderson	A. Greenwood
1930	<i>The Industrial and Com- mercial Revolution in Great Britain during the Nine- teenth Century</i> (Prof. L. C. A. Knowles)			
1931		J. R. MacDonald	Sir H. Samuel Sir J. Gilmour	Neville Cham- berlain Sir E. Hilton Young
1932	<i>Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind</i> (H. G. Wells)			
1933	<i>The Shape of Things to Come</i> (H. G. Wells)			
1934				
1935	<i>Brave New World</i> (Aldous Huxley)	S. Baldwin	Sir J. Simon	Sir Kingsley Wood

CHARTS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD  
1872-1876

Chart I



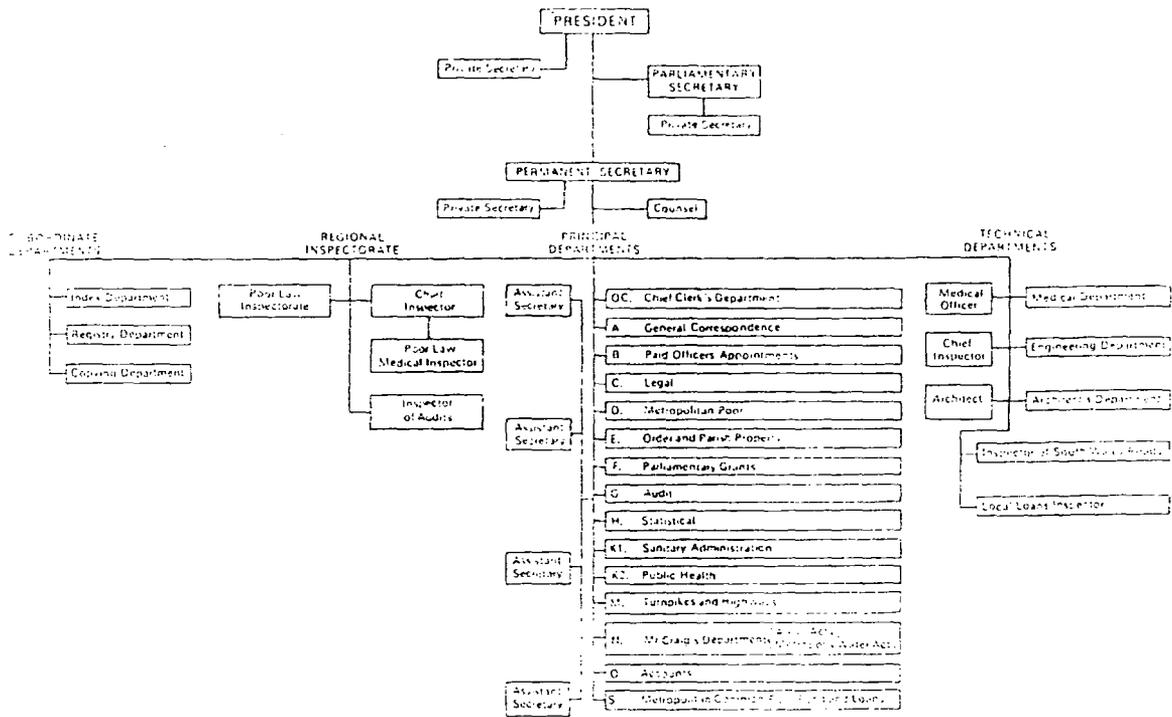
These charts have been constructed from the following sources:

Source: Constructed from T.1/77943/21279/1879

*The Local Government Board: Its Jurisdiction, Duties, Official Staff and Administrative System, 13 May 1879.*

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD  
1877-1884

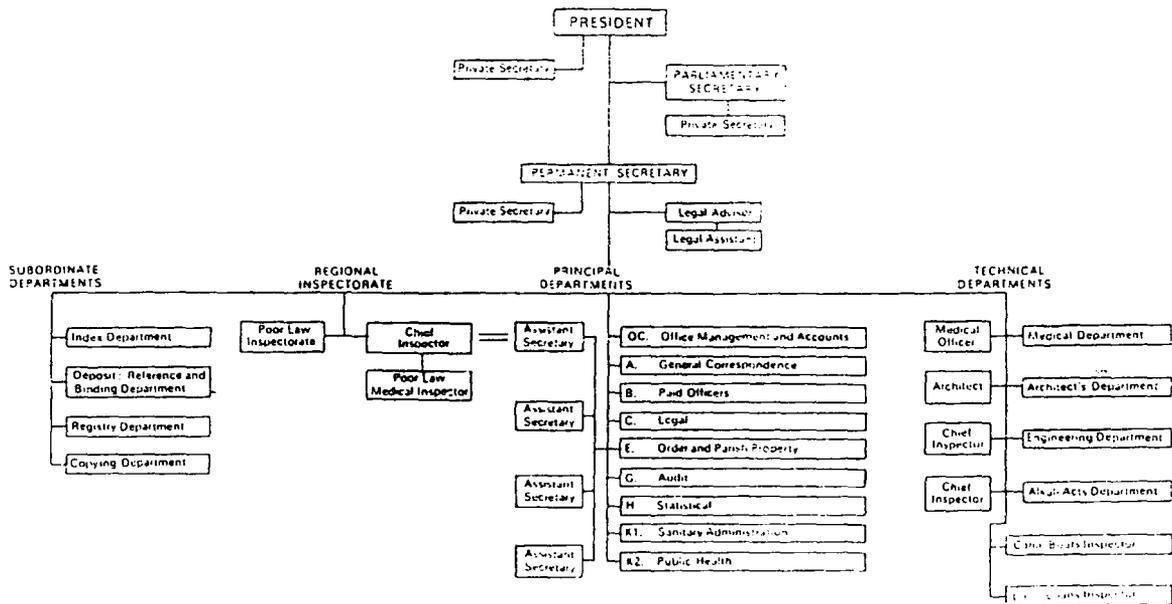
Chart II



Source: T.1/81133/6741/1884 *Reorganisation of the Clerical Staff*, 9 April 1884.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD  
1885-1897

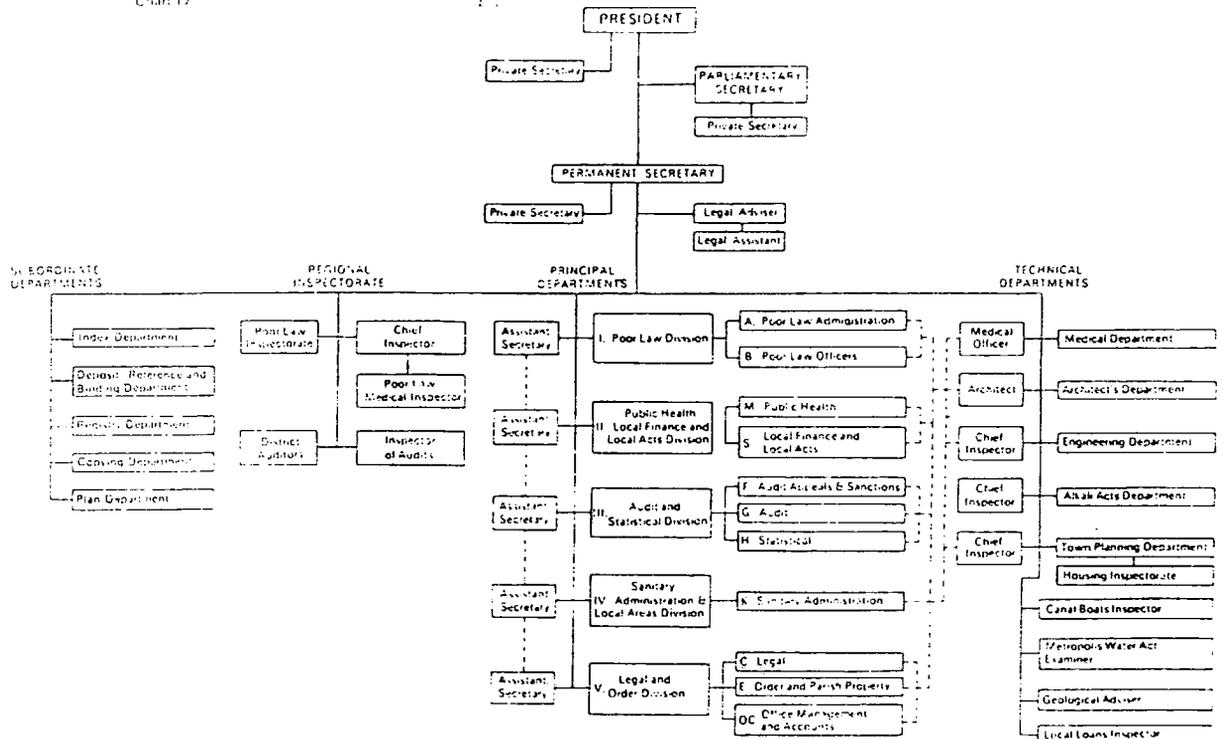
Chart III



Source: *Report of the Departmental Committees appointed to inquire into the Sufficiency of the Clerical Staff and Secretariat of the Local Government Board*, 1898, [C.8731], xl.429.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD  
1898-1905

Chart IV



Source: *The Local Government Board: Division of Business*, 2 January 1911. (Ministry of Housing and Local Government).

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## IV

THE SOCIAL ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF LEISURE IN THE  
POST-SECOND WORLD WAR PERIOD

Accurate statistics on leisure provision are unavailable for the immediate post-Second World War period and there has never been a comprehensive Government review of the entire leisure field. Over the years there have been many government reports, white papers, circulars and some legislation (see Appendix A) addressing limited aspects of leisure, sports and recreation but there has not been a single codifying or consolidating Act of Parliament on leisure provision. It has grown piecemeal, a growth in commercial and voluntary facilities has been matched by, and in some cases overtaken by, a corresponding growth in involvement and activity by central and local government. More importantly, especially since the 1970s, there has been a profusion of quasi-governmental and semi-independent bodies. Leisure, like housing, education and health, was included in the post-war liberal welfare Keynesian ideology and viewed as an important component of individual rights.<sup>1</sup> The importance of leisure has nevertheless led to the growth of hundreds of overlapping agencies with diverse roles and responsibilities in a confusing and fragmented network of UK administration, and with many notable gaps in coverage Appendix 3.

Dramatic changes have been introduced to all local government areas and these have led to corresponding changes in structure, personnel and working practices. Indeed, it has been said that the culture of local government has been radically altered to accommodate the many changes. An analysis of the major changes that challenge the role of local government is introduced in this chapter with an explanation of some of the responses of major writers on the subject. The growing economic importance of leisure has led to suggestions that a Ministry of Leisure is needed to reduce the confusion of responsibilities. This suggestion is considered later in the chapter, as is the role of professionals in the leisure field. Before analyzing these, it is important to start by addressing the nature of central government's role in leisure provision.

## Central Government

Local authorities are by far the main public sector providers of leisure facilities as they manage swimming baths, playing fields, leisure centres, civic theatres and so on, but central government has a very important role to play in a number of ways. Virtually every aspect of social life is regulated by law and leisure is no exception. In the same way that government legislates for specific social issues like health, education and so on, it also legislates on leisure. To take just a few examples, central government lays down licensing laws on consumption of alcohol in public houses, it maintains that it is inadvisable for children below a certain age to see certain films and also has a variety of regulations concerning health and safety aspects of theatres, dance halls, football matches, etc. Once such legislation is passed then various agencies implement the law.

Secondly, central government creates the institutional framework for public provision of leisure and regulates and controls the operation of such. Legislation is continually passed setting up bodies such as the Sports Council, Countryside Commission or Regional Tourist Boards or, indeed, to abolish those considered no longer appropriate to current requirements (e.g. The Nature Conservancy Council). In the same institutional framework local authorities were created by an Act of Parliament and have had powers increased or taken away by central government in accordance with changing circumstances. They were set up to provide and administer services at the local level and must not act ultra vires.

Central government policy making and legislation for leisure involves a number of departments of state but despite the apparent volume of work and diverse subject matter, leisure has a low priority compared to other social issues. There are at least seven different secretaries of state with responsibilities affecting leisure, ten central departments are involved; seventeen centrally controlled bodies; nine or more regional bodies; and both district and county levels of the local authorities at every locality in the UK.<sup>2</sup>

The largest clustering of responsibilities lie within the confines of the Department of the Environment where the Secretary of State for the Environment and the Minister for Sport are located. Because leisure encompasses a wide range of government policy other Departments are also involved, e.g., Home Office (licensing laws), Department of Education and Science, (youth and community issues), Department of Health (promotion of fitness, hygiene standards), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (forestry, agriculture, water recreation), Department of Transport (railways, canals), Department of Trade and Industry (tourism) - these are just a few examples highlighting the complexity of central government activity and involvement. It is easy to see how both overlapping and gaps in coverage can occur; the field is so wide. Leisure and leisure related areas of government work are, by necessity, dealt with on a multi-sectoral and multi-agency approach. To overcome some, but not all, of the problems brought about by such inter-actions at central, local and regional levels of government no one Government department has total responsibility for all leisure related policies, but the Minister of Sport has various mechanisms for co-ordination. He has quarterly meetings with all relevant ministers and separate quarterly meetings with chairmen and directors of key recreational, tourism and conservation bodies. In this way he has an overview of the situation, but while it is better than no co-ordination at all, there remain many gaps in coverage in local and regional level.

Central government has many ways of communicating with, and controlling the providers of leisure at regional and local level. Not only does it pass legislation laying down specifications on roles and responsibilities but also there are many administrative means at its disposal to guarantee that legislation is being implemented appropriately. Circulars, advisers, inspectors, audits, the carrying out of research, etc., are some of the ways of controlling, regulating and communicating with local and regional bodies. Of course, by far the most significant means of control is financial, this is seen in both the control of the money supply and in the form of grants and use of the Audit Commission to monitor and review spending.

## Local Government

Legislation relating to leisure facilities provided by local government is permissive rather than mandatory and concurrent rather than specific (i.e., involves both county and district levels). Local authorities are empowered to provide for leisure but not required to do so. As Appendix 4 shows, the Local Government Act 1972 has specific clauses relating to provision of facilities and the way councils interpret the legislation allows them a certain flexibility especially in terms of how much or how little they provide and also the amounts they charge for entrance fees, etc. Legislation ensures that local authorities have powers in relation to leisure facilities but details can be adjusted to meet local requirements.

Leisure services and leisure related functions are distributed in different ways among the different levels of local authority. County councils have statutory obligation in three main areas. They have responsibilities for strategic planning and land use in their areas and in the field of leisure there is a statutory obligation to provide libraries and education. Education is not primarily a leisure service but is connected in several important respects; there are adult education classes; education for the arts and sports; the use of facilities such as playing fields and sports halls provided for schools and colleges for general sporting and cultural use.

District councils have some statutory obligations, in respect of listed buildings, for example, though not as much as the counties. As already mentioned, most other functions are of a permissive rather than mandatory nature. Appendix 5 illustrates the diverse range of local authority leisure and recreation functions, some provided at the county level and others at district level.

Each of the current levels of local authority has a long tradition of providing amenities but local needs and fashions are constantly changing. Many public facilities date back to the nineteenth century but changes in popular taste in recent years have led to the opening of sports centres, squash courts, skating rinks and ski slopes. The growth in availability of such facilities indicates the relative importance

of leisure in people's lives but also reflects a growing affluence. The building of sports centres in the late 1960s and early 1970s constitutes the most significant development in leisure services since the Second World War.

Almost 30% of local councils now have a single leisure department but many others have leisure services attached to other services. Leisure is variously incorporated thus - Leisure and Amenities Department; Technical and Leisure Department; Recreation and Leisure Departments; and as Appendix 6 shows there is a variety of officers titles indicating other combinations. The departmental structures also affect the committee structures and again each local authority has a very different and particular internal organisation. Appendix 7 shows the diversity. Since the 1960s there have been three main changes in the way leisure is regarded and the degree of importance afforded to it in local government. First, the range of facilities has increased. Secondly, local government re-organisation led to fewer but larger departments and an emphasis on a corporate approach: the need for structural planning for the area as a whole led to many internal organisational changes. Thirdly, the increased sophistication of service provision, administration and management procedures led to the need for Leisure Officers with appropriate knowledge and expertise. As far back as 1966 the Maud Report<sup>3</sup> had made a number of recommendations appropriate to recreation and leisure and likewise the Bains Report of 1972 led many authorities to re-think and re-align the departments concerned with leisure.<sup>4</sup> As a result of both reports and re-organisation, many councils created a composite leisure department and allocated the work of the department to one committee. This allowed leisure departments to be subject, with other service departments, to the overall social, physical, and economic planning needs of the whole area. This also necessitated liaison with a range of quangos and semi-independent bodies.

### Quangos and Semi-Independent Bodies

Central government sets the institutional framework and legislation relating to leisure and local government is currently the largest provider of services in the public sector. In addition to central and

local administration, however, there is a large number of organisations throughout the UK involved with aspects of leisure but not actually part of central or local government departmental structures.

These semi-independent bodies are created by statute under the general supervision of a particular minister to do a particular job. The minister will have appointed a governing body (by whatever name it may be called), but he is not responsible for the day to day running of the organisation, so these bodies may be seen as extensions of central administration but at "arms length". Government policies on leisure have nearly always been put into effect by quangos rather than directly through government departments. Thus we have the Sports Council, Arts Council, Countryside Commission and British Tourist Authority to give but a few examples. A more recent example is English Heritage created to perform functions in respect of ancient monuments, the work of which was previously done through the directors of education. The work of a number of quangos and nationalised industries such as the Forestry Commission, Regional Water Authorities, British Rail and Development Corporations also have a bearing on leisure without it being their principle concern.

The Conservative Government since 1979 has modified many quangos relating to leisure and also created or abolished others. As an example of how these quangos operate throughout the UK the Sports Council at the regional level takes three forms: executive regional bodies, advisory and co-ordinating bodies, and regional offices of national bodies.<sup>5</sup> Hence the Regional Council for Sports and Recreation (R.C.S.R.) is an advisory and co-ordinating body, providing services to the Regional Officers of the Sports Council and Countryside Commission. It advises on location of grants, provides technical expertise and also provides local, regional and district planning frameworks for sport. This enables the Minister for Sport to more readily co-ordinate at central government level.

Many councils have strong links with quangos such as the Sports Council and Countryside Commission and these links have become even stronger since the early 1980s as central government has continued to restrain direct revenue and capital funding of projects. Many Leisure

Officers have set about securing sponsorship from bodies like the Arts Council and Regional Health Authorities, as a way of replacing direct grants with indirect government funding. This has proved a lifeline for the present and future plans of leisure departments.

Economic Importance of Leisure: Should there be a Ministry of Leisure?

Such is the growing importance of leisure in the nation's life and economy that it is often suggested that the problems of co-ordination between the myriad of central government departments, regional quangos and local authorities, could be better dealt with if there was a Ministry of Leisure headed by a Cabinet Minister. Indeed recent research calls for a major inquiry to look at issues such as:

1. the setting up of an inter-departmental leisure services advisory commission (to be known as L.S.A.C.) involving all central departments in any way connected with leisure;
2. consolidating legislation for all leisure services;
3. the increased collection of annual data from all bodies nationwide ;
4. monitoring of local authority activity and agency or quango activity;
5. more research and guidance.<sup>6</sup>

Up to the present there seems little likelihood of the Government setting up a central Department of Leisure. Leisure is a vast field but does not have a high priority on the political agenda. Even if there was a Minister of Leisure there would still be the inevitable problems of overlapping of functions, lack of co-ordination and gaps in provision.

In future, local authorities and regional quangos are likely to play an increasing role in providing leisure facilities under central direction and control. As people's habits change and society continues to move from a manufacturing based economy to a service based economy, the economic importance of leisure as a source of employment and prosperity will heighten. Councils will place much greater emphasis on activities to promote tourism, expand and develop plans to build places of

interest, obtain grants and premises for museums, exhibitions, garden festivals and sports and cultural events. More financial cutbacks and the emphasis on competitive tendering and privatisation may threaten future plans and halt the escalation. These threats may be turned to positive advantage as the changes lead to more emphasis on assessing present and future needs, rationalisation of internal structures, and a re-examination of external relationships. Professional leisure officers have been instrumental in bringing about many of the changes.

### The importance of professionals in leisure

The changing nature of government business at both central and local level since 1945 has led to the need for an even greater specialized and technical understanding in an extensive range of policy areas. "The period from 1945 to 1970 was the highest plateau of attainment of professional society."<sup>7</sup>

The development of local government services owes much to the dominance of certain professions and, indeed, "one of the keys to changing service departments and committees has been the organisation around professional competencies."<sup>8</sup>

Chief officers in local government belong to professional bodies characterised by exclusivity; possess theoretical knowledge; have undergone systematic training and adhere to a professional code of conduct. Loyalty to their own professional body can, in H. Elcock's opinion, breed a certain arrogance and can in some instances undermine the political objectives of a council.<sup>9</sup>

Criticism that some professionals in local government are able to command an enhanced status in relation to other professionals many have some truth in it as it is often claimed that the 1960s was the era of the planners and the 1980s the era of the leisure managers. Clearly the 1974 re-organization which led to larger, single purpose departments, allowed certain professionals to dominate and leisure managers belonged to one of those groups.

A dramatic rise in the number of people involved in leisure services, a rapid increase in range of amenities, especially sports centres, and the increasing importance attached to fitness and quality of life allowed leisure professionals to escalate in significance during the 1970s and 1980s.

In 1983 the Institute of Leisure and Amenities Managers was established despite the resistance of some of the longer established and more traditional professional bodies, and five of the more prominent associations became merged into one.<sup>10</sup>

In a recent study W. Bacon argues that the professional leisure associations have provided local government with "a new type of confident middle class generalist who extols the virtues of 'the amateur' and the 'general all-rounder' who is colonizing the elite roles in Leisure Management."<sup>11</sup> Bacon concludes that there has been a shift from traditionalists with narrow technical specialisms and sports centre managers, to a new generation of politically sophisticated lateral thinking entrepreneurial generalists who will lead Britain's public leisure services into the 1990s.<sup>12</sup>

The existence of a growing body of leisure professionals in local government has aided the development of an extensive range of high quality facilities. There is no doubt of the important role played by leisure professionals. The uncertainty of future development and the necessity to undertake an enabling role will require a different breed of professional leisure managers and Bacon may be correct in his view that a power elite possessing the requisite qualities could be the dominating force for the future. Leisure services will probably play an integrative role in future local government business and by occupying a central position may determine the shape and nature of future developments.

#### The changing culture of local government: changes in leisure services in their context

Local government at both County and District level has undergone dramatic changes since 1979 in all areas of service delivery due to ideological clashes, financial pressures and a questioning of its role and

continued existence. Indeed, in a recent Report entitled "The Competitive Council" the Audit Commission observed that: "Local authorities are in the throes of a revolution. The immediate cause is the wave of legislation changing their methods of raising revenue, their ways of working and the range of their functions."<sup>13</sup>

Local authorities have been subjected to hundreds of pieces of legislation that have whittled away their powers. In particular the Local Government Act 1988, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the introduction of the community charge have forced councils, Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street included, to make alterations to management and political structures, ways of conducting business and personnel to cope with demands placed upon them. At the heart of what is happening is a re-definition of the role of local authorities and a push towards reducing the perceived monopolistic provision of services in the hope, at a stroke, of cutting public expenditure and increasing consumer choice and accountability.

Much of the thinking embodied in central government policy towards local government in particular, but directed towards all public bureaucracies in general, originated from the work of right wing think tanks such as the Institute of Economic affairs and Adam Smith Institute. The current Conservative Government has been influenced by new right and public choice theories of the state.<sup>14</sup> Their thesis rests on the core assumptions that all public bureaucracies are unresponsive to their consumers, wasteful and inefficient. There is a view that public organisations have in the past been monopoly providers of services with a tendency to over-supply the market. These monopolistic and over-supplying tendencies have created large scale organisations with in-built vested interest and there is a lack of any clear understanding of the preferences of local people. Publicly administered services are considered to stifle initiative and individual responsibility and it is argued that if left to the market mechanisms, with increased competition and choice for consumers, services could be provided at a better quality and a lower price.

State provision, in the view of public choice theorists, has encouraged a welfare dependency and has failed in the long run to achieve its own self declared aims of equality and fairness. The Conservative government is ideologically committed to a belief in the market as a competitive means of redistributing goods in a fairer and more competitive fashion and the thrust of recent legislation on competitive tendering, contracting out and fragmentation of service delivery into small units more accountable to their customers is a clear illustration of the way the main objectives are to be achieved. There are many criticisms of the public choice theories, most of them have as their central argument the point that public provision never has had, and should not have, profit as a central tenet. Public provision is intended to meet a criterion of needs as much as ability to pay and historically state programmes have had to be supplemented by the market as a result of inadequacy of providing a total service rather than assumption of provision.<sup>15</sup>

It is also argued that political systems and market systems have incompetencies; neither is perfect. Market systems can be as limited a system in re-allocating resources as political representative systems expressing citizen preferences. Thirdly, G. Goodin (1982)<sup>16</sup> rejects the view that bureaucrats are self interested with a desire to maximise their span of control and budgets. Bureaucrats, in his view, are mission-orientated, i.e., motivated by the content of their policies and a desire to serve their public. Fourthly Dunleavy (1985/6) points to the way public choice and new right theorists have simplistic assumptions that senior officials can direct their departments and under-estimates the extent of intra-organisational diversity and conflicting interests within local authorities. Additionally, all bureaucracies and budgets are different. The amount spent on administration and service delivery differs between councils, and there are clear differences at Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street. Local councils are still dependent on central government for the largest part of their finance and are called to account for increased spending limits. They are nowadays controlled and scrutinised to an even greater degree by bodies such as the Audit Commission than they ever were pre-1979.

Public choice and new right theories have been subjected to vitriolic attacks in the academic world as they can only offer a limited and partial view of the world of local government. Despite the problems of using many of the ideas associated with these schools of thought the Government has grasped nearly all of the central tenets and fashioned many of them into an all-pervasive ideology which corresponds with their antipathy towards local authorities.

Over the last thirty years especially, there have been many serious attempts to explain the nature of, and changes taking place in local government. Cynthia Cockburn's "Local State" thesis of the early 1980s became the most widely promoted of academic perspectives but again was charged with many inaccuracies. Even the public choice and new right theories outlined earlier in this section which provide perhaps the best justification for the Conservative attack on local government are flawed.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps the most significant theory on local government that encapsulates not only the pressures affecting councils from central government but dealing in a more holistic way with the host of changes being brought to bear on local government is the "Localist" theory expounded by George Jones and John Stewart. This theory, according to G. Stoker, is widely accepted and deserves the title of "new official ideology of local government". It is a traditional model of public administration that values local government, argues the merits of local democracy, recognises the need for councils to change but moves beyond a formal/legalistic perspective. Since 1983 many strands of theoretical understandings of local government have been drawn together and Jones and Stewart in particular have been associated with this "localist" theory. It is widely accepted as the theory used to shield councils from attacks from the centre and Ken Young as Research director of the Widdicombe Inquiry followed a similar line of reasoning by stressing the capacity of local government to act as a bulwark against the centralised tendency of the central government and of emphasising councils' ability to generate innovation, maximise public choice; and promote pluralism and participation. The central ideas of the Widdicombe Report accord with the range of ideas encapsulated in the localist theory of Jones and Stewart.

The reason why the "localist" theory is a more coherent explanation is that not only does it explain the pressures being placed on local government from the centralising tendencies of the Conservative government but it also seeks to explain new demands from below, i.e., from consumers. It also deals with the rapidly changing economic, social and political changes apparent in the wider society. The following illustrates a few of the changes that will affect councils in the future (there are many others):

- growing affluence of the population, more free time;
- better quality of life and increase in assertiveness and expectations;
- major shifts in demography, i.e., more elderly; fewer young people;
- rise of new social groups;
- changing work patterns, rapid changes in econ/industrial base;
- new demands with information technology;
- effects of 1992 and European dimension;
- possible abolition of county councils and expansion of district councils.

The localist theorists put forward a forceful case for autonomous, elected local councils that have the capacity to win public loyalty by allowing choice and meeting local demands. There are four core ideas on which the localist case is premised:

First - There is value in dispersing legitimate power and involving many decision makers in different localities. This is based on pluralist assumptions but localist theorists accept that councils do not grant equal access to all because of the dominance of service committees in the decision making process.

Secondly - There is strength in diversity and differences can be accommodated. The complex challenges facing local authorities can provide scope for learning, for experimentation and pioneering new initiatives.

Thirdly - Local government is local and can therefore be accessible and responsive to citizens.

Fourthly - By allowing choice and meeting local needs local authorities will win support from electors.

These four main ideas are embodied in the localist theory but Jones and Stewart also accept the facts that traditional bureaucratic modes can discourage risk taking and innovation, as the public choice theorists argue, and one important fact to bear in mind is that professional influences in decision making with officers part of a naturally recognised body, can lead to the exclusion of local factors. Nevertheless the localist theory does have more coherence than many earlier theories on local government.

Jones and Stewart readily admit that reforms are needed to ensure the survival of local government. Briefly the reforms they envisage are: the enactment of a charter specifying the respective roles of central/local government; introduction of a local income tax; proportional representation at local elections; shift to unitary authorities; new management styles to break with routinism (new style to reflect innovation, openness and learning); and commitment to a public service orientation.<sup>18</sup>

It is obvious that there is a very great push towards a contraction of local government business and also a clear change in how its role is perceived. A policy document by a group of right-wing MPs, put to the Prime Minister on 17 September 1990, includes the proposal, among many others, of transferring most of the work of local councils to the private sector.<sup>19</sup> This radical contribution to policy proposals beyond the next general election will no doubt affect the whole shape of local and central government, if implemented.

No longer are local councils perceived as the traditional service providers but now assume the mantle of enabler, facilitator, regulator, monitor and supervisor. The old idea of the council as provider of services is changing and the new ethos is one of making it possible or setting the framework that enables other agencies, statutory, commercial and voluntary to carry out service provision.<sup>20</sup> The role of the supervisor, monitor and regulator will expand over the next few years in line with legislative demands.

Two good examples of the changing role of local authorities are education and housing. The Education Reform Act 1988 gives greater power to governors in controlling budgets and running schools. The county council will set the budget and determine the educational objectives in accordance with the dictates of the Department of Education and Science. Once the framework is set county councils will monitor and supervise the work of governors, provide advice where necessary and then evaluate performance in accordance with H.M.I. wishes.

Similarly in housing, under the Local Government and Housing Act 1990 the district housing service will undergo marked changes. Significant amongst those changes is the shift in the balance of choice in council housing to tenants, as consumers of the services. Ultimately the housing service could be reduced to a residuary welfare housing agency left only to cope with the most needy families that commercial and voluntary agencies fail to cater for. Although districts have a statutory duty under the 1977 Homeless Persons Act to house certain families, the role of the housing departments is set to shift to one that encourages and enables other providers to ensure adequate housing provision.<sup>21</sup>

The new role of facilitator and enabler now taken on by councils has been accompanied by the need to change internal management processes. In attempts to satisfy the increasing demands from central government, consumers and outside agencies, local authorities now concentrate on aiming for economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Many techniques aimed at achieving the three principles are now being adopted in local government with the resultant changes in structures, practices and personnel. From the introduction of the Financial Management Initiative to the use of performance indicators, review and evaluation of programmes and consumer preferences it is clear that there is a "sea-change" in local government. The changes are occurring at a rapid pace and local councillors are increasingly removed from their main role as representatives responding to constituents' grievances and are now expected, together with officers, to run the councils like a commercial organisation. Councillors are now expected to

act like a board of directors, setting objectives, drawing up business plans; marketing their services and then evaluating performance. This new approach, it is said, will be more competitive and will provide more efficient services for the consumers. Indeed, the introduction of the community charge was a twofold attempt to ensure that users of services paid for those services and brought the council to account if services were not up to expectations. New legislation has affected leisure service provision in a number of ways but the following section illustrates the particular changes.

The erosion of local government since 1979 by a Government committed to holding down public expenditure and a general acceptance of the view that councils do too much and inefficiently is manifest in the legislative changes affecting all service provision, and this includes leisure services. Contracting out of council responsibilities has led to many significant changes in all affected services. There have been considerable difficulties in implementing the changes in all areas but this is particularly true in the case of leisure services with its complex nature and vast network and range of specified facilities.

Under the 1988 Local Government Act certain specified services such as catering and cleaning had to be put out to competitive tender and contracts may then be awarded to any organisation, including the councils' own direct works department, with the ability to offer an efficient service at a competitive price. In 1989 the Secretary of State for the Environment declared that leisure services would be subjected to competitive tendering by 1990. This proposal concerned leisure officers because it was felt that the complicated nature of facilities and the complexity of contract specifications precluded implementation of the legislation within the suggested timetable. The minister, having borne in mind the objections raised, agreed to revise the timetable for contracting out leisure services as follows:

- 35% of the work to be put out to tender by January 1992;
- 70% of the work to be put out to tender by August 1992;
- total of the work to be out to tender by January 1993.

The legislation does not require the selling off of facilities so the council in the main will retain ownership and control, but there is a requirement to contract out the management and the running of the facilities. In most cases councils will retain effective control as there are no specifications on opening times, entrance fees or, indeed, range of facilities offered. This flexibility with price mechanisms, the scope for extended opening times and the discretion needed to decide which activities to promote is welcomed in some quarters as a way of expanding the overall scale of operations of leisure departments.<sup>22</sup>

Undoubtedly sport, leisure and recreation are now major contributors to the national economy. Nearly one million people work in leisure related industries and there was a total expenditure of £6.9 billion in 1985. Spending on leisure is expected to grow by 8% in real terms over the next five years as demographic trends show that more women will enter the labour force and have more disposable income and early retirement will increase free time for more individuals. Consumers will increasingly demand better facilities as knowledge increases on ways of keeping fit and healthy. More time free from work coupled with growing affluence and changing social and economic conditions will shape future patterns of need and of provision.<sup>23</sup>

The quality of life debate is considered to be one of the most important issues for all political parties to address over the next decade. The Conservative party has only been concerned with the economic importance in job creation and employment opportunities of leisure but the Labour party and Liberal Democrats are committed to increasing leisure opportunities. The Liberal Democrats are firmly committed to freedom, better quality of life, and they advocate early retirement, more sabbaticals and a process of life long education. The Labour party is more positive in advocating government intervention to enable more people to participate in leisure pursuits. It is committed to include leisure in the next election manifesto.<sup>24</sup>

Clearly, the policies advocated at national party level are not always adopted and implemented wholesale at local level and there are many reasons for this. Briefly, as already pointed out in Chapter Two the British political system is very complex and characterised by thousands of diverse groups and institutions all with varying levels of power. Policy making is fragmented and circumscribed by the activities

of the variety of groups and organisations all exerting influence but divided internally and externally.<sup>25</sup> The lack of co-ordination which leaves a gaping hole at the heart of central government leads to uncertainty, confusion and chaos. I. Budge and D. McKay show that up to the 1960s, the "two party system did guarantee relatively stable and good government despite the difficulties apparent in any system. Party discipline in the Commons, Cabinet Government, the doctrines of individual and collective responsibility, together solved the problem of combining popular accountability with efficient administration. A permanent, incorruptible and able civil service imposed coherence on policy choices and supplied technical advice and ensured the actual machinery of government ran smoothly". With a neutral civil service holding the balance, no organised interest group was totally ignored and central and local relations took care of themselves with limited and benevolent central direction matched by local compliance. Since the 1960s, growing economic difficulties began to show real inadequacies in how the British political system was functioning. The technocratic mood of the 1960s and 1970s gave way to attempts to plan the economy; reform the machinery of government (i.e., local government re-organisation and Civil Service reforms); and followed by corporatism or tripartism with organised groups invited into the decision making process. The Conservative Government elected in 1979 was characterised by the conviction style politics of Thatcher with the emphasis on strong party leadership pushing through radical policies. However, despite the rhetoric, even such an apparently strident approach did not solve the problems of implementation of policies at the local level.

In the case of leisure policies in local government, the massive scale of organisations involved in this area leads to even greater confusion in policy making and implementation. Leisure facilities have grown in accordance with other social welfare provision and in the post Second World War period is now an important part of central/local government activity. The lack of a comprehensive review of leisure provision and the fact that there is no central Ministry of Leisure has not deterred the profusion of agencies of a governmental, quasi-governmental or semi-independent nature. The period has seen dramatic changes in local government structure, personnel and working practices. Two of the most significant changes affecting the way local government provides for

leisure are the departmental and committee changes brought about by the 1974 local government re-organisation and the influx of leisure professionals committed to providing high quality leisure facilities for the local population. Legislative changes and control mechanisms imposed on local government have not entirely eradicated the room for discretion open to leisure professionals in assessing local needs and responding to them. A detailed outline of leisure provision in Chester-le-Street and Wear Valley is given in the next two chapters and shows the important role of leisure professionals, with an analysis of the way each District has responded to the growth of leisure and the introduction of new legislation. The particular way in which each District has responded to such changes makes an interesting contrast.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972LEISURE/RECREATION/AMENITIES/CULTURES111 SUBSIDIARY POWER

A Local Authority shall have power to do any thing (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition of disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions.

S137 "GENERAL EXPENDITURE" (2p rate)

A Local Authority may incur expenditure which in their opinion is in the interests of their area, or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants.

S141 RESEARCH AND THE COLLECTION OF INFORMATION

Council of a county(?) may conduct (or assist in the conducting of) investigations into, and the collection of information relating to any matters concerning the county or any part of the county - results may be made available to any other local authority in the county, any government department or the public.

- (a) the maintenance of a band or orchestra;
- (b) the development and improvement of the knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and the crafts which serve the arts;
- (c) any purpose incidental to the matters aforesaid, including the provision of refreshments or programmes and advertising of any entertainment given.

S145(2)

- (a) may (for the above purposes) endorse or set apart any part of a park or pleasure ground belonging to the authority;
- (b) facilities may be <sup>hired</sup> ~~leased~~ (for payment or not) by other persons;
- (c) may make charges for admission to entertainments.

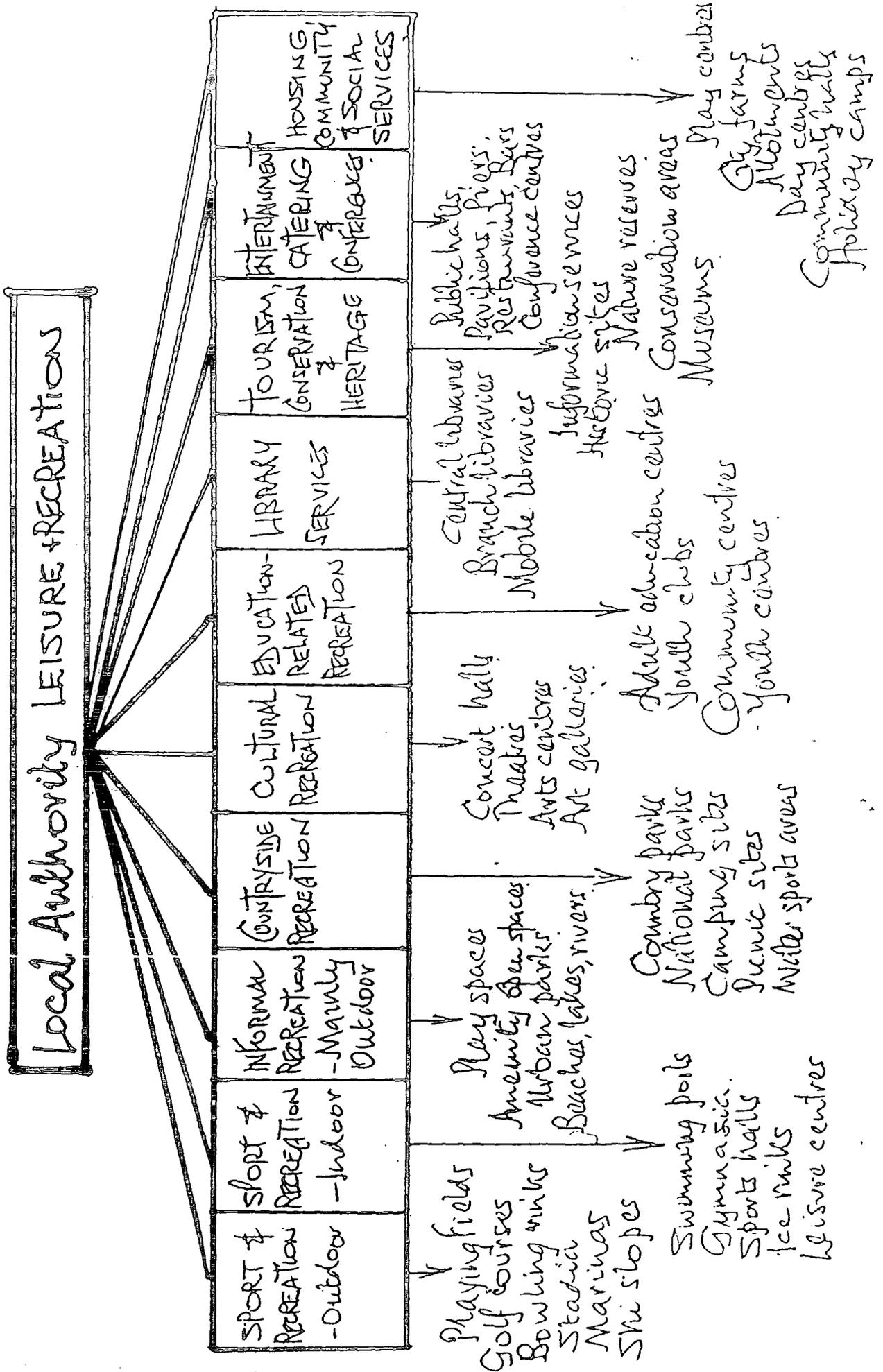
These powers are concurrent, as are many powers conferred by the specific 'service' statutes. The result is something of a patchwork of powers and duties which emphasise the diversity of leisure and the varied provision by particular authorities. Most of the powers to provide recreation and leisure are permissive

S144 POWER TO ENCOURAGE VISITORS AND PROVIDE CONFERENCE AND OTHER FACILITIES

- (a) "A Local Authority may (alone or jointly):
- (i) encourage persons by advertisement or otherwise, to visit their area for recreation, for health purposes or to hold conferences, trade fairs and exhibitions in their area; and
  - (ii) provide or encourage any other person or body to provide, facilities for recreation conferences, trade fair and exhibitions or improve, or encourage any other person or body to improve any existing facilities for those purposes.
- (b) Local Authorities may contribute to any organisation approved by the Secretary of State, established for the purpose of encouraging persons to visit the UK.

S145 PROVISION OF ENTERTAINMENTS

- (a) A Local Authority may do, or arrange for the doing of, or contribute towards the expenses of the doing of, anything (whether inside or outside their area) necessary or expedient for any of the following purposes, that is to say:
- (i) the provision of an entertainment of any nature or of facilities for dancing;
  - (ii) the provision of a theatre, concert hall, dance hall or other premises suitable for the giving of entertainments or the holding of dances.



LEISURE SERVICES OFFICERS' TITLES

Numerous forms of title are in use as in other Local Authority services, including:

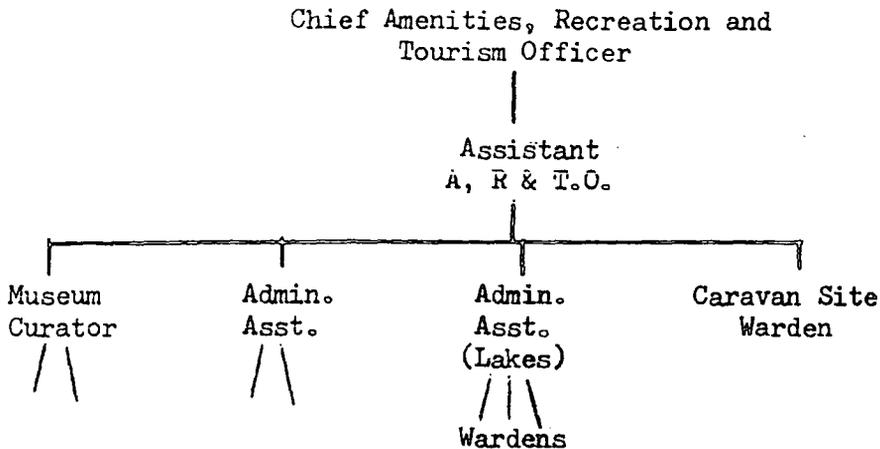
1. Recreation and Amenities (or Amenities and Recreation) Officer
2. Recreation (or Recreation Services) Officer
3. Leisure (Services) Officer
4. Leisure and Recreation Officer
5. Amenities Officer
6. Leisure and Amenities (or Amenities and Leisure) Officer
7. Tourism and Recreation Officer
8. Tourism and Amenities Officer
9. Leisure and Cultural Services Officer
10. Arts and Recreation Officer
11. Cultural Amenities Officer
12. Recreational and Cultural Services Officer
13. Entertainments and Amenities Officer
14. Leisure and Tourist Services Officer
15. Leisure and Entertainments Officer
16. Public Relations and Recreational Officer
17. Publicity and Amenities Officer
18. Leisure and Publicity Officer
19. Amenities and Works Officer
20. Civic Amenities Officer
21. Sport and Recreation Officer
22. Recreation and Open Spaces Officer
23. Museums and Art Galleries
24. Librarian
25. Curator
26. Arts and Museums Officer

27. Libraries and Arts Officer
28. Libraries, Arts and Museums Officer
29. Art Galleries Officer
30. Museums Officer
31. Libraries, Arts and Entertainments Officer
32. Cultural Services Officer
33. Fine Arts Officer
34. Music Officer
35. Theatre Officer
36. Parks and Amenities Officer
37. Parks Officer
38. Parks, Cemeteries and Allotments Officer
39. Parks, Open Spaces, Cemeteries and Crematorium Officer
40. Parks and Recreation Officer
41. Parks and Gardens Officer
42. Parks and Baths Officer
43. Parks and Cemeteries Officer
44. Parks, Cemetery, Crematorium and Entertainments Officer
45. Baths/Swimming Pools Officer
46. Baths and Halls Officer
47. Baths and Entertainments Officer
48. Indoor Recreation Officer
49. Sport and Youth Officer
50. Leisure Centres/Sports Centres Officer
51. Halls/Pavilions Officer
52. Town Halls and Entertainments Officer
53. Entertainments and Leisure Centre Officer
54. Entertainments Officer
55. Attractions Officer
56. Entertainment and Tourism Officer
57. Attraction and Publicity Officer
58. Tourism and Publicity Officer
59. Tourism (Development)/(Services) Officer
60. Tourism and Resort Activities Officer
61. Resorts (Services) Officer
62. Resort Activities and Entertainments Officer
63. Catering and Entertainments Officer
64. Resort and Conference Services Officer
65. Zoological Gardens Officer
66. Beach Catering Officer

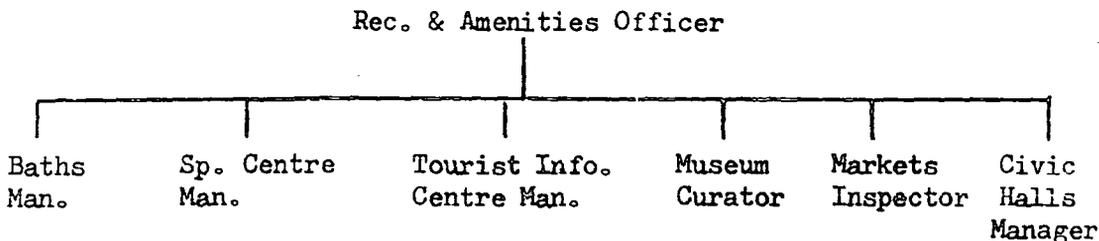
(Source: Municipal Year Book, 1977)

EXAMPLES OF LEISURE SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL ORGANISATION

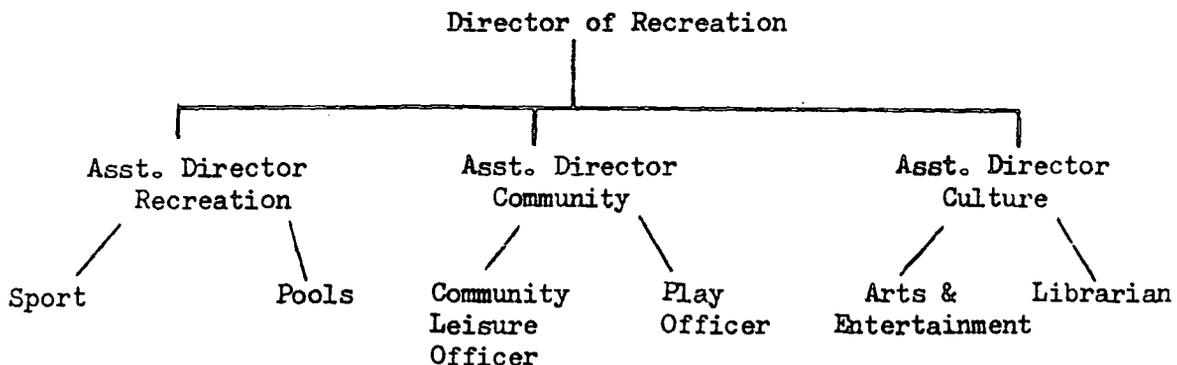
1. District Council 94,000 pop.



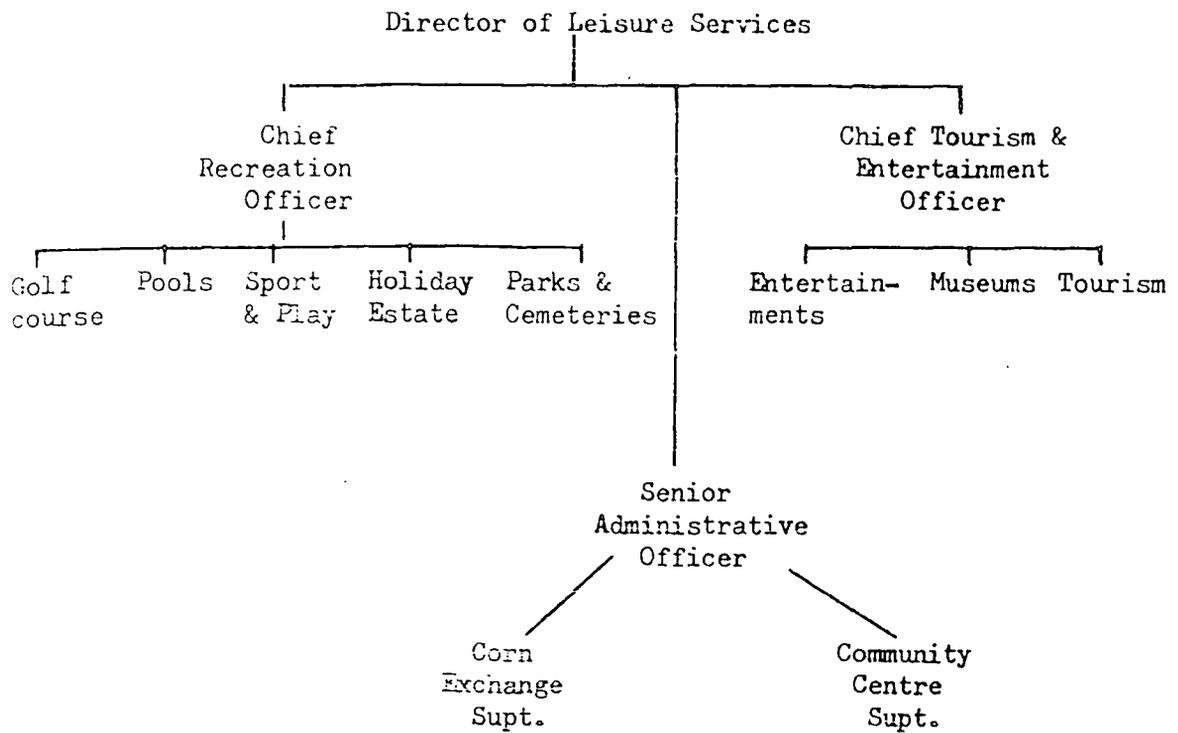
2. District Council 70,000 pop.



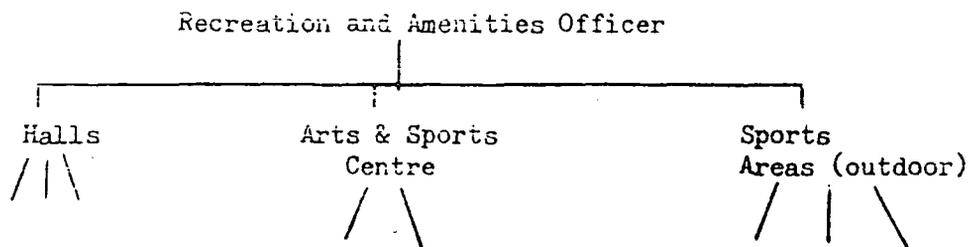
3. London Borough Council 207,000 pop.



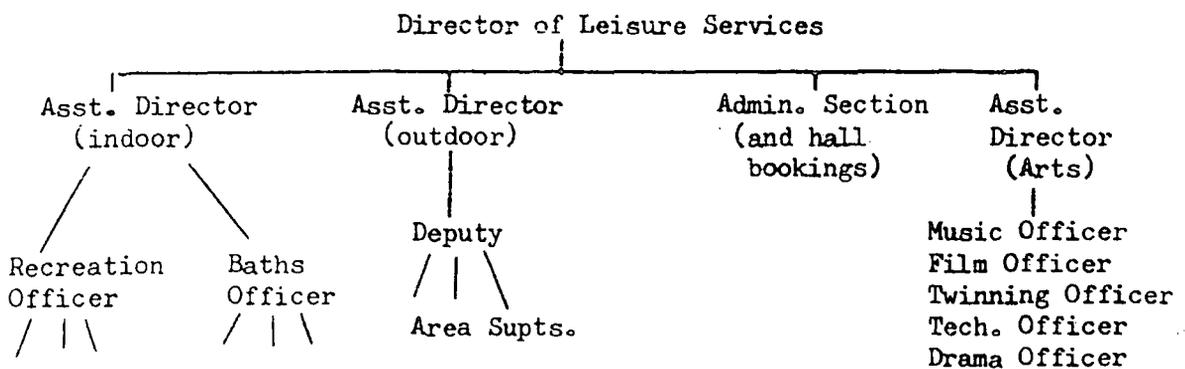
4. District Council 145,000 pop.



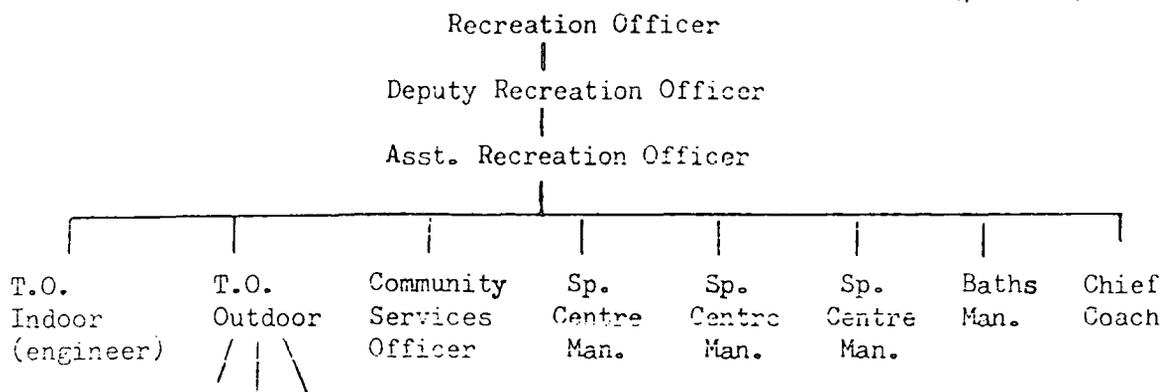
5. District Council 98,000 pop.



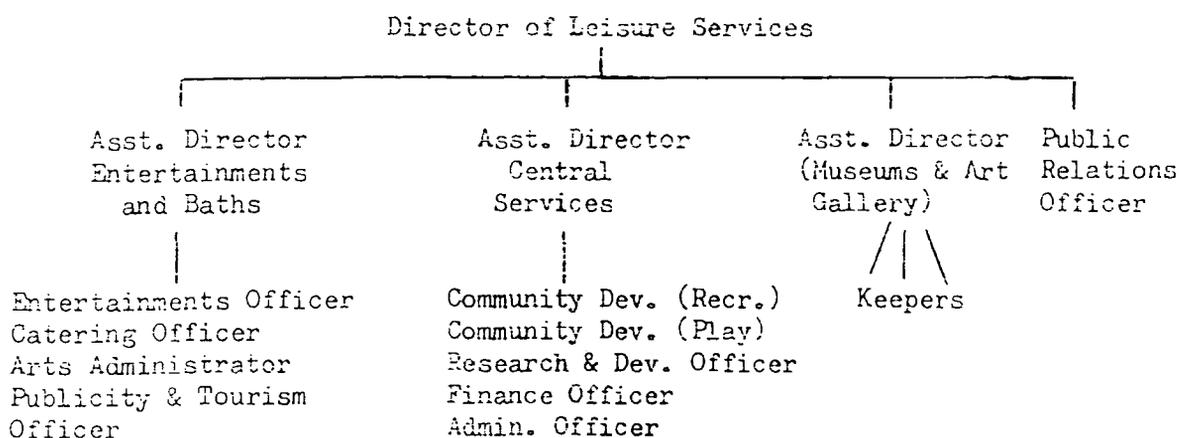
6. Metropolitan District Council 373,000 pop.



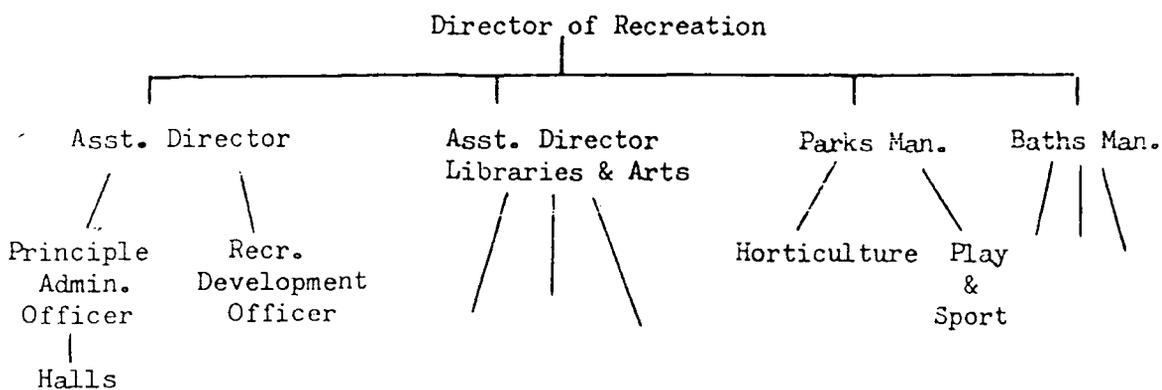
7. District Council 166,000 pop.



8. District Council 214,000 pop.



9. London Borough 285,000 pop.



APPENDIX AGovernment Legislation, Circulars, Reports and Other Important Events affecting Leisure

- 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act
- Government aid granted to voluntary agencies;
  - Limited in scope.
- 1944 Education Act (Butler)
- L.E.As. given responsibility to provide social, recreational and physical training for primary, secondary and further education.
- 1949 National Parks and Access to Countryside Act
- 1960 Wolfenden Report
- Raised awareness of the importance of Sport. Suggested close collaboration between L.As. and L.E.As - joint case.
- 1963 D.E.S. granted more aid to voluntary organisations.
- 1964 Joint circular Circular 11/64 issued by Ministry of Housing, L.G. and D.E.S.
- L.As. asked to review existing facilities and co-ordinate future provision.
- 1964 Public Libraries and Museum Act.
- 1965 Plowden Report on Education
- Positive discrimination for deprived areas and increased use of community schools.

- 1965 Sports Council created a Minister of Sport appointment.
- Promoted the building of Sports Centres. Nine Regional Sports Councils and the Northern Advisory Council on Sports and Recreation set up. Brought together L.As., central government and regional sports associations.
- 1967 Civic Amenities Act
- 1967 Redcliffe Maude Report.
- A number of recommendation pertinent to Leisure.
- 1967 Mallaby Report.
- Staffing in local government.
- 1968 Central Council for Physical Recreation (C.C.P.R.) Committee on Planning for Sport
- joint planning and joint use of schools for community and education.
- 1968 Countyside Act.
- Set up Countryside Commission to review conservation and landscape issues, to advise L.As. and carry out research.
- 1969 Tourism Development Act
- Mid 60s to 70s Over 300 sports and leisure centres built.
- 1971 House of Lords Select Committee under Lord Cobham. Published in 1973. The first comprehensive attempt to look at leisure as a whole (outdoor sport and recreation).

- 1972                    Bains Report
- Re-organization and rationalizing of internal structures. Implications for Leisure Services.
- 1972                    Local Government Act
- 1974                    Local Government Re-organization
- Provided the impetus for change. Growth of larger single purpose Departments.
- 1975                    White Paper "Sports and recreation" recommended setting up of regional councils for sport and preparation of regional strategies.
- 1976                    Lotteries Act
- 1976                    Local Government (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act
- 1976                    Local Authority Association Report "Towards a Wider Use". Recommended co-operation in planning and management.
- Multiple use schemes.
- 1977                    Report sponsored jointly by Director of Education, D.E.S., Arts Councils, Sports Council, Scottish and Welsh Offices. "Leisure and the Quality of Life".
- 1977                    Yates Committee - set up as a result of 75 White Paper. Final Report in 1984 emphasised the role of professionals and policy development for leisure highlighted the need for a single professional body to have a philosophy and values for leisure.

- 198?                      Gunn Committee  
- Recreational Management and Training.
- 1983                      Setting up of I.L.A.M. incorporating A.R.M.,  
I.M.E., I.P.R.A. and I.R.M.
- 1989                      Audit Commission Report "Sport for Whom"  
clarifying the local authority's role in Sports  
and Recreation.

Sources: Government Publications, a variety of books and publications.

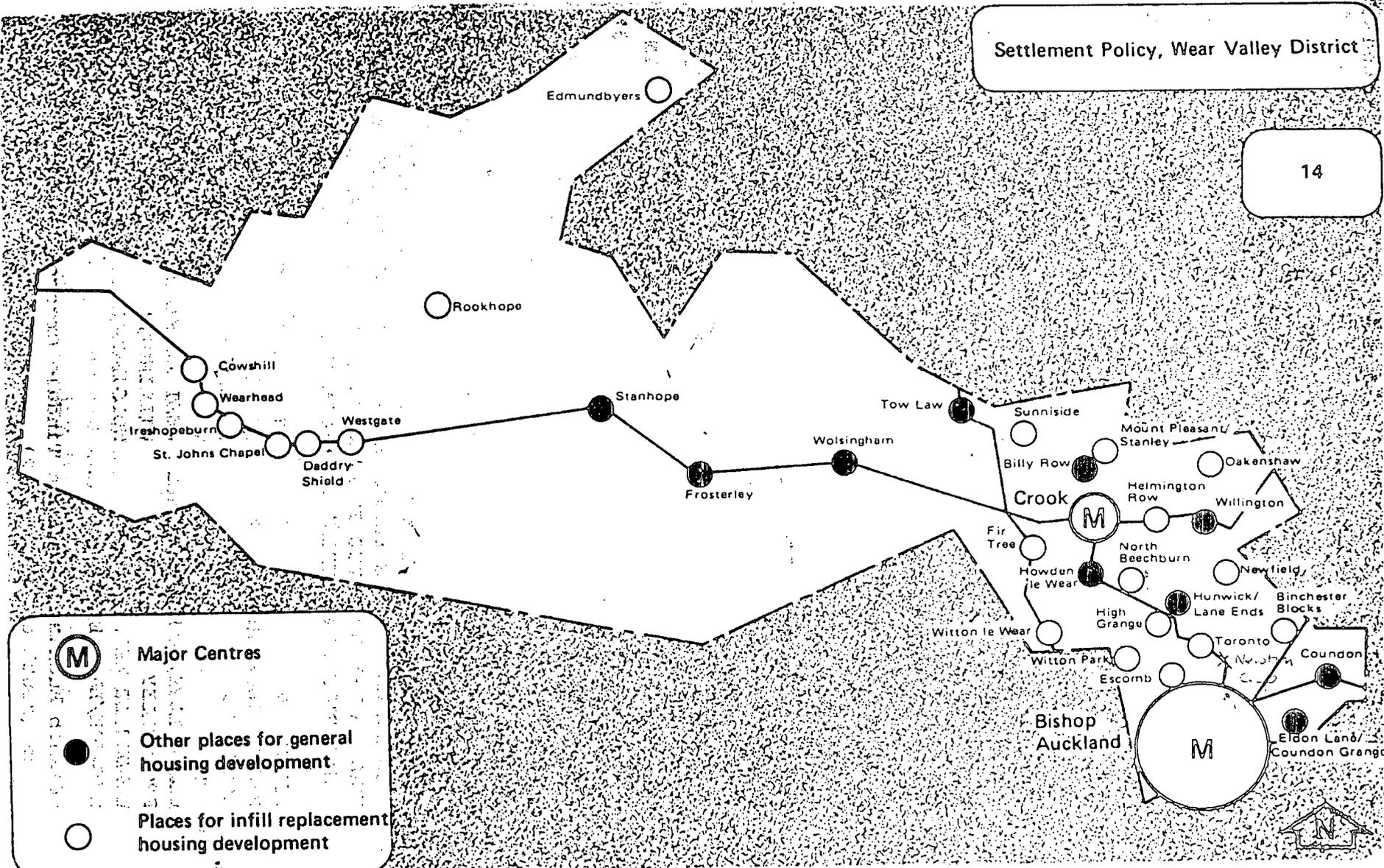
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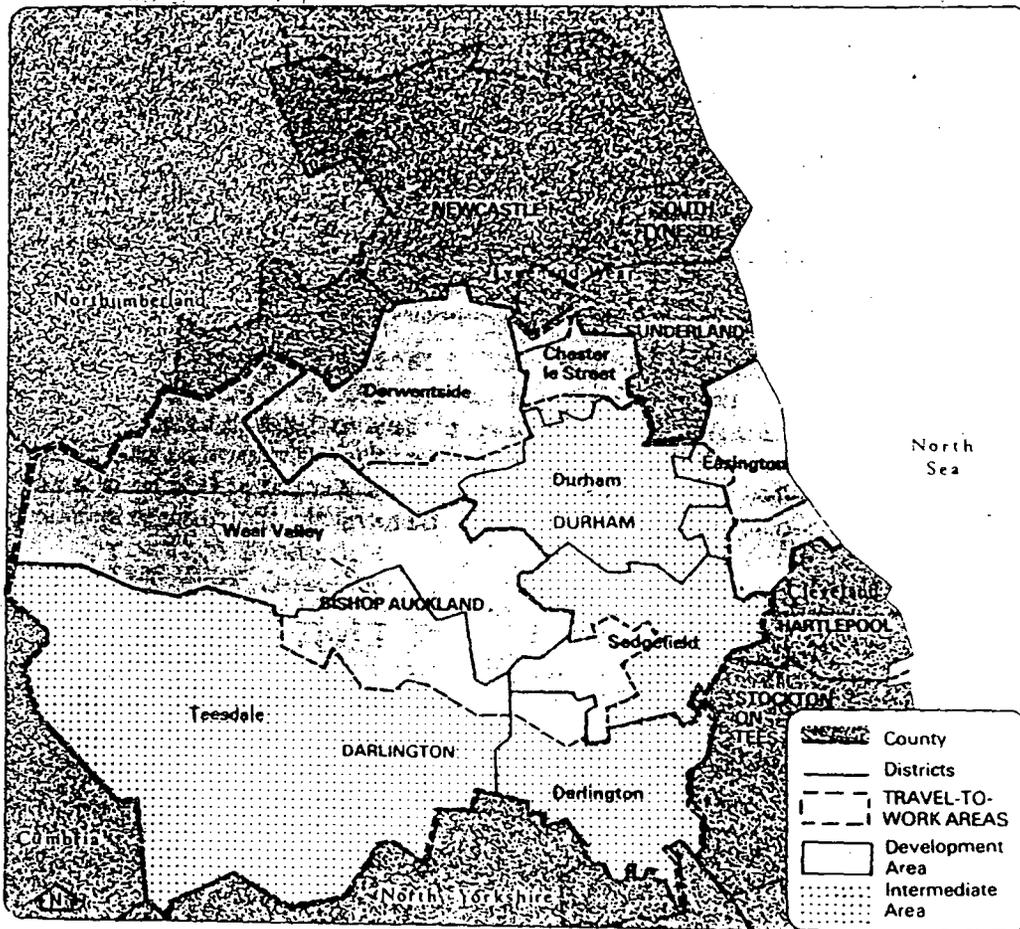
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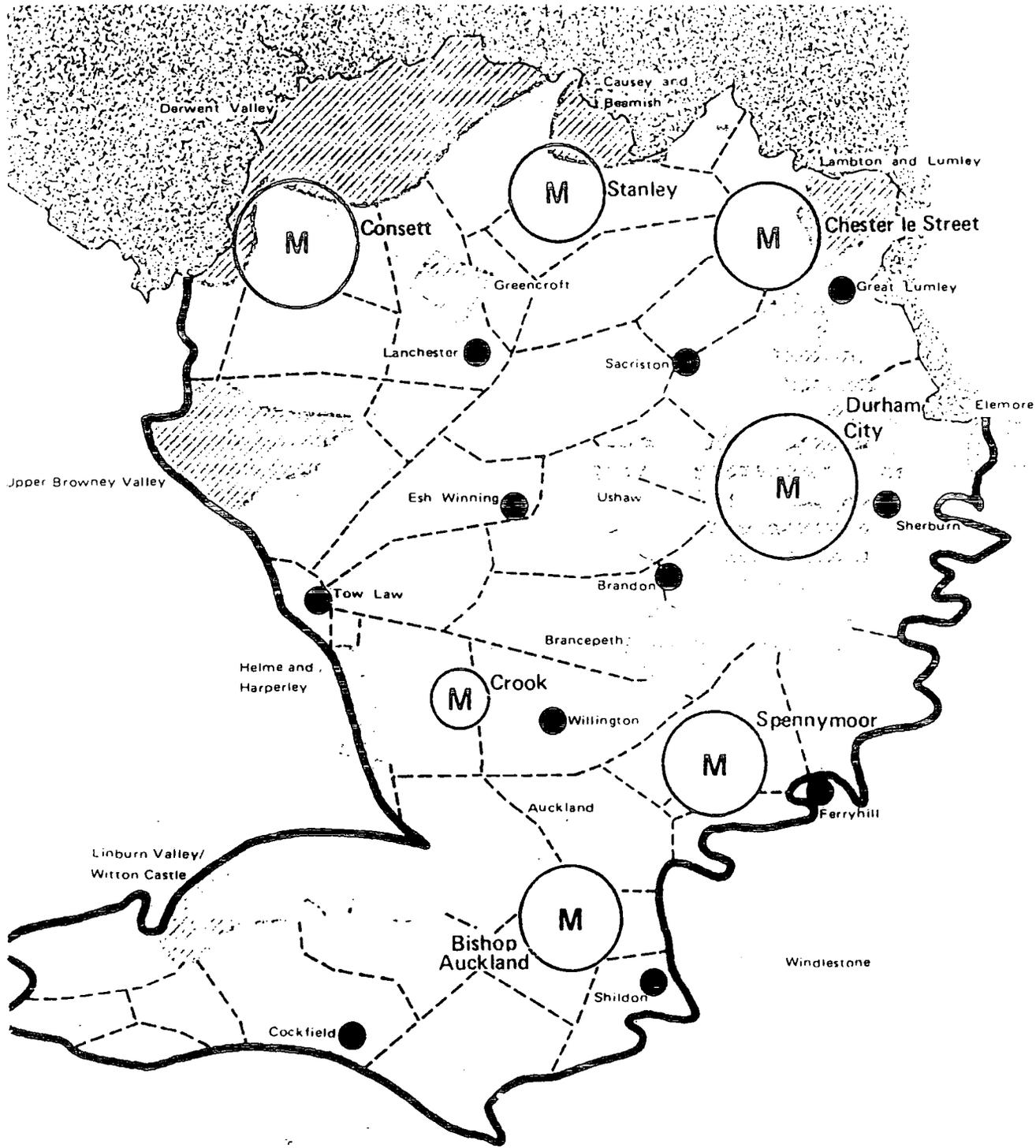
Settlement Policy, Wear Valley District

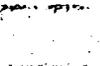


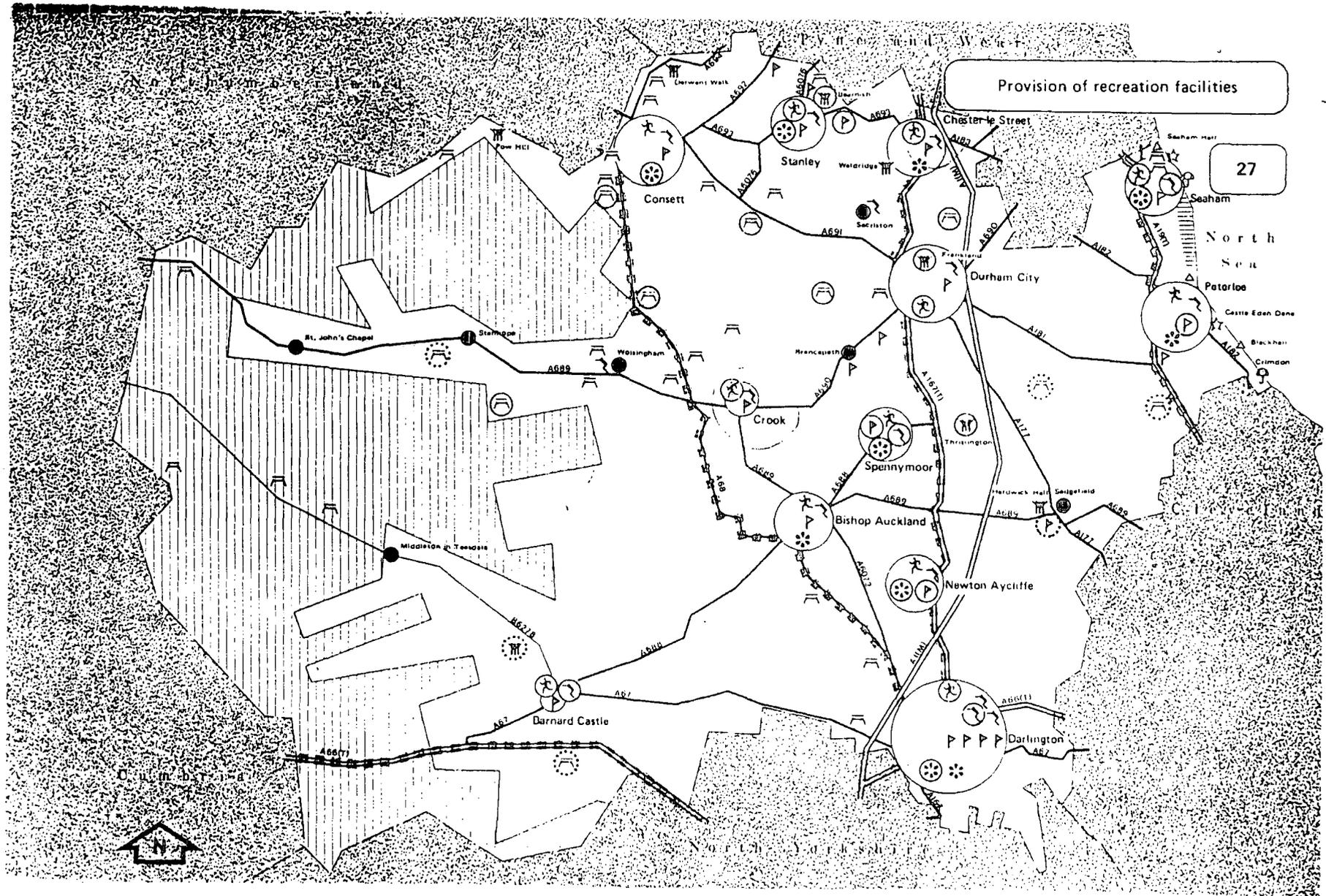
County, district, travel-to-work and assisted areas, 1985



**Zones relating to opencast coal and fireclay extraction  
in County Durham.**



	Major centres		Boundary of landscape zones in which opencast coal mining may be allowed
	Other towns and villages		Boundary of 'exposed' coalfield
	County boundary		Area where opencast coal mining will normally be opposed





Major centres: existing facilities and priorities for provision are shown inside the circle



Other towns and villages

Existing facilities

Priorities for provision



Sports centre



Swimming pool



Golf course



(general locations)



Informal recreation park on fringe of major centres



Picnic area (firm proposals)



(general locations)



Country park (firm proposals)



(general locations)



Areas where seaside resort facilities will normally be allowed



Areas where facilities for informal seaside recreation will normally be allowed



Area of coast where only car parks and toilets will normally be allowed



Area where no recreation development will normally be allowed



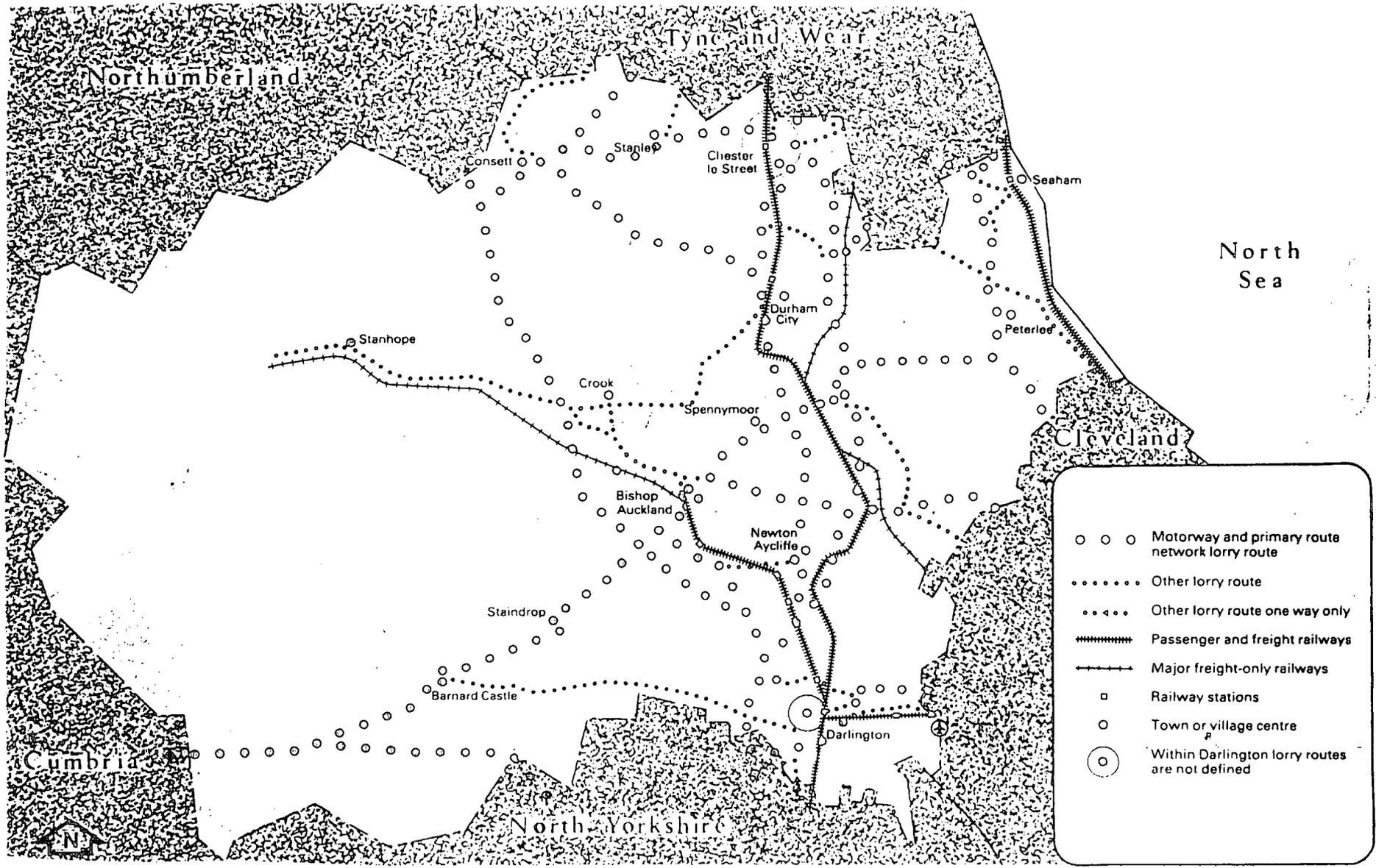
Tourist routes along which picnic areas will be provided

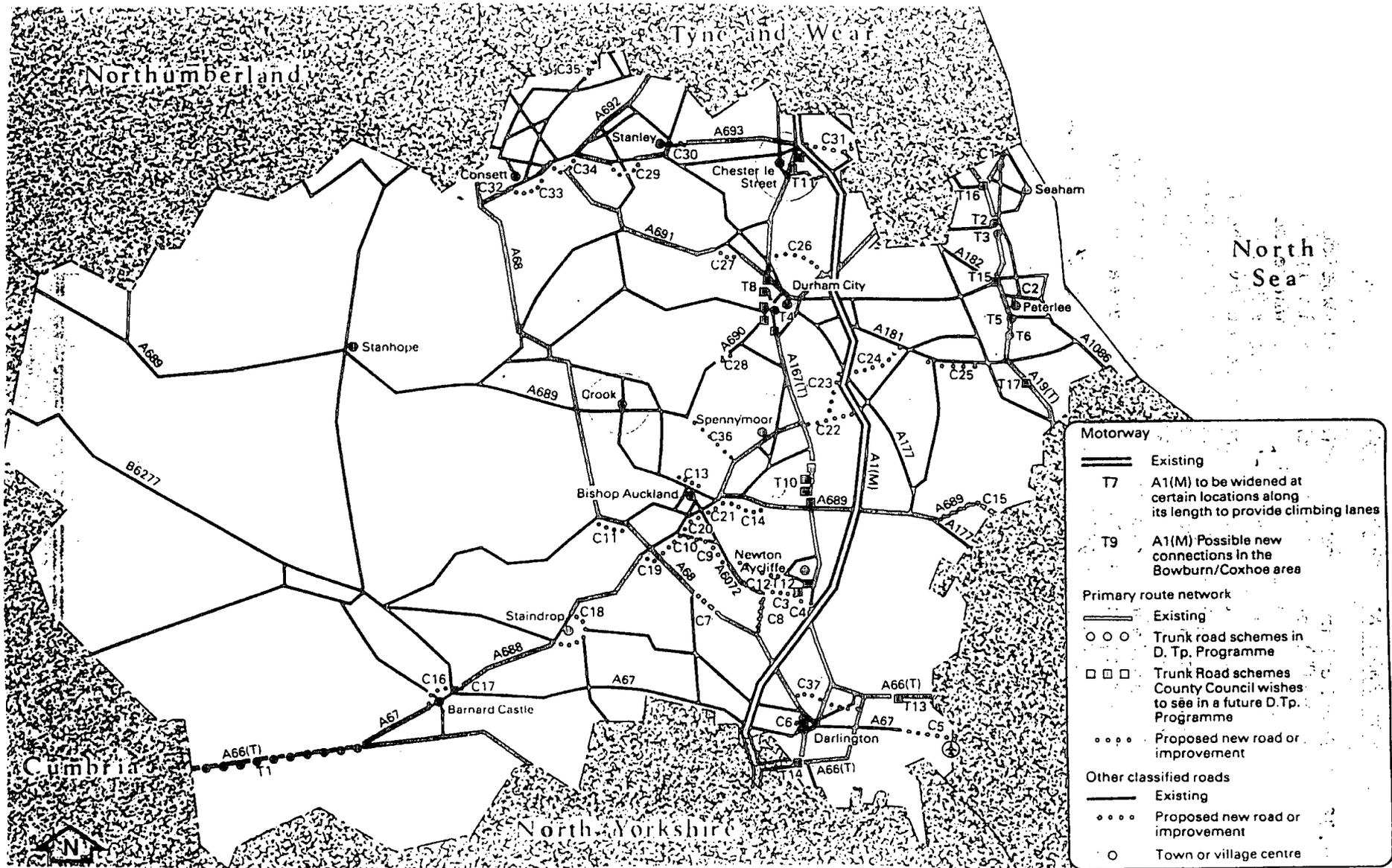


Area where country parks, picnic areas and other sites for informal outdoor recreation will be provided



Area where the only recreation development normally allowed will be small, carefully-sited car parks.





**Motorway**

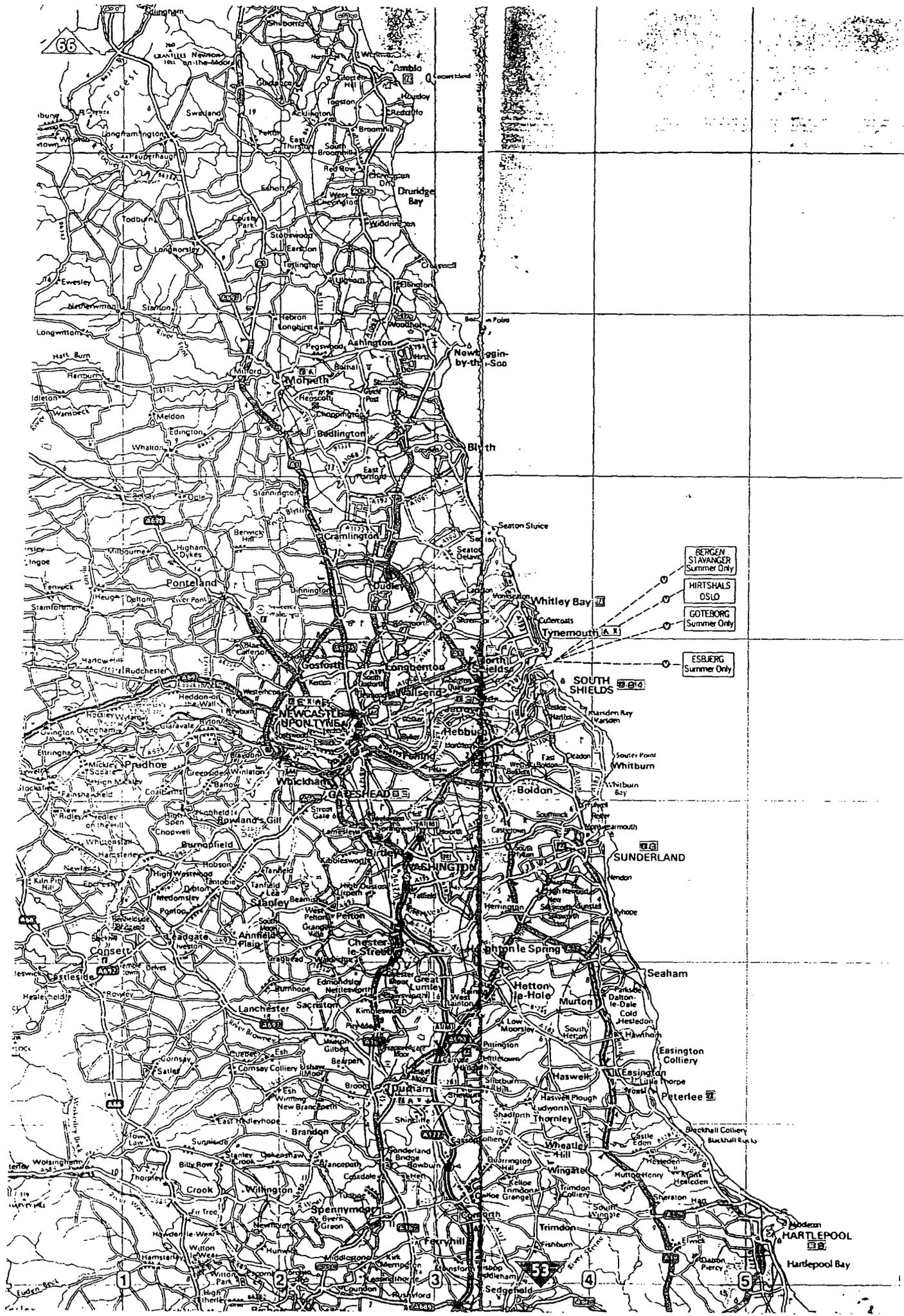
- Existing
- T7 A1(M) to be widened at certain locations along its length to provide climbing lanes
- T9 A1(M) Possible new connections in the Bowburn/Coxhoe area

**Primary route network**

- Existing
- Trunk road schemes in D. Tp. Programme
- Trunk Road schemes County Council wishes to see in a future D.Tp. Programme
- Proposed new road or improvement

**Other classified roads**

- Existing
- Proposed new road or improvement
- Town or village centre



- BERGEN STAVANGER Summer Only
- HIRTSHALS OSLO
- GOTEBOG Summer Only
- ESBIERG Summer Only

SUNDERSLAND

HARTLEPOOL

66

1

2

3

4

5

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF CHESTER-LE-STREET  
AND THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Chester-le-Street is a town within the County of Durham with its origins dating back to 833, although almost five centuries earlier the Romans were known to have built a fortress, remains of which are still being unearthed today. The town is strategically placed between Durham City and Newcastle and is serviced by the A1 London - Edinburgh motorway and with the main London-Edinburgh railway line passing through it. The main industrial base was formed by coalmining as many of the surrounding villages were transformed into large mining communities during the latter part of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Recent decline in the coal industry has affected the town and surrounding areas and there are no remaining collieries. Appendix 8 shows detailed statistics on population; social-economic groups; housing; employment; social services; finance and environment for all the District authorities in Durham County Council, including Chester-le-Street and Wear Valley.

Chester-le-Street District Council consists of seventeen wards and was formed after the 1974 re-organisation by the merger of Chester-le-Street Urban District and a large proportion of the Chester-le-Street Rural District.<sup>2</sup> It is the second smallest district council in County Durham, Teesdale being the smallest.

Departmental Structure

As a small district council Chester-le-Street has a staff of 574 (both full and part-time) and an annual expenditure of £6,346,170.<sup>3</sup> Fig. One shows the authority divided into three main Departments, i.e., Chief Executive, Directorate of Operations and Directorate of Finance. Before 1985 the three main Department Heads or Principal Officers were the Chief Executive, the Chief Technical Officer and the Treasurer. In 1985 a management consultancy firm,

S.J. Noel Brown, was commissioned to undertake a review of the whole authority. The resulting report, which advocated the adoption of Total Quality Management and other private business approaches recommended the renaming of the Principal Officers; hence the Chief Technical Officer became the Director of Operations; the Treasurer became the Director of Finance, and the Chief Executive (although he did not have a name change) became the Managing Director of the local authority. These three first tier officers, as they are now known, form a Senior Management Team with the responsibility for recommencing and initiating strategic policy. In theory each of them heads a particular department incorporating a number of service divisions, but in practice they are freed from the day to day controlling and managing of their departments; this is left to the managers of each service, now known as Second Tier Officers.

The Bains Report of 1972 recommended the grouping together of related activities and the creation of larger committees and departments, "programme areas" and "directorates" respectively.<sup>4</sup> The central concern of the Bains Report was the need to improve integration and co-ordination across the range of activities and stressing the duality of local government, a partnership between members and officers, each with their own major area of responsibility, neither regarding any aspect of local authority work as their exclusive preserve. Integration, it was felt, could be achieved by the establishment of a "central co-ordinating team" comprising both members and officers. Chester-le-Street is modelled as Bains recommended in that the Senior Management Team of first tier officers headed by the Chief Executive are freed from the day to day running of their own departments and on the member side there is a Policy and Resources Committee. The Policy and Resources Committee will be examined in more detail below.

The freeing of first tier managers from day to day running of their departments necessitates second tier officers managing and controlling each service, e.g., the Recreation and Leisure Manager has day to day control and management responsibility of the Recreation and Leisure Division within the Directorate of Operations, leaving the

Director of Operations free to concentrate on overall policy. All fourteen Divisional Heads or Managers within a Directorate are known as second tier officers, and they form a Second Tier Management Team that meets regularly to consider day to day operational problems and the effects of policy on service delivery.

### The Committee Structure

The internal organisation of local government is not codified in law, it is a blend of statutory provisions, custom and practice. The main aspects determined by law are:

1. The full council, comprising elected members is designated the formal governing body. Only the full Council can levy rates or Community Charge.<sup>5</sup> The Council is required to meet annually, elect a chairman and to transact other business. Thereafter the Council usually meets monthly or quarterly, the frequency is not specified by law.
2. All relevant authorities must make statutory appointments (e.g. County Councils must appoint a Director of Education, Chief Constable, etc.) and some committees have a legal obligation to co-opt members, e.g. District Councils must co-opt members to the Allotments Committee under the 1922 Allotments Act.<sup>6</sup>
3. Procedure and conduct of business (Part XI and Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972). Councils are empowered to give notice about meetings, publish minutes, etc. Model standing orders are issued to local authorities concerning order and conduct of meetings; presentation of agenda and minutes; declaration of interests, etc.<sup>7</sup>

Outside the aforementioned statutory provisions, councils are free to determine their own committee structure, management arrangements and styles of decision-making best suited to local needs. Each local authority has developed a distinctive internal organisation reflecting differing local social, economic and political circumstances.

Committees and departments are the main features of local authority organisation reflecting the division of labour between the elected members and appointed officers. Most, if not all, councils have insufficient time and too much business to decide everything in full Council and it would be impossible for elected members to closely supervise the work of administrators in service departments. To ease the burden on members and to divide up the work, a series of committees based on service function has evolved over the years. The Committee system is regarded as "the essential defining element of traditional administration; it is fundamental to local government",<sup>8</sup> and "the characteristic method of working".<sup>9</sup> It is often said that the real work of local government takes place in committee and that "the committee system is the characteristic mark of local government just as the Cabinet system is typical of central government".<sup>10</sup>

Councils can delegate many functions to committees and "all but the smallest councils appoint a number of committees".<sup>11</sup> The amount of delegation varies in accordance with local conventions. Committees are based on a blend of formal delegation and convention and can have varying levels of independence bestowed upon them. The Maud Report regarded the system of committees as the practical and essential means of conducting business where executive authority is entrusted to a large body. It was a contrivance of decentralising the various functions of the council and for creating a number of microcosms of it to meet problems as they arose; it was not seen as a means of establishing responsibilities of individual members or groups of members. The traditional system based on separate parts where an individual service has a professional departmental hierarchy led by a principal officer and supervised by a committee member was "a unity in the parts but a disunity in the whole".<sup>12</sup> Maud felt that non-controversial issues could be delegated to officers but the responsibility for major decisions should be handed over to a few key members who would make up a Management Board. This Management Board was to consist of between five and nine members and would be concerned with "proposing and co-ordinating the authorities business and work, initiating and recommending policy, seeing that councils' decisions are carried out and supervising the administration".<sup>13</sup>

It was felt that all members were involved in decision-making and this led to a fragmented and unco-ordinated system with too many committees dealing with the minutiae of council business. Maud favoured a clear cut division between members who should decide policy, and officers responsible for the detail and implementation. By reducing the number of committees to six per local authority; by vesting executive authority with the Management Board of five to nine members; and by ensuring that the Chief Officer had responsibility for co-ordinating the work of Departments it was envisaged that the disparate parts of the whole would be drawn together and unified.<sup>14</sup> There is no indication from this research that any ideas proposed by Maud were adopted by Chester-le-Street Council; even though there are few committees it is due to the size of the council rather than any concerted effort to reduce them; the Chief Executive does have the co-ordinating role in overseeing each service Department but this role has a long history; and the Management Board idea was not taken up.

Given the random manner in which council functions have been amassed over the years it has been usual for the establishment of committees and departments in parallel for each major separate function as and when the need arose. A line can be drawn between vertical committees based on service provision (e.g., Housing, Recreation and Leisure) and horizontal committees embracing the whole of council resource matters (e.g., Finance, Personnel).<sup>15</sup> The committee system at Chester-le-Street is organised along vertical and horizontal lines. As Figs. Two and Three show there are three main committees, two main sub-committees and a range of minor sub-committees. One of the three main Committees is the Policy and Resources Committee advocated by Bains in 1972 and set up with the purpose of assisting in the formulation and carrying out of the overall plan for the community and to aid the authority in setting objectives, priorities and controlling and co-ordinating the implementation of objectives and monitoring and reviewing performance. Bains anticipated that Policy and Resources Committees of Members would work in tandem with the co-ordinating team of officers, thereby ensuring a corporate approach to management of council business. The Policy and Resources Committee at

Chester-le-Street has two of the four sub-committees proposed by Bains (Finance and Manpower) and it also deals with monitoring and reviewing performance even though it does not have a sub-committee for the sole purpose. Land, which was the other programme area mentioned in the Bains Report, is dealt with under the General Purposes Committee.

Each Committee meets once a month, apart from August when there is a recess committee to consider business arising during the holiday period. The most striking and unusual aspect of Committee work at Chester-le-Street, and it may be unique in this respect, is that all thirty three councillors (twenty-five Labour, four Independents and four Liberal Democrats) serve on all committees, and all sub-committees. In an authority as small as this, each committee knows what the others are doing and is aware of all the council's activities. Each councillor attends at least sixteen committee meetings per month, sometimes more; but committees are simply rubber-stamping exercises lasting on average between five to ten minutes. All members can hope to do at the committee stage, and this is especially true of opposition members, is to secure very minor alterations and score political points by having objections recorded in the minutes, if only to show the electors in their ward that they are doing something in their role as representatives. Policy and major decisions are taken informally outside the committee system and will be examined in greater detail in the next section.

The nature of the policy making in Chester-le-Street leaves the opposition effectively neutralised at committee stage. The controlling group of traditional, cautious and conservative members rely heavily on the expertise of officers. Members have hardly any source of outside advice and virtually no research facilities that could be used to challenge the professional knowledge base of officers. Professional officers are therefore very significant actors in the formulation and implementation of policy at Chester-le-Street.

### Policy Making

The Maud Report supported the view that "there are some issues that stand out patently as important and can be regarded as policy; other matters seemingly trivial may involve political or social reaction of such significance that deciding them becomes a matter of policy and members may decide a course of action upon them. Also a succession of detailed decisions may contribute eventually to the formulation of policy".

In the electoral chain of command theory of decision making "policy is the work of the Council" but in practice the full council rarely initiates anything and its proceedings have become more and more formal and ritualistic.<sup>16</sup> The orthodox view is that policy making is organised around particular services, administered by a committee working through a corresponding principal officer heading a department. Many councils have policy making processes bearing the needs of individual services in mind rather than in relation to council activities as a whole. Orthodox views of policy making usually fail to account for the individual personalities of actors involved and also the inherent evolutionary traditions and conventions. Chester-le-Street has a distinctive policy making process which is at variance with the orthodox view outlined earlier.

On the officer side, Chester-le-Street has two Management Teams; the Senior Management Team is made up of first tier officers or directors and they concentrate on planning and policy-making. There is also a second tier management team made up of the fourteen managers of service divisions and they deal with day to day operational issues and the effects of policy on service delivery. Each management team meets at least once a week, sometimes many more times, both formally and informally. In such a small council, and especially in one organised on an open-plan office layout, there is a high degree of informal inter-action between officers, and the necessity for formal meetings is minimised.

On the member side, Chester-le-Street is controlled by the Labour Party with each committee chaired and deputised by leading group members. Minority group members sit on every committee but are never asked to chair. There are differing views on the expediency of this form of control of committees. Professor H.V. Wiseman found in his Leeds study that the controlling Labour Group was able to conduct business more effectively by not allowing minority members to frustrate decision making.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand L.J. Sharpe regards one party control as a serious threat to the democratic workings of local government.<sup>18</sup>

In Chester-le-Street there is "caucus" rule where the leading members, known affectionately by some officers as "the all-powerful triumvirate", i.e., the Leader of Council, the Secretary of the Labour Group and chairmen of committees, liaise informally and regularly with officers before and in between committee and group meetings. Local government officials are servants of the Council though under a party system they have to serve the majority party.<sup>19</sup>

The Maud and Bains Reports recognised the growth of party politics but gave little consideration to this issue, although they stressed the need for "a very close, though informal, working relationship between the majority party leader and the Chief Executive".<sup>20</sup> A joint Royal Institute of Public Administration and Policy Studies Institute pamphlet goes as far as to say that "the idea of the council as a whole being responsible for the determination of policy in changing political circumstances does not accord with political reality, whatever the constitutional position. The effective power in most councils now rests with the party group. Local authorities have developed both formal and informal methods for Chief Officers to advise where necessary." Indeed RIPA/PSI also published a draft guideline (prepared by Sir John Boynton) for Chief Executives to help them in dealing with their council members to enable them to maintain impartiality.<sup>21</sup> (Appendix 9)

In Chester-le-Street a policy issue may originate from one of the Senior Management Team in discussion formally or informally with one or both of his counterparts. It can arise from inter-actions between any of the three Senior Management Team members and the fourteen second tier management team. One clear view that emerges from interviews undertaken

for this research is that councillors themselves do not, under any circumstances, initiate any policy, relying instead on the expertise of officers. The twenty-five member Labour Party Group meets at least weekly and the members tend to follow the direction given by the three major figures already mentioned. Once the Labour Group has accepted the policy proposal put by the Officer, the Leader will advise the particular officer to go ahead and prepare a report on the matter. At the group meetings the Leader will note any particular members' concerns and then instruct the officer to draw up a report for consideration. The policy has therefore been ratified and agreed at this stage even before an official report is prepared and put to committee. Decision-making is mostly an orchestrated affair between leading Labour members and the controlling Group informally ratifies all decisions in the weekly meeting. It is obvious that there is a heavy reliance on the technical and professional expertise of chief officers. The reliance on chief officers of leisure will be outlined more fully.

#### Recreation and Leisure Department

The Recreation and Leisure Department is a division within the Directorate of Operations and as Figs. 4 and 5 show it is staffed by only six individuals within the District offices and supported by ninety-six operation and facilities staff throughout the District. Recreation and leisure services have not been afforded a high priority by local councillors even though in terms of gross expenditure it is second only to housing. (See Appendix 10 showing comparison of Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street Recreation spending per head of population). The division is responsible for providing and managing those recreational facilities shown in Fig. 6 and it spends approximately one and a half million pounds per annum Fig. 7 but earns approximately £297,000 per annum. In addition to recreational facilities the division also has responsibility for the upkeep of three cemeteries which earn £13,000 in burial fees and the staging of special events such as cycling races, football tournaments on a break-even or loss-making basis. These events are provided solely for community benefit. During the period 1979 to 1989 manpower in the recreation and leisure division

almost halved but since the introduction of new legislation forcing them to put grounds maintenance and management of leisure facilities out to competitive tendering there has been a review and internal restructuring. Indeed one member of staff is now solely responsible for interpreting and implementing the new guidelines set by central government. There has also been a growing recognition in Chester-le-Street, as in many other councils, that leisure services not only improve the quality of life for local residents but also the local economy by attracting business, encouraging tourism and ultimately, it is hoped, create employment for local people. Leisure is an area relatively free from the tight central control exerted over statutory services. Recreation and Leisure divisions are able to set their own pricing structures, operational standards and opening times and have greater scope for innovation and new initiatives. As central government funds have been diminishing over the last ten years many councils are seeking ways of obtaining funds from other bodies.

#### Links with outside bodies

Fig. 8 indicates current links with outside bodies and the following sections provide analysis.

#### Northern Arts and Durham Theatre Company

Chester-le-Street annually grants £2,500 to Northern Arts and £2,500 to Durham Theatre Company and apart from informal liaison and some councillors acting as representatives to Northern Arts this is the sum total of the relationship. Northern Arts did approach the council recently to suggest the recruitment of an Arts Development Officer and the setting up of an Arts Funding Association of local artists but this proposal was rejected. Northern Arts were prepared to supply £3,000 if the Council could match the sum but, in view of lack of interest in the past, many events have had to be cancelled. This scheme was rejected out of hand.

Park View Community Association, Local Community and Youth Groups,  
Local Sports Clubs and the Education Department

The district council has very close links with Park View Community Association, which is financed by Durham County Council Education Department, and other local sports and community groups which it helps with finance and advice. Many of the links are of an informal nature but there is also a series of joint sporting and coaching events. Durham County Council has very little contact with the Sports Council, which is seen as a funding body that provides research and advice. In 1989 the Sports Council and Durham County Council founded a joint scheme introducing artificial fibre on to one of the District's football pitches. The Education Department uses the District swimming pools for lessons for local school pupils.

Institute of Leisure and Amenities (I.L.A.M.) and Institute of Baths  
and Recreation Management (I.B.R.M.)

The Leisure Officers of Chester-le-Street belong to both professional associations and benefit from advice and support. I.L.A.M. has recently set up its own research department and Chester-le-Street is in the process of commissioning a large scale survey of community leisure needs.

Other Local Authorities

Leisure officers of Chester-le-Street are in close, informal contact with surrounding Durham councils. they also develop inter-district sports fixtures. Durham County Council in its latest Structure Plan encourages the Districts to promote tourism and economic development by the encouragement of investment and Chester-le-Street is considering the implications of doing this.

Chester-le-Street Riverside development: A home for County Cricket in the North

In line with its stated aims of improving the quality of life for local residents, stimulating the local economy by attracting new business and creating employment, the Leisure Department at Chester-le-Street's greatest success is claimed to be the proposal to develop recreational facilities on a one hundred acre site in the Riverside area of the town.

Early in 1989 the Council began to investigate the feasibility of developing the site and with the backing of Durham County Cricket Club and Durham County Council made a bid to the T.C.C.B. for acceptance as the eighteenth County to be awarded First Class status.

There has been ferocious local opposition to the plans with the setting up of a "Save our Riverside" campaign. Local residents concerned with issues such as cost of the development and future running costs; damage to the environment and local wildlife; anticipated traffic congestion; housing business premises out of price range of local people; employment opportunities will be limited and those created will be of low paid and menial nature. Many public meetings have been held with marches through the town and written objections have been sent to the Secretary of State, but all to no avail.

Ferocious feelings have been engendered outside the council chamber and within it; one councillor resigned over the issue; but the plans went ahead. The T.C.C.B. gave Durham County Cricket Club the green light in December 1990 and Chester-le-Street and Durham County are forging ahead with the development of the Riverside area. (See Appendices at the end of this chapter for press cuttings.)

There has been a certain amount of political debate at Chester-le-Street about leisure provision but nowhere near the scale of opposition at Wear Valley, to which we now turn our attention.

# APPENDIX EIGHT

	DERWENTSIDE	CHESTER LE STREET	WEAR VALLEY	CITY OF DURHAM	EASINGTON	TEESDALE	SEDFIELD	DARLINGTON	COUNTY DURHAM	ENGLAND & WALES	NOTES & SOURCES
<b>TRANSPORT</b>											
Households with no car 1991 (%)	50.7	41.9	49.2	42.7	56.7	33.3	48.1	44.0	47.6	30.5	2
Households with one car 1991 (%)	40.2	45.3	40.5	45.3	38.0	47.5	42.6	43.6	42.1	45.0	2
Households with two or more cars 1991 (%)	9.1	11.6	10.3	12.0	6.5	19.2	9.3	11.6	10.3	15.0	2
Mode of travel to work 1991 (%)											2
Car	51.7	60.1	50.7	56.0	40.8	54.6	50.5	49.2	50.6	51.2	
Bus	23.5	22.4	17.9	20.9	25.3	7.0	19.1	19.1	20.6	15.3	
Tram	0.2	0.4	1.2	0.4	0.4		0.6	2.1	0.8	6.0	
Motor Cycle	1.2	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.7	1.9	1.6	3.0	
Pedal Cycle	0.3	0.3	1.1	0.7	0.3	1.0	1.1	4.3	1.3	3.9	
On foot	18.8	11.9	20.4	15.7	27.1	24.2	22.8	18.5	19.0	15.0	
Work at home	2.4	1.3	4.3	2.2	2.0	8.5	2.0	2.2	2.6	3.4	
Length of highways April 1989 (kms)											26
Motorway		7		14			15	9	45	2737	
Trunk		6		12	18	24	16	12	65	9529	
County roads - classified	264	73	250	149	127	367	169	103	1502	119828	
County roads - unclassified	365	182	272	300	342	202	308	255	2305	169170	
<b>EDUCATION (County Council Services)</b>											
27											
<b>Number of County Schools 1989</b>											
Nursery	3	2	3	4	5		4	6	27	535	
Primary (inc nursery classes attached)	49	25	39	43	45	16	42	36	295	19407	
Secondary	6	4	5	6	6	2	8	6	45	3907	
Special	2		2	4	2		4	3	17	1251	
<b>Average size of schools (pupils)</b>											
Nursery	57	42	41	47	45		41	67	52	187	
Primary (inc nursery classes attached)	149	190	147	164	211	194	205	226	182	187	
Secondary	770	847	868	993	982	665	696	778	830	740	
<b>Pupil/Teacher ratio</b>											
Nursery	21.1	16.9	16.0	14.5	16.5		17.2	12.2	15.3	26.4	
Primary (inc nursery classes attached)	22.3	18.1	21.4	21.9	23.0	19.9	23.0	23.0	21.9	21.6	
Secondary	16.0	15.7	15.8	15.7	16.3	14.6	15.4	15.8	15.8	15.0	
<b>LIBRARY (County Council Services)</b>											
28											
<b>County Library Branches 1989</b>											
Full-time	5	3	5	6	9	1	8	2	39	2056	
Part-time/Mobile	6	4	8	5	3	5	3	2	39	2195	
<b>MAJOR CENTRES</b>											
29											
<b>RESIDENT POPULATION 1988 (000s)</b>											
Consett/Castlesford/Leazes	29.9										
Staley	17.0										
Chester-le-Street	22.3										
Bishop Auckland/West Auckland	24.3										
Croptham	8.4										
Durham City	36.6										
Southam	21.9										
Petersham/Horden	30.7										
Barnard Castle/Sturton	5.8										
Swannyside	17.7										
Newton Aycliffe	24.3										
Darlington	85.2										
<b>NOTES AND SOURCES</b>											
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Census 1971.</li> <li>Census 1991.</li> <li>Director of Economic Development, 1988-based estimates. County figure is an independent estimate and not the sum of districts. England and Wales figure is the mid-1988 population estimate (OPCS PPI 881).</li> <li>Director of Economic Development, 1988-based estimates. County figure is an independent estimate and not the sum of districts.</li> <li>Census 1991. Amended to take account of known changes.</li> <li>OPCS vital statistics 1988. Birth rates exclude still births. The total period fertility rate is the average number of children which a woman aged 15 can expect to bear during her child-bearing life if current age-specific birth rates remain unchanged.</li> <li>OPCS vital statistics 1988. The standardised mortality ratio is the number of actual deaths in the area expressed as a % of deaths that would have occurred had national age-specific rates prevailed.</li> <li>Director of Economic Development. Estimates of average life expectancy from birth averaged over the years 1985-88.</li> <li>1991 Census and subsequent District Council quarterly returns. Percentages are based on District Council Housing Investment Programme returns, April 1989.</li> <li>Estimates obtained by dividing the 1988 population in private households by the average household size.</li> <li>Director of Economic Development, 1988-based estimates.</li> <li>District Council Housing Investment Programme returns, April 1988.</li> <li>District Council returns.</li> <li>Department of Employment, census of employment 1987. Compiled by using the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.</li> <li>Department of Employment data compiled on 1961 district boundaries. National figures are given in thousands.</li> <li>Director of Social Services, April 1988.</li> <li>County Treasurer, April 1989. The tabular value per head of population has been calculated using the Registrar General's mid-year estimates of population for 1988.</li> <li>Census 1991, modified to take account of subsequent boundary changes.</li> <li>Director of Economic Development, estimates derived from 1988 population estimates and total area figures.</li> <li>Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Census June 1991.</li> <li>Director of Environment, June 1989.</li> <li>Director of Environment, June 1989.</li> <li>Director of Environment, April 1989.</li> <li>Director of Environment, April 1989.</li> <li>Census 1991. Figures do not add up to 100% because the category 'other' not stated is excluded.</li> <li>Director of Environment, April 1989. England and Wales figures are for 1987 and are from Department of Transport and CIPFA statistics.</li> <li>Director of Education, April 1989. England and Wales figures are estimates from CIPFA Education statistics 1988/89. It is impossible to split the national average school size statistic between primary and nursery schools.</li> <li>County Librarian, April 1989.</li> <li>Director of Economic Development, provisional estimates 1988.</li> </ol> <p>This leaflet has been produced for Durham County Council by the Director of Economic Development.</p> <p>© 1990 Durham County Council Economic Development &amp; Research Unit</p>											

# County Durham in Figures 1990





# The Chief Executive and Party Politics in Local Government

*Draft guidelines suggested by the delegates to the seminar organised by the Policy Studies Institute and the Royal Institute of Public Administration on 24 May, 1979 (based on a paper prepared by Sir John Boynton).*

1. The Chief Executive is the servant of the Council as a whole and his overriding responsibility is to the Council, and not to any party political group.
2. In councils with party political groups, the Chief Executive will nevertheless be expected to work closely with the majority party for the time being and to give them information, assistance, and advice. Subject to maintaining his position as politically neutral (see para 3) he may develop a special relationship with the majority party leadership and should not without consent disclose to the minority parties any matters discussed with that leadership.
3. The political neutrality of the Chief Executive should be respected by all parties. He should not be asked to play any role or undertake any task which is likely to prejudice that neutrality, or make it difficult for him to serve a different majority political party at some future time in the Authority.
4. (a) The Chief Executive should expect and be expected to ensure that a report, oral or written, is provided on any matter of significant policy of the Authority before a policy is considered for adoption by any sub-committee or committee of the Council or by the Council itself. The object of such a report should be to ensure that councillors are aware of the main courses of action which may be open for adoption and the probable consequences of those courses of action.  
(b) Where the majority party make arrangements for the discussion of items in a party political group prior to submission to a committee or sub-committee, arrangements should be made to ensure that official information and advice is available to the group meeting.  
(c) The Chief Executive may express a preference for a particular course of action provided that in doing so he does not derogate from the position of elected members as the policy makers.
5. The Chief Executive has a duty to warn the Council where he is aware, of prospective decisions which might be *ultra vires* or lead to surcharge. He is also entitled to present a report where the Council are considering a course of action which might, in his view, be considered to be seriously contrary to the public interest. Such a report should be made in confidence. The Chief Executive may be asked by the majority party to defer the presentation of a report. Provided that the purpose of the report can still be achieved by later presentation and consideration the Chief Executive should normally agree to a requested deferment. The responsibility for accepting, in whole or in part, or rejecting any view of the Chief Executive rests with the Council. His duty should be regarded as fulfilled when the warning has been given to the Council or one of its committees or sub-committees.

6. All members of the Council should have a right of access to the Chief Executive. Where a member requires information, it should be provided if it is readily available, for example, in committee papers or material published on behalf of the Council. The Chief Executive should be free to give advice as to procedural matters to any member. In doubtful cases, the Chief Executive should be entitled to seek the instructions of a chairman or a committee before responding to a request from a Council member.
7. The following principles should govern the relationship between the Chief Executive and minority parties:
  - (a) It should be regarded as proper for the Chief Executive to develop a working relationship with the minority parties on the Council.
  - (b) The Chief Executive should be free to provide information and answer procedural enquiries to members of any minority party as set out in para 6. He should not advise as to the policies which any minority party should pursue.
  - (c) The Chief Executive should ensure that the majority party leadership are aware of information provided by him to representatives of minority parties, unless it be of a routine or trivial nature.
  - (d) Because the Chief Executive is the servant of the whole Council, he should draw the attention of the majority party leadership to any case where consideration should, in his opinion, be given to affording information, consultation, or representation to the minority parties.

In applying these principles to any given situation, the Chief Executive should have regard to the perceived custom of the Authority, to any established traditions, and to any accepted procedural rules governing the rights of minority parties to information, consultation, or representation.

8. If a Chief Executive attends a meeting of any party political group, he should inform the leadership of the other parties on the Council. He should ensure that the part he plays in the proceedings is consistent with his political neutrality. He should not attend party political group meetings at which there are persons present who are neither elected members nor officials of the Authority.

Chester le Street District Council  
Recreation & Leisure Division

Its Place Within the Authority

Directorate of  
Operations

DIRECTOR OF  
OPERATIONS

Recreation & Leisure  
Environmental Services  
Architects  
Housing  
Purchasing  
Planning

Chief Executive's  
Department

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Administrative Services  
Secretarial Services  
Personnel

Directorate of  
Finance

DIRECTOR OF  
FINANCE

Computing  
Community Charge  
Housing Benefits  
Accountancy  
Wages

Chester le Street District Council

Recreation & Leisure Division

**COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

Full Council

Environmental Health  
Recreation & General  
Purposes

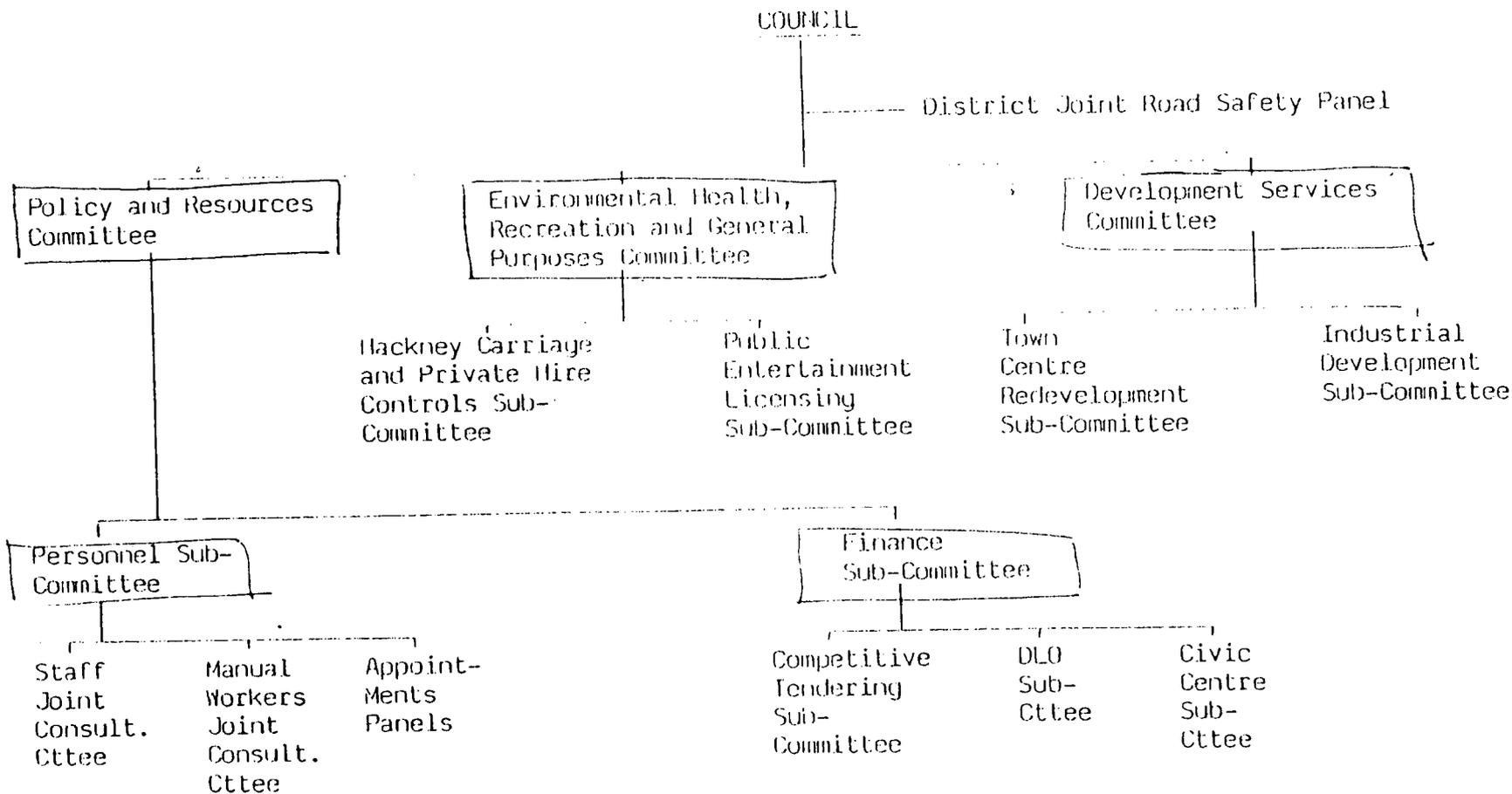
Development Services

Policy & Resources

Personnel

Finance

THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF CHESTER LE STREET



Chester le Street District Council

Recreation & Leisure Division

**Staff Structure**

Recreation & Leisure Manager

Assistant Recreation & Leisure Manager

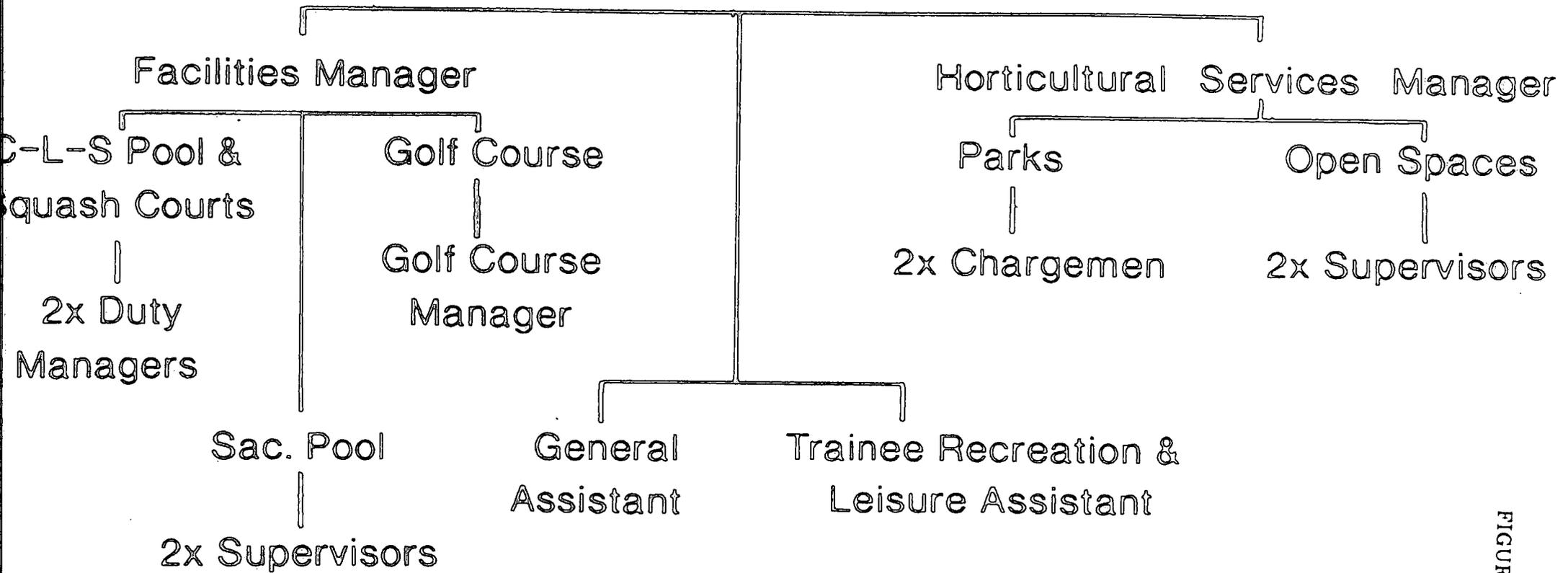
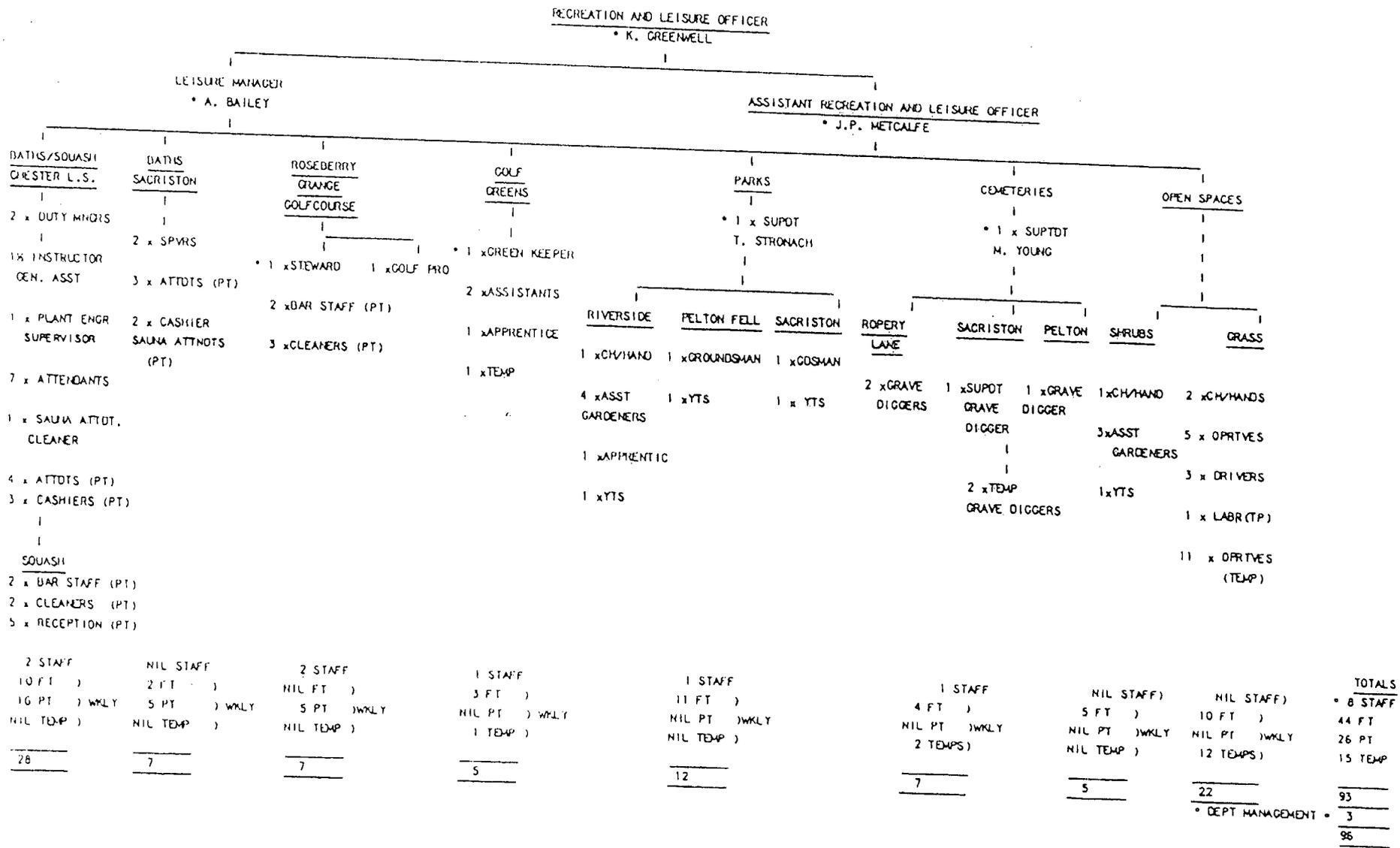


FIGURE 4



COMPARISONS WITH OTHER NON-METROPOLITAN DISTRICTS - ACTUALS 1986/87

	<u>Wear Valley</u>	<u>Chester-le-Street</u>	<u>Darlington</u>	<u>Derwentside</u>	<u>Durham</u>	<u>Easington</u>	<u>Sedgfield</u>	<u>Teesdale</u>	<u>Fenland (Cams)</u>	<u>Glanford (Humberside)</u>	<u>East Northants (Northants)</u>	<u>All English Districts</u>
<b>GENERAL</b>												
Population	65,000	53,400	99,200	86,100	86,100	96,500	88,600	24,800	70,000	69,500	64,200	
Area (Hectares)	50,507	6,762	19,840	27,083	18,691	14,420	21,760	84,298	55,183	57,985	51,009	
Density	1.29	7.90	5.00	3.18	4.61	6.69	4.07	0.29	1.27	1.20	1.26	
<b>ALL SERVICES</b>												
Net Cost per head of population **	113.68	74.37	105.19	83.38	76.56	83.56	109.76	65.49	38.65	60.61	27.10	59.91
Manpower per 1000 population - Full time	9.03	9.08	10.18	12.61	12.74	13.31	11.37	4.07	5.10	4.59	4.08	6.74
- Part time	2.46	2.17	4.78	2.60	0.75	1.70	1.50	0.56	1.27	0.86	1.04	1.23
<b>PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORT PER HEAD OF POPULATION</b>												
Revenue Support	-	-	2.67	0.73	-	0.02	-	-	-	-	-	0.79
Concessionary Fares	3.87	3.05	8.07	4.22	3.43	3.76	3.88	2.63	-	0.76	0.31	2.04
<b>HOUSING - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</b>												
Management and Maintenance per dwelling per year	£273	£317	£304	£583	£401	£380	£343	N/A	£459	£299	N/A	£441
Rent arrears as percentage of rent collectable for year	1.6%	0.9%	3.5%	3.7%	0.5%	3.0%	1.1%	1.1%	2.2%	0.6%	N/A	2.6%
Benefits as a percentage of gross rents:												
Government Subsidy - percentage of total costs	58.8%	49.8%	59.6%	59.8%	44.0%	48.7%	55.0%	49.2%	58.0%	55.2%	N/A	50.2%
Rate Fund Contribution to Housing Revenue as a percentage of total costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3%	1.5%	-	-	N/A	2.2%
	2.3%	2.0%	17.0%	0.7%	14.0%	6.2%	3.4%	4.3%	22.4%	2.4%	N/A	2.1%
<b>TRADING SERVICES</b>												
Revenue as a percentage of total costs	57.4%	114.8%	89.5%	54.2%	83.0%	59.9%	73.6%	223.2%	81.0%	36.4%	56.2%	101.3%
<b>RECREATION - PER HEAD OF POPULATION</b>												
	£23.20	£14.60	£20.00	£23.40	£21.30	£ 9.90	£21.50	£ 0.90	£ 6.80	£ 8.70	£ 3.00	£12.00
<b>REFUSE COLLECTION</b>												
Employees - per 1000 population	0.78	0.66	N/A	0.75	0.88	N/A	N/A	1.05	0.37	N/A	N/A	0.54
Net Cost - per head of population	£10.50	£ 9.71	N/A	£11.25	£9.51	N/A	£7.95	£11.42	£7.03	N/A	N/A	£8.22

\*\*NOTE: The net cost of all services is shown before deducting Specific Grants (e.g. Improvement Grants, C.I.A., Slum Clearance, etc.) This does not give a fair comparison because of the high level of Improvement Grants given by this Authority over a number of years, a higher Specific Grant is received by this Authority. A more accurate comparison would be shown if the net cost given was after the deduction of Specific Grants.

SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Swimming Pools

Squash Complex

Roseberry Grange Golf Course

Football Pitches

Rugby Pitches

Tennis Courts

Bowling Greens

Parks

Open Spaces

Playgrounds

Cemeteries

Chester le Street District Council

FIGURE 7

Recreation & Leisure Division

Application of Funds

on Recreation 88/89

	<u>Exp (£)</u>	<u>Income (£)</u>
Cemeteries	95 000	13 000
Parks & Recreational Areas	306 000	10 000
Open Spaces	120 000	3 000
Sacrison Swimming Pool	128 000	24 000
Chester le Street Swimming Pool	363 000	83 000
Squash Courts	79 000	41 000
Golf Course	210 000	123 000
Special Events	13 000	-----

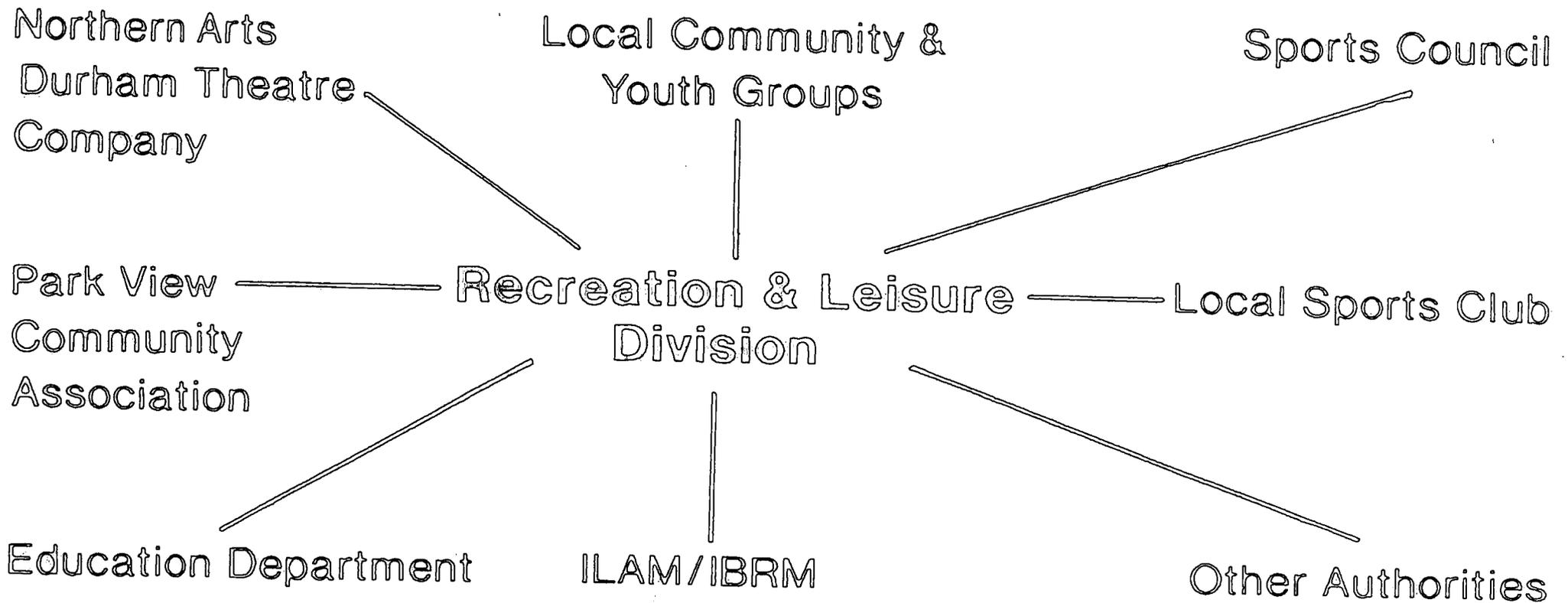
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GENERAL RATE FUND SUMMARY REVENUE ACCOUNT

	1988/89 Gross Expenditure	1988/89 Income	1988/89 Net Expenditure	1987/88 Net Expenditure
	£	£	£	£
<u>EXPENDITURE ON SERVICES</u>				
Refuse Collection	689,910	30,043	659,867	516,970
Highways	309,456	1,037	308,419	260,308
Transportation	221,290	27,298	193,992	213,957
Environmental Health	261,136	2,199	258,937	206,401
Cemeteries	98,120	14,793	73,327	98,663
Leisure	1,232,068	291,033	941,035	874,713
Planning and Development	427,915	234,846	193,069	261,011
Housing (non HRA)	630,970	597,556	33,414	29,426
Housing Benefit	1,643,255	1,374,140	269,115	173,900
Cost of Rate Collection	205,007	3,974	201,033	171,364
Community Charge	48,198	1,400	46,798	-
Registration of Electors	23,623	662	22,961	31,234
Miscellaneous	565,222	334,092	231,130	282,622
	6,346,170	2,913,073	3,433,097	3,120,570
Contribution to Housing Revenue Account			98,718	118,862
Contribution from Trading Undertakings			(162,826)	(127,993)
Interest on Internal Balances			(76,447)	(63,246)
Contribution to Special Reserve			3,292,542	3,048,193
<u>NET CHARGE TO RATE FUND</u>			112,331	245,414
Block Grant			(1,365,201)	(1,511,803)
Rates			(1,951,781)	(1,781,549)
<u>DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) FOR YEAR</u>			87,891	255
<u>GENERAL RATE FUND BALANCE</u>				
Balance at beginning of year			795,701	795,956
Surplus/(Deficit) for year			(87,891)	(255)
Balance at End of Year			707,810	795,701

Chester le Street District Council  
Recreation & Leisure Division

Its Role in the Community (Links with Outside Bodies)



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**Press cuttings and appendices on**

**Chester-le-Street District Council**

# Don swaps soccer for his first love

THE Don — is the phrase used to describe the Godfather!

While Don Robson cannot be placed in that category, he is without doubt a powerful man when it comes to the running of cricket.

He is one of the leading lights in Durham's bid to join the cricketing elite in the first class game.

With one of the most persua-

sive men at the helm that I have ever met, it's hard to see how Durham's bid can be rejected.

When Durham officially announced their bid on Thursday, they held a double Press conference. There was one at Durham County Hall and the other in London.

Robson was the man who travelled to the capital to put Durham's ideas forward to the southern and national media.

Yet, despite his passion for cricket it was as a footballer that Robson made his name.

After playing soccer with Doncaster Rovers, he went on to have spells with Gateshead, South Shields and Blyth Spartans.

Cricket though was always his passion. Gradually, 56-year-old Robson got more and more involved with cricket and became chairman of Greenside Cricket Club and the Tyne-side Senior

League.

Now he is also chairman of the powerful National Cricket Association and he carries the can for all cricket in this country apart from Test matches, first class and minor counties.

Channeling his energies into cricket at grass roots level is high on Robson's list of priorities.

He appreciates that the development of cricket at a tender age is paramount for English cricket.

If quality is brought through the system from a young age, the greater the chance of success in the future.

Robson has a hectic schedule. As well as his business interests, he is leader of the Labour-controlled Durham County Council and back in 1973 as a 39-year-old, became the youngest ever chairman of Durham County Council.

# HOWZAT! CRICKET CLUB AIMS FOR TOP

**DURHAM County Cricket Club has the best record of any in the Minor Counties League. The club has launched ambitious plans to join the county championship and bring first class cricket to Durham. GRAHAM ROBINSON looks at these plans and the future of Durham County Cricket Club.**



● TREASURER ... Tommy Moffat.



● CHAIRMAN ... Arthur Austin.

**D**URHAM County Cricket Club has put its cards on the table and launched a campaign to fulfil the impossible dream.

The idea of first class county cricket being played in Durham would have been laughed out of court not so long ago.

Of course, Durham is the best equipped county outside of the first class circuit.

Durham's record at minor counties level is second to none. Champions a record-breaking nine times, they lifted the title on three occasions in the 80s and but for the weather, there could easily have been another couple of championship successes.

It seems incredible that Durham is not already in the top flight. League cricket in the North East is widely regarded as being as good as there is anywhere else in the country.

## STAGGERING

There was, of course, the theory that the county championship was a closed shop. Durham's push looks like hitting that theory for six.

Let's not get carried away on the bandwagon of publicity, however. There's still a long way to go.

To put things into perspective, Durham has now got a foot on the bottom rung of the ladder.

It's now just over a year ago since a working party met at Ashbrooke to discuss the viability of Durham bidding for the big time.

In just 12 months the amount of work that has gone on unnoticed is staggering. Durham's promotional package was unveiled simultaneously at County Hall and in London.

The quality of the glossy brochure and video was top class, which in a way epitomises Durham's outlook. It wants the best and has gone out of its way to produce the best publicity campaign it can.

Ultimately, the decision will be left to the 19 members of the Test and County Cricket board.

Some 13 votes will be required if Durham is to get the go ahead and become the 18th First Class County.

But before it reaches the voting stage, there are three main areas that Durham must convince the TCCB members it has in hand.

They are that Durham can compete at first class level on three counts: Facilities, talent and financial backing.

Durham's plans were revealed three months ago to build a multi-million pound complex at Chester-le-Street's riverside park. A stadium capable of hosting first class cricket, an adjacent nursery ground, leisure and residential facilities are in the pipeline.

## FINANCIAL

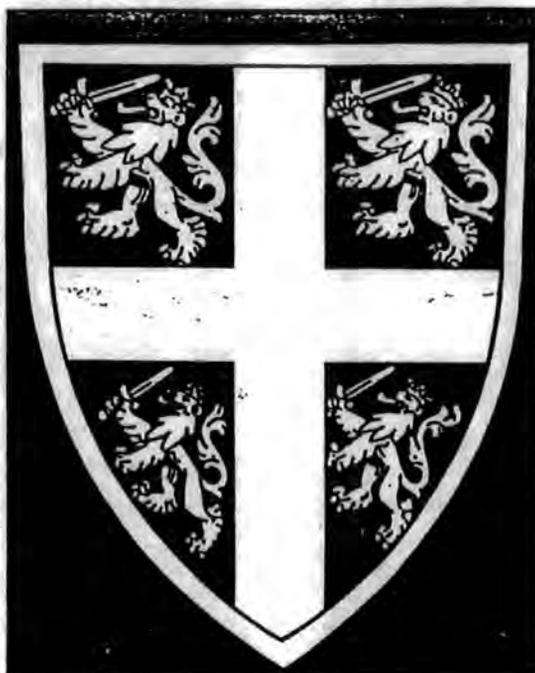
In 1973 at Harrogate, Durham turned the White Rose of Yorkshire red with embarrassment when they toppled Geoff Boycott's side by five wickets to become the first minor counties team to topple a first class county in the Gillette cup.

Derbyshire was then handed even more severe punishment in 1985 in the NatWest Trophy at Derby losing by seven wickets.

On Wednesday, the county committee will host an important meeting as they bid to turn their dream to reality.

Businessmen from all over the region have been invited to a presentation night at Durham where companies will be urged to invest in the county's cricketing future.

Once the final financial details are sorted out Durham will have done all of the spadework and its future will then lie in the hands of the TCCB members.



## Locals want idea to be hit for six

'SAVE Our Riverside' campaigners today urged Wearshires to join their fight to block a multi-million pound cricket stadium being built at Chester-le-Street.

They are asking Wearshires to write letters objecting to the scheme and are hoping someone will agree to organise a campaign in Sunderland.

David Robinson, a spokesman for the campaign, said: "In the summer people from the Sunderland area come here in their thousands to enjoy being by the riverside."

"If they were planning to build a cricket stadium with hotels, a business park and parking spaces for thousands of cars in Barrow Park or Reker Park they would object to it."

Wearshires opposing the scheme, or anyone willing to organise opposition in Sunderland, are being asked to write to

the campaign chairman, John Minto, at 10 Wadsworth Avenue, Garden Farm Estate, Chester-le-Street.

Mr Robinson accused the cricketing fraternity of being misleading in a brochure it had produced by not indicating the development that would be associated with a cricket stadium — a business park, hotel, housing, and parking spaces for 3,000 cars.

He also claimed that the estimated cost of running the ground, put at £525,000 a year, would actually be far higher and could lead to the project being abandoned.

● If anyone would like to sponsor Durham County Cricket in any way they should phone John Caine on 2614707.

# COUNCIL FACES STICKY WICKET

SLECHO  
21/10/89

BY GEORGE OLIVER

COUNTY council chiefs have defended their decision to offer expert help and advice to developers of a controversial multi-million pound cricket complex at Chester-le-Street.

The project could bring county championship cricket to the North-East, but townfolk campaigning against the plan argue it will ruin a popular riverside park.

The scheme, set against the backdrop of Lumley Castle, includes a business park, hotel and conference centre, housing and parking for 3,000 cars in addition to the cricket stadium.

If the proposals by the Durham County Cricket Club win approval, the Chester-le-Street ground would be the country's first to be built to Test or even county standard this century.

## BENEFITS

The council's job hunters say the scheme would not only enhance the area's image but add to its economic development.

District and county council officers have already played a significant part in the preparation of the recently publicly launched illustrative scheme.

A report, to go before councillors next week, suggests that in view of the "significant benefits likely to accrue from the proposals if they come to fruition" the authority should provide whatever technical and professional support to the parties involved.

A council spokesman said it would be difficult to quantify the extent of that support at such an early stage but added: "We will be treating this in the same way we would any other major economic or commercial venture that will bring benefit to the county."

## Durham may wait till 1993

By Mark Dawson

DURHAM'S bold bid to join the giants of the county cricket scene may not see fruition until 1993.

Early speculation suggested Durham could be playing in the Championship by 1991, but the committee specially set up to establish first-class cricket in the North-East has no intention of rushing things.

And one of that committee, Durham treasurer Tom Moffat, said last week: "It may be best that we enter the first-class scene at second eleven and Sunday League level in 1992 and not take part in the Championship until the following year.

### Lavish

"We'll take our time until we have got it right. We won't get a second bite at the cherry, so our application must be spot on first time."

Nevertheless, Moffat and his colleagues are confident that Durham will become the first newcomers to the county set since Glamorgan moved into the big time in 1921.

And he is optimistic that objections to the setting up of a purpose-built ground and county headquarters at

Chester-le-Street's 100-acre, Riverside

Park will be out-weighted by the boost first-class cricket would bring to the region.

The lavish Riverside Park scheme — incorporating a cricket ground, all-weather sports facility, football pitches, car parking, executive housing and a hotel — is crucial to Durham's application.

"Unless we have our own home, it is not viable to go first-class. We'd need an estimated £750,000 per year to run the team and, while we can use other grounds around the county as Riverside Park is being developed, we cannot raise the money needed at those grounds — individual clubs still have their own fund-raising to do," said Moffat.

Durham will make its application to the TCCB next year, supporting it with a glossy brochure. However, the brochure is currently lacking photographs and the county want help from anyone who can supply a picture of a Durham-born player who has gone on to the first-class scene.

Photos can be sent to the Sports Desk at the Sunday Sun, Thomson House, Great Market, Newcastle.

S. Sun. 29.10.89.

# Lancs in boost for Durham

NIE  
17.10.89

**DURHAM will play their first-ever three day match next summer when Lancashire bring a full-strength side to Gateshead Fell.**

The game will provide a perfect platform for the county to test their potential against a first class side.

By that time, Durham should know whether or not their bid with the Test and County Cricket Board to join the elite has proved successful.

While Durham officials have been working overtime in an effort to have the application on the table by early January, this match gives them the opportunity of assessing the make-up of the current side.

Although no-one doubts the county will have to bring in at least seven new faces, several members of the Minor Counties line-up will be keen to prove they can live with the best.

The match was the brainchild of Lancashire

by Ian  
Murtagh



chairman Bob Bennett who is on the sub-committee examining Durham's bid.

But he revealed last night that the fixture had been suggested long before he was appointed to the sub-committee.

He said: "Lancashire are a progressive club and we decided to do everything we can to assist Durham.

"Everyone at Old Trafford is hoping they are successful because an additional county will, without doubt, be a tremendous boost

Ironically, the fixture is scheduled for July 4-6 — just days after the two clash, in the NatWest Trophy.

It will be played under County Championship regulations with Fell chosen as the venue because the club have not been handed any Minor Counties games next season.

## Fell date for Lancs

ETC 16.10.89  
NATWEST Trophy rivals Lancashire have handed Durham the chance to gain experience of first class cricket next season.

The teams are to meet in a three day match under full first class rules at Gateshead Fell on July 4 to 6, a week after their NatWest clash at Old Trafford.

The match was suggested by Lancashire chairman Bob Bennett, a member of the TCCB sub committee looking into Durham's application for first class status.

"He said Lancashire would like to give Durham as much help as possible, and we are absolutely delighted to have been able to arrange this match," said Durham secretary Jack Iley.

# Opponents set to bowl over <sup>JOURNAL</sup> ~~plans~~ <sup>14/10/79</sup> plans for park cricket ground

CRICKET fans who want to see first class games on a new Test-standard ground in County Durham were bowled a googly by opponents yesterday.

Durham County Cricket Club is expected to apply later this year for permission to play in the County Championship and an integral part of its bid is a plan to build a new ground.

Durham County Council and Chester-le-Street District Council are helping the minor counties side to choose a site and have provisionally earmarked the southern half of Chester-le-Street's popular Riverside Park.

A feasibility study is being undertaken on the project which would include a cricket stadium; multi-purpose, all-weather nursery ground which could accommodate other sports; a high quality landscaped business park; a hotel and exhibition/conference centre and a sports pavilion with a slipway to the River Wear.

It also includes outdoor sports and recreational facilities; riverside housing and parking for more than 3,000 cars.

But 300 residents who attended a public meeting in Chester-le-Street said they did not want the development and are forming an action committee to oppose it.

They hope to marshal their own ranks before a planning application is submitted.

"There was a show of hands and not one person was in favour of the development."

said Mr David Robinson, an engineer and the campaign organiser, of Crichton Avenue, Chester-le-Street, yesterday.

"Riverside Park is the only area of natural landscape beauty left to residents of Chester-le-Street that is not in private ownership. It is well used for evening walks and weekend leisure."

He said there were a lot of ecological and environmental objections as well.

"Any major development will pollute the river and we doubt if the fish stocks will ever recover. The Durham Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds support us."

Mr Robinson said people were not against county cricket in Chester-le-Street but were opposed to developing a beautiful stretch of river just to finance the cricket ground. After all, it was the housing that was going to pay for the ground.

Mr Ian Caller, president of Durham County Cricket Club, could not be contacted for comment yesterday but Coun George Staines, leader of Chester-le-Street District Council, said the district council was only committed to examining the feasibility of the scheme.

"Complaints are coming in the main from people close by. But there is no suggestion that the riverside walks will go. The only alternative site appears to be the northern half of the park."

But he said economic factors, such as employment, should not be overlooked.

# Cricket plan 'risks a river's wildlife'

N/ECHO  
7/10/89

RESIDENTS fear plans for a multi-million pound cricket stadium on a popular riverside could be devastating for wildlife.

The stadium, along with housing, sports facilities, a hotel and business park, have been proposed for Chester-le-Street's Riverside Park.

The scheme is at the heart of Durham County Cricket Club's push towards first class status.

Last night engineer Stan Hornsby, who lives in nearby Crichton Avenue, said 44 species of birds, including colonies of Sand Martins, could be lost to the area.

He said: "Two of the colonies are going to be where the hotel and the housing development are going to be situated. An entomologist said there is a colony of moths there which is only one of

two recorded in County Durham.

"There are a lot of people walk round this riverside every hour of every day because it's so unspoilt. There's nothing like it in the area."

He added: "This cricket ground could be built anywhere in the county. It doesn't have to be on the riverside."

Opposition in the town is mounting and a public meeting has been called for next Wednesday night in St Cuthbert's Church hall to form an action group to fight the plan.

Chester-le-Street Council has sent leaflets to homes in the district and is inviting comments.

Chief Executive Tony Greensmith has said the response will be considered before a decision on the plan is taken.

# It's just not cricket for park's wildlife

STECHE  
9/10/89

By CAROLINE SWORD

**WILDLIFE could be threatened if plans for a multi-million pound cricket stadium at Chester-le-Street go ahead, according to local residents.**

The stadium, along with housing, sports facilities, and a hotel and business park, have been proposed for the town's Riverside Park.

The area is popular with walkers from throughout the region and now local residents

say the effect of the new buildings could be devastating for wildlife.

Engineer, Stan Hornsby, who lives in nearby Crichton Avenue, said 44 species of birds, including colonies of Sand Martins, could be lost to the area.

Mr Hornsby said that two of the colonies of Sand Martins are where the hotel and housing development are going to be situated.

He claims that he has also been told by an entomologist that there is a colony of moths on the site which is only one of two recorded in County Durham.

Mr Hornsby said: "There are a lot of people who walk round this riverside every hour of every day because it is so unspoilt. There's noth-

ing like it in the area.

"This cricket ground could be built anywhere in the county. It doesn't have to be built on the riverside."

The new scheme is at the heart of Durham County Cricket Club's push towards first class status.

Opposition to the new stadium has come from a number of quarters and a public meeting has been called for next Wednesday night in St Cuthbert's Church hall to form an action group to fight the plan.

Chester-le-Street Council has sent out leaflets to homes in the district and is inviting comments from local residents.

# Stadium on beauty spot plan opposed

NE 12.10.89

RESIDENTS last night signalled their opposition to ambitious plans for a cricket stadium on a popular beauty spot.

Over 300 people attended a public meeting in Chester-le-Street on the scheme for the Riverside Park.

The proposal, part of Durham County Cricket Club's push for first class status, is to build the stadium, sports facilities, housing and a business park on the banks of the River Wear.

But townspeople are opposed to losing the park, which with its views of Lumley Castle is popular with visitors from outside the district.

They also fear:

- The loss of wildlife including two colonies of bats unique in County Durham.
- Traffic and parking problems.
- That the cost of the scheme will put up their poll tax bills.
- That local sewage works would be unable to cope with the extra load.

One of the meeting's organisers, David Robinson, of Chrichton Avenue, said the scheme breached Durham County structure plan policies on housing.

He added: "We are not against cricket, we just don't want it on the Riverside Park."

Chester-le-Street Council, which leafletted homes and staged a public display of the proposals, was accused of not providing enough information.

An action group is now being formed to fight the scheme which is now the subject of a feasibility study.

# Park plans procedure defended

NG 13.10.89

A COUNCIL chief executive has defended consultation procedures over proposals for a cricket stadium on a popular park.

At a public meeting in Chester-le-Street residents accused the district council of not providing enough information about a scheme to build a new home for Durham County Cricket Club on the Riverside Park.

Tony Greensmith said yesterday: "I find that absolutely incredible. For the council to leaflet every home in the district, to put on a public display and actually extend that display, it seems a little bit awry to say we have not provided enough information."

"We have provided every scrap of information and we have stated publicly that this is only the first stage of public consultation."

An action committee is being formed to fight the proposals, which also include housing and a business park on the banks of the Wear.

Residents condemned the scheme, allied to Durham's bid for first-class cricketing status, at the public meeting, saying it would take away a recreation area unique to the area and destroy wildlife.

Mr Greensmith said consultants were about to begin a feasibility study which would go out for further consultation on completion, probably next spring.

# Cricket sticky wicket

EFFORTS to bring first class cricket to Co Durham could founder on a sticky wicket.

Chester-le-Street residents are opposing a plan to build a test match-standard ground at the centre of a development project on the town's Riverside Park.

The scheme — which was drawn up by Durham County Cricket Club and Chester-le-Street district and Durham County councils — is at the forefront of an attempt to win a place for Durham in the county cricket championship.

More than 300 residents packed into St Cuthberts Church Hall, Chester-le-Street, this week for a public meeting to voice their concern about the proposals.

They say the scheme would amount to the loss of a popular public amenity and create environmental and traffic problems.

Protestors also believe it would be a heavy burden for the poll-tax payers of the town in years to come.

Opposition campaign organiser David Robinson told the meeting people were "up in arms" at the plans, which would "prostitute the Riverside Park for a business park, hotel complex, housing, a cricket ground and a car park for more than 3,000 vehicles".

An action committee has been set up and funds are being raised to mount an effective campaign of opposition.

"Riverside Park is an open area of outstanding natural beauty," said Mr Robinson.

Comment — EC  
Page 14 13.10.89

14 EVENING CHRONICLE, Friday, October 13, 1989

# Chronicle Regional test of resolve

OPPOSITION to plans for a spectacular development including a test-standard cricket ground at Chester-le-Street will itself be a test of Co Durham people's overall resolve to improve the prospects of our whole region.

We cannot be surprised at local anxieties over the loss of present park amenities and changes that would produce more road traffic.

But we must hope that the hundreds at a critical public meeting do not represent most townspeople's attitudes to the real chance of first class county and test cricket and changes that will generate new jobs and strengthen northern links with more-prosperous southern areas.

# Cricketers facing sticky wicket

as  
AD 01/09



●Cricket protestor Stan Hornsby points out the riverside area earmarked for development.

By Peter Bedingfield

A GROUP of Chester-le-Street residents plan to stump a multi-million pound scheme to bring first class cricket to the town.

And the opening stroke of the campaign comes next Wednesday at 8pm with a public meeting in St Cuthbert's Church Hall, Lumley Terrace.

There, the scheme's opponents face their first test in rallying popular opinion. The meeting is organised by angry home owners in Crichton Avenue, which backs onto a winding stretch of the River Wear. They want to hit for six any attempt to build on the beautyspot.

If plans on show last week at Chester-le-Street Civic Centre are adopted, the panoramic view now enjoyed by some residents in the street will be the site of the most ambitious development in the town's history.

According to its backers, the scheme would rid Durham County Cricket Club of its Minor Counties tag and

could result in the provision of a new ground at Chester-le-Street's picturesque Riverside Park.

It would be the country's first new Test or County standard cricket ground for almost 100 years and would form the hub of a 100-acre sport, leisure, business, hotel and housing development which would bring "wide ranging benefits" to Chester-le-Street and County Durham.

But protestors claim first class cricket could bring a second class lifestyle for local people. They warn of chaotic traffic problems, the loss of wildlife and disappearance of the riverside playing fields.

Captain of the 'take it away' side is engineer Stan Hornsby, of Crichton Avenue. He said: "If the people of Chester-le-Street want the riverside to stay as it

is they should object to the council and try to stop this development before it is too late. Once we lose the riverside we will never have anything like it again."

Nature lover Mr Hornsby, who has counted 44 species of birds and two types of bat in the area added: "The proposed development would have a devastating effect on riverbank wildlife. Executive housing and a hotel is planned for the site where Sand Martins have nested for years and the area is also home to a rare colony of moths."

But the main thrust of Mr Hornsby's attack centres on possible traffic congestion - a

subject he believes will concern all residents in the district.

"The town's road system is busy enough at peak periods and still to come is traffic from 300 new houses at Pity Me. Imagine the chaos if on top of all this a top class cricket match is going on."

"I'm not opposed to the plans in principal but I do not think Chester-le-Street is the right place for the new ground. When other residents are fully aware of what is involved I'm sure they will agree."

District Council chief executive Tony Greensmith stressed that the riverside proposals are still at the talking stage. Letters outlining

the plan have gone to every home in the district and the Civic Centre exhibition is likely to be set up again later this month.

Said Mr Greensmith: "We have gone out of our way to ensure that everyone knows about the proposals and we are positively encouraging residents to comment. This is the biggest thing ever proposed for Chester-le-Street and it is only right to gauge public opinion."

He added: "People living in Crichton Avenue have every right to make their views known. But the interests of the 44 households in the street must be weighed against the other 22,000 throughout the district."

# Durham to join big league with new ground

**DURHAM are set to lose their Minor Counties tag following the decision to build a multi-million pound stadium at Chester-le-Street's picturesque Riverside Park.**

Although a bold and ambitious bid to join the First Class ranks has still to be ratified by the Test and County Cricket Board later in the year, today's official announcement to build the country's first new Test or County standard ground for almost 100 years should rubber stamp Durham's case.

By GEOFF STOREY

Durham County Cricket Club President Ian Caller has maintained a dignified low profile throughout the initial campaign as the bid to become the first county to join the First Class ranks since Glamorgan 62 years ago was leaked.

But at a Press Conference held at Chester-le-Street Civic Centre today, Mr Caller was pleased to make a preliminary announcement on the outline of the concept.

"This is most definitely a very important day for the County Cricket Club," said Mr Caller. "For many years we have discussed among ourselves the possibility of bringing First Class cricket to the County. But the problem of providing a suitable ground and facilities has always been a stumbling block.

"So today I am extremely happy to be able to see a way forward and to be able to discuss both our bid for First Class status as well as allocation for a new ground.

"We are in the process of preparing our bid to the Test and County Cricket Board. With the help of Price Waterhouse we will be submitting our bid later this year.

"We are happy to report that already the Test and County Cricket Board has appointed a sub-committee to investigate our bid — and that is even before they have received it. This must indicate a fair amount of support within the cricketing circles.

"Our bid will elaborate on the achievement of the cricket club as a Minor Counties over many years, the number of County cricketers produced in both Durham and the North East, the links with Dur-

ham University which has now become the major cricketing university, the proximity of one of England's finest indoor cricket centres at Houghton-le-Spring, and the tremendous amount of support for league cricket in County Durham.

"May I stress at this point that Durham County Cricket Club have received an enormous positive reaction from the public, commerce and industry on both local and national level, financial institutions and public authorities."

With the new stadium not expected to be operational for another five years, existing grounds at Feetham (Darlington), Ashbrooke (Sunderland), Gateshead Fell and Durham University will be used to accommodate initial matches.

Said Mr Caller: "If we are accepted for First Class cricket then our intention would be to use existing grounds throughout the County for the next few years. But a cornerstone of our bid is the provision of a new, modern, first class ground.

"We think we have found the ideal location for such a ground — the Chester-le-Street Riverside.

"Although we have to carry out a good deal more work, we feel that we can provide a top class ground with quality and atmosphere by the riverside. What we can do which many existing grounds can't do is to provide adequate car parking, which is becoming more and more important.

"We would hope that the ground would become a place for the whole family. This is particularly so if it can be linked with other leisure pursuits.

"We very much like the idea of having an all-weather artificial surface nursery ground which can be used all the year round for both cricket and possibly many other sports and thereby increasing leisure opportunities in the North East.

"My goal is that these ideas can be developed as quickly as possible so that in a few years time the residents of the North East can see First Class cricket in a first class ground."

# DURHAM GO FOR BIG TIME



**JIMMY MOFFAT** — the Durham County treasurer knows that the price is right

**DURHAM COUNTY** cricket officials are eager not to miss their big opportunity as the build-up to First Class status gathers momentum.

Ambitious plans to build a multi-pound stadium at the picturesque Riverside Park site at Chester-le-Street, announced this week, are expected to be the cornerstone of Durham's bid to join the County Championship in 1991. *S.E. 16.9.89*

The feedback from other counties has been favourable and when international accountants Price Waterhouse finally present Durham's case to the Test and County Cricket Board, officials are confident of acceptance.

"The opportunity will never come again," stressed Durham County treasurer Tom Moffat. "As our president Ian Caller says, 'How dare we fail?'"

"We not only owe it to ourselves — we owe it to the whole of the North East to get it right.

"No time limit has been set on our application, but if we are to succeed for the 1991 season then our application will have to be submitted in the near future.

## PRIME SITE

"But we can start to motor now that everything is out in the open. A permanent location was not one of the specifications the TCCB demanded, but we felt it was not a viable proposition without our own ground."

Officials of both Chester-le-Street Council and Durham County Council are in

favour of developing a prime site. But it will be interesting to see whether there is any reaction from local residents.

The councils claim plans were already in hand to develop the area before Durham's bid to join the first-class scene got off the ground and a venture of this magnitude can only enhance the whole of the North East.

Where the money comes from to finance such a venture is being kept a closely guarded secret, with all parties claiming they are awaiting feasibility studies.

But they stress that it will be self-financing, with no burden placed on the rate payers of Chester-le-Street or Durham County.

There will be no shortage of sponsorship, either, with the brewery giants waiting in the wings to plough a considerable annual premium into the coffers.

"We have studied the balance sheets of several counties," said Moffat, who captained and kept wicket for Chester-le-Street for several years.

"It takes between

£500,000 and £700,000 per year to run a county side, so by the time we are admitted the cost could be as much as three-quarters of a million.

"We could expect to take about £50,000 through the turnstiles and would receive £200,000 from the TCCB and the sponsored cup competitions.

"We would have to run a side in the Second XI competition, and there is still a possibility of continuing to play in the Minor Counties Championship."

## AMBITION

League clubs in the area have held meetings to discuss the implications of a first-class set up on their doorstep. But Moffat claims the incentives outweigh any set-backs.

"Surely it is the ambition of any cricketer to want to play for his county?" he said. "I know in Yorkshire many a local league player has received a last-minute call-up to play a Sunday League match or County Championship game."

by GEOFF STOREY, Chief Sports Writer

S/Ech 12/7/89

# Brewery giants bid to sponsor Durham

**BREWERY** giants Whitbreads and Newcastle Breweries are desperate to win the battle to sponsor Durham's bid for First Class County Cricket.

Raising the £500,000 per annum to run a side in the County Championship will not present a major obstacle to the ambitious Minor County side whose application for first class

By GEOFF STOREY

status is expected to be confirmed in December.

Whitbread are currently ahead in the brewery stakes — the present going rate for main sponsorship is about £300,000 — but Newcastle Breweries are coming up fast on the rails.

Other big sponsors are keen to finance the signing of an overseas star.

Durham have opted for a low profile in the build-up to join cricket's elite but details of a multi-million scheme aimed at creating a new home are due to be unveiled at a Press conference tomorrow.

It could result in the country's first new Test or County standard cricket ground for almost 100 years.

44 TODAY Thursday September 14 1989 ★★☆☆

## SHORTS

### Durham's Test match special

DURHAM have stepped up their bid to join the County Championship in 1991 by unveiling plans for a world-class stadium where Test cricket could be staged. It is part of a proposed multi-million sports centre in Chester-le-Street.

### Durham's stadium ambitions

THE TIMES 14/9/89

By a Special Correspondent

Durham yesterday unveiled plans for a world-class stadium as they stepped up their efforts to join the county championship in 1991. The ground would be developed out of a proposed multi-million pound sports centre, which it is hoped would be open by the mid-1990s, in Chester-le-Street.

Ian Caller, spokesman for the county's campaign for first-class cricket, said yesterday: "We are setting out our stall to attract Test cricket to the North-East. We have to be thinking about the 21st Century."

Durham's priority is to persuade the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) to accept their application to join the championship. If Durham were admitted for 1991, home matches in the first few years would be played on a circuit of nine club grounds.

Caller said: "We will be very disappointed if our bid to join the championship doesn't get off the ground now. We feel that having a major stadium will be a very strong argument in our favour when we go to the TCCB. We estimate that more than two million people live within about 40 minutes' driving time of the site."

## Huge cricket plan for NE

13/9/89

AMBITIOUS plans for a Test-match standard cricket ground in the North-East with spin-off leisure, business and housing facilities were unveiled today.

The multi-million pound scheme for a 100-acre riverside site at Chester-le-Street is based on Durham's bid to bring first-class cricket to the region.

As part of the county's attempt to become the 18th first-class cricketing county it is hoped the development will include:

- The country's first new Test-standard ground for a century
  - An adjoining multi-purpose nursery ground catering for athletics and hockey
  - A high-quality landscaped business park
  - Hotel, exhibition and conference facilities
  - A sports pavilion with riverside slipway
  - Various other sporting and recreational facilities
- The site earmarked for the development is a stretch of green area between Ropery Lane, the A167 and Riverside Park, Chester-le-Street.

Chester-le-Street District

## CRICKET

### Durham given a major boost

PETER BOWLER went on a go slow to defy Lancashire at Old Trafford yesterday.

The 25-year-old Derbyshire opener chiselled out an unbeaten 55 as they battled to 167 for 4 on a weather hit day.

Bowler was entrenched on 12 for 12 overs and took 175 mins to reach his 50.

But he shared in a rescue operation with Chris Adams, which added 72 after England's Phil DeFreitas had grabbed three early wickets.

Durham's bid to achieve first class cricketing sta-

tus received a significant boost yesterday when plans to set up home at a brand new venue were unveiled.

With municipal as well as commercial support they plan to take up residence at a purpose built ground at Chester-le-Street.

### Scheme

It's part of a multi-million pound scheme which would incorporate a business park as well as an hotel and conference centre.

14/9/89 Daily Express

## SPORTSMAIL CRICKET ON A PLAN FOR A NEW TEST VENUE

DURHAM, still campaigning for a place in the county cricket championship, yesterday unveiled a vision of a Test match future.

They plan a multi-million pound ground development in Chester-le-Street's picturesque Riverside Park to back their bid to be allowed into the championship in 1991.

Details of the scheme were announced by Durham officials and county council representatives. The ambitious Minor Counties side expect to present a detailed package to the Test and County Cricket Board in the next few weeks in support of their application.

### Cornerstone

Durham president Ian Caller said: 'If we are accepted, our intention would be to use existing grounds like Darlington, West Hartlepool and Durham University's for the next few years. But a cornerstone of our bid is the provision of a new, modern first class ground capable of staging Test matches by the end of the century.'

A driving force behind the scheme is Malcolm Pratt, chairman of Chester-le-Street District Council's Environment and Parks Committee, who preferred to stay in the background yesterday.

But there is no doubt that it was his vision which allowed Durham to present the exciting plan of a super stage for, among other things, first class cricket.

The delightful Chester-le-Street site has the imposing backcloth of Lumley Castle. It is not difficult to imagine television cameras focusing on it just as they highlight the cathedral at Worcester.

Durham's case to be the championship's first new member since Glamorgan 68 years ago, said Caller, was based on the achievement of the club as a Minor County over many years.

He added: 'There have been a number of county cricketers produced in both Durham and the

# Durham think big and beautiful

Report By DOUG WEATHERALL

North-East generally and we have links with Durham University, which has become the major cricketing university. The close proximity of one of England's finest indoor cricket centres at Houghton-le-Spring and the tremendous support for local league cricket in County Durham is also in our favour.'

### Bleak

Durham reckon it would cost them about £750,000 a year to be championship members. But developers and sponsors, including international companies, are queuing to be involved.

And if it's thought in the south that Durham may be too bleak for regular cricket, they point out: 'We

have no more rain in the summer months than Birmingham and Reading, which are both situated near many top cricket grounds, and we also have more calm days than Bristol.'

Riverside Park is the most likely name for the new complex, which would include an all-weather nursery ground and accommodate other sports like athletics and hockey, an exhibition-conference centre, and housing.

It would be created by the mid-1990s if Durham's first-class application is successful.

Caller said: 'We would also provide good parking with room for 3,000 cars and the ground's accessibility would be virtually unparalleled.'



THE HIGH hopes of Durham president Ian Caller and the plans for a new top-quality ground to accompany the county's bid for first-class status



● Batting for Durham at the site of the proposed development Coun Pickford.

# North Test cricket project

*JG 22M*  
*14.9.89*

From Page One

Mr Ian Caller, president of the Durham County Cricket Club, said: "The possibility of North-East involvement in the County Championship has always had support from existing first class county clubs but the problems of a suitable ground and facilities have always been stumbling blocks."

He said the bid to the TCCB would elaborate on Durham's achievements as a minor county over many years, the number of county cricketers produced in the North-East, the cricketing links with Durham University, the proximity of one of England's finest indoor cricket centres at Houghton-le-Spring and the tremendous support for league cricket in County Durham.

## Scheme

Mr Caller said Riverside Park site next to the River Wear, overlooked by Lumley Castle, must be "one of the finest in the North."

"We very much like the idea of an all-weather, artificial surface nursery ground which can be used all the year round both for cricket and possibly many other sports."

Coun Bob Pendlebury, deputy leader of Durham County Council, said the project was one of the most ambitious put together in County Durham for many years.

He said the scheme could bring a substantial number of

SEVENTY beagles suffered "a horrible, painful death" when they suffocated aboard a ferry taking them from Britain to Sweden for use in drug tests, it was disclosed yesterday.

Swedish police said last night the unnamed British transport firm, which was taking 100 of the dogs in a van aboard a ferry from Harwich to Gothenburg, could face cruelty charges.

The dogs, all eight months old, were bought from Perrycroft Kennels, which trades under the business name Alpha Sirius, of Jubilee Drive, Colwall, near Malvern, Worcestershire.

They were purchased by Swedish pharmaceutical company Astra and were put aboard the ferry Tor Britannia last Wednesday.

Det Supt Bengt Inaeus, of

## Call to

THE mother of a schoolgirl savaged to death by two Rottweilers called yesterday for a total ban on the dogs after

# Ambitious Test cricket project unveiled for North

THE covers yesterday were taken a multi-million pound housing, sports and business plan aimed at bringing county championship and Test cricket to County Durham. Business advisors and chartered accountants Price Waterhouse is doing a feasibility study on a proposal to develop the 100-acre Riverside Park at Chester-le-Street. A new Test-standard cricket ground could be the hub of the scheme. The plan is to build a cricket stadium; multi-purpose, all-weather nursery ground which could also accommodate other sports; a

high quality landscaped business park; a hotel and exhibition/conference centre; a sports pavilion with slipway to the River Wear; other outdoor sport and recreational facilities; riverside housing; and parking for more than 3,000 cars.

Price Waterhouse was brought in by Chester-le-Street District Council, Durham County Council and Durham County Cricket Club, which announced the project at a Press conference at Chester-le-Street Civic Centre.

The aim of the cricket ground development is to support an appli-

cation by Durham County Cricket Club, which is in the Minor Counties League, to play in the County Championship.

The development would be on the land south of Ropery Lane and leisure facilities to the north, which include picnic sites and children's play areas, would be improved. The scheme is intended to be self-financing with the initial funds coming from private enterprise.

Most of the land is owned by the district council, although some small plots belong to individuals

Coun David Pickford, of Chester-le-Street District Council, who chaired the conference, said: "There is no doubt that Riverside Park would be an excellent location for first class cricket."

"Its setting must be one of the best in the North and its accessibility by road, rail or air is virtually unparalleled. The over-all scheme, of which the proposed cricket ground is just a part, is only at the earliest stages.

"We have simply put our initial ideas down on paper, but it is cer-

tainly a very exciting proposal and a real prospect which could have wide-ranging benefits for the people of Chester-le-Street and County Durham.

"A lot of work has to be done to establish if the scheme is viable. We have agreed it, in principle, subject to a suitable scheme being identified and to Durham County Cricket Club's application for county status being approved."

Coun Pickford said the development would go ahead in a different form if the club's application was

turned down by the Test and County Cricket Board.

The Board has set up a sub-committee to examine Durham's application which will not be submitted until the feasibility study is completed. It is intended to submit the application later this year and the new ground could be open by the mid-nineties.

If Durham joined the County Championship in 1991, matches would be played at other grounds around the county until the new stadium was ready.

Turn to Page 3

N1E

14.9.84

# Durham's dream can come true

## County cricket a step nearer

DURHAM already have the backing of ten counties in their bid to become the 18th first class side, writes IAN MURTAGH.

And with just 19 members voting on Durham's admission into the county championship when the Test and County Cricket Board meet this winter, it seems the odds strongly favour the county's bid.

Durham CCC president Ian Caller said: "We have talked on an informal basis to the majority of first class counties and the feedback is very favourable.

"But this is still at a very early stage and there will be many more meetings before any vote is taken."

I understand committee members have already spoken to ten counties and so far everyone of them has indicated they would support Durham's application.

### Feeling

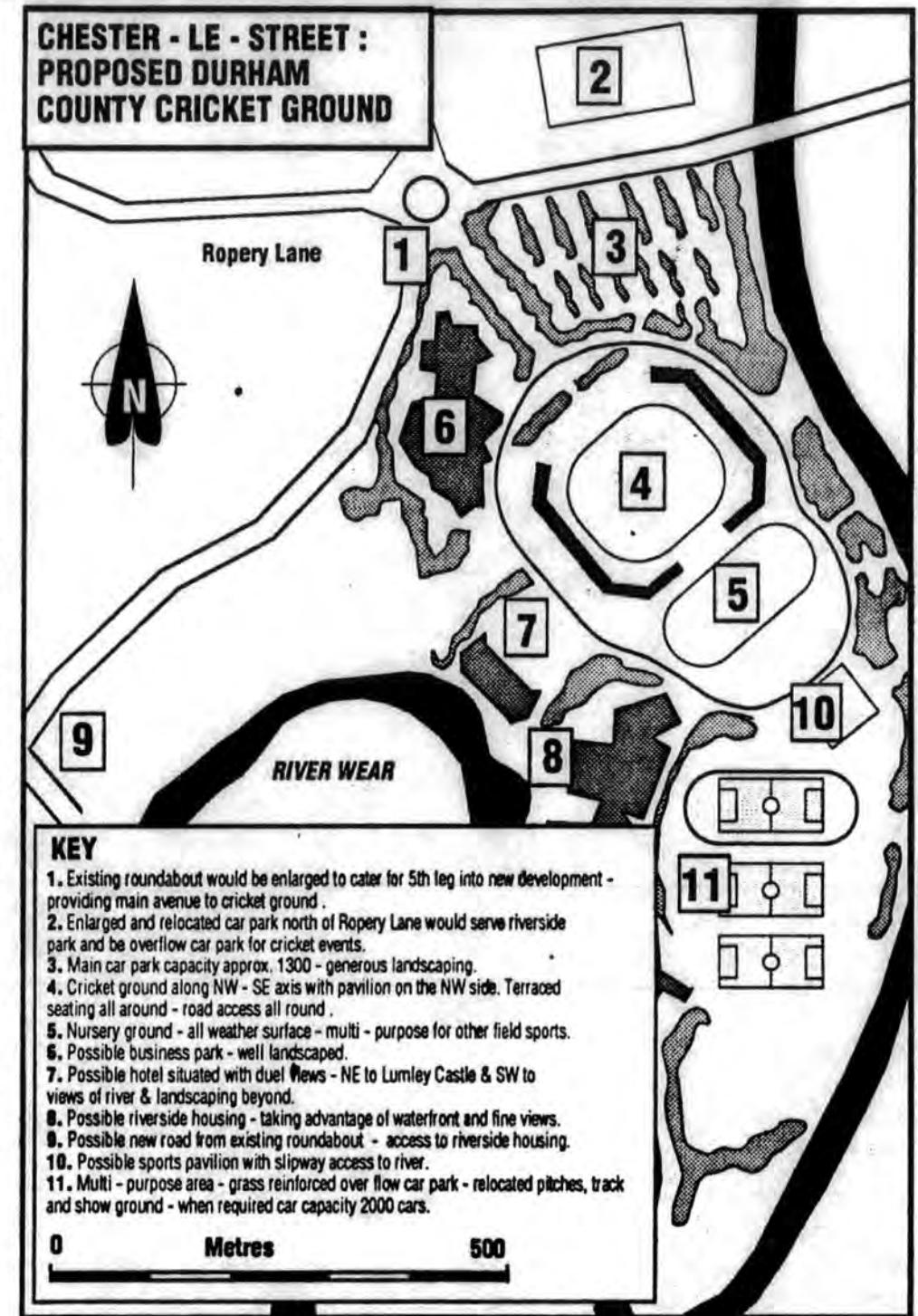
The feeling within the sport is that Durham need only satisfy Lord's that their plans are financially viable to receive the green light.

The county will present a feasibility study undertaken by accountants Price Waterhouse to all 19 voting members together with a glossy brochure presenting their case.

Said treasurer Tom Moffatt: "A permanent location was not one of the specifications the TCCB demanded, but we feel it is the strongest weapon in our case.

"Financially, it would not be viable in the long-term to stage first class cricket at several venues although of course in the interim period, this is what we will have to do.

"We start off at a huge advantage over some counties because we can develop a



stadium geared towards the future from scratch - and that is far more cost effective than modifying existing venues."

Caller is optimistic that Durham will become the first new county since Glamorgan joined the set-up in 1920 but struck a note of caution saying:

"We dare not fail and must make sure everything is right.

"But so far, everyone has been impressed by the thoroughness and professionalism of our plans."

Caller dismissed speculation that Durham were on the verge of announcing major sponsors

saying: "We will deal with that area in the course of time.

"But it is fair to say that a number of backers including major international companies are waiting in the wings to help us if and when we get the go ahead."

14/9/89

- see over -

# County plans



Ian Caller: Setting our stall out

DURHAM launched their bid for first class status yesterday with the mouth-watering prospect of staging Test cricket in the North-East in the 21st century.

Unveiling plans to build a multi-million pound development at the Riverside Park in Chester-le-Street, Durham President Ian Caller declared: "We are setting our stall out for Test matches to be played here in the future."

The decision to go ahead with plans for a major new county

headquarters has given Durham's campaign a massive boost and when the application is submitted to the Test and County Cricket Board later this year, club officials believe this factor will weigh heavily in their favour.

After months of negotiations between Durham County Council, Chester-le-Street District Council and cricket committee members, a final decision to investigate the viability of the scheme was only reached yesterday.

Now the region could boast one of

## to win Test cricket

NIE 14.9.89

the finest sports stadiums in the country with facilities available for a wide range of leisure pursuits.

Riverside Park, overlooked by Lumley Castle would include a purpose built cricket stadium with an all-weather nursery ground alongside which could be used for other sports.

Plans have also been drawn up for a high quality business park, an hotel and conference centre, a sports pavilion and possible housing near the River Wear.

Although no costs will be an-

nounced until the consultants have talked to various developers, the financial package would be a joint venture between local authorities and private enterprise while in the long-run, it is hoped the whole development would be self-financing.

Durham looked into the possibilities of three sites in the county but eventually plumped for the Riverside land because of its central location just of the A1(M).

The district council had already decided to carry out a study of the

area with a view to developing recreation and leisure and now the cricket stadium will form the basis of the scheme.

Coun David Pickford said: "We have made a decision to support the concept of a first class cricket stadium subject to a viable scheme being identified and subject, of course to Durham County Cricket Club's application being approved."

The development could bring wide-ranging benefits to the region as well as hundreds of new jobs.

• A step nearer: Back Page

**D**URHAM County Cricket Club have unveiled plans for a multi-million pound ground development to back their attempt to gain first-class status. Details of the scheme, planned for Riverside Park in Chester-le-Street, were announced by club officials and county council representatives.

Durham, who will present a package to the TCCB shortly, hope to join the County Championship in 1991. Their intention would be to use existing grounds for the next few years. But a cornerstone of their bid would be a new ground capable of staging Tests by the end of the century.

# Huge cricket plan is lined up for North East

From Page One

Council today gave backing to the scheme and agreed to bring in consultants to make a feasibility study of the plan.

Members of the district council, Durham County Cricket Club and the county council, were all at today's Press conference giving initial details of the proposals.

Coun David Pickford, of the district council, said an approach was made by the cricket club which is looking for a new site to back up its bid to join the county championship.

It came at a time when the council was considering new recreational facilities in the Riverside Park area.

"There is no doubt that Riverside Park would be an excellent location for first-class cricket," said Coun Pickford.

## Benefits

"At present the overall scheme is only at the very earliest stages.

"We have simply put our initial ideas down on paper,

but it is certainly a very exciting proposal which could have wide-ranging benefits for the people of Chester-le-Street and Co Durham."

Coun Bob Pendlebury, of the county council, said the authority would give the plan "full support" as it should bring added "prestige" to the area.

The consultants report will be made over the next few months, looking into financial and commercial aspects of the scheme, followed by public consultation.

# Valley of fear for sad Tykes

**GLAMORGAN** took a huge step towards condemning Yorkshire to the County Championship wooden spoon at Pontypriidd yesterday.

They staged a recovery to finish the first day of their final match against champions Worcestershire at 221-7.

That gave them two points and took them to within three of Yorkshire who have finished their matches.

At Canterbury Chris Cowdrey hit a determined unbeaten 58 to remove Kent's fears about finishing bottom.

## Bold

Cowdrey helped Kent recover from 63-4 to 204-7 and guaranteed them the two points they needed to climb above the Tykes.

Surrey's Alec Stewart underlined his Test potential with a superb unbeaten 171 against Sussex at The Oval.

Robin Smith celebrated his 26th birthday with a powerful 68 against Gloucestershire at Bristol.

Dynamic Leicestershire duo Winston Benjamin and Chris Lewis skittled Nottinghamshire out for 121 at Trent Bridge after David Gower gambled on putting the home side in.

Ambitious Minor County Durham yesterday unveiled plans for a multi-million pound stadium of Test match standard to back their bold bid to win first class status.

12. EVENING CHRONICLE, Wednesday, September 13, 1989

## Chronicle Moment

# Durham's first class chances

FOR the first time in nearly a century, England could see the development of a brand new cricket ground of Test and County Championship standard — and it would be right here in our own region.

Thanks to the co-operation of far-sighted Durham county councillors and senior figures in the game nationally and locally, Chester-le-Street — ideally close to the motorway — could soon become the home of a Durham club elevated from the ranks of the Minor Counties and at the hub of a multi-million-pound development providing other sport facilities as well as new hotel, commercial premises and new housing.

While it must be remembered that this Riverside Park project is only at an early stage, we believe that it is more than appropriate to be optimistic about the results that should flow from the ambitious, but thorough, thinking behind the scheme outlined today.

There is widespread enthusiasm for giving the region first class cricket on a permanent basis.

And there can be no less support for a bold development that would enhance the region's economic dynamism and would forge new links of all kinds between the North East and the rest of England.

# Testing time for Durham

**INDEPENDENT 14.9.89**  
DURHAM yesterday unveiled plans for a stadium of Test-match standard to back their attempt to gain first-class status.

Details of the scheme, planned for the picturesque Riverside Park in Chester-le-Street, were announced at a joint press conference attended by club officials and County Council members.

The Minor Counties club expect to present a detailed package to the Test and County Cricket Board in the next few weeks to support their application to join the County Championship in 1991.

The Durham president Ian Caller said: "A cornerstone of our bid is the provision of a new, modern first-class ground capable of staging Test matches by the end of the century."

## CRICKET

# Durham unveil plans for first-class ground

By a Special Correspondent

**DURHAM** county's Chester-le-Street could be vying with Old Trafford, Trent Bridge and Edgbaston for the right to stage Test match cricket in the 21st century.

Durham County Cricket Club, in conjunction with Chester-le-Street County Council, have announced a multi-million pound development and, if all goes well with their application

to the Test and County Cricket Board, a brand new, first-class cricket ground will be the jewel in the crown.

Chester-le-Street's picturesque River Side Park will be the site. A beautiful stretch of the river Wear marks its south-eastern boundary and the impressive Lumley Castle overlooks the proposed complex. A similar setting to Arundel in fact.

The 100-acre site would also

include facilities for rowing, hockey, soccer, rugby and athletics and there would be car parking for 3,000 vehicles. A hotel and a business park are also planned.

Council spokesman David Pickford said: "The riverside development will go ahead regardless of the TCCB's decision about admitting Durham to the first-class ranks, but there would be great disappointment if their bid fails."

"The site is perfect as far as we are concerned," said Ian Caller, president of Durham CCC. "The ground would be just a mile from the A1 with very easy access roads, and accessibility by rail and air couldn't be better.

"This would be the first time for 100 years that a ground has been built specifically to stage county cricket and we are not ruling out further development with a view to staging Test

matches in the 21st century. "There are over two million people living within 40 minutes' drive."

Durham CCC's detailed application will be ready for presentation to Lord's within the next couple of months and the TCCB have already chosen a sub-committee to deal with it. If Durham are successful, they will be the first to gain admittance to the first-class game since Glamorgan in 1921.

# DURHAM DREAM NEARS REALITY

## First-class status soon

**DURHAM** are just one throw of the dice away from becoming the 18th first-class cricket county.

Their hopes of squeezing between Derbyshire and Essex in the 1991 first-class handbook rest on a multi-million pound new stadium at Chester-le-Street meeting with planning approval.

Several sites have been mooted, but the committee formed to present an acceptable package to the Test and County Cricket Board have plumped for a ground with easy motorway access.

International accountancy firm Price Waterhouse have steadily put together a financial package. It will cost around £500,000 a year to run a team in the County Championship — but there will be no shortage of sponsors.

by **GEOFF STOREY**  
Chief Sports Writer

Durham officials have kept a low profile since plans to become the first new senior county since Glamorgan 68 years ago were leaked.

But an official announcement is expected soon that Durham, one of the most successful Minor Counties sides in recent years, will realise their long-standing ambition.

Their case rests on the success of plans to develop a new ground, which could have multi-purpose sports and commercial facilities the equal of any in the country.

### SCRUTINY

TCCB chief Alan Smith has visited the area to inspect proposed sites and grounds expected to play a big part in Durham's bold bid.

Most of the grounds currently used for Minor Counties and NatWest Trophy games would qualify for planning protection, but not truly measure up to TCCB demands.

Nine grounds were the subject of close scrutiny by a select committee who have carefully vetted them all before choosing the four most convenient and suitable for staging first-class games before the new stadium is completed.

I understand the committee have come down in favour of Darlington, Gateshead Fell, Ashbrooke and Durham University.

Devon, founded in 1824 and members of the Minor Counties since 1901, made a gallant attempt to attain first-class status in 1948, but few others have had the resources to nudge the authorities... until now.

# IT'S GREEN FOR GO!

EVENING CHRONICLE  
13/4/89

**DURHAM'S bid for first class cricket status really lifted off today with the announcement of a mutli-million pound scheme which will give them a home and base at Chester-le-Street Riverside.**

And it will be followed soon by the announcement of just who will sponsor Durham in 1992 when they will become the 18th first class county and the first new boys since Glamorgan back in 1921.

Brewery giants Whitbreads and Newcastle Breweries have already thrown their hats into the ring and Durham do not look as though they are going to have any trouble finding the £500,000 needed to run a side in the County championship.

Now it certainly looks as though it is all systems go for Durham, especially after today's news of a new stadium.

Ian Caller, President of Durham, said today: "This is most definitely a very important day for Durham County Cricket Club. For many years we have discussed among ourselves the possibility of bringing first class cricket to the County but the problem of providing a suitable ground and facilities has always been a stumbling block.

"So today I am extremely happy to be able to see a way forward and to be able to discuss both our bid for first class status as well as a location for a new ground.

**BY ALAN OLIVER**

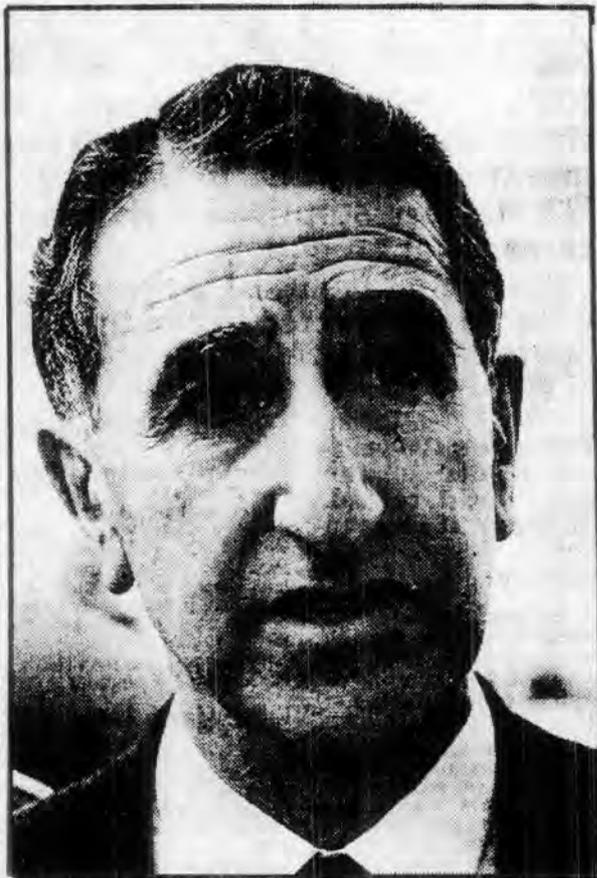
such a ground — the Chester-le-Street Riverside.

"Its setting next to the River Wear, overlooked by Lumley Castle must be one of the finest in the North. Its close proximity to the A1(M) and the main line station give it excellent communications.

### Support

"We have estimated between two and two and a half million people live within about 40 minutes driving time to the site - so if we can provide attractive cricket the support should be there.

"The weather isn't bad as as some people seem to think. We have no more rain in the summer months than Birmingham and Reading, which are both situated near to many cricket grounds."



IAN CALLER — important day.

13 9 89

### Number

"We are in the process of preparing our bid to the Test and County Cricket Board. With the help of Price Waterhouse we will be submitting our bid later this year. "We are happy to report that already the Test and County Cricket Board has appointed a sub-committee to investigate our bid — and that is even before they have received it. This must indicate a fair amount of support within cricketing circles.

"Our bid will elaborate on the achievement of Durham County Cricket Club as a Minor County over many years; the number of County Cricketers produced in both Durham and the North East, the links with Durham University which has now become the major cricketing university, the proximity of one of England's finest indoor cricket centres at Houghton-le-Spring, and the tremendous amount of support for local league cricket in County Durham.

"May I stress at this point that Durham County Cricket Club have received an enormous positive reaction from the public, commerce and industry on both local and national level, financial institutions and public authorities.

"If we are accepted for first class cricket then our intention would be to use existing cricket grounds throughout the County for the next few years but a cornerstone of our bid is the provision of a new, modern, first class ground. "We think we have found the ideal location for

# Durham

## now go

### for 1992

YOUR DATE 21.9.89  
By PAUL NUNN

THE new target date for Durham to become a first-class cricket county is 1992.

At one time they had hoped that they might be involved the season after next. But the following year has now been adopted as a more realistic aim.

The county announced yesterday that their application to play in all the Test and County Cricket Board's competitions is to be examined by a special TCCB working party chaired by Derbyshire chairman Chris Middleton.

A preliminary meeting has been held with the Minor County officials to consider Durham's initial proposals, including the development of a purpose-built ground in a multi-million pound sports centre at Chester-le-Street.

Further meetings will be held during the next few months to consider Durham's application in greater detail.

Bob Bennett, the Lancashire chairman, Steve Coverdale, Northampton's secretary/manager, Jim Woodhouse, the Kent chief executive and Tony Brown, the TCCB administration secretary, complete the working party.

# Durham go for 1992

NC 21.9.89

By IAN MURTAGH

**DURHAM will have to wait until 1992 for admission into the County Championship if their application proves successful.**

After a meeting with the Test and County Cricket Board sub-committee, set up to look into their application, Durham officials have reluctantly decided to delay their possible entry by 12 months.

But last night county treasurer Tom Moffatt insisted that it was still all systems go and that the new date had been chosen to allow Durham to complete their plans.

He said: "After talks with members of the sub-committee, it became obvious that we wouldn't be ready for the start of the 1991 season.

"Although we had always set our stall out at being in by then, this is not a setback.

"It simply gives us more time to get it right."

However, Moffatt maintains that Durham are still on course for submitting their

official application this winter and hope to hear a decision by early next year.

"There's a lot of talking to be done in the next few weeks, but the TCCB seem impressed with our plans and optimism could not be higher," he added.

It is significant that a sub-committee has already been set up before the bid has been lodged and this indicates just how seriously Lord's are treating it.

Chairman is Derbyshire's Chris Middleton and other members on the sub-committee are Bob Bennett of Lancashire, Steve Coverdale, Northants' secretary/manager, Kent chief executive Jim Woodhouse and TCCB Administration Secretary Tony Brown.

Brown is impressed with Durham's plan to develop a multi-purpose site at Chester-

le-Street's Riverside Park and following last week's initial meeting, said: "We are as enthusiastic as the county officials."

The sub-committee will be looking into two specific areas before reporting back to the TCCB. Firstly, it will be examining whether an additional county would benefit the county championship and then investigating Durham's financial and playing staff plans.

Said Brown: "Their application is well thought out and very exciting but the hard work starts now.

"It would not be feasible for Durham to be admitted in 1991 simply because there are so many areas to look in to.

"No new county has joined the first-class circuit since the 1920's so this is new ground for everyone involved.

"But just because we have said that the earliest possible year for entry is 1992 does not mean we are dismissing the bid.

"In fact, we could not be treating Durham's application more seriously."



Tom Moffatt — confident

# Residents anger at cricket plan

E/C  
28.9.89

CHESTER-LE-STREET residents are furious at the lack of information given to them over plans for the prestige development of the Riverside area.

And opinions are split as to whether the plans will benefit town, or be little more than a get-rich-quick exercise for property developers.

Visitors to a special exhibition of the plans, which include a new county cricket ground for Durham, voiced their concerns.

Jim Patton, of West Dave, Durham Road, claimed he had not received the Council's letter notifying people of the proposals and the exhibition.

He said: "I want something through my door. We've had nothing. A friend came down from Sacriston and told us about what was going on. To me it's a total farce."

Other residents echoed the complaints and Tony Greensmith, chief executive of the district council, launched a survey among his office staff to see if they had been omitted from the 22,000-leaflet publicity drive.

He said: "We did a little check on Monday in the office and gave the agency a ring to go back to those areas they missed. I'd have been extremely surprised if no one had come along and said they hadn't had one."

Some people voiced doubts over the proposed business park, plus the likely increase in traffic in the town on match days, river pollution and an exclusive housing development.

And the artist's impression of the site was condemned as "totally misleading" by Mr Patton. He said the cricket ground is shown four times larger than it actually is.

One resident, who asked not to be named, said: "I'm worried about the actual motivations. What sort of people are going to be able to afford the exclusive housing?"

But some are backing the scheme. Peter Thirlwell, a resident of the town for more than 20 years, said: "It covers healthy pursuits. More people now have more leisure time and it will keep them out of mischief." Liberal councillor Derek Morse has also given his blessing to the plan but has reservations about the business park. He said: "I want to see what sort of business park they would build. I must admit that is causing me some concern but it is one way of funding the scheme." And Mr Greensmith said: "It could do for Chester-le-Street what Gateshead Stadium did for Gateshead. The benefits for the North East and County Durham in particular are fairly wide-ranging."

**AMBITIOUS PLANS TO GIVE DURHAM ITS OWN first class county cricket ground as part of a multi-million pound development were unveiled last week.**

The scheme would rid Durham County Cricket Club of its Minor Counties tag and could result in the provision of a new ground at Chester-le-Street's river-side park.

Councillor David Pickford of Chester-le-Street District Council said the approach from Durham County Cricket Club for help in establishing a new ground had come at a time when the council were looking at the possibilities of improving leisure facilities.

"There is no doubt that Riverside Park would make

an excellent location for first class cricket," said Coun Pickford.

Mr Ian Callier, President of Durham County Cricket Club, said the Riverside plan had brought the club's dream of County Championship cricket a step nearer to reality.

"The possibility of North East involvement in the County Championship has always had support from

## Put to the test!

existing first class county clubs, but the problems of a suitable ground and facilities have always been stalling blockades in taking the matter any further," said Mr Callier.

Councillor Bob Pendlebury, Deputy Leader of Durham County Council said the Riverside Park project was one of the most ambitious and imaginative put together in County Durham for many years.

# LITTLE INTEREST IN CRICKET GROUND BID

S.E. 6.11.89  
By TREVOR HOYLAND

**ONLY 206 people out of a population of more than 50,000 gave their opinion about a proposed multi-million pound cricket stadium in Chester-le-Street, it was revealed today.**

A report by the town council's Chief Executive, Tony Greensmith, on the results of a public consultation exercise will be considered by the Environmental Health, Recreation and General Purposes Committee tonight.

The project, which was unveiled in September, will include a County and Test standard cricket ground, a hotel complex, business park, housing, car parking and sports facilities on a 100-acre site at the Riverside Park.

## HAZARD

The ground would be the country's first first new Test or County-standard pitch for almost a century.

Opponents of the scheme have launched a campaign, saying it would lead to the loss of a popular recreation area for families, have a devastating effect on wildlife, create a traffic hazard and prove costly to ratepayers.

Figures in Mr Greensmith's report show that the estimated number of visitors to a display at the Civic Centre was less than 600 from a population of 53,492.

However, of these only 206 commented on the scheme, with 57 for and 116 against.

Supporters suggested the project should include an indoor sports centre, nursery ground and a concert venue. The existing uses of football, rugby and angling should also be protected.

Consultants have been appointed to assess the cash implications, and their report will be considered alongside the results of the public consultation exercise.

# Chester-le-Street Riverside: The Facts

Chester-le-Street District Council has considered and accepted in principle the recommendations of Consultants to develop the area South of Ropery Lane as a multi-million pound cricket stadium, sport and leisure complex. The next stage will be to seek approval for the submission of an Outline Planning Application. You have probably heard an inaccurate version of what is being planned. These are the facts:

## TEN POINTS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- \* It affects only the area South of Ropery Lane. There are no plans for the Riverside Park and the area North of Ropery Lane, but there are thoughts of making the park more attractive by developing its Victorian "feel". Both the bandstand and the greenhouses could be upgraded in accordance with this theme which could be further developed by the construction of Victorian tea rooms on the site of the existing shops.
- \* There will be more land for you to enjoy on the Riverside. At present there are 48 acres in the area South of Ropery Lane which are open to the public but by making the farmland in the peninsula available to the public the total area will increase to 64 acres, an increase of one third.
- \* Trees will be planted, better walkways built and more seating provided to make the Riverside area even more attractive. The area will be carefully landscaped to preserve views across the river towards Lumley and beyond.
- \* There will be vastly improved sporting and leisure facilities for the people of Chester-le-Street. These include an athletics track, a synthetic surface for outdoor games, four floodlit tennis courts and at least five new football/rugby pitches. The changing rooms and other sporting facilities will be designed into the Cricket Stadium so that it can be used by the whole community.
- \* Steps have been taken to protect wildlife. David Bellamy Associates are advising the Council to ensure that there is no danger to either plants or animals. The plans guarantee that there will be no development within 15 metres of the river banks and by creating an extensive conservation area in the peninsula new habitats can be provided for local wildlife.

- \* The scheme is supported by all parties on the council.
- \* There is no longer a plan for a hotel. The original plan for 300 houses has been reduced to 100 low density houses. The original 120,000 sq ft business park has been scaled down to 36,000 sq ft of offices which will look like semi-detached houses and be nowhere near the river. These developments will pay for the scheme and ensure that there is no capital cost to community chargepayers.
- \* Durham County Council is already looking at traffic management in the area with a view to improving roads, access, safety and car parking at the Riverside. It will become easier to drive down to the Riverside and enjoy the open space.
- \* The Council has nothing to hide. All plans are available for inspection and the planning application will be discussed in open committee. The Chief Executive, Tony Greensmith, is happy to discuss the plans.
- \* This multi-million pound development will bring jobs to the town, both during construction and afterwards. Chester-le-Street would be mentioned in every newspaper throughout the summer months and TV coverage will show the town as an attractive place for residents, visitors and for business.

## QUESTIONS YOU SHOULD ASK YOURSELF AS RESIDENTS OF CHESTER-LE-STREET

- Q Can we afford to let this multi-million pound development go elsewhere?
- Q Should we ignore the economic and commercial benefits to Chester-le-Street associated with the plan?
- Q Why should we miss the chance of first class recreational, leisure and sporting facilities on our doorstep?
- Q Or lose the prestige of having first class cricket and resulting media coverage for Chester-le-Street?

Q Or forego the opportunity to improve all the facilities and access to the Riverside?

Q Or lose the chance to create a better long-term future and much needed employment?

## CONSERVATION

Statement from David Bellamy Associates.

"David Bellamy Associates were involved in assessing the possible negative impacts and the positive environmental potential of the Riverside proposals. Our conclusions were that, properly designed, implemented and managed, proposals which were sensitive to conservation needs could result in benefits to both people and wildlife in the area".

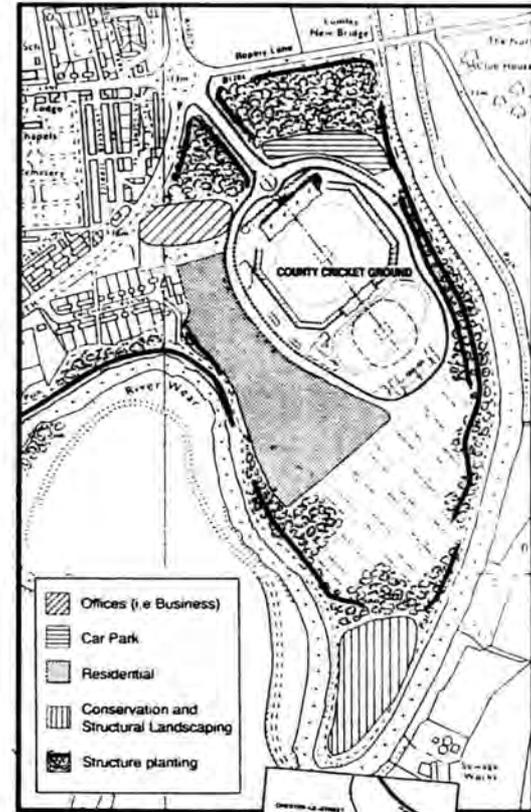
## A MESSAGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, COUNCILLOR GEORGE STAINES

"The Riverside development is one of the most significant and important schemes to come before this Council in recent years. The long and short term benefits that have been explained to you are obvious, and we would be failing in our duty as elected representatives if we did not present you with the facts.

As a Council we must take a positive view, making our decisions based on factual information and on what we think will benefit everyone in the District. Rumours are rife, as are misconceived and unsupported claims that the scheme will be responsible for destroying the habitat of wildlife and restricting access to the area.

We have consulted the very best professional advice available. The facts are that we wish to enhance the opportunities for wildlife to flourish and in addition create greater access for all the people who wish to use the Riverside.

The Riverside Park, North of Ropery Lane is not included in the scheme. We believe that this development can improve the quality of life for present and future generations".



*The Heart in the Community*

Enquiries regarding the Riverside development at Chester-le-Street please write to:  
The Chief Executive Tony Greensmith, Chester-le-Street Riverside, PO Box 30, Civic Centre, Chester-le-Street, Co Durham. DH3 3UU. Or telephone for an appointment - Telephone 091 389 0000.



HOW THE STADIUM COULD LOOK . . . an artist's impression of a grandstand built in traditional materials

# Cricket stadium a step forward

A COUNCIL is to seek planning permission for a controversial scheme incorporating a first class cricket stadium.

Chester-le-Street Council's environment and recreation committee gave the go-ahead for a planning application to be submitted to the authority's planning committee.

At the same time members rejected calls from protestors for a referendum on the proposals for the Riverside site.

The council leader, Coun George Staines, said that to agree to a referendum would be an abdi-

By MEL MASON

cation of elected members' authority to make decisions.

And members gave a vote of confidence to chief executive Tony Greensmith over the placing of half-page adverts about the development in newspapers just a week before council by-elections.

The committee said it deplored comments by Coun Derek Morse (Lib) that these appeared to be designed to influence voters.

The planning application will incorporate a cricket ground and associated facilities, housing and offices, landscaping, informal

recreation and a nature conservation area.

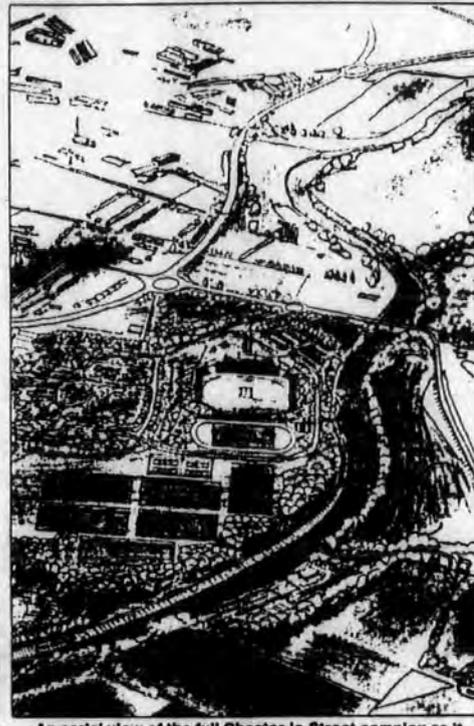
If the council approves the scheme it will have to refer it to Environment Secretary Chris Patten, to see if he wants to hold a public inquiry.

A revised development concept and financial appraisal by consultants Halrow Fox and Associates revealed that the council could expect to receive £4.5m from the release of land for 100 homes, and £270,000 by the development of 36,000sq ft of office space.

This would be used to offset the £2.47m cost of community sport and recreation facilities leaving a £2.3m contribution towards the £6.75m cost of the cricket ground and associated facilities.



HOW THE STADIUM COULD LOOK . . . a less traditional, more modern look for the ground



An aerial view of the full Chester-le-Street complex as it could eventually look

# Durham

FIRST CLASS



THE NORTHERN  
**ECHO**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1990



Leading the  
charge  
Page 8



Best quick  
bowler  
Page 6



Top Durham  
runmaker  
Page 6



Leading  
the battle  
Page 2



PHOTOGRAPH BY...  
DRAWING BY...  
PAGE 2  
PAGE 6  
PAGE 8

# FIRST CLASS DURHAM

For the record  
compiled by BRIAN HUNT

### GILLETTE CUP

Durham v Northumberland (Foscoyne, Gillingham) May 4, 1984: Herts 83 (S H Young 4-15, K G Bledsoe 3-22); Durham 88 for 5. Durham won by 7 wickets. Man of Match: S H Young.

Sussex v Durham (Tweed) May 27, 1984: Sussex 283 for 5 (J M Parks 102, M S H Young 3-28); Durham 83 (A Vase 4-31). Sussex won by 205 runs.

Durham v Northumberland (Chester-le-Street) April 23, 1987: Northumberland 181 for 7 (M J Sully 3-27); Durham 180 (P M Wrenner 47, R Ingle 44, Sully 30). Northumberland won by 11 runs. Man of Match: R J Bailey.

Durham v Worcestershire (Chester-le-Street) May 4, 1988: Worcestershire 98 (T W Greenway 46, S H Young 4-17, J G Barrow-Williamson 4-32); Durham 82 (S Brant 6-13). Worcestershire won by 16 runs. Man of Match: S H Young.

Durhamshire v Durham (County) July 5, 1972: Yorkshire 142; Durham 141 for 6 (A J Burridge 85). Durham won by 4 wickets. Man of Match: A J Burridge.

Durham v Surrey (Chester-le-Street) July 16, 1972: Surrey 217 (M J Smeaton 101, S R Lester 3-28); Durham 142 (J G March 78). Surrey won by 78 runs.

Yorkshire v Durham (Georgians) June 30, 1972: Yorkshire 138 (C Johnson 54, S R Lester 6-15); Durham 128 (R Ingle 47). Durham won by 8 wickets. Man of Match: S R Lester.

Durham v Essex (Chester-le-Street) July 11, 1973: Durham 134 (U K Laver 4-32); Essex 127 for 2. Essex won by 7 wickets.

Northamptonshire v Durham (Georgians) June 29, 1974: Durham 158; Northants 152 for 7 (R G Williams 51, J S Wilkinson 3-24). Durham won by 7-1 runs. Man of Match: Durham 52, D O Parnell 48, C M Old 4-8; Yorkshire won by 113 runs.

Northamptonshire v Durham (Georgians) June 29, 1974: Durham 158; Northants 152 for 7 (R G Williams 51, J S Wilkinson 3-24). Durham won by 7-1 runs. Man of Match: Durham 52, D O Parnell 48, C M Old 4-8; Yorkshire won by 113 runs.

Durham v Yorkshire (Chester-le-Street) July 18, 1979: Durham 213 for 6 (Wainman 52, S I Carr 47, P J Kippax 3-25, 10 Boycott 38, J H Hampshire 75). Yorkshire won by 4 wickets.

Northamptonshire v Durham (Trent Bridge) July 2, 1980: Durham 189 (Wainman 53, S I Carr 47); Northamptonshire 157 for 6 (C E B Rice 48, P J Kippax 3-25). Northamptonshire won by 4 wickets. Man of Match: Wainman.

### NATWEST TROPHY

Lancashire v Durham (Old Trafford) July 11, 1981: Durham 187 (R R Atkinson 80); Lancashire 189 for 2 (A Kennedy 102, N C H Lloyd 48, M Lonsdale won by 5 wickets.

Surrey v Durham (The Oval) July 3, 1982: Surrey 279 for 7 (M A Lynch 158, G R J Roope 77, S P Oates 5-51); Durham 188 for 6 (S Greenwood 73). Surrey won by 111 runs.

Durham v Lancashire (Chester-le-Street) July 3, 1988: Lancashire 211 for 6 (D Hughes 71, S P Oates 7-22); Durham 108. Lancashire won by 103 runs. Man of Match: S P Oates.

Durham v Northamptonshire (Foscoyne) 1981: Northants 228 for 6 (M Lonsdale 77, S Greenwood 4-32); Durham 198 (D Atkinson 48, A Patel 38, S Greenwood 36). Northants won by 11 runs. Man of Match: S Greenwood.

Durhamshire v Durham (Durry) 1988: Durhamshire 171 (M J Smeaton 53, A S Patel 3-24, S Greenwood 3-25); Durham 173 for 2 (A Patel 48, J W Lister 42, S Greenwood 42). Durham won by 7 wickets. Man of Match: S Greenwood.

Kent v Durham (Canterbury) 1989: Kent 248 for 7 (M R Bennett 78, P J Kippax 3-28); Durham 189 (S Greenwood 3-28). Kent won by 79 runs.

Northamptonshire v Durham (Georgians) 1988: Worcestershire 217 for 8 (A Kallaburrow 88, P Smith 76, D Armit 77, P Kippax 3-41); Durham 182 (A S Patel 58). Worcestershire won by 135 runs.

Durham v Middlesex (Foscoyne) 1987: Durham 164 for 6 (S Greenwood 56); Middlesex 159 for 3 (W Black 45, M W Cotting 48, M Middlesex won by 7 wickets.

Durham v Somerset (Foscoyne) 1988: Somerset 242 for 7 (L Hardy 100, J Carr 3-16); Durham 238 for 6 (L Carr 54, J W Lister 46). Somerset won by 34 runs.

Durham v Middlesex (Foscoyne) June 26, 1982: Middlesex 218 for 7 (D J Hayward 82, Durham 181 (P Barn 43, S Hughes 4-20). Middlesex won by 37 runs.

Lancashire v Durham (Old Trafford) June 27, 1982: Durham 184; Lancashire 188 for 2.

# Formidable trio to set ball rolling

IT has long been a talking point around Durham cricket clubs that the county produces enough talent to support a first-class team.

In the early 1980s Hesham-born former Kent paceman Norman Graham, in his time as Northumberland's commercial manager, floated the idea of a joint Durham-Northumberland team applying for first-class status.

A feasibility study was started, but the idea fizzled out when it was decided it would be impossible to generate enough income to run a first-class team.

But still the talent kept emerging, and in late 1988 Durham decided to go it alone. Matt Roseberry was co-opted on to the committee and newly-installed president Ian Callier, together with Tom Moffat and Don Robson, set about preparing Durham's case.

They made a formidable trio. Callier had the contacts in the first-class game through bringing

TIM WELLOCK looks at the beginnings of a bandwagon that's rolling Durham towards county championship cricket

international stars to play in the the Callers Pegasus Festival at Jesmond; Moffat, the county treasurer, had the drive and business knowledge as chairman of the Durham Small Business Club; and Robson had a wealth of local public administration experience as leader of Durham County Council. He is also chairman of the National Cricket Association.

They also share a deep love of the game, which has prompted them to spend countless unpaid hours making sure that every angle was explored and nothing was left to chance.

"We began in early 1989 and it has been a part of our lives ever since," said Moffat.

"We set out to do it as professionally as possible. We got Price Waterhouse to draw up the business plan and Nova International to handle the marketing, and brought in Geoff Cook to oversee the final stages.

"The business plan took 18 months to prepare. It is not just a financial plan, it looks at everything. "This is a major regional development which will provide all kinds of opportunities for small businesses and create jobs.

"Television exposure and marketing potential will benefit the region, tourism will be increased, catering and hospitality facilities will be developed and will be used all the year round."

There have been times when the Durham officials have been accused of feathering their own nests, and they have also been accused of being vandals because of their plans for a stadium on the riverside at Chester-le-Street.

But their labour of love continued, always with the knowledge that the major stumbling block would be lack of finance to start up a business which will have an annual turnover of £700,000-£1m.

With that in mind they made a promotional video, featuring Tom Graveney, which they used in their offers of sponsorship packages to local companies.

The initial response was not encouraging, but then the Newcastle Building Society, Co-operative Bank and British Gas Northern all promised sums well in excess of £100,000 spread over five years.

There is more in the pipeline, but there is still some way to go to meet the initial target of £500,000 a year for five years, after which they expect to be self-financing.

Hopefully, acceptance by the TCCB will open the floodgates. After all the hard work which has gone in, Durham certainly don't deserve to fail for lack of cash.

# Cook's challenge

FORMER England batsman Geoff Cook is the man whose vast experience will guide Durham into first-class cricket.

The 39-year-old former Northants captain has spent the last four months overseeing the final stages of Durham's application and will be delighted to take up the full-time appointment he has been offered.

"It's a very exciting challenge," said Cook, who was born in Middlesbrough and played for Northants for 19 years before retiring last season. He also played in seven Tests.

"We are lucky to be starting afresh and are aware of all the pitfalls other counties have encountered.

"Financially, we could be the envy of many counties, but we must sustain interest after the honeymoon period.

"You can have the best-organised set-up in the world, but unless the team are performing well it becomes misdirected."

Cook has already lined up a potential captain and several other experienced first-class cricketers who are excited by the challenge of helping Durham.

"We need to assemble a playing staff which will do justice to all the enthusiasm the entry into first-class cricket will generate," he said.

"It's important to get one or two experienced professionals in next year and I have spoken to some who would willingly spend a season in Minor Counties cricket if Durham are accepted into the County Championship the following season.

"In that case it would also be vital to get our captain installed next year. The man I have lined up has captaincy experience.

"But if it's to be a gradual entry via the Second XI Championship I may have to

TIM WELLOCK talks to the man who hopes to lead Durham into a new era — on or off the pitch

potential and nurture them through the pitfalls.

"There are divided opinions on whether we should have an overseas player, but I think it would be absolute folly not to plan on using one. To be anything like competitive it's essential.

"The teams who have won the championship recently have done it with an overseas batsman, such as Worcestershire with Graeme Hick and Middlesex with Desmond Haynes.

"But they have had good English bowlers, whereas in Durham's case a bowler looks the most likely requirement."

The Durham bowler who has impressed Cook most is Ian Conn, but he fears the entry into first-class cricket may come just too late for the Burnmoor seamer, who has a career as a chemist.

"I'm surprised he slipped through the net. He could easily have been a first-class bowler and could feature initially for Durham if he has the desire," said Cook.

There is already an excellent coaching system in Durham, although it's less than adequate in the south of the county. The system might need refining so that we make sure we see the better players earlier."

Cook is already looking closely at youngsters receiving National Cricket Association coaching at the McEwan Centre at Houghton-le-Spring.

He also plans extensive net practices throughout the winter and expects to introduce several youngsters to Minor Counties Championship cricket next season.

"I have already told people like Steve Greenwood and Peter Kippax that we have to look to the future and they accept that," he said.

"From the point of view of winning our NatWest Trophy match at home to Glamorgan it might be better to have them in the side. But it's essential to assess the youngsters as much as possible.

Cook has no doubt there is plenty of talent to work on, and also has no fears about the grounds Durham propose to use.

"I had heard some horror stories about the grounds, but after 20 years of playing around the country, often on pitches of dubious quality, I have been pleasantly surprised by what I have seen up here.

"Durham need have no fears of having grounds of a reasonable standard.

"Lancashire groundman Peter Marron has offered to help, and it's essential we use him as much as possible.

"It's a shame Sunderland isn't considered good enough for first-class cricket at the moment as it's a marvellous stadium.

"Hopefully we can get over the problem, and we plan to play Lancashire there in a one-day match next season."

Durham also have matches lined up against Sri Lanka, Scotland and Denmark and will be looking for more first-class opposition to help them prepare for their brave new world.



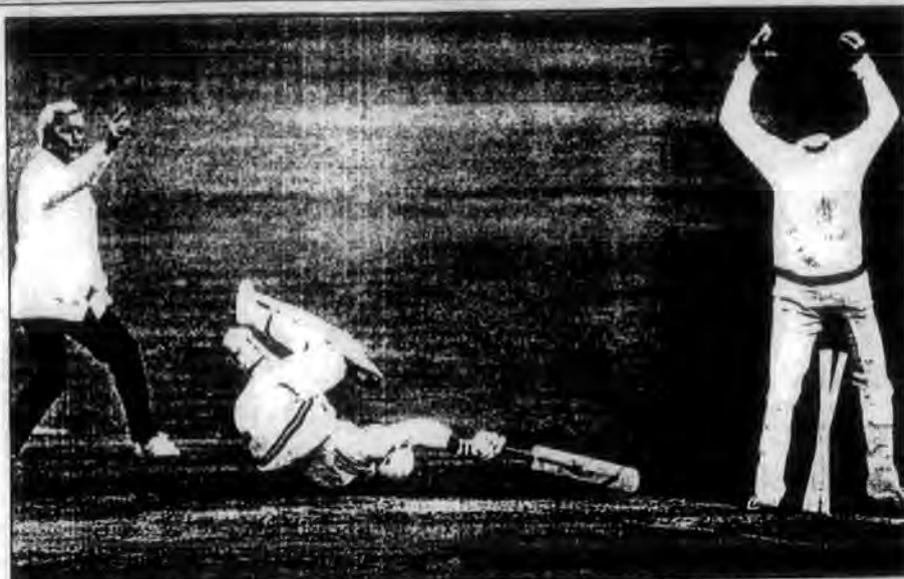
BACK HOME: Geoff Cook back in the North-East and relishing his new job



FORMER GLORIES: Cook considers getting kitted up to the England tour to India in 1981

*'There is plenty of talent to work on'*

IM WELLOCK recalls the highlights — and some of the major contributors — in Durham County Cricket Club's 108-year-old history



RUN OUT: Durham's Steve Greenword wins the verdict from umpire Don Oelzer as Middlesex's West Indian batsman Roland Butcher scrambles in vain to reach the crease in June, 1989



Durham v B Africaans (Durham) 25 (G Turnbull 4-79 and 302 for 2 dec; SC M H Hazton 151, W F Whitwell 4-64; Durham 181; SC M Hazton 4-9 and 91; Africaans won by 445 runs.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) Sunderland July 25-27, 1927: B Africaans 268 (A Brown 8-100; Durham 129; G Turnbull 48; 36 and 204 (E W Elliot 85, G Turnbull 48); B Africaans won by an innings and 28 runs.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) July 24-26, 1911: Durham 244 (H Brooks 47) and 87 (H Smead-Or 3-45); B Africaans 229 (Stannard 100; A Brown 8-97) and 85; B Africaans won by 5 wickets.

Durham v Australia (Aldborough) Aug 9-10, 1912: Durham 142 (C V Adlam 58, G Macnamy 5-37); Australia 346 (E P Mayne 111, A Morris 5-86). Match abandoned.

Durham v Australia (Aldborough) July 16-18, 1921: Durham 188 and 121 (E A McDonald 5-22; Australia 287 and 24 for no win; Australia won by 10 wickets.

Durham v W Indies (Fifehead) June 13-14, 1923: W Indies 128 (D Challenger 47), K Doolan 4-80 and 132 for 2; Durham 53, J K Hoff 53; Durham 83 (C R Brown 5-38) and 74; W Indies won by 180 runs.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) July 23-24, 1924: Durham 198 (S H Weight 43 and 12 for no run; B Africaans 173 (T K Dobson 4-60, G Duggan 3-27). Match abandoned — rain.

Durham v Australia (Aldborough) June 8-10, 1928: Durham 123 (A A Maltby 8-53 and 114, G Macnamy 4-25, C V Gilmartin 4-80; Australia 322 for 3 dec (T J E. Andrews 125; Australia won by an innings and 81 runs.

Durham v W Indies (Chester-le-Street) June 18-20, 1927: W Indies 273 (C S Chatterjee 117, Cook 4-80) and 194 (W H; Durham 284 (J Cook 100), H Brooks 74) and 123 (H Weight 58, N Zealand won by 16 runs.

Durham v W Indies (Aldborough) June 1-2, 1928: Durham 227 (T K Dobson 126, W H; W Indies 121, A L Howell 4-41, J Giff 3-20 and 81 for 5; Match drawn.

Durham v W Indies (Aldborough) July 23-24, 1928: Durham 112 and 71; B Africaans 243 (H G Owen-Smith 102, B Africaans won by an innings and 80 runs.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) July 16-20, 1931: Durham 145 (D P W Alcorn 7, 50; N Zealand 218 for 2 (S C Cronin 108).

Durham v W Indies (Aldborough) July 25-27, 1932: Durham 258 (C L Adlam 80, G Macnamy 5-24 and 132 for 2; B Africaans 101 (E H Bromley 27, W H Howarth 80); Match drawn.

Durham v Australia (Fifehead) July 25-26, 1934: Durham 73 (L Featherston-Bent 7-21) and 204 (C L Adlam 50, G Macnamy 4-25; Australia 214 for 3 dec (A F Kippax 101 (no), E H Bromley 27, W H Howarth 80); Match drawn.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) July 17-18, 1935: Durham 48 (A Langton 4-14, G V Vincent 4-12) and 141 (D C H Townsend 40, Langton 3-35; B Africaans 221 (G V Vincent 140 for 5; Durham won by an innings and 95 runs.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) June 10-11, 1936: Durham 174 and 203 for 2 dec (S Wapp 48, 138 and 203 for 2; Durham 176 (T R Dobson 52, J Carr 48) and 203 for 1 (E H Puddle 85); Match drawn.

Durham v W Indies (Aldborough) July 14-15, 1937: W Indies 200 (H G Vivian 87, Duggan 4-29 and 138 for 2; Durham 4-29; Durham 270 (D C H Townsend 138 (no) and 100 for 4; Match drawn.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) Aug 6-8, 1938: Durham 108 (Featherston-Bent 6-53, W O'Reilly 4-20) and 98 (O'Reilly 6-26; Featherston-Bent 4-27; Australia 260 for 2 dec (S G Barnes 140 (no), C L Badcock 109 (no); Australia won by an innings 178 runs.

Durham v W Indies (Aldborough) July 17-18, 1940: Durham 143 for 5 dec; Durham 108 for 8 dec; Match drawn.

Durham v Australia (Aldborough) Aug 11-12, 1941: Australia 286 (C L Macdonald 84, K R Miller 36, T K Jackson 9-76); Durham 73 for 5; Match drawn.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) Aug 18-19, 1942: N Zealand 417 for 3 dec (V J Scott 104, F S Smith 108 (no), F L H Maloney 104 (no); Durham 177 (no) and 293 (J H Christie 56); Match drawn.

Durham v W Indies (Aldborough) July 26-27, 1950: W Indies 275 (S G Doolan 114, K S Trevelyan 106, T K Jackson 4-120) and 214 for 4 dec (Trevelyan 100 (no), C L H Maloney 87; Durham 145 (J G Duggan 89) and 203 for 4 (Koster 87); Match drawn.

Durham v India (Aldborough) July 5-8, 1952: Durham 322 for 4 dec (J G Koster 105, A Conn 80; India 198 (P R Unwin 61, P Roy 54, R Aitchison 6-84, A Conn 4-30) and 101 for 3; Match drawn.

Durham v B Africaans (Aldborough) Sept 3-5, 1955: B Africaans 543 (P Mansel 148, P Wessely 123, K Williamson 4-99; Durham 111 (D W Hardy 40, J J Smith 5-29) and 109 (Smith 5-44); B Africaans won by 324 runs.

Durham v India (Aldborough) Sept 13-14, 1952: Durham 267 for 4 dec (D Milburn 101, D W Hardy 86 (no) and 152 for 7; India 81, G G Crawford 40; India 181 (D G Bannister 51, J M Watson 8-23 and 210 for 10; D G Bannister 81; Watson 4-8, F Forster 3-26). Match drawn.

Durham v Pakistan (Aldborough) Sept 8-10, 1952: Pakistan 262 (Imdad-ul-Haque 88, Waheedullah 53 (no), K Bashir 3-26). Match drawn.

Durham v Pakistan (Aldborough) Sept 8-10, 1952: Pakistan 262 (Imdad-ul-Haque 88, Waheedullah 53 (no), K Bashir 3-26). Match drawn.

Durham v Pakistan (Aldborough) Sept 8-10, 1952: Pakistan 262 (Imdad-ul-Haque 88, Waheedullah 53 (no), K Bashir 3-26). Match drawn.

(Durham have played several international matches, particularly pre-1990, for which no records are available)

# Tuns gave birth to tons

**D**URHAM County Cricket Club was founded in 1882, when, at the request of South Shields, a meeting was held at the Three Tuns in Durham City on May 23.

Clubs represented were South Shields, Darlington, Durham School, Durham City, Stockton, Whitburn, Gateshead Fell and North Durham.

A committee was formed and a match was arranged against Northumberland at Sunderland on June 12-13.

Durham, captained by Arthur Mewburn of the host club, bowled out their visitors for 99 then scored 185.

Northumberland were dismissed for 162 in their second innings, with Mewburn taking seven for 52.

The Durham captain batted at 11 in the first innings but saw his side to a four-wicket win by hitting an unbeaten 47 out of 75 for six in the second innings.

The county had difficulty arranging fixtures in the early days, and were indebted to Richard Henry Mallett, whose hard work and enthusiasm kept things going.

Although born in Stoke, Mallett played for Darlington and Sesham Harbour and made several visits to 'Lord's' to arrange the best possible fixtures.

He also attended meetings which led to the formation of the Minor Counties Championship in 1896, when 16 counties gave their support.

But in the first season only seven could meet the condition of entry that four matches should be played at home and four away.

Durham, with four wins and three draws from eight games, shared the title with Norfolk and were followed by Worcestershire, Bedfordshire, Oxfordshire, Hertfordshire and Staffordshire.

The difficulty of securing fixtures meant Durham twice had to drop out of the competition. But they have been ever-present since 1899 and share with Buckinghamshire the distinction of having won it the most times.

Their nine titles were achieved in 1896, 1900, 1901, 1926, 1930, 1976, 1980, 1981 and 1984.

They also won the Minor Counties Knockout, then known as the English Estates Trophy, in 1985, beating Dorset by 100 runs at Fenner's, Cambridge, in the final.

Durham have achieved several other distinctions through the Gillette Cup/NatWest Trophy.

In 1973 they became the first Minor County to beat a first-class side by topping Yorkshire at Harrogate, and in 1985 they beat Derbyshire to become the

first Minor County to take two first-class scalps.

They have played 24 matches in the national knockout and have won 12 Man of the Match awards — both records for Minor Counties.

Steve Greenword is the only Minor Counties player to have won three Man of the Match awards — against Berkshire in 1979, Northamptonshire in 1984 and Derbyshire in 1985.

Greenword, born in Gateshead in 1943, played for Leicestershire from 1963-66 and has made 192 appearances for Durham since 1970, leaving him second only to Neil Riddell (218).

He is also second to Riddell in the list of leading run-scorers with 7,802, while he is fourth in the wicket-takers with 427.

The county's other great all-rounder was John Carr, born in Leadgate in 1894.

Known as Jack, he played as a professional for Chester-le-Street, Blackhall, Darlington RA and Stockton and lies third in the list of appearances for the county with 183 matches from 1924-46.

He is sixth in the batting list with 4,472 runs and second in the bowling with 624 wickets. He was described in 1931 as the most popular cricketer in the county.

Easily the county's leading wicket-taker is Alfred Morris, a paceman born in West Hartlepool, whose phenomenal strike rate saw him take 851 wickets in 94 matches from 1905-14.

He was professional for Burnmoor and Sunderland while playing for Durham, but after the First World War he moved into the Bradford League.

Fifth in the bowling list is Jack Watson, who was still playing village cricket last season at the age of 88.

A medium pace and off-spin bowler, he took 392 wickets for Durham in 128 matches from 1945-46, and also scored 2,792 runs. He also played 67 times for Northumberland, taking 196 wickets and scoring 1,630 runs.

Born at High Spen, Jack played as a professional for Rison, Durham City, Ashington, Alnwick, Shildon BR, Blackhall, Swailwell and Normanby Hall.

One of Jack's greatest performances was the six for 23 he took against India at Aehbrooke, Sunderland, in 1959, the match in which Colin Milburn made his only appearance for Durham and scored 101.

Some of other great Durham players featured prominently in the matches against touring sides, which began with the South Africans at Feethams in 1901 and ended with Pakistan at Aehbrooke in 1962.

Durham's only victory in those matches was against All India in 1936, while the biggest defeat was by an innings and 324

runs against the South Africans at Aehbrooke in 1955.

Alf Morris proved his prowess with figures of 36-11-87-6 against All India in 1911 and 32.2-4-96-6 against the Australians the following year.

In 1923 Sir Lesrie Constantine was in the West Indian side which beat Durham by 180 runs at Feethams, Darlington. He was one of four victims to Thomas Kell Dobson junior in the first innings.

Dobson, whose father played for the county from 1886-96, was another of Durham's great all-rounders.

Born at Whitburn in 1901, he played 100 times for Durham, scoring 3,040 runs and taking 226 wickets.

When the West Indians returned in 1926, this time to Aehbrooke and again with Constantine in the side, Dobson hit 105 in Durham's first innings.

He was captain from 1932-36, but resigned because of ill health and died in 1940, aged 39.

He was succeeded as captain by David Townsend, who hit an unbeaten 136 in the drawn match against New Zealand in 1937.

In 1950 the West Indies visited Aehbrooke with a team which included Clyde Walcott and Sonny Ramadhin and were held to a draw largely due to the efforts of Jackie Keeler.

The diminutive opening batsman from South Moor hit 90 in the first innings and 97 in the second, but he saved his best innings for the county for the visit of India two years later, when he scored 135 out of 302 for six.

Durham's formidable pace pair of Alex

Cozon and Ron Aspinall dismissed India for 156 to force the follow-on, but the match was drawn.

Cozon and Aspinall both played for Yorkshire before giving excellent service to Durham, and Cozon, who played in one Test in 1945, still lives in the county.

In the 1955 match against South Africa the Durham attack was opened by Gus and Ken Williamson, from Norton.

In a South African total of 543, with three men run out, Ken emerged with the credible figures of four for 99.

He also played football, squash and several other sports with great distinction, while Gus, who adopted the family name of Barkas-Williamson, played first-class cricket for Northamptonshire from 1959-62.

Two bowlers of genuine pace who gave great service to Durham and made their mark against first-class opposition were Stuart Young and Stuart Wilkinson.

Young, born in Blackhall in 1939, turned down several offers from first-class counties, and after starting his career with Blackhall he played as professional for Horden, Chester-le-Street, Blackhall, Darlington, South Shields, Philadelphia and Bishop Auckland.

In 115 appearances for Durham he took 348 wickets and scored 1,864 runs.

He won two Man of the Match awards in the Gillette Cup, his greatest moment coming when he took four for 17 against Worcestershire at Chester-le-Street in 1968.

Wilkinson, born at Echeester in 1943, played for Shotley Bridge, Durham City and Philadelphia and achieved fame as the man who bowled Geoff Boycott in Durham's 1973 Gillette Cup win against Yorkshire.

But his best performance came four years later when he won the Man of the Match award against Northants at Northampton.

He shot out the first four batsmen — Roy Virgin, Peter Willey, David Steele and Mushtaq Mohammed with only 17 on the board and finished with five for 24.

Needing 152 to win, Northants scraped home by three wickets, with their Hartlepool-born wicketkeeper George Sharp unbeaten on 36.

Of the many other fine cricketers Durham has produced, one of the best-loved was Russell Inglis.

Born at Crookhall, he turned down many offers from first-class counties and was easily Durham's leading run-scorer when ill health forced him to retire in 1973, aged 37.

He died eight years later, but the memory of his 6,236 runs for Durham and 12 dedicated seasons as Chester-le-Street's professional lives on.

PACY: Bowler Stuart Young made his mark against first class opposition winning Man of the Match awards twice in Durham's Gillette Cup clashes



# The chums of April who congregate

**STEPHEN BRENKLEY**

spent several seasons following and reporting the county circuit.

Here's a taste of just what will face Durham's new boys.

ONE hot July morning at Worcester a man with a ruddy face and a blazer looked longingly out at the practising flannelled fools.

He said, to nobody in particular but mostly to himself: "What a lovely way to make a living. Playing cricket with your mates all day long. They haven't got anything to moan about."

First-class cricket is not, however, quite as straightforward as having a laugh with your mates all day long. Come September of any season, they might not be the chums of April who congregated at the county nets so fresh and willing, but irritating twerps with insufferable ways and no form.

The truth is, of course, that a cricket

eleven does not necessarily consist of fellows who are bosom pals. Their ability to rub along with each other may be considered in selection but it is not the first priority.

Cricketers' existences are artificial. Not only must they share dressing rooms with the same core of individuals for five months but hotel rooms too. They finish play for the day, go for a pint or two and dinner, and then turn in.

They gather for breakfast, they go to the ground, do a lap, might have a net and prepare to take the field with their mates again. Wonderful, it is. After three or four days they pile in their cars (three at least in a vehicle) and travel to the other side of the

country to do it all again.

For the married ones there is also the ritual of the nightly call home. Their wives, who if ever they were interested in cricket have long since lost the affection, are probably there thinking that he is merely away having a good time with his mates. The seasons always start with such hope. By the end of June it is possible that all hope has been abandoned with many of the rain-ruined games. The rest is just trying to string a few scores together to improve upon the Championship placing but mainly to ensure a new contract for next year. It is astounding how cricketers' minds are concentrated by the contract. This has nothing to do with

their pride in the job (mostly) but with the fact that most contracts are so pitiful. Players paid only for the season, not for long winter months. The money barely covers the mortgage. Meals a day are provided free. It is perhaps the worst fate that befall any young sportsman, good enough to play county cricket but not possess that extra touch class to advance further. Most cricketers seem not to mind being poor as most appear to content not to win all the time. They are praying that the hang on long enough for the benefit years is the usual time to end and the benefit year can come



TOP MAN: Neil Riddell, a great servant for Durham. Below: Durham wicketkeeper Andy Fothergill — appealing as ever

# More than

THERE are some who claim the riverside at Chester-le-Street could provide one of the country's most attractive venues.

During a break in play on a bright, sunny day the television cameras would capture picturesque Lumley Castle, set in rolling countryside, giving the rest of the country a new, more positive image of the North-East.

This aspect has not been lost on the councillors and officers who have worked on the scheme and believe that national coverage could be a valuable — if intangible — asset of the project.

"The fact of the matter is we are going to get some beautiful television shots," said Chester-le-Street District Council chief executive Tony Greensmith.

"There is a bit of mind association. People are going to see Chester-le-Street's got green areas and a castle, and it may substantially alter their impression of the region."

From this and all the publicity a first class

**MARK SUMMERS** looks at the plans to site Durham's cricket HQ at Chester-le-Street and considers the objections to the multi-million pound scheme spearheaded by the local action group

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cricket club would generate, it is hoped inward investment would flow.

But the scheme does potentially offer tangible benefits to the small market town.

Consultants estimate that it would provide construction jobs over four years and around permanent jobs on completion, mainly in business park that is needed to generate for the project.

In addition it would mean spectators spending money in the town and possibly developing opportunities for tourism.

The scheme is much more than just a cricket stadium, although the stadium is the catalyst for the development.

It is estimated that 100 executive homes, 36,000 sq ft of office space on the 107-acre south of Ropery Lane would contribute £1.5m towards the £6.75m cost of building the stadium and car parking.

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Both sides must now await the decision of Environment Secretary Chris Patten — due December 4 — on whether to hold a public inquiry because the housing and offices by the structure plan.

The scheme offer more to the small

# at the county nets so fresh and willing

bring in £100,000 tax free now. The demands are greater. Thirty years ago professionals could simply drift about, get drunk on Saturday nights, have Sundays off and meander down the road for the next contest. The one-day game has changed all that. Travelling has increased, levels of essential fitness have necessarily risen. Driving 400 miles, sleeping in a strange bed while your mate across the way snores is not the best preparation for fitness training in the morning. It is possible too, of course, to have too much cricket. It becomes monotonous with nothing to play for. Except the old contract.

Doubts always creep in, even among the thoughts of the best players. Some huge fast bowler sorts them out a couple of times and they wonder what they are doing. Or some new wonderboy with a massive bat smashes you round the ground on three successive days. You begin to wonder where the next away swinging yorker is coming from. And all this, except on the big one-day occasions which demand different disciplines, is being enacted in front of a few hardy, devoted souls who wanted to be there doing it themselves, like the man in the blazer all those years ago. The camaraderie survives, perhaps because the players are mostly bright

enough to realise that it is all artificial. John Arlott has bestowed on the county professional circuit and the members of it the status almost of a religious sect which deserves to be followed. They can be a rum lot and it can be a rum way of going on. But it should be a treasured part of the English (and Welsh) way of life. In its way it reflects life: the highs, the lows, the mostly humdrum. Speaking years ago to the long serving Kent bowler Fred Ridgway he said he had never wanted to be a cricketer. It was just something he did. Ridgway played five times for England in India but, in truth was, an honest county pro, albeit of a

different generation. Years after retirement he said: "I remember sitting in the office the year after I retired. It was June, I think, and the sun was shining. I looked round and thought of the lads at Canterbury or Leicester or wherever they were. I knew where I'd prefer to be." They are unlikely to have too many men in blazers following them about and not many of any sort, and the traffic jams on the A1 will be long, and the wife will be playing hell about the kids, and there will be nothing to play for except the contract after mid-July. But Durham should relish being a first-class county.



**Jack Hey's First Eleven**

WE asked Jack Hey (above) to select a Durham XI from the best players he has seen in his 45 years as county secretary. Here is his selection, in batting order:  
 Russell Inglis (1956-73)  
 Harry Bell (1944-62)  
 Steve Greensword (1970-)  
 Steve Atkinson (1972-89)  
 Alan Burridge (1961-72)  
 Don Herdy (capt) (1948-67)  
 Neil Riddell (1972-90)  
 Jack Watson (1945-66)  
 Stuart Young (1956-72)  
 Stuart Wilkinson (1968-85)  
 Bobby Cole (wk) (1958-74)  
 Reserves: Paul Bum, Ken Biddulph, Brian Lander.

## a stadium

## Anywhere else but by the Riverside

THE first thing the man leading the campaign against the scheme will tell you is that he is a cricket fan and supports the bid for first-class status.

Ironically Jack Minto, chairman of the Save Our Riverside action group, became involved when he went along to a public meeting with the intention of supporting the development. "But when I saw what was proposed I thought that I had to fight it," said the retired civil servant.

The protestors' position is clear. They do not want the riverside area built on, a view they say is shared by thousands of other residents.

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"We took a lot of signatures down there (for the campaign's 18,000-name protest petition) and it is extremely well-used by people in the summer for picnics, walking the dog, taking the children.

"It is popular for informal recreation; just looking at the place has some attraction." The campaigners believe the land is part of the town's heritage and say it was the intention of the councillors who agreed to buy it during the 1950s and 60s to keep it as open space and a haven for informal pursuits.

"Enhance the sports facilities for the locals, put in an athletics track, fine," said Minto. "But there are only four areas like it in the county and it would be a real shame if it was lost.

Since the development was first floated publicly more than a year ago the action group has fought a war of words with the council.

It counts among its supporters locally-born Labour MP Jack Cunningham and his father Andrew, once a powerful figure on Durham County Council.

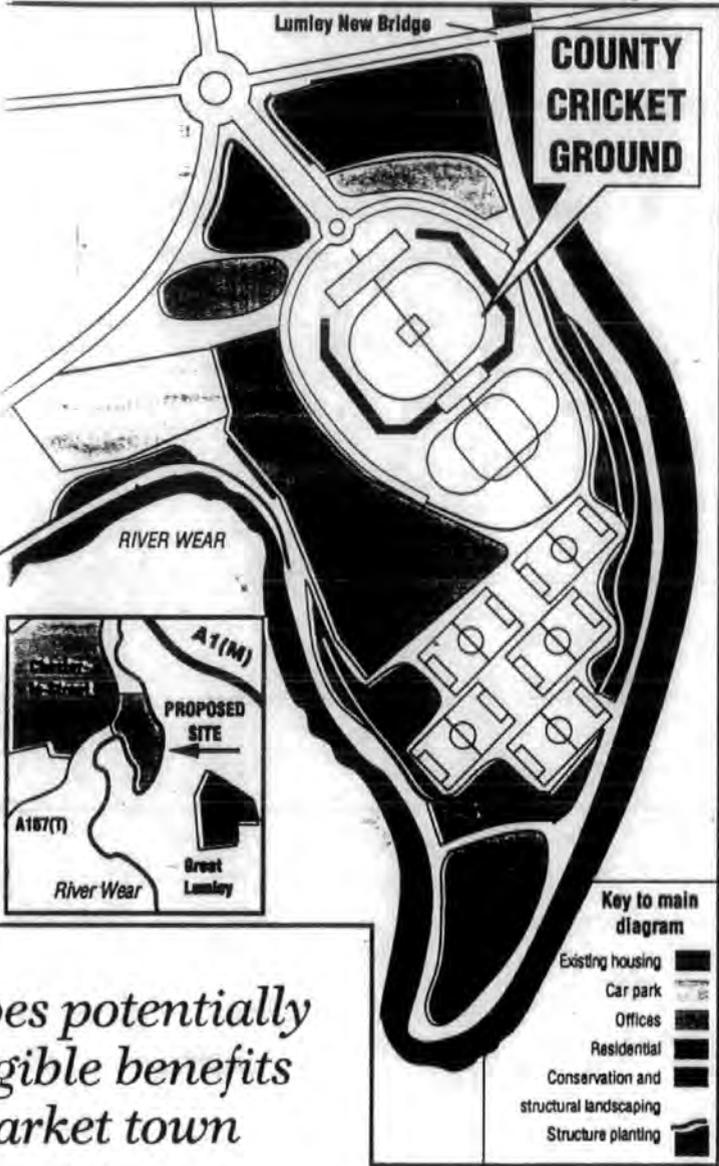
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The group also disputes the council's assertion that the scheme can be justified as a breach of structure policies because the stadium holds regional significance.

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**JACK CUNNINGHAM** - against the development

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They gather for breakfast, they go to  
the ground, do a lap, might have a tea  
and prepare to take the field with  
their mates again. Wonderful, it is.  
After three or four days they pile in  
their cars (three at least in a vehicle)  
and travel to the other side of the

The rest is just trying to string a few  
scores together to improve upon the  
Championship placing but mainly to  
ensure a new contract for next year.  
It is astounding how cricketers'  
minds are concentrated by the  
contract. This has nothing to do with

the way scores is not the best  
preparation for fitness training in the  
morning.  
It is possible too, of course, to have  
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# More than a stadium

## Anywhere else but by the Riverside



**T**HERE are some who claim the riverside at Chester-le-Street could provide one of the country's most attractive venues.

During a break in play on a bright, sunny day, the television cameras would capture picturesque Lumley Castle, set in rolling countryside, giving the rest of the country a new, more positive image of the North East.

This aspect has not been lost on the councillors and officers who have worked on the scheme and believe that national coverage could be a valuable — if intangible — asset of the project.

"The fact of the matter is we are going to get some beautiful television shots," said Chester-le-Street District Council chief executive Tony Greensmith.

"There is a bit of mind association. People are going to see Chester-le-Street's got green areas and a castle, and it may substantially alter their impression of the region."

From this and all the publicity a first class

**MARK SUMMERS** looks at the plans to site Durham's cricket HQ at Chester-le-Street and considers the objections to the multi-million pound scheme spearheaded by the local action group

cricket-club would generate, it is hoped that inward investment would flow.

But the scheme does potentially offer more tangible benefits to the small market town.

Consultants estimate that it would provide 80 construction jobs over four years and around 200 permanent jobs on completion, mainly in the business park that is needed to generate funds for the project.

In addition it would mean spectators spending money in the town and possibly develop opportunities for tourism.

The scheme is much more than just a cricket stadium, although the stadium is the catalyst for the development.

It is estimated that 100 executive homes and 36,000 sq ft of office space on the 107-acre site south of Ropery Lane would contribute £2.3m towards the £6.75m cost of building the stadium and car parking.

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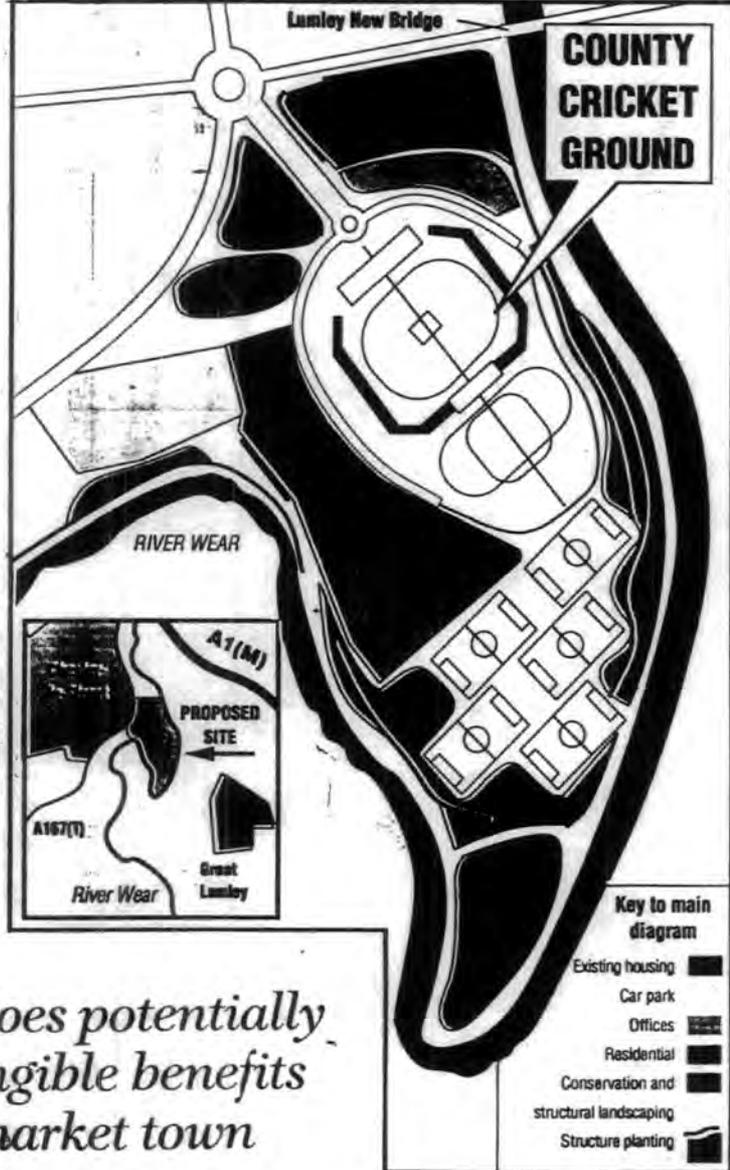
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# Eight lead list

Players born in the County of Durham who have appeared in first-class cricket in the British Isles since 1884

- C L Alderson 1906-79 b Durham (Minor Counties)
- F Aggus 1934-38 b Gateshead (Middlesex)
- T M Armstrong 1946-1929 b Wingers (Oxford Univ)
- J S. Asker 1908-42 b Gateshead (Cambridge Univ)
- B R Alderson 1962 b Darley (Minor Counties)
- D Bailey 1944 b West Hartlepool (Lancashire)
- J J Bailey 1940 b West Hartlepool (Minor Counties)
- F J Bamsey 1883-1938 b Durham (Oxford Univ)
- B Bamsey 1844-1891 b Stockton (Surrey)
- W Barnes 1917 b Harrington (Lancashire)
- T W Birtles 1928 b Stockton (Hants)
- W Birtles 1942 b Newfield (Warwickshire)
- R C Black 1900-88 b Durham (New Zealand)
- J Brown 1989 b Gairthorn (Sussex)
- J S. Brown 1980 b Cleaton (Northants)
- P Sims 1982 b Seaton (Minor Counties)
- T E Burnley 1883 b Darlington (Cambridge Univ)
- D A Burrows 1988 b Peterlee (Gloucestershire)
- H J Burridge 1938 b Sunderland (Minor Counties)
- A J Carter 1913 b Hensdon, Sunderland (Derby)
- R G Carter 1957 b Hensdon (Warwickshire)
- C Christie 1971 b Sunderland (MCC)
- T Collins 1911 b South Moor (Warwickshire)
- W Coppeland 1856-1917 b Stockton (Lancashire)
- F L Crabtree 1872-1901 b Darlington (Cambridge Univ)
- R W Carter 1945 b West Hartlepool (Cambridge Univ)
- H L Dallas 1888-1964 b Lancaster (Middlesex)
- S A S Daniels 1958 b Darlington (Glamorgan)
- T Denton 1926-1974 b Stockton (Yorkshire)
- T K Dibbess 1901-40 b South Shields (Minor Counties)
- A S Druggan 1887-1983 b Bishop Auckland (Cambridge Univ/Middlesex)
- J H Druggan 1905-89 b Bishop Auckland (Cambridge Univ)
- K J East 1905-88 b Low Fell (Minor Counties)
- W W Ellis 1875-1931 b Rosar (Gents of England)
- G Forster 1981 b Seaham (Leics)
- J S Fox 1928 b Norton on Tees (Warwickshire)
- J Gifford 1946 b Sunderland (Warwickshire)
- G Gwynne 1872-1938 b Weaste (MCC)
- S Greenwood 1943 b Gateshead (Leics) (Minor Counties)
- J W T Griffiths 1912-44 b Darlington (Cambridge Univ/Kent)
- T J Hall 1930-84 b Durham (Derby/Somerset)
- W Hardy 1908 b East Boldon (Minor Counties)
- D S Harris 1921 b Leasing Park (Leics)
- G Hickman 1909-78 b Burnopfield (Warwickshire)
- A Hildesley 1951 b Moorside, Gossett (Northants)
- P P Hogg 1889-1982 b Hartlepool (Somerset)
- T W Hooley 1851-1989 b Stockton (Yorkshire England XI)

TO PAGE 7

SINCE first-class cricket officially began in 1884 it has featured 117 Durham-born players.

Eight have represented England, the best known being Bob Willis, who was born in Sunderland, Peter Willey, from Sedburgh, and the legendary Burnopfield Bashir, Colin Milburn.

The others are J E McConnon, A E Stoddart, C H Parkin, R T Spooner and D C H Townsend, although only the last three actually played for Durham.

Roger Blunt, born in Durham City in 1900, played nine times for New Zealand, while James Middleton, born in Chester-le-Street in 1866, played six times for South Africa.

Milburn played for Durham only once, scoring 101 and 12 against the Indians at Ashbrooks, Sunderland, in 1969, aged 18, before beginning his distinguished career with Northants the following season. He played nine times for England before an eye injury tragically cut short his career.

Jim McConnon, also from Burnopfield, played for Glamorgan from 1960 to 1961, when he retired because of recurring injury, which restricted him to two Test matches.

An off-spin bowler, he also played football for Aston Villa and suffered a serious knee injury in 1952.

He went on the 1954-55 MCC tour of Australia but had to return early without playing in a Test because of injury.

He took 100 wickets in a season three times and had a career total of 819 at an average of 19.8.

Andrew Stoddart, born at Weaste in 1863, played for Middlesex from 1888-1900 and made 16 appearances for England.

Richard Spooner, a batsman born at Stockton in 1919, played 17 times for Durham in 1946-47 before joining Warwickshire, where he played until 1959 and appeared in seven Test matches.

Cecil Parkin, born at Eaglescliffe in 1886, was an off-spin bowler who was said to be the "clown prince" of his era.

In 1906 he played in one first-class match for Yorkshire, who thought he was Yorkshire-born, and he made his Durham debut the following year.

He played in 16 matches for the county before beginning a 12-year spell with Lancashire in 1914, during which time he played in ten Tests.

David Townsend, born at Norton in 1912, was the last player to represent England who did not play for a first-class county.

TIM WELLOCK looks at the men from Durham who have made it to County standard and beyond

It was after gaining his blue at Oxford in 1933 and 34 that he went on the 1934-35 tour to the West Indies and opened the batting for England in three Test matches.

Four generations of the Townsend family played first-class cricket, with David's grandfather, Frank, and father, Charles, both having long careers with Gloucestershire.

David's son, Jon, played first-class cricket for Oxford University in 1964.

Peter Willey played for Seatham Harbour before beginning his long first-class career with Northamptonshire in 1966. He joined Leicestershire in 1984 and has played in 26 Test matches.

In the list of Durham-born batsmen who have scored first-class centuries Willey is way out in front with 42, followed by Stoddart (28), Milburn (23) and Maurice Nichol (27).

Hetton-born Nichol also hit four centuries in his 61 appearances for Durham before playing for Worcestershire from 1928-34. He was 12th man for England against New Zealand in 1931.

Next in the list of century-makers comes Paul Romanes with 13.

Born at Bishop Auckland on Christmas Day, 1956, Romanes played for Northamptonshire in 1975 and 76 and since 1982 has been with Gloucestershire, who have awarded him a benefit next season.

Apart from Bob Willis, perhaps the best pace bowler to be born in Durham was Ossie Whentley, who was born at Low Fell, Gateshead, in 1935 and played for Cambridge University, Warwickshire and Glamorgan.

He set a record for a University side when he took 80 wickets for Cambridge in 1958, and went on to take 100 wickets in a season five times.

He was captain of Glamorgan from 1961-66 and still lives in Wales. But he clearly hasn't forgotten his roots as his house is named Low Fell.

Bob Carter, born at Horden in 1937, was part of Worcestershire's pace attack from 1961-73, while Bill Blenkinsop, still playing for his home club Bishop Auckland at 48, bowled for Warwickshire from 1964-74.

But Durham's more recent pace products have failed to make an impact, with Darlington's Simon Daniels

lasting only two seasons at Glamorgan in 1981-82 and Peterlee-born Dean Burrows playing only a couple of matches for Gloucestershire from 1984-87.

Boldon's Gareth Smith made his Northamptonshire debut in 1986, dismissing Sunil Gavaskar with his second ball.

But he failed to become established in the side and has now been taken on by Warwickshire.

Three more Boldon products, Simon Brown, 21, Martin Thursfield and Andrew Robson, both 19, have first-class experience.

Brown is with Northamptonshire, Robson has played in one John Player League game for Surrey, while Thursfield, who has played once for Middlesex, and Philadelphia's Paul Christie are with the MCC Young Professionals.

But Chopwell-born Ian Smith has been released by Glamorgan, where he made his debut in 1985 at the age of 19.

Meanwhile, 17-year-old Philip Weston, from Durham City, awaits his debut with Worcestershire. If he makes his mark he will be a rare success among Durham-born pacemen, perhaps underlining where the county's greatest difficulty will lie in the first-class arena.



QUICK DELIVERY: Bob Willey Durham's finest fast bowler



BIG OLLIE: the unforgettable Colin Milburn (above) and the all-round talents of Peter Willey (below)



PLAYING ON: Bill Blenkinsop for Bishop Auckland

'Set record when he took 80 wickets for Cambridge'



For the record compiled by BRIAN HUNT

DURHAM CCC LEADING RUN SCORERS		
N. A. Riddell	888	1972-80
S. Greenwood	782	1970-80
S. R. Atkinson	698	1972-80
R. Ingle	625	1956-73
W. W. Ellis	534	1887-07
J. Carr	412	1924-48
MORE APPEARANCES		
N. A. Riddell	218	1972-80
S. Greenwood	192	1970-80
J. Carr	183	1924-48
D. W. Hardy	150	1948-67
R. Ingle	140	1956-73
S. R. Atkinson	128	1972-80
LEADING WICKET-TAKERS		
A. Morris	651	1905-14
J. Carr	524	1924-48
G. Turnbull	487	1871-10
S. Greenwood	427	1970-80
J. M. Watson	382	1948-68
W. F. Whitwell	366	1967-68

# The great matches



## Yorkshire v Durham 1973

ALAN Old was the odd man out on the historic June day in 1973 when Durham beat Yorkshire in the Gillette Cup at Harrogate.

The man better known for his feats in an England rugby shirt was the only man on either side not playing for his native county. But that made victory all the sweeter.

"I knew most of the Yorkshire players quite well, and in any sport I've always found you gain extra pleasure from beating people you know," he said.

Old, now headmaster of Sir William Turner's Sixth Form College at Redcar, remembers the day as the highlight of his cricketing career.

His brother Chris was in the Yorkshire side, and walked straight into the Durham dressing room after the match.

"He knew most of the Durham players and wanted to share in our celebrations," said Alan. "He certainly didn't fancy the dressing down waiting for the Yorkshire players from Mr Boycott."

"Chris came to support us in the next round. Like most of the Yorkshire players, he knew we had beaten them on merit. It was not a fluke result."

"It was a tremendous day. It was pure adrenalin on Durham's part. We were a good team and we played right at the peak of our form and sustained it for the whole game."

Old vividly remembers the moment

when Stuart Wilkinson hit Boycott's middle stump.

"It was magic - like a dream," he said. "Stuart bowled tremendously, then Brian Lander came on and finished them off."

"It was a pretty flat wicket, but we bowled very well and they batted very badly. Colin Johnson batted well, but no-one could stay with him."

Yorkshire were all out for 135 in the 59th over, and with Russell Inglis leading the way with 47 Durham coasted home by five wickets.

"Russell was a marvellous cricketer," said Old. "One of the joys of playing for Durham was playing alongside people like him and Steve Greenwood."

Lander won the Man of the Match award for taking five for 15 in 11.4 overs.

Bobby Cole, whose brilliant wicketkeeping made him an automatic choice for Durham, even though he batted No 11, also remembers the day as the highlight of his career.

"We were on a high from the moment Boycott was out," he said.

"He had hit a four through the covers and he tried it again, but the ball came back through the gate and bowled him."

"I remember Derek Soakell hitting against Richard Hutton. But always used a lot of bottom hand and he whipped Hutton over mid-wicket for 139."

"Hutton said: 'What sort of a shot was that?' so Derek did it again next ball."

## Derbyshire v Durham 1985

THE June day in 1985 on which Durham beat Derbyshire in the NatWest Trophy was blisteringly hot. But The Sun made only a fleeting appearance in the Press box.

After about an hour's play the man from the supposedly brighter end of the national newspaper market received a call from his head office ordering him to get across to Trent Bridge quick sharp.

A giant-killing was on the cards, he was told, as Nottinghamshire were in deep trouble against Hertfordshire.

Off he went to witness Paul Johnson haul Notts comfortably out of the mire, while back at Derby the host county slipped rapidly into it.

Things hadn't looked too bright for Durham before the start, with Paul Burn being drafted in for his debut because of an injury to Peter Kippax, and wicketkeeper Richard Mercer also dropping out, to be replaced by Andy Pothergill.

Fothergill gave a superb display behind the stumps and was invited back to Derbyshire for a trial.

There were no such heroes for Burn, but the fact that in those days he was considered an all-rounder led indirectly to Durham's triumph.

He was brought on as second change, and after being hit for 17 in

three overs Durham were forced to gamble on the left-arm spin of Ashok Patel.

Helped by some rash strokes, Patel snapped up three quick wickets as Derbyshire slumped from 83 for two to 99 for six.

Patel took the prize scalp of Kim Barnett for 53, while Graham Johnson had earlier clean bowled John Morris, who had scored 150 in a friendly against Durham at Feethams, Darlington, two years previously.

Derbyshire were all out for 171 and Durham's only fear was the pace of Michael Holding.

The West Indian quickly forced David Jackson to retire after a blow on the helmet, but at the other end John Lister had a point to prove.

Relishing the chance to take revenge on the county who released him from a three-year contract in 1979 the day after he scored a double century for their second team, he set about the wayward Allan Warner.

He hit 43 of Durham's first 62 runs, paving the way for Steve Greenwood, Neil Riddell and Patel to steer Durham home with seven wickets and 4.3 overs to spare.

Clearly, Greenwood was a man who was lost too early to first-class cricket, and it's a shame that Durham's application has come too late for him to return.



MAN OUT: Alan Old sped tracksuit for at flannels to help am topple Yorkshire

## GILLETTE CUP Yorkshire v Durham

June 20th 1973  
At St. George's Road, Harrogate

YORKSHIRE

G Boycott b Wilkinson	14
R D Lumb b Old b Lander	12
P J Hancock b Cole b Inglis	12
J H Hampshire c Inglis b Lander	10
C Johnson not out b Greenwood	44
R A Hutton b Lander	0
C M Old b March	5
D L Stanford b Cole b Greenwood	5
P Carrick b Lander	19
H P Cooper not out	0
A G Nicholson b Lander	0
Extras	4
Total	129

Fall: 1-18, 2-32, 3-34, 4-40, 5-41, 6-50, 7-100, 8-121, 9-135

Bowling: Wilkinson 12-3-33-1, Old (AOB) 7-1-10, Lander 11-4-31-5, Inglis 8-3-25-1, March 9-3-16-1, Greenwood 12-4-25-2

DURHAM

R Inglis c Cooper b Carrick	47
S R Atkinson c D Carrick	14
S Greenwood not out	35
J G Marsh not out	7
A D Old c Barnard b Cooper	18
N A Riddell b Nicholson	11
D W Soakell not out	10
Extras	4
Total (5 wickets)	133

Fall: 1-58, 2-63, 3-87, 4-92, 5-123

Bowling: Old 9-1-15-2, Nicholson 11-5-37-1, Cooper 13-3-25-1, Carrick 12-4-32-2, Hutton 8-3-35-0  
Durham spin by 4 wickets



POINT TO PROVE: John Lister faced the might of Michael Holding

## NAT WEST TROPHY Derbyshire v Durham

June 1985

At Derby

K J Barnett b Patel	53
I Anderson c Fothergill b Johnson	4
J Roberts c Fothergill b Patel	13
R J Sharma c Johnson b Patel	11
G Miller c Hirst b Greenwood	0
M A Holding b Cole b Greenwood	0
P G Newman c Riddell b Johnson	19
B J Maher c Johnson b Greenwood	0
A Warner b Johnson	11
O H Mortensen not out	4
Extras	11
Total (58.4 overs)	111

Fall: 1-14, 2-40, 3-62, 4-94, 5-99, 6-99, 7-142, 8-144, 9-158

Bowling: Cole 9-1-25-0, Johnson 11-4-2, 31-2, Johnson 12-0-35-2, Burn 3-0-17-0, Patel 12-3-34-2, Greenwood 12-4-30-3

DURHAM

J Lister c Roberts b Mortensen	42
D C Jackson b D Riddle	13
S Greenwood c Roberts b Holding	40
N A Riddell not out	49
A S Patel not out	21
Extras	20
Total (3 wks, 55.4 overs)	172

Fall: 1-4, 2-63, 3-114

Bowling: Holding 12-2-36-1, Warner 12-1-46-1, Newman 12-1-25-0, Mortensen 10-4-2, 37-1, Miller 5-1-15-0  
Durham won by 7 wickets

# The captain fielded in a trilby hat

## Durham v All India 1936

SUPPORT was always terrific for these games and we had a capacity crowd for the match, which was blessed with two fine days.

In the first innings All India were all out for 174, due to good bowling from Albert Howell (South Shields professional), Stan Ellis (Durham City professional), Jack Carr (Chester-le-Street professional) and Arnold Close (Bishop Auckland).

Durham replied with 176, a lead of two, with the captain Thomas Dobson (Whitburn) scoring 52 and Jack Carr 45.

In the second innings All India scored 203 for three declared, with Army officer S Wazir Ali making 139 not out with a broken finger - a fantastic display.

Durham needed 202 to win and an opening partnership of 109 between Alan Parnaby and Ned Randle got us off to a good start, and we finally won by five wickets.

I am the only Durham player still alive, but the memory of being honoured to play for the county along with such outstanding

ARTHUR Austin, Durham's 82-year-old chairman, is the only surviving member of the side which beat All India by five wickets at Ashbrooke in 1936. Here he recalls the highlights of the game.

players against a touring side gives me a source of great pride.

The Indian team included opening batsman V M Merchant, who in the following years turned out to be their finest player.

N B Amarnath was the father of recent Test player Mohinder Amarnath, who played two seasons for Durham while professional at South Shields.

D D Hindekar was a brilliant wicketkeeper, and both he and Merchant returned with the Indian Test team ten years later.

The captain, Maharajah Sir V A Vizianagram, always fielded in a brown trilby hat. He was a very important man in India, but not a cricketer by any means.

## Durham v All India

June 10th and 11th 1936

At Ashbrooke

ALL INDIA first innings 174 (J A Close 3-44; Durham first innings 176 (T K Dobson 52 n.o., S N Banerjee 5-54, Amr Elahi 3-36)	
---	--

ALL INDIA second innings

S Wazir Ali not out	139
V M Merchant b Ellis	2
N B Amarnath b Ellis	4
L P Jai b Howell	35
C Ramaswami not out	21
Extras	2
Total (3 wks 09C)	203

Fall: 1-4, 2-30, 3-116

Bowling: Howell 14-0-73-1, Ellis 15-4-40-2, Carr 10-0-37-0, Gibson 4-0-14-0

DURHAM second innings

A H Parnaby c Hindekar b Banerjee	29
E H Randle b Banerjee	55
H Gibson b Banerjee	0
G Hickman c Hindekar b Banerjee	-3
J A Close not out	12
J Carr b Banerjee	31
A L Howell not out	9
Extras	4
Total (5 wks)	203

Fall: 1-109, 2-108, 3-153, 4-160, 5-164

Bowling: Banerjee 15-0-56-5, L Amarnath 19-4-66-0, Gopalan 7-1-25-0, Pala 7-0-43-0  
Durham won by 5 wickets

## FROM PAGE 6

A B Hensley 1890-1924 b Harrogate (London County)

R H Mansley 1905-86 b West Hartlepool (Durham Univ)

M Hensley 1903 b South Shields (Minor Counties)

R Hensley 1906-82 b Crayke (Minor Counties)

J G Keeler 1924 b South Moor (Minor Counties)

H C King 1887-1920 b Durham (MCC)

O Kirby 1828 b Darlington (CU Leas)

J E Keighly 1908 b Low Fell (Durham Univ)

J W Lester 1958 b Darlington (Durham V. V. League 1972-1916 b Aycliffe (Northants))

J E McGowan 1922 b Burnopfield (Durham)

M McLellan 1858-1928 b Darlington (Durham Univ)

R H Mansley 1944 b South Shields (Durham)

R D Mansley 1925 b Stockton (Stockton)

L Mansfield 1928-1977 b South Shields (Pleas of North)

M Mansfield 1895-1913 b Chester-le-Street (South Africa)

C Millers 1941-90 b Burnopfield (Northants)

R Miller 1911 b Philadelphia (Durham)

A Morris 1874-1951 b West Hartlepool (Northants)

M Mould 1903-34 b Hutton (Worce)

C H Purdie 1898-1943 b Easingwold (Yorkshire)

A H Ramsley 1918-74 b Durham (Minor Counties)

R Sitter 1911 b Scarborough (Durham)

W F Titterton 1889-1950 b Carby Hill (Durham)

G R Wall 1923 b Sunderland (Warwick)

R H Westwood 1884-1911 b Barnes (Durham)

R B West 1919-51 b Barnes Auckland (Hampshire)

I M Richardson 1911 b Sibley (Northants)

N A Whaley 1947 b Standish (Minor Counties)

Robson 1904-08 b Chester-le-Street (Minor Counties)

M W Westwood 1925 b Barnes Auckland (Durham)

R W Westwood 1906 b Sunderland (Durham)

M E West 1930 b Wastoe (Northants)

W M Scott 1870-1944 b Othello (Cambridge Univ)

R Sitter 1950 b West Hartlepool (Northants)

A Skell 1852 b Stockton (Worce)

S Skell 1885 b Jarrold (Northants)

I Skell 1967 b Crayke (Durham)

G Skell 1922 b Bishop Auckland (Durham)

Skell 1928-1927 b Darlington (York)

R Sitter 1911 b Stockton (Cambridge Univ)

R Sitter 1919 b Sunderland (Warwick)

W H Stephenson 1920 b Hutton Hill (Durham)

A E Steadant 1863-1915 b Westoe (Middle)

G B & Sitter 1875-1901 b Sunderland (Minor Counties)

A Tall 1953 b Wasington (Northants)

T Tall 1872-1954 b Langley Moor (York)

M Y Threlford 1971 b South Shields (Middle)

R G Towl 1884-1959 b Hutton-le-Street (Durham)

A Trowman 1821 b Stockton (Warwick)

A Trowman 1912 b Norton on Tees (Durham Univ)

R Trowman 1910 b Norton on Tees (Durham Univ)

H E Trowman 1881-1946 b Greenham (Durham Univ)

D W Varry 1911 b Darlington (Cambridge Univ)

J G Varry 1961 b Darlington (Durham Univ)

R W Wallard 1915 b Norton on Tees (Durham Univ)

J W Wallard 1869-1945 b Barnard Castle (Durham)

O B Whalley 1926 b Liff Fell (CU Warwick)

A J A Whitham 1825-1905 b Mount Oswald (Middle)

C T A Whitham 1884-1970 b Durham (Surrey)

P W Whitham 1885-1987 b Norton on Tees (Minor Counties)

P Whaley 1946 b Sedburgh (Northants)

Lack

J B Whitham 1928 b Norton on Tees (Northants)

R B D White 1948 b Sunderland (Surrey)

O M Whitham 1921-44 b Sunderland (Cambridge Univ)

T C Westley 1907-77 b Durham (Cambridge Univ)

C C Wright 1874-1877 b South Shields (Durham Univ)

L Wright 1903-58 b Durham (Worce)

R H Young 1928 b Blackwell (Minor Counties)

THE following players are on first-class county staffs - an swilling first-class debuts in 1990:

Nan Pender 1990 b Gateshead (Leeds)

Andrew Roseberry 1971 b Bolton (Surrey)

Andrew Roseberry 1971 b Bolton (Surrey)

Chris A Welsh 1972 b Durham (Warwick)

Philip Whelan 1973 b Durham (Warwick)

R B Anderson Ave played in Stanley League.

# Echo delighted to back Durham



THE Northern Echo is to be one of the main sponsors of Durham County Cricket Club's bid for first-class status. Today the paper announces a deal worth more than £300,000 in cash and services to the cricket club over the next five years. In return The Northern Echo becomes a Vice President Founder of the club.

Announcing the sponsorship Peter Sands, editor of the Echo, said that the paper was proud to lend full support to Durham's ambitions. "First-class cricket is exactly the sort of initiative this region needs. It can only be of benefit to the North's reputation, to its businesses, to its youngsters and to its sports-loving



Get your free car sticker from Northern Echo offices next week.

public. It must also be in the overall interests of cricket to extend itself Northwards.

"In this sports-mad part of the world there is no reason why cricket should not become as an important part of our lives and our tradition as football has been. This week promises to be an important landmark in Durham's sporting history and we are delighted to be part of it."

As part of its support the Echo is giving away 5,000 car stickers which will be available from The Echo's district offices throughout the region and from its Darlington head office from the beginning of next week. We will also be extending our editorial coverage of the club, running competitions, and reporting on the fund-raising campaign each week.

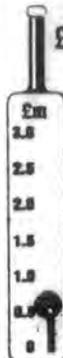
The Echo joins a number of other key sponsors who have put the club well on its way to a cash target of £500,000 a year for three years, a total of £1.5m. More than £500,000 has already been pledged.

Other sponsors are:  
Newcastle Building Society  
The Co-operative Bank  
Cecil Yull  
British Gas  
The Evening Chronicle  
Talent Construction Ltd  
Callers Pegasus  
Embleton Garages  
Tor Coatings

Further sponsors are expected to come forward if this week's bid for first class status is successful.

£565,000

— that's the current total pledged for Durham County Cricket Club's first class campaign. The Northern Echo will publish regular updates as the total grows month by month.



## Fostering county spirit



COACHED FOR SUCCESS: Andrew Roseberry, Philip Weston, Robin Weston and Mike Roseberry

MATT Roseberry and Mike Weston are happy to let the cricketing success of their sons speak for itself.

But they would be entitled to claim that without their efforts neither their sons nor Durham would have had a first-class future.

The boys, among the best cricketers to come out of the county in the last ten years, have had the very best in coaching virtually since they were big enough to hold a bat, and Michael Roseberry willingly acknowledges the benefits.

"Obviously you have to have some ability, and there is plenty of that in Durham," he said. "But having the opportunity to develop your talent makes a tremendous difference.

Michael was going to Lord's for coaching at the age of 12. His brother Andrew and the Weston boys, Philip and Robin, quickly followed.

"Lord's coach Don Wilson suggested we should build a cricket centre up here," said Matt Roseberry.

With the help of Sports Council and county council grants, he and Weston built the McEwans Centre at Rainton Bridge, near Houghton-le-Spring, which was opened in 1966.

"Since then we have seen a steady stream of Durham boys going off to first-class counties," said Matt. "One year there were eight and our coach John Hampshire said it was ridiculous they couldn't play on their own doorstep.

"I had discussions with some potential sponsors and local authorities, then John and I went round the Durham committee members individually and won their support.

"We have been lucky to have Don Robson, the chairman of the National Cricket Association, involved. The work he has put in has been unbelievable — this could not have happened without him.

"A lot of very good coaching goes on under the NCA banner by people like Brian Lander, Gordon Pratt and Gary Hulme.

"But once the kids got to 18 there was nowhere for them to go. Now we invite them to the Cricket Centre and invite county coaches along, so that they get picked up.

Mike Weston played for Durham City and the county as a batsman and leg-spin bowler, but it was as a rugby player that he made his biggest mark, playing for the British Lions and becoming England's chairman of selectors.

His elder son Philip, 17, stands 6ft



TIM WELLOCK talks to two men who helped lay Durham's first-class foundations

4in and is also a promising rugby player, but is concentrating on cricket.

A left-arm pace man who can also bat, he is in the middle of a two-year contract with Worcestershire.

"I have been offered an extension, but I haven't decided what to do yet," he said.

"I am happy with Worcester, but I want to see how I progress before I commit myself. I'm also interested to see if Durham get into first-class cricket."

His brother Robin, an opening batsman and leg-spin bowler, is keen to play for Durham after captaining a very successful county under 15 side last season.

He also captained England under 15s and has just won the Cricket Society's Sir Jack Hobbs Memorial Trophy as the country's most outstanding under 15 schoolboy — a trophy for which he will still be eligible next year.

Last season Robin scored 417 runs in seven innings for Durham, and hit 106 not out and 80 for England against Scotland.

Andrew Roseberry, 19, has started a second two-year contract with Leicestershire, while Michael, 23, now appears to have a glowing future with Middlesex.

Michael wishes it to be known that he has no intention of coming back to play for Durham in the foreseeable future.

"People think that because I am marrying a Durham girl and we have bought a house in Durham City I am coming to play up here," he said.

"We would all have played for Durham if they had been a first-class county when we started. But I want Middlesex to believe my loyalty lies with them, which it does.

Matt Roseberry is very wary of people saying he set Durham's first-class ball rolling for his own gain.

"I deliberately waited until my own sons were fixed up with other counties," he said.

"I think we will get 7,800 at three-day games and 12,000 at one-day matches."

"It's the biggest thing that's happened to the region for years. It will put the North-East back on the map."



DUCK: sometimes it's better to get out of the way  
Picture by TONY BARTHOLOMEW

*'We'd have all played for Durham if they'd been first class when we started'*

11.6.1990.

# Councillor quits 'over cricket bid'

A COUNCILLOR has quit because of proposals to build a cricket stadium in a popular park, she says.

Labour member Maureen Pattison said she was "totally opposed" to plans for a first-class stadium on the Riverside Park at Chester-le-Street.

But the ruling Labour group on Chester-le-Street District Council claimed she resigned because she was not made council vice-chairman.

Mrs Pattison, 56, one of three Chester South ward councillors for more than seven years, describes herself as committed to the Labour Party.

But she said yesterday: "I am completely opposed to development on the Riverside, which is a beautiful asset for the people of Chester-le-Street. I am also disillusioned with certain members of the Labour group."

Chester-le-Street and Durham County councils are due to receive consultants' reports on plans for a stadium which would be the centrepiece of Durham Cricket Club's bid for first-class status.

But the prospect of losing a large belt of open space by the River Wear has

By MARK SUMMERS

sparked considerable opposition. Around 13,000 people have signed a protest petition, including senior Labour MP John Cunningham.

Mrs Pattison said she had opposed the idea in group meetings but felt it was a "foregone conclusion" the council would push the scheme through.

She said she had been passed over for the vice-chairman's post because of her views on the project.

But environment committee chairman and Labour group chairman Malcolm Pratt said in a statement: "Coun Mrs Pattison has not resigned because of her opposition to any proposed development at the Riverside."

He said Mrs Pattison had twice before failed to become vice-chairman and had said she would resign if she was unsuccessful this year.

"The Labour group is sorry that she has taken this decision because she has been a very good ward councillor."

But Mrs Pattison denied the claim. "It was not sour grapes. The Riverside was the most important thing."

# Holiday of a lifetime became ordeal in dock

## TONY GOLIGHTLY

TONY Golightly was an occasionally brash but effective chief executive of Chester-le-Street Council.

The son of a local mining family, he eventually rose to the top job in October 1979.

He was described as a loyal and popular officer who was proud of his career success. And he was said to be at the forefront of the council's efforts to keep contracts "in-house".

He was chairman of the Rotary Club and is treasurer and chairman of the town's football club, which he helped save from collapse.

An accountant by profession, Mr Golightly began his career as a trainee with Durham County



**Tony Golightly: took top council job at Chester-le-Street in 1979**

Council in 1956 and later worked his way up with councils in Surrey.

He returned to Chester-le-Street in 1970 as chief financial officer, later treasurer, before taking the chief's post.

He and his wife Enid have been good friends with Terry Hodgson and his wife Barbro for many years.

## TERRY HODGSON

TERRY Hodgson became possibly Britain's youngest town hall chief after a remarkably rapid rise through the ranks.

He was just 30 when he took over as Derwentside Council's chief executive in 1975.

He had risen to deputy chief executive just five years after starting his career as a committee clerk in West Yorkshire as a teenager.

Tribute was paid in court to his efforts in trying to regenerate Derwentside's economy after the Consett steelworks closure.

Shortly before he left the council in 1987, the planning department ordered his wife Barbro to stop running a confectionery business from their home without permission.



**Terry Hodgson: rapid rise through the local authority ranks**

And the following year the couple were charged following a clash with police outside the home of Bob Young's brother Alan but were subsequently acquitted.

Mr Hodgson is a business development manager to the Young Group on a consultancy basis and also managing director of a wine importing company of which Mr Young is the main shareholder.

## BOB YOUNG

FORMER miner, Bob Young launched his business career with two trucks and built a company worth £14m when it went public in 1988.

Mr Young and his brother Alan ran a haulage firm which later diversified into mining plant hire and then opencast and drift mining.

The Young Group is now the biggest company based in Derwentside and works other mines in Staffordshire and Lancashire.

Young Group is in the process of acquiring a big Australian mining concern in a bid to lessen his dependency on the UK coal market.

Bob Young's battles with the Durham planning authorities over opencasting and his role as peacemaker in the Newcastle United boardroom battle have made him a high-profile figure.



**Bob Young: business career launched from humble beginnings**

Despite his wealth and success, Bob Young was described in court as down to earth and straight talking.

The jury also heard he is a workaholic, putting in 12 or 13 hour days and regularly foregoing holidays.

Christine Davies, his former public relations manager, said he is generous, giving holidays he could not take to close colleagues.

By MARK SUMMERS

TONY Golightly enjoyed the golfer's trip of a lifetime just over two years ago with his old friend Terry Hodgson and their wives.

But yesterday as he walked from court, after being acquitted of corruption, he said: "If I thought I had to go through all this I would have said 'no'."

For that £4,300 holiday for four to the US Masters in Augusta — paid for by R and A Young Mining — was to lead to a long ordeal for him, his friend and Bob Young, chairman of the Young Group.

It led to a four-month police investigation, Mr Golightly's suspension from his £30,000-a-year post, his early retirement last summer, and ultimately the dock at Teesside Crown Court.

The prosecution alleged that the holiday was an attempt by Mr Young and Mr Hodgson to gain information from Mr Golightly on council tenders — although there was no evidence that the chief executive had provided any.

The court heard how Mr Young bought the tickets for himself but abandoned the holiday because of the pressure of preparing for his company's public flotation.

When he was offered only a small refund for cancellation he decided to give them to Terry Hodgson.

Mr Justice Buckley told the jury it was "quite unequivocal" that the purchase of the tickets was "quite innocent".

A conviction could only have been based on "pure speculation and prejudice", he said.

And Mr Hodgson's invitation to Mr Golightly was innocent, although some members of the jury might have thought both men had been unwise.

Afterwards Mr Golightly said: "Perhaps it's my own fault, perhaps I have been unwise, but at the time I genuinely didn't think so."

"I don't feel bitter about taking early retirement. I took it so I wouldn't be in the position where I would be working with prosecution witnesses."

Mr Hodgson said he would be back at his desk that afternoon. He said the trial had not affected his relationship with his boss.

Mr Young said it had been "a very difficult time for me, my family and my company."

# Don swaps soccer for his first love

THE Don — is the phrase used to describe the Godfather!

While Don Robson cannot be placed in that category, he is without doubt a powerful man when it comes to the running of cricket.

He is one of the leading lights in Durham's bid to join the cricketing elite in the first class game. With one of the most persuas-

ive men at the helm that I have ever met, it's hard to see how Durham's bid can be rejected.

When Durham officially announced their bid on Thursday, they held a double Press conference. There was one at Durham County Hall and the other in London.

Robson was the man who travelled to the capital to put Durham's ideas forward to the southern and national media.

Yet, despite his passion for cricket it was as a footballer that Robson made his name.

After playing soccer with Doncaster Rovers, he went on to have spells with Gateshead, South Shields and Blyth Spartans.

Cricket though was always his passion. Gradually, 56-year-old Robson got more and more involved with cricket and became chairman of Greenside Cricket Club and the Tyneside Sealer

League. Now he is also chairman of the powerful National Cricket Association and he carries the can for all cricket in this country apart from Test matches, first class and minor counties.

Channelling his energies into cricket at grass roots level is high on Robson's list of priorities.

He appreciates that the development of cricket at a tender age is paramount for English cricket.

If quality is brought through the system from a young age, the greater the chance of success in the future.

Robson has a hectic schedule. As well as his business interests, he is leader of the Labour-controlled Durham County Council and back in 1973 as a 39-year-old, became the youngest ever chairman of Durham County Council.

# HOWZAT! CRICKET CLUB AIMS FOR TOP

**DURHAM County Cricket Club has the best record of any in the Minor Counties League. The club has launched ambitious plans to join the county championship and bring first class cricket to Durham. GRAHAM ROBINSON looks at these plans and the future of Durham County Cricket Club.**

**D**URHAM County Cricket Club has put its cards on the table and launched a campaign to fulfil the impossible dream.

The idea of first class county cricket being played in Durham would have been laughed out of court not so long ago.

Of course, Durham is the best equipped county outside of the first class circuit.

Durham's record at minor counties level is second to none. Champions a record-breaking nine times, they lifted the title on three occasions in the 80s and but for the weather, there could easily have been another couple of championship successes.

It seems incredible that Durham is not already in the top flight. League cricket in the North East is widely regarded as being as good as there is anywhere else in the country.

## STAGGERING

There was, of course, the theory that the county championship was a closed shop. Durham's push looks like hitting that theory for six.

Let's not get carried away on the bandwagon of publicity, however. There's still a long way to go.

To put things into perspective, Durham has now got a foot on the bottom rung of the ladder.

It's now just over a year ago since a working party met at Ashbrooke to discuss the viability of Durham bidding for the big time.

In just 12 months the amount of work that has gone on unnoticed is staggering. Durham's promotional package was unveiled simultaneously at County Hall and in London.

The quality of the glossy brochure and video was top class, which in a way epitomises Durham's outlook. It wants the best and has gone out of its way to produce the best publicity campaign it can.

Ultimately, the decision will be left to the 19 members of the Test and County Cricket board.

Some 13 votes will be required if Durham is to get the go ahead and become the 18th First Class County.

But before it reaches the voting stage, there are three main areas that Durham must convince the TCCB members it has in hand.

They are that Durham can compete at first class level on three counts: Facilities; talent and financial backing.

Durham's plans were revealed three months ago to build a multi-million pound complex at Chester-le-Street's riverside park. A stadium capable of hosting first class cricket, an adjacent nursery ground, leisure and residential facilities are in the pipeline.

## FINANCIAL

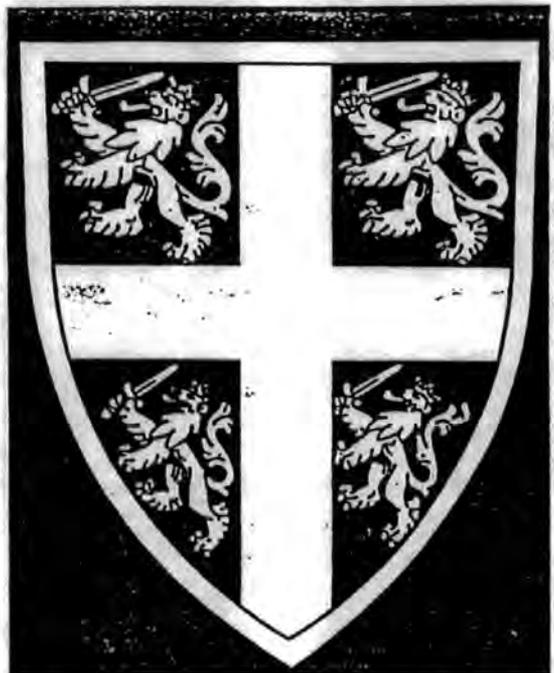
In 1973 at Harrogate, Durham turned the White Rose of Yorkshire red with embarrassment when they toppled Geoff Boycott's side by five wickets to become the first minor counties team to topple a first class county in the Gillette cup.

Derbyshire was then handed even more severe punishment in 1985 in the NatWest Trophy at Derby losing by seven wickets.

On Wednesday, the county committee will host an important meeting as they bid to turn their dream to reality.

Businessmen from all over the region have been invited to a presentation night at Durham where companies will be urged to invest in the county's cricketing future.

Once the final financial details are sorted out Durham will have done all of the spadework and its future will then lie in the hands of the TCCB members.



● TREASURER ... Tommy Moffat.



● CHAIRMAN ... Arthur Austin.

## Locals want idea to be hit for six

'SAVE Our Riverside' campaigners today urged Wearside to join their fight to block a multi-million pound cricket stadium being built at Chester-le-Street.

They are asking Wearside to write letters objecting to the scheme and are hoping someone will agree to organise a campaign in Sunderland.

David Robinson, a spokesman for the campaign, said: "In the summer people from the Sunderland area come here in their thousands to enjoy being by the riverside."

"If they were planning to build a cricket stadium with hotels, a business park and parking spaces for thousands of cars in Barrow Park or Roker Park they would object to it."

Wearside opposing the scheme, or anyone willing to organise opposition in Sunderland, are being asked to write to

the campaign chairman, John Minto, at 18 Windermere Avenue, Garden Farm Estate, Chester-le-Street.

Mr Robinson accused the cricketing fraternity of being misleading in a brochure it had produced by not indicating the development that would be associated with a cricket stadium — a business park, hotel, housing, and parking spaces for 3,000 cars.

He also claimed that the estimated cost of running the ground, put at £525,000 a year, would actually be far higher and could lead to the project being abandoned.

● If anyone would like to sponsor Durham County Cricket in any way they should phone John Caine on 2614707.

# 'Insult' claim in cricket protest

11.10.90 *Durham Advertiser*

By JANET HALL

Two hundred people are planning to march through Chester-le-Street at the weekend in protest at the controversial Riverside development.

But the 17,000 signature petition they had hoped to present at the Civic Centre will have to be handed over to a caretaker after they were told no councillors or officers would be there on a Saturday.

Retired councillor Maureen Patterson is disgusted that no one will be there to receive the petition opposing plans for the Durham county cricket ground and leisure complex.

"I have been told that nobody will come to accept the petition because they are not open on Saturdays. It is a smack in the face for the ordinary people of Chester-le-Street," she said.

"It is rather an insult. The council must have no heart."

Meanwhile, fact sheets on the development are being sent to every household in the area.

The district council is sending leaflets to all its residents.

About 22,000 leaflets are being delivered this week and the plans are also on display at Chester-le-Street Library until the end of next week.

Chief executive Tony Greensmith said the council wanted to make sure local people had the facts.

"There has been a great deal of speculation about the proposals. The plans have been available at the Civic Centre for inspection but by sending out information locally and putting up a display in the library we're really making an effort to ensure everyone has the opportunity to comment.

"It's a genuine move to have real consultation with local feeling," he adds.

The leaflet includes a map of the area which the council proposes to develop as a county cricket ground and community sport and leisure complex with housing and offices.

It says the idea of building 300 houses has been reduced to a development of about 100 houses; there is no longer a plan for a hotel and the total area for public use would be increased by a third.

# Holiday gift refused by council officers

TWO senior council officers turned down an expensive American golf holiday before it was offered to the chief of another authority.

Teesside Crown Court heard yesterday that Allan Roberts, chief executive of Sedgefield District Council, and Malcolm Davies, chief of technical services at Derwentside District Council were invited to the 1988 U.S. Masters Golf Championships in Augusta.

The separate offers were made by Terry Hodgson, a friend of both men, who had resigned as Derwentside's chief executive to become business development manager on a consultancy basis for the mining to haulage company The Young Group.

The Crown has alleged that the £4,300 all-in holiday for two was later given corruptly by Hodgson and company chairman Bob Young to Tony Golightly, then chief executive at Chester-le-Street Council.

David Gripton, prosecuting, alleged that Hodgson and Young hoped Golightly would

By MARK SUMMERS

provide important inside information on tenders for council services.

Mr Roberts told the jury that Hodgson said in a telephone call that the tickets had been bought for one of the Young brothers but he was unable to go.

Mr Roberts said he declined the offer because the date clashed with the council chairman's annual civic ball.

Asked if he had any other reasons for turning it down, Mr Roberts said: "As I had got another appointment I didn't even consider it any further than that."

Mr Davies, who said his invitation was made while drinking with Hodgson at a pub, told the court: "I said something like 'you must be joking'."

Mr Davies also told the court that Hodgson, while chief executive, never asked him for information about tenders for contracts.

Mr Roberts under cross examination told the court that he as chief executive would not

know the figures of contract bids until the sealed tenders were opened and would not normally know the sums involved in bids from the council's workforce.

Mr Roberts also told the court it was "fairly common knowledge" at civic functions that Golightly had been to America. He said Golightly was open about it.

Neil Johnson, who took over as chief executive from Hodgson in 1987, said that as far as he was aware his former colleague had always been "honest and straight".

Mr Johnson said Hodgson had been highly successful in attracting investment, industry and new jobs to Derwentside following the Consett steelworks closure in 1980.

Hodgson, 43, of Pont View, Leadgate, and Young, 43, of Town Head Farm, Iveston, deny corruptly giving Golightly the holiday and air tickets worth £276 for connecting flights from Newcastle to London.

Golightly, 50, of Park Road North, Chester-le-Street, who took early retirement last year, denies corruptly receiving them.

The case resumes on Monday.



Bob Young



Terry Hodgson



Tony Golightly

# Riverside park plan set to dominate by-election

A CONTROVERSIAL riverside development looks set to be the big issue of a council by-election at Chester-le-Street.

The vacancy in Chester South was created last month when Labour councillor Maureen Pattison resigned in protest at the proposed scheme for the park by the River Wear, which is in the ward.

The Labour-controlled district council has since voted to develop an outline planning application for the project, which includes a first-class stadium for Durham County Cricket Club.

Labour's candidate is 23-year-old Norma Lines, daughter of Chester West

By MARK SUMMERS

councillor John Lines. Her opponents are Independent Bill Moist and Conservative John Wears.

Mr Moist, 34, branch manager of a traffic management hire company, said yesterday: "Obviously the riverside is a big issue to an awful lot of people in the town and the ward. I'm against it."

"Looking at the Labour leaflet, they seem to be wanting to fight with that theme and I'm happy to do that because there's an awful lot of opposition."

Mr Wears, 60, a retired businessman, agreed that the riverside was the main issue. He said he supported calls by Tory

councillor Hugh Mackay for every household to be consulted.

"If I am elected I will go along the way the people wish it to go. I feel it could be a very good thing but I want to look at it further before I make my mind up."

Miss Lines referred *The Northern Echo* to Labour group secretary and environment committee chairman Malcolm Pratt.

He said: "As far as the Labour party is concerned in Chester South and Bournmoor, the main issue will be the poll tax."

"It is very unfair and only the Labour party can rid the country of the poll tax

and we'll be asking people to vote as the only alternative to the Tories."

"There will be other issues that will develop during the campaign but the riverside will be one of them."

The Save Our Riverside campaign, which claims to have 15,000 names on a protest petition, is leafleting households in the ward urging voters to ask candidates where they stand on the issue.

The by-election is one of two on August 9. At Bournmoor, Independent Nattress will fight Labour's Tony Harland for the seat. The vacancy was created by the death of long-serving Independent Andrew Cossar.

**REPORTING THE REGION**

# Holiday of a lifetime became ordeal in dock

## TONY GOLIGHTLY

TONY Golightly was an occasionally brash but effective chief executive of Chester-le-Street Council.

The son of a local mining family, he eventually rose to the top job in October 1979.

He was described as a loyal and popular officer who was proud of his career success. And he was said to be at the forefront of the council's efforts to keep contracts "in-house".

He was chairman of the Rotary Club and is treasurer and chairman of the town's football club, which he helped save from collapse.

An accountant by profession, Mr Golightly began his career as a trainee with Durham County



**Tony Golightly: took top council job at Chester-le-Street in 1979**

Council in 1956 and later worked his way up with councils in Surrey.

He returned to Chester-le-Street in 1970 as chief financial officer, later treasurer, before taking the chief's post.

He and his wife Enid have been good friends with Terry Hodgson and his wife Barbro for many years.

By MARK SUMMERS

TONY Golightly enjoyed the golfer's trip of a lifetime just over two years ago with his old friend Terry Hodgson and their wives.

But yesterday as he walked from court, after being acquitted of corruption, he said: "If I thought I had to go through all this I would have said 'no'."

For that £4,300 holiday for four to the US Masters in Augusta — paid for by R and A Young Mining — was to lead to a long ordeal for him, his friend and Bob Young, chairman of the Young Group.

It led to a four-month police investigation, Mr Golightly's suspension from his £30,000-a-year post, his early retirement last summer, and ultimately the dock at Teesside Crown Court.

The prosecution alleged that the holiday was an attempt by Mr Young and Mr Hodgson to gain information from Mr Golightly on council tenders — although there was no evidence that the chief executive had provided any.

The court heard how Mr Young bought the tickets for himself but abandoned the holiday because of the pressure of preparing for his company's public flotation.

When he was offered only a small refund for cancellation he decided to give them to Terry Hodgson.

Mr Justice Buckley told the jury it was "quite unequivocal" that the purchase of the tickets was "quite innocent".

A conviction could only have been based on "pure speculation and prejudice", he said.

And Mr Hodgson's invitation to Mr Golightly was innocent, although some members of the jury might have thought both men had been unwise.

Afterwards Mr Golightly said: "Perhaps it's my own fault, perhaps I have been unwise, but at the time I genuinely didn't think so.

"I don't feel bitter about taking early retirement. I took it so I wouldn't be in the position where I would be working with prosecution witnesses."

Mr Hodgson said he would be back at his desk that afternoon. He said the trial had not affected his relationship with his boss.

Mr Young said it had been "a very difficult time for me, my family and my company."

## TERRY HODGSON

TERRY Hodgson became possibly Britain's youngest town hall chief after a remarkably rapid rise through the ranks.

He was just 30 when he took over as Derwentside Council's chief executive in 1975.

He had risen to deputy chief executive just five years after starting his career as a committee clerk in West Yorkshire as a teenager.

Tribute was paid in court to his efforts in trying to regenerate Derwentside's economy after the Consett steelworks closure.

Shortly before he left the council in 1987, the planning department ordered his wife Barbro to stop running a confectionery business from their home without permission.



**Terry Hodgson: rapid rise through the local authority ranks**

And the following year the couple were charged following a clash with police outside the home of Bob Young's brother Alan but were subsequently acquitted.

Mr Hodgson is a business development manager to the Young Group on a consultancy basis and also managing director of a wine importing company of which Mr Young is the main shareholder.

## BOB YOUNG

FORMER miner Bob Young launched his business career with two trucks and built a company worth £14m when it went public in 1988.

Mr Young and his brother Alan ran a haulage firm which later diversified into mining plant hire and then opencast and drift mining.

The Young Group is now the biggest company based in Derwentside and works other mines in Staffordshire and Lancashire.

Young Group is in the process of acquiring a big Australian mining concern in a bid to lessen his dependency on the UK coal market.

Bob Young's battles with the Durham planning authorities over opencasting and his role as peacemaker in the Newcastle United boardroom battle have made him a high-profile figure.



**Bob Young: business career launched from humble beginnings**

Despite his wealth and success, Bob Young was described in court as down to earth and straight talking.

The jury also heard he is a workaholic, putting in 12 or 13 hour days and regularly foregoing holidays.

Christine Davies, his former public relations manager, said he is generous, giving holidays he could not take to close colleagues.

# Town is 'misled' over plans for cricket stadium

2/8/90

By LAWRENCE DONEGAN

PEOPLE are being misled about plans to bring first class cricket to County Durham, it was claimed yesterday.

Chester-le-Street District Council leader George Staines said leaflets circulating about the proposed cricket stadium and business park at Riverside Park were based on out of date information.

He refuted claims by campaigners that the 110 acre site would endanger wildlife and cause traffic and flooding problems.

Jack Minto, chairman of the Save Our Riverside Campaign, said he welcomed the council leader's intervention in the debate, adding: "At last the council is beginning to take our campaign seriously."

Mr Minto dismissed the claim that residents were being misled and repeated an invitation to the council to help organise a local referendum on the proposals.

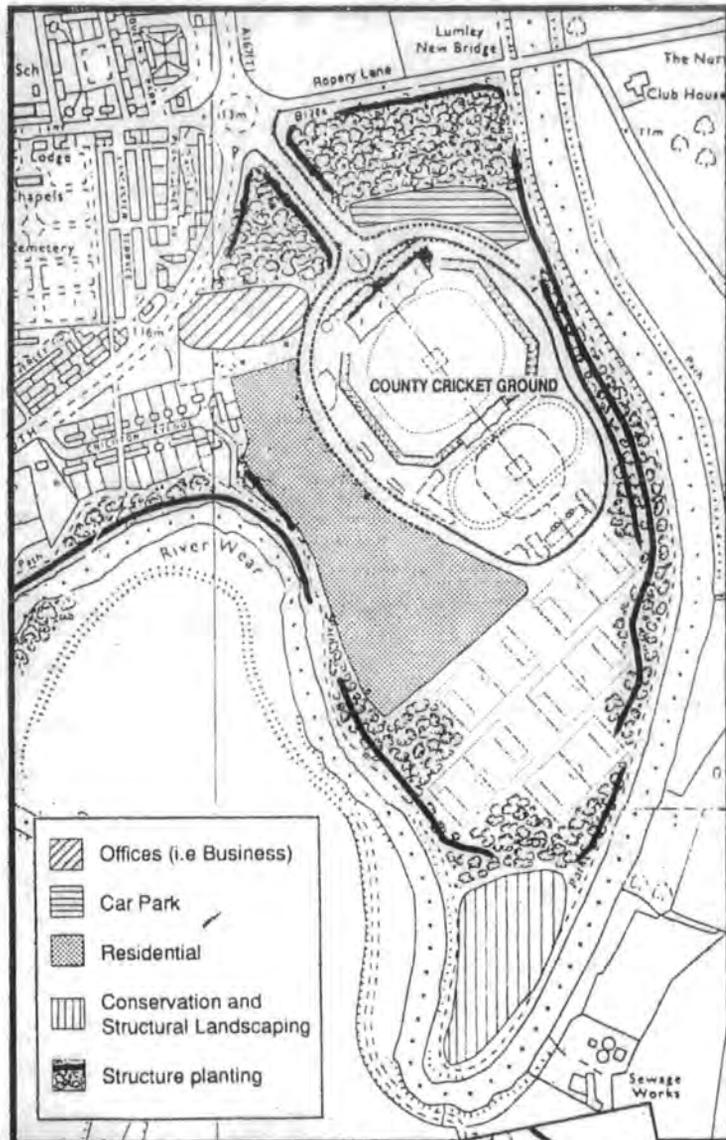
Speaking in the run-up to a council by-election on August 9, Coun Staines said he was anxious residents should be aware of the scale of the current planned development.

As well as serving Durham County Cricket Club, the scheme would provide better sports facilities for the community, improve wildlife habitats in the area and increase public access to the Riverside site, he said.

Coun Staines added: "Protesters talk about a hotel which no longer features in the proposals for the area south of Ropery Lane. The proposed business park amounts to 36,000sq feet, which is equivalent of six semi-detached houses. We've reduced the housing from 300 town houses to 100 low rise houses."

However, Mr Minto said a revised plan for the cricket development recently approved by the council did not provide answers to residents' concerns.

"The original statement on bringing first class cricket to County Durham only mentioned a cricket ground. Whatever the latest plans are it is clear they are a long way from that," he said.

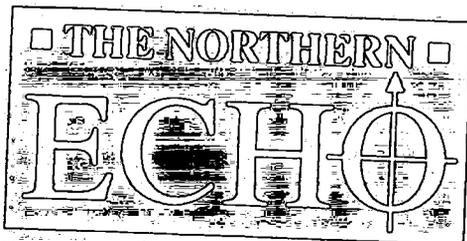


Coun George Staines





T 26.10.90.



REGIONAL

IN BRIEF

## MP backs plan for riverside

DURHAM North MP Giles Radice says he supports the imaginative Riverside Development planned for Chester-le-Street on two conditions.

They are that the design of houses, offices and the cricket stadium are of the highest standard and in keeping with the site, and that the council's proposals to improve the environment are strictly adhered to.

# County plans to win Test cricket

14.9.89.

DURHAM launched their bid for first class status yesterday with the mouth-watering prospect of staging Test cricket in the North-East in the 21st century.

Unveiling plans to build a multi-million pound development at the Riverside Park in Chester-le-Street, Durham President Ian Caller declared: "We are setting our stall out for Test matches to be played here in the future."

The decision to go ahead with plans for a major new county

headquarters has given Durham's campaign a massive boost and when the application is submitted to the Test and County Cricket Board later this year, club officials believe this factor will weigh heavily in their favour.

After months of negotiations between Durham County Council, Chester-le-Street District Council and cricket committee members, a final decision to investigate the viability of the scheme was only reached yesterday.

Now the region could boast one of

the finest sports stadiums in the country with facilities available for a wide range of leisure pursuits.

Riverside Park, overlooked by Lumley Castle would include a purpose built cricket stadium with an all-weather nursery ground alongside which could be used for other sports.

Plans have also been drawn up for a high quality business park, an hotel and conference centre, a sports pavilion and possible housing near the River Wear.

Although no costs will be an-

nounced until the consultants have talked to various developers, the financial package would be a joint venture between local authorities and private enterprise while in the long-run, it is hoped the whole development would be self-financing.

Durham looked into the possibilities of three sites in the county but eventually plumped for the Riverside land because of its central location just of the A1(M).

The district council had already decided to carry out a study of the

area with a view to developing recreation and leisure and now the cricket stadium will form the basis of the scheme.

Coun David Pickford said: "We have made a decision to support the concept of a first class cricket stadium subject to a viable scheme being identified and subject, of course to Durham County Cricket Club's application being approved."

The development could bring wide-ranging benefits to the region as well as hundreds of new jobs.

○ A step nearer: Back Page

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# Stadium is 10.10.1990 first class, says county

A CONTROVERSIAL scheme to develop a first-class cricket stadium on the outskirts of Chester le Street was yesterday greeted as the most important and exciting development of the early 1990s.

It was given overwhelming backing by members of Durham County Council's development control sub-committee whose views will now be sent to the district council and Environment Secretary Chris Patten.

The district council has submitted outline plans for the stadium — which will provide a home for Durham County Cricket Club — along with housing, offices, and land for informal recreation on the Riverside Park site.

The county's deputy director of environment John Wearmouth told the sub-committee that while the scheme breached Structure Plan rules, this was outweighed by its benefits in terms of

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By MEL MASON

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improving the image and economic being of the county as a whole.

Deputy council leader Bob Pendle said the proposal was both exceptional and exciting. While the district council was faced with a tremendous responsibility, it also had a wonderful opportunity in its hands.

"We have seen over the last few years the appearance of new industry and technology, and I see this as complementary to what is happening in the county as a region in this respect.

"This will not only be of benefit to the county but also to the whole region. I am convinced that the site is the most suitable in the county for this development."

Coun Joe Knox said he believed the setting was perfect and it was important for the town that the development should go ahead.

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# Go-ahead for first-class cricket home

9.11.1990

By MARK SUMMERS

THE controversial scheme to build a home for first-class cricket in County Durham won approval last night. Chester-le-Street development services committee gave outline permission for the riverside blueprint.

Now the council, which prepared the plan, and the objectors strenuously opposed to it, must wait and see if Environment Secretary Chris Patten calls in the application.

The Save Our Riverside Campaign hopes he does this and orders a public inquiry.

The plan, the cornerstone of Durham County Cricket Club's first-class status bid, breaches the county structure plan because it proposes houses and offices on the 106 acres of playing fields and farmland by the River Wear south of Ropery Lane.

The council believes it can justify the breach because the cricket stadium is of regional importance. The houses and offices would fund the development of the stadium and associated recreation and leisure facilities.

Last night council leader George Staines said first-class cricket would put the town on the map, and the development would provide new leisure facilities the council could not fund alone.

He also told the meeting it would provide 80 construction jobs for four years and 180 permanent jobs.

"We are jealous of the structure plan but at the same time we are concerned about putting on our patch something that is first class," he said.

The committee rejected a call by Liberal Derek Morse to refer the plan back for reconsideration.

Coun Morse claimed there was no evidence that the cricket stadium was of regional significance, saying that average attendance at matches could be 400 to 1,000 people.

"Nobody has come up with any evidence whatsoever on the regional significance. There has been a conspiracy of silence on the issue."

Coun Bill Moist (Ind) questioned the validity of many letters of support which had come in after the statutory deadline for consultation.

The plan and the objections now go to the Department of the Environment. Mr Patten has a month to decide whether to call it in.

Durham's application to join the county championship has been handed to the Test and County Cricket Board. It will be decided in December.



The proposed stadium — part of Durham County's bid for first-class status

11.6.1990.

# Councillor quits 'over cricket bid'

A COUNCILLOR has quit because of proposals to build a cricket stadium in a popular park, she says.

Labour member Maureen Pattison said she was "totally opposed" to plans for a first-class stadium on the Riverside Park at Chester-le-Street.

But the ruling Labour group on Chester-le-Street District Council claimed she resigned because she was not made council vice-chairman.

Mrs Pattison, 56, one of three Chester South ward councillors for more than seven years, describes herself as committed to the Labour Party.

But she said yesterday: "I am completely opposed to development on the Riverside, which is a beautiful asset for the people of Chester-le-Street. I am also disillusioned with certain members of the Labour group."

Chester-le-Street and Durham County councils are due to receive consultants' reports on plans for a stadium which would be the centrepiece of Durham Cricket Club's bid for first-class status.

But the prospect of losing a large belt of open space by the River Wear has

By MARK SUMMERS

sparked considerable opposition. Around 13,000 people have signed a protest petition, including senior Labour MP John Cunningham.

Mrs Pattison said she had opposed the idea in group meetings but felt it was a "foregone conclusion" the council would push the scheme through.

She said she had been passed over for the vice-chairman's post because of her views on the project.

But environment committee chairman and Labour group chairman Malcolm Pratt said in a statement: "Coun Mrs Pattison has not resigned because of her opposition to any proposed development at the Riverside."

He said Mrs Pattison had twice before failed to become vice-chairman and had said she would resign if she was unsuccessful this year.

"The Labour group is sorry that she has taken this decision because she has been a very good ward councillor."

But Mrs Pattison denied the claim. "It was not sour grapes. The Riverside was the most important thing."

## CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT COUNCIL

### PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF CHESTER-LE-STREET RIVERSIDE

#### BRIEF TO CONSULTANTS

##### BACKGROUND

1. Early in 1989 Chester-le-Street District Council decided to undertake a feasibility study of the Riverside area with a view to increasing the provision of recreational and leisure facilities in that area. In May 1989 Durham County Cricket Club informed the District Council that it was to make a bid to be accepted as the 18th County in the County Championship, and based on research undertaken by the Club the Riverside area had been identified as the optimum site for the County Cricket Stadium.
2. In recent months a Working Group consisting of Officers from the District Council and Durham County Council has examined the requirements of Durham County Cricket Club. The Working Group has also considered those other recreation and leisure activities which it is considered are desirable as part of an overall scheme and those commercial elements which could possibly be included in such a scheme in order to fund the development. The Working Group has produced a preliminary assessment entitled "Chester-le-Street Riverside : A Home for County Cricket in the North". A copy is attached as Annex 1.
3. The Preliminary Assessment includes an "indicative scheme" for the development of the area south of Ropery Lane showing ideas for development accommodating a County Cricket Ground.
4. The indicative scheme was made public on 13th September, 1989 and at that stage the District Council decided to support the Club's bid for first class status and carry out a detailed feasibility study into how the Riverside development could best be handled in physical and financial terms. A copy of the Chief Executive's Report to the Council's Environmental Health, Recreation and General Purposes Committee is attached as Annex 2.

##### THE SITE

5. The total site covers over 40 hectares (100 acres) and the District Council is the principal landowner. The preliminary assessment indicates current planning and land use policies as well as the present pattern of land ownership. It will be seen that much of the land south of Ropery Lane (where it is envisaged the cricket development would take place) is in the ownership of the District Council.

6. The setting of the site is an attractive one next to the River Wear, overlooked by the Lumley Castle Estate and golf course to the east and close to the historic town of Chester-le-Street 500 metres to the west. The Durham motorway (A1/M) is close by and Chester-le-Street is on the East Coast main railway line.
7. It is estimated that 2.5 million people live within 40 minutes driving time of Chester-le-Street. The total population of the six Northern Counties (Durham, Tyne and Wear, Cleveland, North Yorkshire, Northumberland and Cumbria) was 3.73 million in 1987.

#### THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES

3. The District Council wishes, if possible, to develop the Riverside Area for recreational purposes. In policy terms the inclusion of a County Cricket Ground as part of any development would be very attractive because of likely economic benefit to the District itself and further aims thence the support of Durham County Council). Indications from the Cricket Club are that whilst the cricket "business" might be expected to cover its running costs, it could not contribute at all to servicing capital tied up in land and buildings. In an attempt to determine whether these capital costs (or what percentage of them) can be funded from other development which might be permitted - in these special circumstances - on or around the site, the indicative scheme shows the Council's ideas for possible limited residential development, business park and a hotel existing satisfactorily alongside the crickering facilities.
4. As mentioned above, the cricket ground is only one element of a larger development concept. Other recreation and leisure activities would also need to form an important part of any development. The District Council has ideas, albeit at an early stage, to improve the area north of Ropery Lane. This area, which comprises a formal park and open space, is extensively used by the public and it is proposed to enhance the facilities there as part of a comprehensive package for the Riverside both north and south of Ropery Lane. This will allow the public to enjoy the pleasant surroundings provided at the Riverside.

#### PRINCIPLES TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

10. The area is presently open space of farm land and is recognised as being one of few open "green" areas within Chester-le-Street District. Any development in this area must have regard to the need to achieve the right balance between environmental and development issues. Commercial development would need to be in accord with planning parameters (See Working Group Assessment). Views, landscaping and tree planting, the needs of local fishing clubs and the retention of public riverside walks for instance, must be given consideration in any overall scheme.

11. The District Council has given wide publicity to its ideas for the development of the Riverside at this very early stage. Public concern has already been expressed in relation to potential damage to the natural flora and fauna of the area brought about by any development. Consultants will be required to consider this aspect amongst others, and indicate what arrangements would need to be made to protect wildlife and local plant life.
12. Preliminary research has indicated that there are a number of important principles which need to be considered in developing a first class County Cricket Ground. These principles are identified in the Working Group Assessment. Also, the need for the Cricket Club to raise revenue from the Stadium would involve the incorporation of commercial features in the design. Consultants will be required to take into account specialist physical requirements related to cricket ground provision and advise on appropriate plans for commercial uses to be directly associated with any stadium.
13. Neither the District Council nor the County Council will be able to make any direct financial contribution to the scheme of any significance. The District Council's investment will take the form of the land in its ownership. The capital required to finance the total development would only be effectively released when the District Council achieves planning consent for an acceptable scheme on its own land and comes to terms with a developer in a form of a "barter agreement". Consultants will need to consider the implications of the legislation contained in the Local Government and Housing Bill which will govern local authorities' capital expenditure after 1st April, 1990. Advice will be required on how this "barter" arrangement can be achieved as well as the implications for the sale/lease/disposal of land.

#### WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY CONSULTANTS

14. It has been decided that a formal independent assessment needs to be prepared to advise on the ideas so far developed for the site. The District Council, therefore, invites tenders from appropriately qualified consultants in respect of an expert study to advise on the following issues:
  - (i) The Consultants will be required to consider the commercial aspects shown on the sketch plan (housing/hotel/business park) and to assess the demand for, and type and scale of such aspects. Alternative commercial solutions which could satisfy planning requirements, and would be in sympathy with the overall concept could be considered.

(ii) It is hoped that the commercial aspects included in the proposed scheme will be capable of generating a level of income sufficient to finance the Cricket development, the recreation and leisure activities shown for the area south of Roper Lane and provide additional finance to fund further recreation and leisure development north of Roper Lane. It will be necessary, therefore, for Consultants to undertake a financial viability study in order to assess whether the scheme can be self financing. It will be necessary for the Consultants to cost the total scheme. It will, of course, be possible to develop the cricket ground in stages and the Consultants should advise on the appropriate amount of development in the early years in relation to the amount of capital available.

(iii) It will be necessary for Consultants to advise how the proposed scheme could be achieved, assuming a financially viable scheme can be identified, taking into account the legislation restricting and controlling the District Council's capital expenditure programmes. In effect how the income generated from the commercial uses can be transferred to the non-commercial uses in view of local Authority capital finance restrictions.

(iv) The study will need to quantify the benefits in terms of the "return" which can be expected on the investment of public money in the Cricket Stadium. The benefits may be economic, image building, promotional and any others which the Consultants can identify.

(v) The Study will also need to consider the tenure arrangement between the District Council and Durham County Cricket Club in relation to the Stadium. Views will need to be expressed on possible commercial uses of the Stadium in order to raise revenue for the Cricket Club. It must be acknowledged, however, that any commercial features incorporated in the Stadium must not be in competition with commercial activities elsewhere on the site.

(vi) Using the material already supplied in the Working Group's Preliminary Assessment as a basis the Consultants will need to carry out an independent site assessment. This should review all aspects covered in the Preliminary Assessment and any other further matters which the Consultant and any others relevant or which arise during the course of further discussions.

- (vii) The Consultants will need to comment on the "ideas for the development of the Riverside" in design/planning and layout terms; and in the light of all findings from other parts of the study suggest, if needed, changes to the layout.
- (viii) The Consultants will need to advise on the best way of achieving the physical development of the scheme e.g. one developer carrying out the total development or split site development. Any financial benefits will need to be considered.
- (ix) The Consultants will need to advise on a suggested timetable for the development of the site.

#### TIMETABLE

- 15. Initial proposals from the Consultants indicating how the study would be carried out, the personnel involved, any work to be subcontracted and the fee should be submitted by 15th December.
- 16. Shortlisted Consultants will be interviewed early in the New Year by a panel of District Council and County Council Officers and Members. This same panel will form a Steering Group to oversee the Study.
- 17. The Study should be completed in two parts; Part 1 would consist of 14 (i) - (v) above and Part 2, 14 (vi) - (ix). Part 1 should be completed within 3 months of commencement and Part 2 within 5 months of commencement.

Chester-le-Street District Council  
Civic Centre  
Newcastle Road  
Chester-le-Street  
Co Durham  
DH3 3UT

25 October 1989

## VI

BRIEF HISTORY OF WEAR VALLEY AND THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wear Valley lies approximately fifteen miles south west of Chester-le-Street and like Chester-le-Street is a district council in County Durham. It derives its name from the fact that it is crossed by the River Wear. The District contains approximately 25% of County Durham's land mass, thus being predominantly rural and a large percentage of the northern part of the District is set deep in the North Pennines.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the District contains 40% of the latest designated area of outstanding beauty and was once described by central government as the "Last Undiscovered Dale". Historically, Wear Valley, like Chester-le-Street, was not only dominated by coal mining but also had lead mining and quarrying. Lead mining ceased in the early twentieth century and coal mining in the 1960s. Nowadays new mineral-related industries, particularly fluorspar mining and cement manufacturing, together employ about four hundred people in Weardale. Open cast mining is also carried out to recover coal left at the surface after deep mining ceased. The land is usually restored to agricultural use after open casting has been exhausted but the land is in any case of poor quality and used for sheep farming.

During the 1960s, as a direct result of central government's regional policy, several manufacturing plants in textiles and electrical engineering were established in the main towns and villages in the District, (Bishop Auckland and Crook) each employing several hundred people and providing employment for many ex-miners. These plants were, unfortunately for the people in Wear Valley, branches of larger United Kingdom firms, so at the end of the 1970s when the recession began, they were among the first factories to close down. The District's three main employers nowadays are the N.H.S. (especially Bishop Auckland Hospital and supporting services), Durham County Council (for employment mainly in schools, police and social services) and the District Council (with 1142 employees).<sup>2</sup>

As the life of the District once revolved around coal mining it is perhaps inevitable that the first "leisure" facility built in 1925 was the Brancepeth Miners Welfare Hall in Crook which was used for union meetings and various other social and community needs.<sup>3</sup> In 1961 the population size of Wear Valley District was almost double that of Chester-le-Street but whilst Chester-le-Street has seen its population increase up to 1988 Wear Valley's population has declined. (Fig. 9) The District covers an area of land almost eight times the size of Chester-le-Street District Council.

Consequent upon local government re-organisation in April 1974 the Wear Valley District council was formed by merging four former authorities of Bishop Auckland District Council, Crook and Willington Urban District Council, Tow Law Urban District Council and Weardale Rural District Council. The new boundaries extend from Bishop Auckland in the south to Edmundbyers in the north, west towards Nenthead and the border with Cumbria and east towards Durham City. Unlike Chester-le-Street, Wear Valley is disadvantaged by having no direct rail link or major road link with the other regions of the county but both deficiencies are being corrected by two new initiatives. First, a major road building programme funded with grants through the European Regional Development Fund of the European Community has enabled the building of Bishop Auckland, Shildon and Coundon by-pass thereby ensuring a direct link with the A1(M). There is also a new bridge being built over Newton Cap in Bishop Auckland and road improvements near Brancepeth making it easier to reach Crook and Willington. With regard to rail links, Durham County Council is supporting Wear Valley District Council in its proposals to re-open the Darlington to Weardale Branch line in order to attract tourists and also new businesses. Council officials believe that improved rail and road networks will aid the economic viability of the area.

### Departmental Structure and Policy Making

Wear Valley District Council is much bigger than Chester-le-Street, has a staff of 1142 and an annual budget of £20,514,078.<sup>4</sup> There are four main Departments or Directorates as they are now known: Finance and Management; Economic Development and Leisure; Housing and Health;

and Direct Works (which has Planning and Technical sub-directors). Each directorate is headed by a director and the director of finance and management is designated as the principal officer; known as the managing director of the whole authority. Before 1979 the Chief Executive had been a solicitor who held the title of Chief Clerk but like Chester-le-Street, Wear Valley is now adopting private sector management processes and techniques including the adoption of new titles, hence the directors and directorates.

Although each directorate has at its helm a director in charge of operations and two sub-directors dealing with Planning and Technical matters, there is no evidence to suggest that this management team of officers operates in the same way as the senior and second tier management teams at Chester-le-Street. Discussions with chief officers and members reveal that the management team may exist in title, but in fact, there is very little formalised corporate approach. Meetings between principal officers take place on an informal basis with each protecting and seeking to further the cause of his/her own particular professional and technical specialism. Indeed, there is a general consensus that each directorate carries out its work in isolation from the others, except for the fact that the director of finance and management (the managing director) and the director of leisure and economic development liaise frequently with the very powerful leader of the Labour Group, the controlling party. The relationship between these three very strong personalities has been described by one of those involved as "The Powerful Triumvirate" which brings together a powerful political and professional partnership.

Before 1979, when the Leader of the Council was elected, it was usual for chief officers to collectively recommend policy changes and those recommendations would be acted upon; but since then, one opposition member unkindly likened the powerful new leader of the Council to Louis XIV of France. He argued that the Leader rules the Council with absolute power and chief officers must "court" his favour in much the same way as the Court did with Louis XIV. In this way, it is said, the directors of finance and management and leisure and economic development have each in their own charismatic and persuasive way, been able to convince the leader of the importance of their own particular specialism and consequently the Council has been following

policies it might otherwise not have concerned itself with but for these three significant actors has pervaded all Council business because of powerful arguments maintained by the director of leisure and economic development, supported by the director of finance and management and the Leader of the Council.

Discussions with opposition members revealed that there has been an exodus of Chief Officers since 1979 and the former Chief Executive took early retirement at 41 as it is claimed that he could not stand up to the power and might of the Leader of the Council. Chief Officers and members in the past, who have not been in agreement with the leader or who have been unable to "court" popularity for their proposals have been driven to take new jobs elsewhere or taken early retirement. A number have been so publicly humiliated and their presence made so uncomfortable that they leave.

The directors speak very highly of the Leader of the Council and regard him with great respect. Such is the respect in which he is held that individual officers approach him either individually, or jointly, but not very often collectively with their ideas. If the Leader is in agreement it is almost certain that the controlling Labour Group will be in agreement. He therefore has considerable power to determine policy outside and within committee.

It is very rare indeed for members to initiate policy at Wear Valley although very occasionally the Leader of the Council may introduce a new idea and it will be incorporated into a report. There is no doubt that policy originates from officers and they then approach the Labour Leader with their ideas before a recommendation is put into an officer's report. This may sound as if the Leader is a weak person who can be manipulated by strong officers. This could not be further from the truth because the Leader of the Labour Group, it is said, has a very strong personality, hence the need for officers to "court" his favour and to have the policies sanctioned. Since the present Leader achieved his position in 1979 many Chief Officers have been replaced by people who agree with him. One opposition member referred to the way officers have to bow to the superior power of the Leader or say goodbye and look elsewhere for work. A number of officers and

members who have disagreed with the Leader have been publicly humiliated and either accept it or take early retirement.<sup>5</sup> He appears to have absolute power and there are few decisions made without his sanction. The leader sits on all appointments committees so has been instrumental in hand picking officers who will work within the absolute regime. There is a caucus of leading members of the Labour Group, i.e., the Leader, Deputy Leader, Secretary and Chief Whip and they do consider policy recommendations before the Group and committee meetings but such is the power of the Leader that even the senior members are swayed by the power of his personality. All issues of policy are considered in Labour Group meetings and gone through with a fine tooth comb before they go to full committee.

The level of debate at committees is restricted to nit-picking about details of officers' reports, only to have most of the requests rejected as unworkable. A likely scenario was described thus:

Officer's report read out to the Committee meeting - If the Leader of the Council has decided it's a good idea he shouts "Move it". Member of the Labour Group shouts "I second the motion". Opposition members attempt to intervene with points they would like to make. Officers, who are present at the meetings, attack the opposition's views as technically unsound - Motion carried by a vote.<sup>6</sup>

### Committee System at Wear Valley

As Appendix 11 shows the Committee System at Wear Valley district council is much more complex than at Chester-le-Street and there was a major restructuring in April 1990 to take account of the massive changes brought about by the 1989 Local Government and Housing Act. This Act was a response to the Widdicombe Report<sup>7</sup> and not only alters the basis on which local government is financed but also deals with a wide range of council business including (for the purposes of this section) provisions for changes in the political balance of committees; voting rights of members on committees; adoption of procedural standing orders; duties of particular officers and political restriction of officers and staff; members allowances and interests.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of the restructured committee system there are now five main Committees (where there used to be seven), i.e., policy and finance; housing and environmental services; planning; technical; leisure and economical development and numerous sub committees and working parties. (There is even a wartime and civil emergency sub committee, membership of which was increased from seven to thirteen in April 1990.) The new system has merged Leisure and Economic Development and Housing and Technical Services, each service area prior to April 1990 had its own Committee. The changes are in part due to new legislation but also probably reflect a closer partnership with the departments. All committees must report to the Policy and Finance Committee before going to full Council and in order to reflect the political balance the new Act introduces statutory requirements for the membership of committees, sub committees and appointments on other representative bodies.<sup>9</sup> Summarised, the new legislation requires:

1. No party must be allocated all seats;
2. the majority of seats must be allocated to the majority party of the council;
3. seats allocated on committees must be the same proportion as the number of seats held by that party on the council;
4. likewise for advisory committees and joint committees.

Unlike Chester-le-Street where every member sits on every committee, the system is different at Wear Valley. In the past opposition parties have always been given some seats but the Council is now required by law to have a specified number of Opposition members on all committees.

The Policy and Finance Committee at Wear Valley District Council is of great importance and assists with the formulation and carrying out of the overall plan for the authority as envisaged by the Bains Report, by "setting objectives and priorities and controlling the implementation of objectives and monitoring and reviewing performance".<sup>10</sup>

Each main committee meets eight times per annum and within the annual cycle sub committees, joint sub committees and working parties meet more often than the main committees. There is an August recess when only the Planning committee and Staff and Manual Joint Consultative Committee meet and this lull in proceedings allows for the inspection of outlying sites.

As already stated, not all members sit on all committees in the way they do at Chester-le-Street but this may be due to the larger number of committees, scope of business and conventional way of doing things. However, the composition of committees is now in line with central government guidelines with more of a partisan balance. There are forty members on Wear Valley council (see Appendix 14) 25 Labour, 3 Conservatives, 7 Independents, 4 Lib-Democrats and 1 Independent Labour. As there are so few opposition members in relation to the Labour Group it is possible for only one or two of each Group to sit on each committee. The chairperson of the council (an Independent), the vice chairperson (a Labour member), the Labour Group Leader, Deputy Leader, Secretary and Chief Whip are ex officio members of all committees, sub committees, panels and working and joint panels.

Each main committee has approximately 25 to 32 members which includes members of the Labour Group with some of them only on sub committees (varying in membership from 3 to 17 depending upon the nature of business to be covered), e.g., the Allotments Shows organising committee has four members and the Police Liaison working Party has twelve members. Opposition members are represented on all committees and sub committees but they are obviously in the minority.

One striking difference in committee business between Chester-le-Street and Wear Valley District Council is the length of time meetings last. Council committee and sub committee meetings are very long at Wear Valley as the Labour Group and especially the Leader of the Group consider it important to investigate the minutiae of all issues. This situation is not unlike those found by Maud in 1967 when it was advocated that as members were spending too much time on detail a Management Board of five to nine people should be set up to deal with broad policy.<sup>11</sup> Meetings at Wear Valley consist of vigorous debate with the opposition given reasonable opportunity to contribute. This is true despite the fact that the controlling Labour Group meets regularly to discuss issues before they are considered at committee and despite the fact that all issues will have been agreed by the Labour Leader after recommendations by individual chief officers. The reason for such detailed consideration, as an opposition member indicated, is that the whole "circus" is designed to increase the power of the Labour leadership and by giving the go-ahead to all, even minor aspects of council business, the Leader is verifying to his group and to the

electors that he is in command of all business. Nothing, it is said, goes through without the nod of the Labour Leader. Meetings take a long time as the Leader does not delegate, he oversees all business, even trivial issues, making the whole process a long drawn out and often frustrating affair for opposition members.

### The Directorate of Leisure and Economic Development

As an area with high unemployment and an ageing rural population Wear Valley is not an area where one would expect to find a highly developed Leisure Department but Wear Valley has perhaps one of the most dynamic local authority leisure departments in the United Kingdom. This is confirmed by the praise given to the Council in the Sports Council's latest report.<sup>12</sup> Like all other small district councils, Wear Valley was up until recent years, a provider of a limited range of sports and recreational facilities. Nowadays leisure services account for over one third of the total budget and employ one hundred and thirty-three part-time and full-time staff.<sup>13</sup> (Appendix 10 shows comparative spending on Recreation per head of population at Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street and Appendices 12 and 13 show staff structures.)

The workforce has doubled in the last five years and the spending on leisure is now a hotly debated issue. Opposition members are presently calling for a review of leisure services and a reduction in spending by a sixth to reduce the burden on community charge payers.

Before describing in detail the type of provision and how the leisure ethos pervades the whole of council business at Wear Valley, and how it is now regarded as the economic saviour of the area, it would be impossible to convey the dramatic changes that have taken place in Wear Valley without an adequate understanding of the role of Les Morgan, the charismatic director of leisure and economic development (See Figs. 10 and 11).

In interviews with members of staff, council members of all parties and individual electors, there is a general consensus that the whole of council business has dramatically changed since the arrival in 1984 of this very keen and committed leisure professional. This individual, it is argued, who is northern chairman of I.L.A.M. (Institute of Leisure

and Amenities Managers) and has many outside private interests in leisure (e.g., he owns his own ski school in Scotland, and runs his own aerobics classes) describes himself as a "Leisure animal". He has transformed the nature of council business at Wear Valley District Council and has stamped his personal professional authority on the area. Leisure service provision has increased; the workforce has doubled; and the holistic leisure ethic has a high profile. Leisure has for the last few years been seen as a vehicle for transforming the economic base of the community by creating employment opportunities and as an aid to influence the health and welfare of the local community. The new leisure philosophy at Wear Valley now encompasses not just sport but also the arts, tourism, entertainment, heritage, home entertainment, exhibitions, etc. To Les Morgan, the Quality of Life debate is considered essential.<sup>14</sup> As society moves towards leisure/tourism and fitness for a better future Wear Valley exemplified a District in tune with that philosophy and heading very positively into the future.<sup>15</sup>

The fact that Leisure and Economic Development are merged into one directorate and that the Chief Officer carries out two roles indicates the importance that leisure is given in terms of its economic importance.

The directorate of Leisure and Economic Development is modelled on a private sector business and indeed many of the management ideas are those of American writers such as Peters and Waterman. For example, there is a great emphasis on customer satisfaction with endless surveys and questionnaires on performance being carried out; (with a community newspaper devoted entirely to leisure) staff are requested to wear fancy uniforms and sport with pride the badge shown at Fig. 12 to show their commitment to the job. Many of Peters and Waterman's ideas have been incorporated into the leisure and economic development directorate<sup>17</sup> and the director is proud to have won<sup>16</sup> many management awards for his directorate and the high point of his career was to receive an award personally from the U.S.A. management guru, Tom Peters. In short, the director of leisure and economic development is on a one-man crusade to convince everyone at Wear Valley, and indeed

the rest of society, that leisure is vital. His excellent understanding of local government; his varied outside interests; his ability to comprehend the complex nature of legislation governing leisure and economic development; his chairmanship of I.L.A.M. which has given him scope to find out all relevant avenues for grant aid; his approach to business/marketing, etc., have all led to a very persuasive and committed approach to transforming the nature of council business at Wear Valley.

There is no doubt that the resources devoted to leisure services at Wear Valley are enormous in relation to its size. Expenditure for last year (1989/90) was £3.2 million, (of which £2.1 million was recouped from community charge payers, central government grants, charges and fees and finance from outside agencies).

#### Links with outside bodies/agencies

Wear Valley district council receives aid from a number of outside agencies, in connection with spending on capital and other leisure projects. The amount of aid received varies from year to year. Examples of the main agencies are as follows:

1. Sports Council (varied contributions to building of Spectrum Sports Complex; paying the wages of the Community fitness officer; assistance to promote the "Wear Fit Campaign");
2. Northern Arts (grant aid to Arts projects, exhibitions, etc., assistance with paying the wages of the Arts Development Officer);
3. Durham Rural Community Council;
4. County Durham Development Corporation;
5. English and Northumbria Tourist Board;
6. Football Trust;
7. European Community (especially Economic and regional development fund);
8. British coal;
9. Countryside Commission (currently providing aid to fund a brochure "Walks in Weardale");
10. I.L.A.M.

If Wear Valley District Council is planning a new project for the forthcoming year the Leisure and Economic Department will apply to every conceivable benefactor. The extent of grant aid varies from year to year and project to project.

#### Provision of services by the directorate of leisure

Like many district councils Wear Valley's involvement in leisure had evolved over the years from the traditional role of providing recreational facilities such as swimming pools and parks. What little provision there was, was the responsibility of the environmental health technical and planning departments jointly. Up until the early 1980s leisure was not considered important enough to have its own department or committee. However, this changed dramatically in 1983 when a £250,000 grant was awarded by the Sports Council to build the Spectrum sports and leisure centre. The recruitment from Irvine in Scotland of a young and dynamic Leisure Officer brought about many changes with a new emphasis on the District Council as an agency able to consider the overall welfare and health of the community. The council rapidly moved from merely responding to recreational needs of local people and began to embrace a much wider role. The opening of the Spectrum, offering a diversity of leisure facilities under one roof was a conscious aim to move the council away from its traditional role of recreational service provider.<sup>18</sup> Spectrum houses snooker halls, squash courts, sun rooms, saunas, solarium, jacuzzis, bars/cafes, floodlit all weather day ski slope (the World's First coloured artificial ski slope), swimming, roller skating, adventural playground, picnic areas, bowling greens, conference halls and fitness rooms.

In the two years following the opening of the Spectrum centre, which is financed from council funds, but is managed by a legally separate and independent Trust Body of eleven managing trustees and nine councillors, the Leisure Officer established a team of like-minded and enthusiastic individuals who shared his visionary zeal. They reviewed existing facilities to update the image and encourage growth.

Traditional facilities like swimming pools and athletics tracks were transformed with the addition of saunas, sunbeds and jacuzzis. Many facilities were re-named and refurbished with snazzy logos and colour schemes emphasising a new image. Staff were requested to wear neat uniforms, suggestions schemes and awards for the most improved facility were introduced and increasingly leisure became important as a future base for economic growth. Indeed, leisure became so important that in 1987 the Leisure Officer was asked to prepare a major report, resulting in the formulation of a corporate Leisure and Economic Development directorate.

The Spectrum epitomised the positive leisure philosophy considered necessary to bring about changed attitudes in the District. Building on what was regarded as an outstanding success, the years between 1987 and 1990 saw the creation of many new leisure posts in tune with the new philosophy and ethos. Community and fitness officers, activities officers, ski managers, and art development officer posts were all created, with initial funding for the salaries coming from bodies such as the Sports Council and Arts Council.<sup>19</sup>

Although Spectrum remains the largest, there are now three other sports complexes in the outlying districts (Glenholm, Woodhouse Close and Weardale) each providing similar facilities to Spectrum. The District Council also has responsibility for a dual use open-air swimming school (sited at a local comprehensive school), two 18 hole golf courses, bowling greens, tennis courts, athletics grounds and cricket and football pitches.

As an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (A.N.O.B.) Weardale is a very attractive tourist area and the Leisure and Economic Development directorate has actively marketed many of the natural attractions in order to boost the local economy. Wear Valley District Council has many country parks and picnic areas within its boundaries and is fortunate to have two large reservoirs at Tunstall and Derwentside as well as many picturesque walks in the Dales and Upper Pennines.

The District Council in conjunction with Durham County Council and the English Tourist Board is currently undertaking a major review of the area highlighting attractions such as Killhope Wheel leadmining museum, and Weardale museum in an attempt to attract tourists. In 1989 Durham County Council initiated a "Land of the Prince Bishops" tourist theme and Wear Valley District Council is marketing the district in line with this theme. Bishop Auckland is the home of the Bishop of Durham and is surrounded by 800 acres of beautiful parklands; Escomb Church build in 675 a.d. with stone from Binchester Roman Fort is the oldest complete Saxon church in England and one of the best examples of Saxon architecture in Western Europe; Binchester Roman Fort of Vinovia founded in the first century by Julius Aricola is also close to Bishop Auckland. There is obviously tremendous scope for extending tourism in Wear Valley District Council's area but this will require a great deal of time and effort. A survey of all tourist sites is being carried out by Durham County Council with a view to securing financial aid from the European Community.

#### Increased political debate over leisure issues

In view of the importance given to leisure at Wear Valley, particularly over the last three years, the amount of the budget devoted to this service is very contentious and has led to enormous political debate. The opposition groups claim that the controlling Labour Group allow a grossly inflated amount to be spent on leisure to such an extent that it is costing every community charge payer £60.00 per annum.<sup>20</sup> Obviously the community charge is a very unpopular tax and there is some local concern over how council money is being spent. Leisure issues take up a very large amount of council business as the opposition pressurizes the controlling group to reduce spending. Meetings which are already very long compared to those at Chester-le-Street have been extended on numerous occasions to accommodate opposition views. Opposition members feel they have a public duty to inform the electors of what in their views are "ridiculously ludicrous amounts" devoted to leisure spending. Having once held power at Wear Valley (between 1976 and 1979) the Liberal Democrats aim to point out the folly of the controlling Group. Every available means is used to pressurize the Labour Group; such as

writing to the press, public meetings, leaflets, canvassing. Debate in the Council chamber is so ferocious that leading opposition members have been physically ejected, reported to the police, to the National Union of Journalists, and even to the Director of Public Prosecutions on two occasions. The main opposition complaints are the Labour Group's abuse of power and secretive nature of policy making. Wear Valley Council business frequently appears in the local press.<sup>22</sup> Liberal Democrats are convinced they will take control of Wear Valley District Council in May 1991 and are therefore stepping up the pressure and feel that leisure issues will guarantee them electoral success. They claim success for bringing about change on a number of leisure policy issues, a few of which are recorded in the following section: (N.B. the Labour Group refutes all claims made by the opposition and reference to the Afterword following the conclusion of this Thesis will reveal the fundamental changes that have taken place between 1990 and 1991).

**Proposed Building of an Alpine Ski Village and Leisure Park outside Wolsingham in an A.O.N.B.** (Land owned by the Forestry Commission)

This scheme is perhaps the most contentious issue ever to be placed on the agenda at Wear Valley District Council. Over the last two years it has raised temperatures all round. This "hair-brained scheme", as opposition members refer to it was originally planned to cost £30 million (of which Durham County Council would contribute £2.5 million, Wear Valley £2.5 million, the European Community would fund £5 million and the remaining £20 million was to be secured from private investment). A local firm, Stanley Miller Holdings, was appointed to conduct a feasibility study which eventually cost the community charge payers of Wear Valley £177,000 (together with £127,000 which came from the English Tourist Board). During 1989 the estimated cost of this scheme escalated to £64 million. Opposition Liberal Democrats and Conservative members were so alarmed at the sum involved, especially as Wear Valley District Council loan debt stood at £50 million, and concerned at the way Stanley Miller Holdings were appointed without any form of competition that a letter was promptly sent off to the then Secretary of State for the Environment, Nicholas Ridley, asking him to

refuse to allow public money to be granted for the scheme. The local press ran letters from concerned community charge payers, many of whom also wrote to the Secretary of State for the Environment and also directly to the European Community with a request that all E.E.C. fundings to local councils be halted.

The ambitious plans to be involved in the building and management of this scheme were abandoned by Wear Valley district council in October 1989 despite having committed £177,000 to the feasibility study, and despite the grand claims of the scheme's ability to revitalise the local economy by providing five hundred jobs. The money from the community charge was not forthcoming and the opposition claimed this as a victory. In their view a "hair-brained" scheme such as this should never have been allowed to take up so much time and finance. There have been calls for compensation to be paid to Wear Valley District Council from Stanley Miller Holdings and for calls for the labour Leader to resign as he had overall responsibility for sanctioning the spending on this scheme.

Because of the difficulties in securing public sector cash Wear Valley pulled out of the scheme in October 1989 and Stanley Miller Holdings then anticipated continuing the scheme as a self funding venture and began to seek ways of securing private capital investment. Unfortunately, the project's future hangs in the balance at present as Stanley Miller Holdings was put into the hands of the official receiver in March 1990 after announcing losses of £4.5 million. So where does this leave the scheme? Discussion with the Leader of Wear Valley District Council (on 14th June 1990) revealed that although there is no longer any involvement in the scheme by Wear Valley District Council due to the lack of community charge funding, the council has played a catalytic role in getting the feasibility study off the ground. High bank charges and a high level of inflation have frightened many possible private sector companies from involvement. The Leader of the Council has the backing of his members in welcoming any developer who can raise the necessary cash to build the proposed Alpine Ski and Leisure Park at Black Bank Woods and it is anticipated that planning permission would be given. Despite the opposition to this scheme the leading councillors and the chief officers remain convinced that it was a

feasible idea which could have regenerated the local area and made community charge payers proud of their visionary local councillors.<sup>23</sup> A recent document published by the Countryside Commission (June 1990) also influenced the decision not to build the Alpine Ski Village scheme.<sup>24</sup> By stating categorically that "the A.O.N.B. in the North Pennines is not a place for large imported visitors attractions" and that "mass tourism where the countryside is an attractive backdrop for essentially urban-style purpose built facilities, has no place in the North Pennines". Instead the Countryside Commission wants councils to protect the landscape by resisting and not encouraging inappropriate developments. Eager to protect and maintain the North Pennines as an area of outstanding natural beauty the Countryside Commission calls on the nine local councils with land within the area to conserve its heritage and to balance conservation with development thereby retaining a beautiful countryside that can attract new businesses, strengthen the rural economy and improve the quality of life.

It is rumoured that Wear Valley District Council is no longer involved in the proposed development of the £64 million Alpine Ski Resort and indeed there does not seem to be private sector cash to fund the project. It is rumoured that Wear Valley District Council is still considering a scaled down version of the scheme, along the lines of the original £25 million scheme first muted in 1988. Of course the opposition remains opposed to any of the schemes but up until 19th June 1990 the Council remained tight-lipped about future plans and the managing directors stated that "no final plans had been yet made".<sup>25</sup>

### Bishop Auckland Town Hall

Bishop Auckland's 120 year old victorian Town Hall, an imposing building in the centre of the town is owned by Wear Valley District Council on a 999 year lease and due to its dilapidated state of repair it was declared unsafe and closed down some time ago. As a way of resolving the problem of what to do with the Town Hall Wear Valley District Council mooted a number of proposals. First, during 1988/9 they sent three separate deputations to Durham County Council to discuss the possibility of siting a new library in the Town Hall. Bishop

Auckland and the surrounding district is considered to be very poorly served with library services. At this time Durham County Council were reluctant to site a new library in the Town Hall for a number of reasons, not least the financial implications. Wear Valley considered the possibility of renting the property out to a private developer on a 125 year lease. There were no plans at all to sell off the Town Hall but to lease it to Red Castles property company who planned to refurbish the building at an initial cost of £1 million plus another £700,000 at a future date. Red Castle Properties Limited headed by the chairman of Hartlepool Football Club planned to turn the place into an entertainment and shopping emporium. There were also proposals to rent off the main hall to Durham County Council for a library if required. Many of the meetings between Wear Valley District Council and Red Castles were, as is usual at Wear Valley, held in secret and, as usual, the opposition members with the assistance of local people and the local press demanded that the issue was brought out into the open. There was a vociferous campaign to stop the "Sale of the Town Hall" even though as has since been confirmed there were never any plans to sell off the Town Hall. Such was the vehemence of the opposition to the plans that a pressure group calling itself Bishop Auckland Civic Society led by a local doctor was established in an attempt to stop the sale of the Town Hall and also to set about reconstituting the Bishop Auckland Town Council. The group made a request to the Boundary Commission to re-establish Bishop Auckland town council because it was felt that decisions were being made about their town in Crook, which lies a number of miles away.<sup>26</sup>

The Bishop Auckland Civic Society obtained 10,019 signatures to a petition, this being almost half of the town's population (24,700), to stop Wear Valley in its plans to sell off or lease the town hall. The leader of the Liberal Democrats was so incensed with the decision without public consultation and also by the way in which discussions had been held in secret that he began to carry out his own investigations into Red Castle's Property Limited and set about analysing public records to ascertain the solvency of the company. County Court records revealed that the managing director, also as already mentioned the Chairman of Hartlepool Football Club, owned a number of companies, two of which had numerous outstanding county

court judgements against them. This information confirmed the opposition suspicions that as usual Wear Valley District Council had been hasty in taking decisions without prior investigations of the company's solvency. This highlighting of the company's problem led the District Council to defer the matter in February 1990 for further investigations to be made. Discussions with the Leader of the Council on 1st June 1990 revealed that in view of Red Castles Property Limited financial problems the District Council would drop plans to lease the Town Hall for development and enter into consultation with Durham County Council with a view to siting a library in the building. Durham County Council reconsidered the Town Hall question and a new library is to be sited there. Opposition members and Bishop Auckland Civic Society members alike have claimed victory for thwarting Wear Valley's earlier decision and are pleased at the new outcome.

#### Refurbishment of Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre

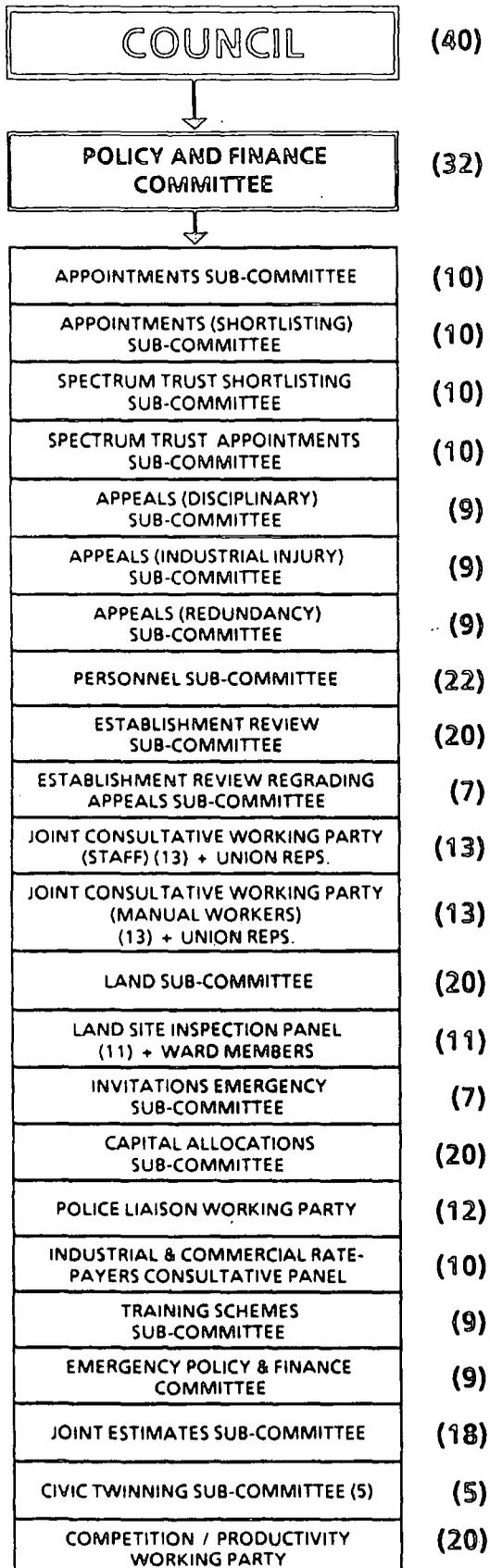
One of the district's leisure centres sited in Bishop Auckland, Woodhouse Close is a relatively new building but due to structural defects the Council decided that it should undergo a massive refurbishment. The building was unsafe and at one point a large chunk of the ceiling fell, just missing a patron. The council on the advice of leisure professionals made the decision to refurbish rather than put right the defects in the entire building. The anticipated cost was £1.6 million. However, due to what the opposition calls "grandiose schemes" the cost has now escalated to over £2.1 million. This issue, as all others relating to leisure spending, has led to vociferous opposition. The opposition has called on the District Auditor to stop the massive capital investment which it is argued will increase community charge bills even further. The Council is still pressing ahead with the plans despite opposition and sees no other way to remedy the problems. As the Leader of the Council remarked "the money spent is in accordance with professional advice given by consultants". A complete refurbishment is needed to bring the district leisure centre up to the standards required in the 1990s.

There have been countless other leisure related issues debated in Council chamber, e.g., the Opposition Party proposed the erection of a Wear Valley stand at the prestigious Gateshead Garden Festival but the Labour Party opposed it; an apparent abuse of the food and drinks bill at certain Council meetings held at the Spectrum Centre led the Liberal Democrats to claim their rightful place as nominees on such committees under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989; the move to re-open the Darlington to Weardale railway line had supporters and opposition in both parties.

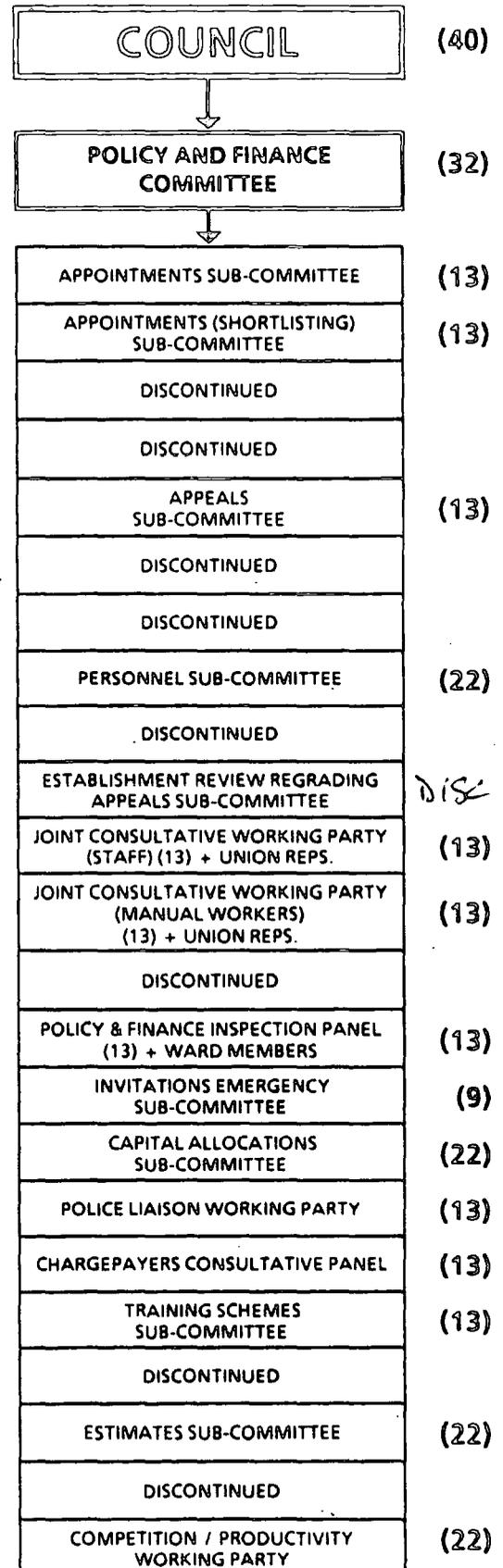
Regardless of the opposition to these plans, and many others, it is clear that by fostering a wide network of links with outside funding bodies and maintaining a distinct understanding of all likely changes affecting local authorities in general, and leisure departments, in particular, the officers at Wear Valley have made capable persuasive recommendations to a forceful and supportive political leadership. This has ensured that, despite, the almost certain imbroglio resulting from any new leisure initiatives opposition has been deflected and as a result of this effective partnership leisure remains the all pervasive service at Wear Valley District Council.

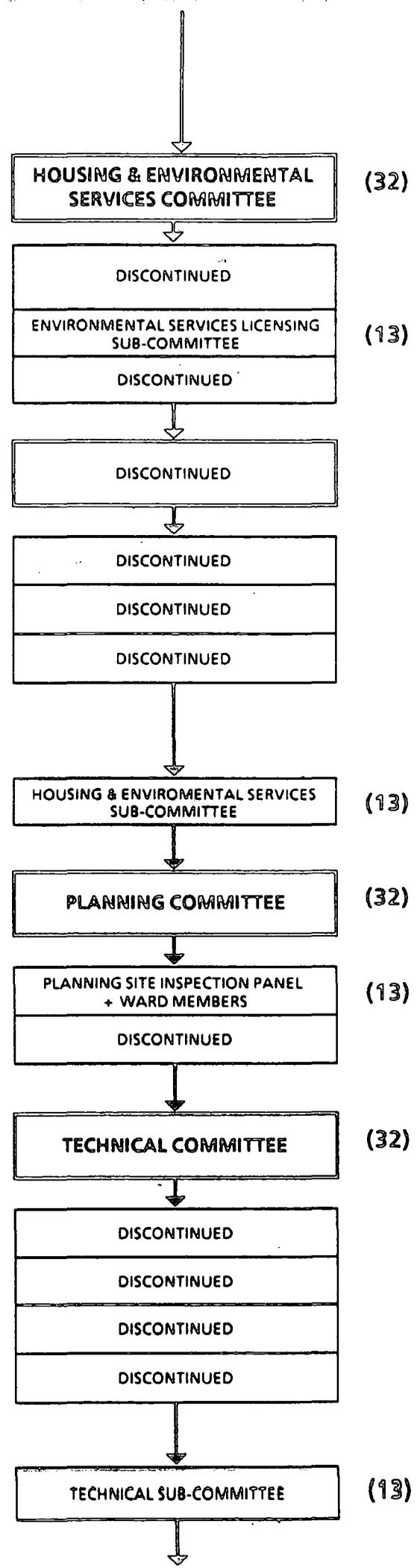
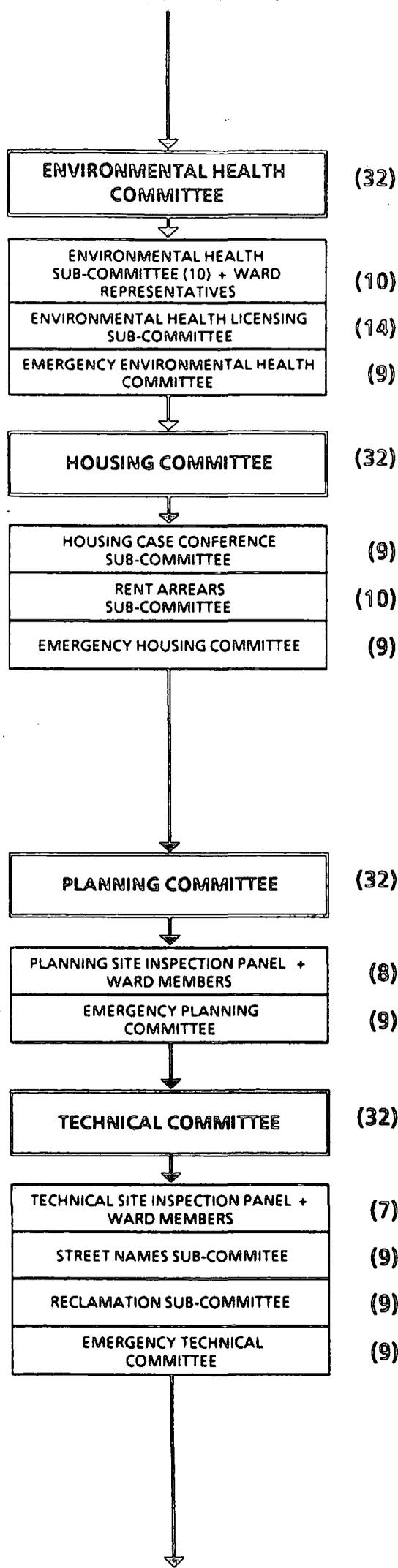
# THE PROPOSED COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

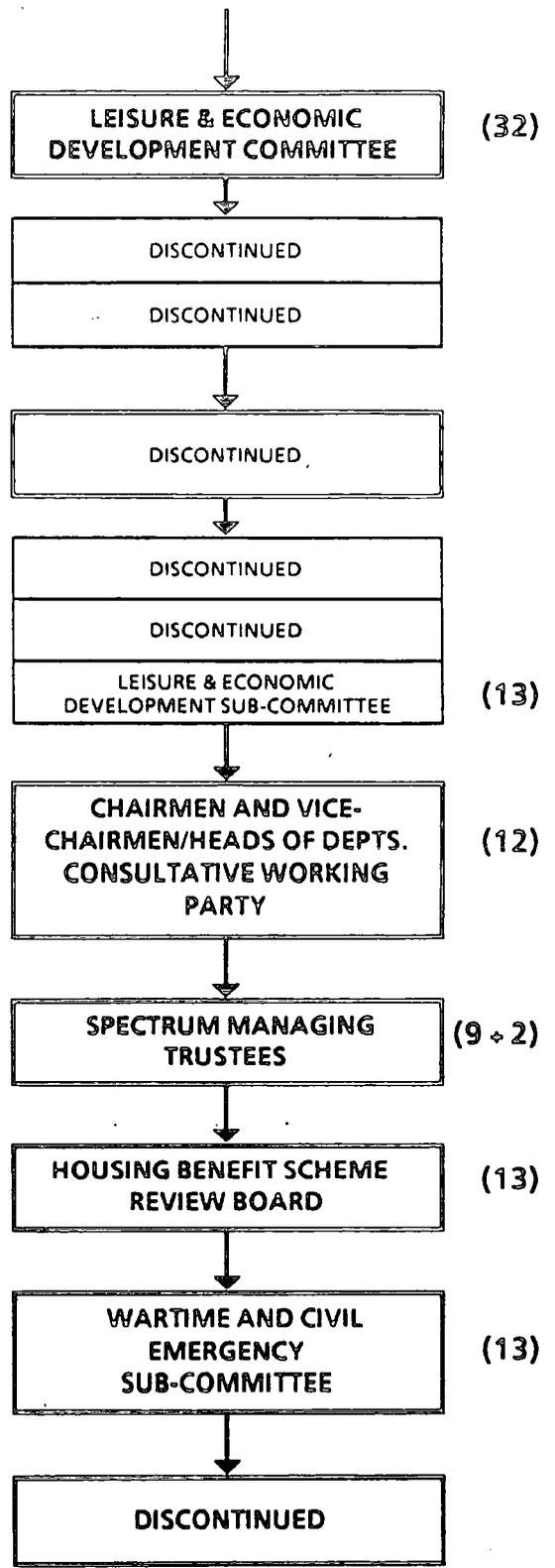
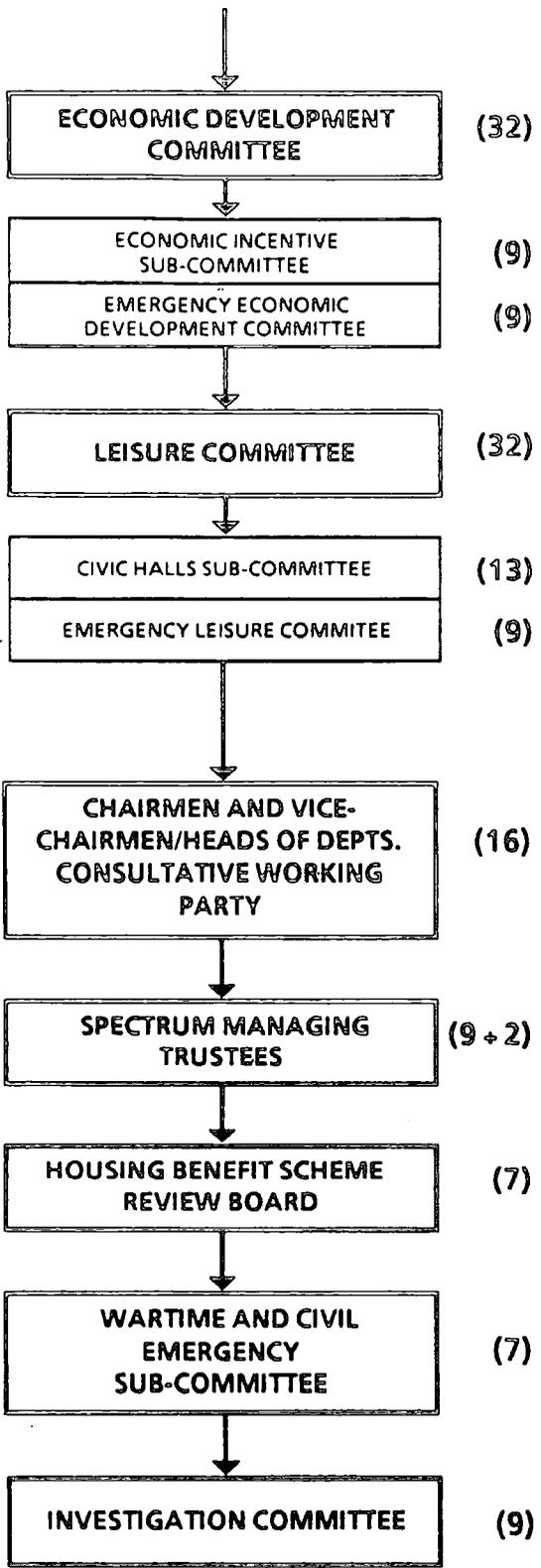
## PRESENT SYSTEM



## PROPOSED SYSTEM







(5) THE COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

	<u>Composition of Council</u>	<u>Committee</u>	<u>Sub-Committee/ Working Party Panel</u>		
Labour	23	18	13	7	5
Independent	8	7	4	3	2
Liberal/Democrats	6	5	3	2	1
Conservative	3	2	2	1	1
	--	--	--	--	--
	40	32	22	13	9

Members of the groups identified above will have to recommend their chosen nominations at the Annual Meeting to the various vacancies allocated.

(6) COMMENTS ON THE NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE(1) Cycle of Meetings

RECOMMENDED that the cycle of meetings remains as at present.

(2) Housing and Environmental Health Licensing Sub-Committee

In view of the possible conflict that could arise it is RECOMMENDED that any Member holding the office of Magistrate be not selected to serve on this sub-committee.

(3) Spectrum Trust

In view of the difficulties this arrangement could present when the leisure services are subject to competition, and also in the interests of efficiency, it is RECOMMENDED that the possibility of this arrangement being revised be investigated. It is also considered that it would make sense to have all politically restricted appointments made by the Appointments Sub-Committee.

(4) Ward Members

Where Ward Members are invited to join sub-committees they will be attending in an advisory capacity only, and will not be allowed to vote. RECOMMENDED that the attendance of Ward Members formally called to attend meetings be classed as an approved duty.

(5) Appeals Sub-Committee

Will deal with appeals on matters of discipline, industrial injury, redundancy, regradings, and should not then include Members of the Personnel Sub-Committee.

(6) Land Sub-Committee

The work of this committee will be dealt with by the Policy and Finance Committee.

(7) Chargepayers Consultative Sub-Committee

In addition to dealing with the budget this committee will also deal with the annual Economic Development programme.

(8) Housing and Environmental Services Sub-Committee

Deals with individual cases of rent arrears, special rehousing cases and individual tenancy problems. Deals with unfit houses and breaches of improvement grant conditions.

(9) Technical Sub-Committee

Will deal with street names, reclamation schemes, site inspections.

(10) Leisure and Economic Development Sub-Committee

Will deal with matters as delegated from parent committee and with the consent of Council.

(11) General

(a) In addition to those matters identified the sub-committees will also deal with any matters delegated by the parent committee, and with the consent of Council.

(b) Meetings with outside bodies involving Members may only be called as a result of a request from a Committee, and all meetings must be arranged through the Committee Section.

(6) COMMITTEE DELEGATED POWERS

1. POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

To deal with the surplus properties in Bishop Auckland Market Place.

To bring about the new development of Glenholme Park, Crook.

Disposals of land on industrial estates.

The disposal of open space land when objections have been received in response to an advertisement placed under Section 123(2)(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The diversion/stopping up of footpaths under the Highways Act 1980, and the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

2. APPOINTMENTS SUB-COMMITTEE

To interview shortlisted candidates and make appointments of employees to politically restricted posts, Heads of Departments to be appointed by the Council.

3. APPOINTMENTS (SHORTLISTING) SUB-COMMITTEE

To consider applications and shortlist candidates for interview for politically restricted posts.

4. APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE

Determines appeals dealing with discipline, industrial injuries, regradings, \*and redundancies.

5. INVITATIONS EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

In emergencies to authorise attendance of Council representatives at meetings/functions.

6. CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

To seek and accept tenders for both capital and revenue works.

To deal with underspendings and additional allocations in accordance with the aims of the Capital Programme.

To appoint Consultants.

Determination of inclusion in Council's standing lists of tenderers.

\*Resolve claims with contractors.

\*Resolve situations for liquidated and ascertained damages on contracts.

\*To approve the level of decoration allowances.

7. TRAINING SCHEMES SUB-COMMITTEE

To consider all matters relating to the Council's involvement in Government funded training schemes and related matters.

8. HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

To decide upon all applications for:-

- (a) rehousing under the mobility scheme.

9. HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

To issue, refuse, revoke and vary all types of public entertainments licences.

To issue, suspend, revoke and refuse applications for all licences made in respect of hackney carriage/private hire licensing.

To authorise the prosecution of all offences in connection with hackney carriage/private hire vehicle/public entertainments licensing.

10. HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE

\*To authorise legal proceedings in respect of Council properties.

\*To grant temporary tenancies where appropriate.

\*To authorise rehousing of persons in arrears exceeding £100, in cases where discretion exists.

\*To decide upon special rehousing cases other than mobility scheme and keyworker applications.

\*To authorise action in respect of individual unfit properties.

\*To authorise waiving the repayment of improvement grants following a breach of grant conditions

11. PLANNING COMMITTEE - Determination of:

Applications for any permission or consent required under Parts III and IV of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

Other matters arising under Parts III and IV of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

Proposals for development to which DoE circular 18/84 applies.

Consultations from neighbouring Local Planning Authorities and the County Council.

Consultations from the Forestry Commission on tree-related matters.

\*Applications for 'Town Scheme' grants up to the prescribed budget allocation.

\*Consultations from the Department of the Environment on planning matters.

The enforcement of planning control under Part V of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 as defined in the following sections:

S.89 Penalties for non-compliance with enforcement notice.

S.91 Execution and cost of works required by enforcement notice.

S.98 Penalties for non-compliance with listed building enforcement notice.

S.99 Execution of cost of works required by listed building enforcement notice.

S.102 Penalties for non-compliance with Tree Preservation Order.

S.104)

S.105) Provisions relating to non-compliance with notice as  
S.106) to waste land.

S.107)

S.108 enforcement notice or orders under Section 51, 51A and 51B.

S.109 Enforcement of Control as to Advertisements.

Making of Tree Preservation Orders S.60 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

Confirmation of TPO's made in pursuance of Sections 60 and 61 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971.

To serve on owners of a ruinous or dilapidated building a repair or demolition notice in compliance with S.79 of the Building Act 1984.

12. LEISURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

To approve applications to purchase sites on the South Church Industrial Estate, subject to negotiations being concluded to the satisfaction of the County Land Agent.

13. TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE

~~To make grants to assist industrial development.~~

To consider and determine street names proposed by applicant/developer within a statutory period of one month.

14. HOUSING BENEFIT SCHEME REVIEW BOARD

To determine appeals.

15. WARTIME AND CIVIL EMERGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE

All powers of the Council, capable of delegation, in the event of wartime or peacetime disaster.

\* ADDITIONAL DELEGATED POWERS REQUESTED

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

LEISURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

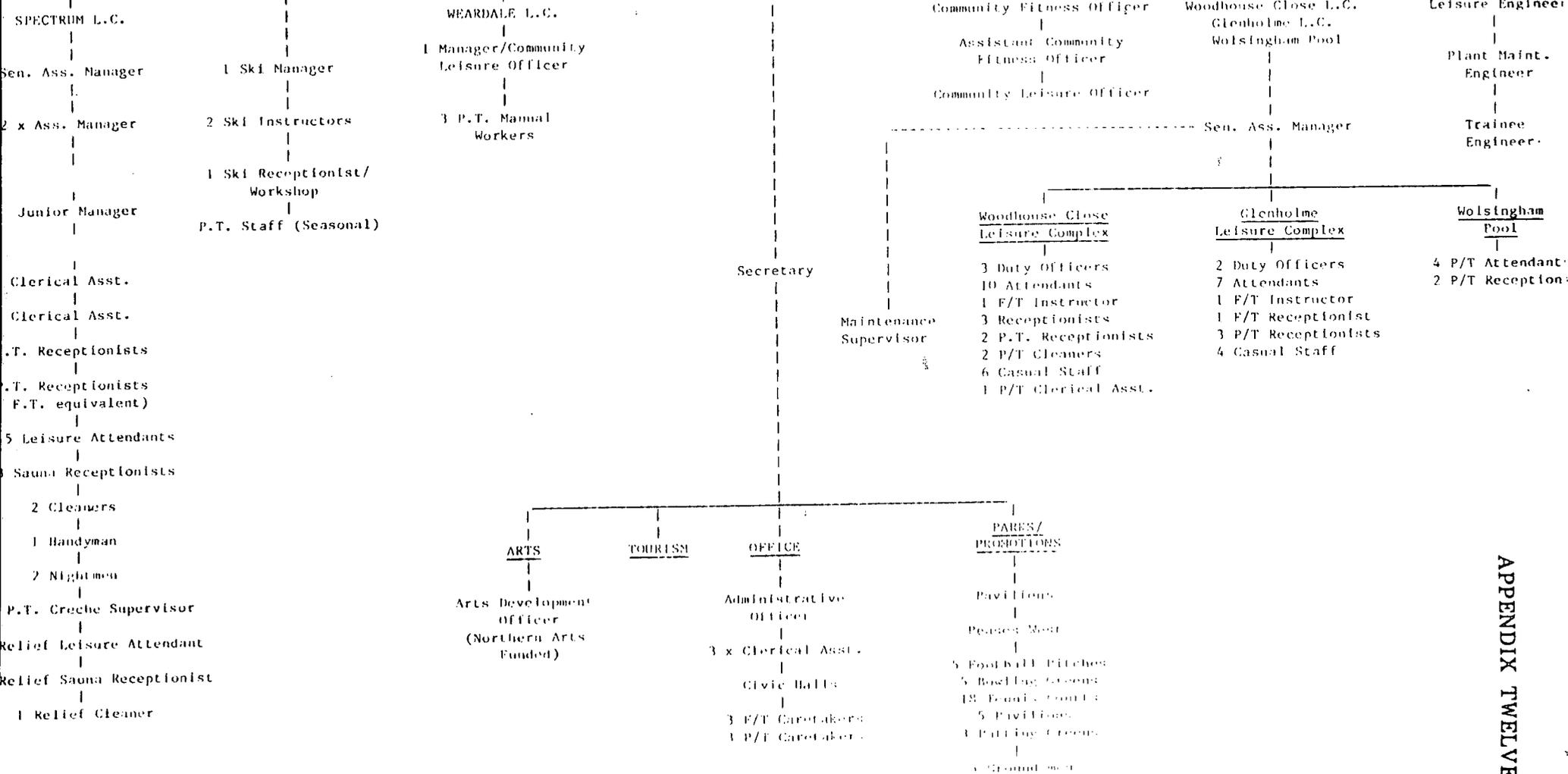
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEISURE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

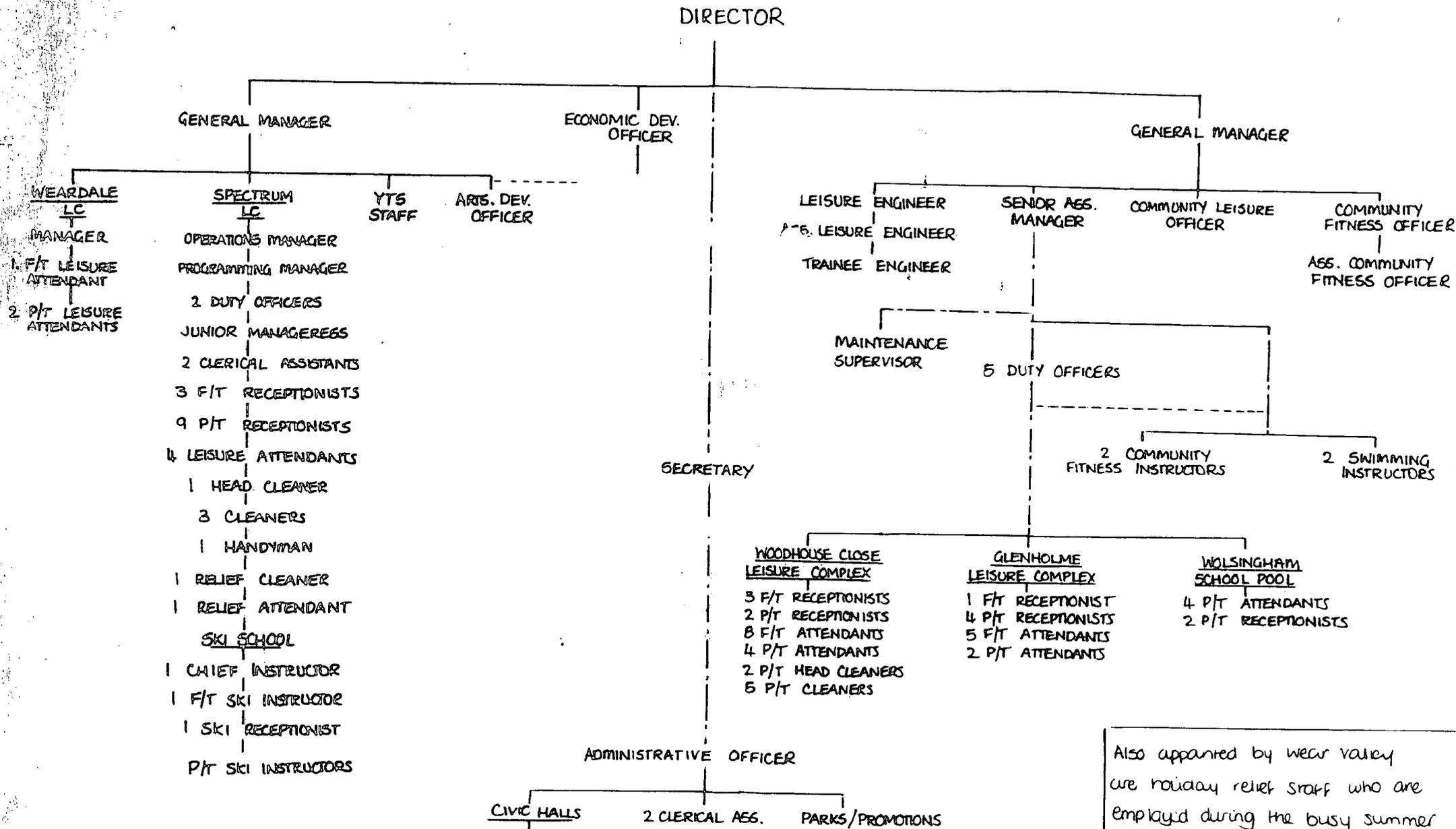
GENERAL MANAGER

GENERAL MANAGER



WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL  
LEISURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPT.

APPENDIX THIRTEEN



Also appointed by wear valley are holiday relief staff who are employed during the busy summer months.

The number of relief works vary every year depending on how busy

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL - ATTENDANCE SHEET

APPENDIX

FOURTEEN

| MEETING | \_\_\_\_\_  
 | DATE | \_\_\_\_\_  
 | TIME: | \_\_\_\_\_  
 | PLACE: | \_\_\_\_\_

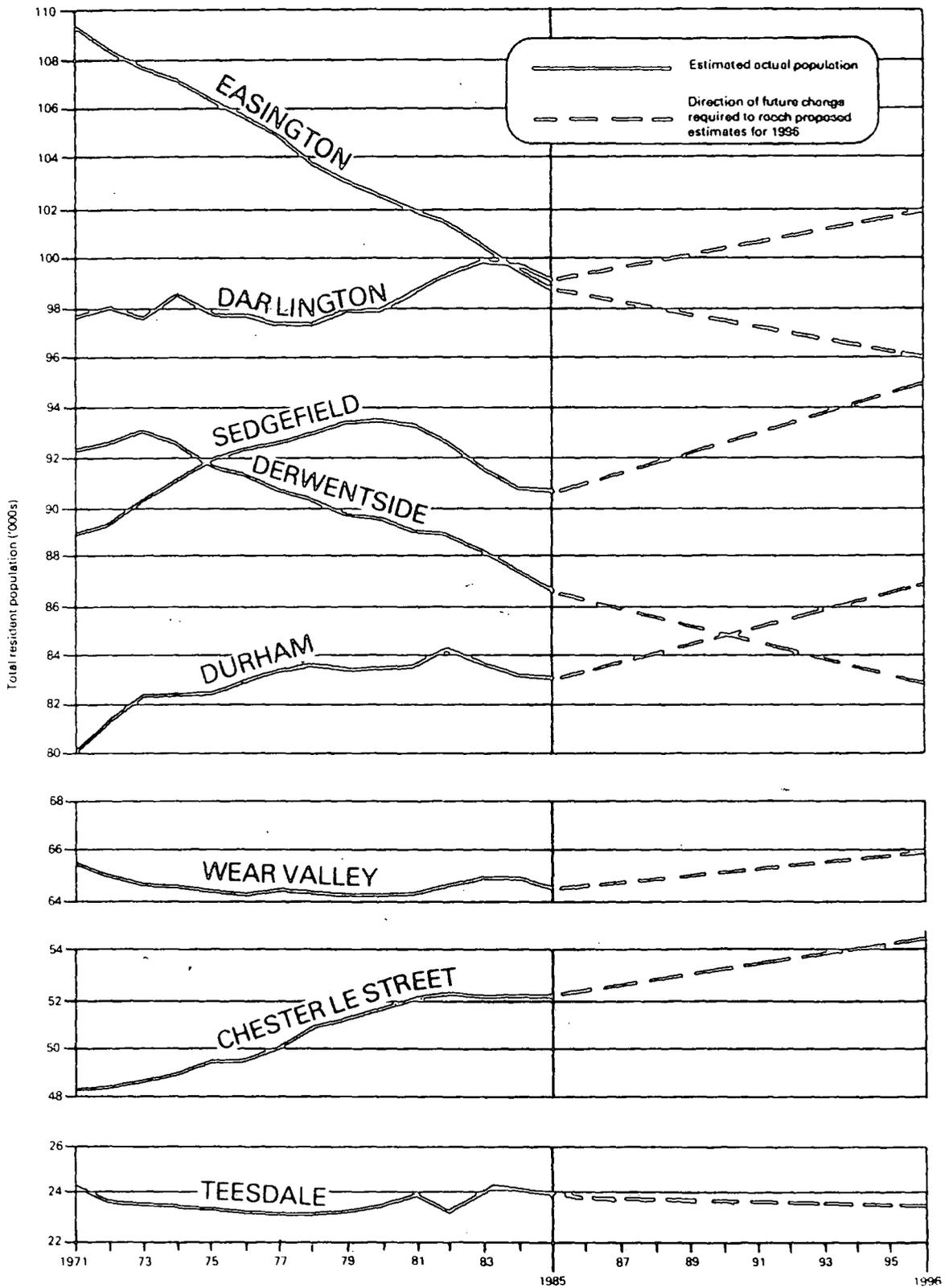
1	CON	ADLINGTON. Mrs. M.			
2	LAB	BOUSFIELD. MRS. I.			
3	CON	BRAMHALD. MRS. J.E.			
4	LAB	BROOKSBANK. A.			
5	LAB	BROWN. MRS. O.			
6	IND LAB	BRYAN. J. T.			
7	LAB	DOUTHWAITE. H.			
8	LAB	DOWSON. Mrs. H.			
9	LIB/ALL	FOOTE WOOD. C.			
10	LAB	FOSTER. F.			
11	LAB	GRAHAM. A. W.			
12	LAB	GRAHAM. P.R.			
13	LAB	HALL. T. W.			
14	LIB/ALL	HARRISON. G.			
15	IND	HILL. G.			
16	LAB	HUNT. J. W.			
17	CON	HURST. MRS. M. (J.P.)			
18	IND	JOHNSON. E.P.			
19	LAB	JONES. J.			
20	LAB	JONES. W.			
21	LAB	JUDD. T.			
22	LAB	KAY. C.			
23	LIB/ALL	LAND. Mrs. M.			
24	LAB	LEE. MRS. J. E.			
25	LIB/DEM	MOORE. F.A.			
26	LAB	NEILSON. W.			
27	IND	O'DONOVAN. R.J.C.			
28	LAB	OXBROUGH. W.			
29	IND	PEADON. F.			
30	LAB	REED. K.			
31	LAB	RICHARDSON J.			
32	LAB	RICHARDSON MRS. R.			
33	LAB	SEDDON. A. (J.P.)			
34	IND	SHUTTLEWORTH. V.			
35	LAB	TAYLOR. G.			
36	IND	WALLIS. MRS. D. (J.P.)			
37	LAB	WHITE. D. (J.P.)			
38	LAB	WHITTON. E.			
39	DYMN	WILSON D.			
40	LAB	WILSON MRS. E.M.			

*2004  
Wear Valley  
Council*

*26 Council  
26 Council  
26 Council  
26 Council  
26 Council*

*25 Lab  
3 Lib  
1 Lib Democrat  
7 Lib Democrat  
Individual*

District population changes



LG Chronicle  
14.7.89

## Management

Les Morgan



To progress organisations need leaders not managers

The success story in leisure is a result of leaders with vision

Society today is facing changes more profound than any tackled so far this century. The UK is going through a major reconstruction of its economic, technological and social systems. At the heart of this is the country's health and leisure lifestyle. The UK is transforming from an industrial to an information society, reflecting a worldwide trend.

The world is experiencing mankind's third "revolution". This is the most difficult yet as it is based on trust and communication.

"During our agricultural period the game was man against nature, an industrial society pits man against fabricated nature, in an information society — for the first time in civilisation — the game is people interacting with other people", writes John Naisbitt in *Megatrends*.

People are now engaged in a swiftly changing communication game. No-one can rely on traditional management and organisational structures. Charles Handy, in *The Age of Uncertainty* says these new organisations "require us to live with more uncertainty but more trust, less control but more creativity".

To progress organisations require leaders not managers. The difference can be summarised as follows. Leaders achieve results, take risks, use tactical planning, negotiate,

use interpersonal communications, trouble shoot, delegate and trust. Managers set objectives, formulate policy, use strategic planning, organise, use formal communication, control, contain, and command.

Leading US business writer Warren Bennis explains: "Management is about doing things right, leadership is about doing the right things".

Leisure, because it is a new profession with no real traditions — it has evolved in times of constant change — will produce more natural leaders on average than any other profession. It will do so because there is no mass of rules and regulations to deal with or hide behind.

Leadership is deciding where to go. It is about finding the best route to the destination and empowering the organisation to travel safely down that route.

Leadership is the ability to empower others. Unlike many past structures, it is the ability to create a learning and creative team. The right style is championed by Tom Peters. He says: "People in organisations thrive on internal competition, which thrives on tense communication and the family feeling and open door policies, on informality, on fluidity and flexibility, on non political shifts of resources. This constitutes the crucial internal focus, the focus on people".

Management today is about weak power controls which use little energy, unlike strong power controls which use large quantities of energy relative to the process they control. Most manual labour and mechanical organisations depend on strong power forms of control. The human brain by contrast is an example of a weak power control. It uses much less energy than the body it controls.

The weak power structures of modern times are different from structured organisations where authority derives power from composition rather than from ability, where formal rules determine how decisions are made and where responsibilities are allocated in a pyramidal form.

The new structures tend to be decentralised, with a single point of leadership, horizontal communication, and a cellular form. They are a shifting mosaic rather than the kind of structure that can be drawn as a diagram.

Managers today are operating in a time of chaos where the winds of change — as even identified by Audit Commission Controller Howard Davies — have slowly

increased to a whirlwind. This crisis could be positive or negative. A person who continually seeks improvement in life, views change through positive eyes.

The leadership of a weak power structure empowers others by knowledge and belief. The best weak power structures thrive on fluidity, change and the creative use of chaos. In some cases organisations have to take on a different form to ensure their visions take shape.

The leisure professional, unlike many past leisure managers who used the words sport or recreation rather than leisure, have no limiting traditions or horizons. They are similar to economic development officers in that neither can exist — especially in the private sector — in a slow moving bureaucratic organisation where authority is derived from position and communication is only vertical.

Leisure, whether in the public or private sector, will not succeed and prosper if the professionals do not live

*'Leisure is the glue which will bond society together'*

their mission and create a corporate culture which evolves and takes calculated risks.

If there is a success story in leisure, it is because there is a leader with vision. No such success can be put down to a formula or specific rules and regulations — unlike professions such as finance, housing, legal or planning. Leisure is effectively the modern day profession for the true entrepreneur.

In such market terms leisure is a sector embracing more than 30 companies with a total market capitalisation of around £11 billion. Its favourites include Trust House Forte, Ladbrooke, Granada, and Mexxa/Playorama. The sector covers a diverse range of businesses from hotels to discotheques, dance halls to greyhound tracks, marinas to leisure centres. Today's theme parks, holiday developments, and cinema complexes, were all dreams only a few years ago.

Leisure spending was £28.8bn in 1979 according to the Henley Centre for Forecasting. By 1985 it had risen to £52.6bn. This year it is expected to reach £75.9bn and in four years it may hit £105bn plus.

Good leisure is important

for a healthy nation, both in physical and mental terms. If this is accepted, some of the new leisure leaders must also be attracted into, or kept in, local authority management.

Councils, if they play the true enabling role, will provide the base for their community to provide healthier people. They are the only organisations with direct mandates to look after local communities. The meaning of "empowering others" must not only include people within an organisation but people and agencies outside its direct responsibility. This means councils will have to change their bureaucratic style of management to one of fluid leadership.

True leadership is about breaking down barriers to social and organisational change. It is about caring for a customer and an individual human being. "If you are not serving the customer, your job is to be serving someone who is", says Jan Carlzon of Scandinavian Airline Systems. Try telling that to many local authority managers.

As the quality of life philosophy and the green revolution grow, the leisure professional must take on the role no one else can play — creating facilities and structures which allow people to believe in themselves.

As the 1975 government white paper says: "When a community neglects its responsibilities for providing the individual with opportunities and choice in the provision of sports and leisure facilities, it will rarely escape the long term consequence of this neglect. When life becomes meaningful for the individual, the whole community is enriched".

Leisure is a thread which runs through everybody's life. It is the glue which will bond society together, to create visions of excitement and happiness, and to allow people to find their way. But it is not just about exercise. It is about linking the development of the individual directly with the development of the organisation. It is about both employees and customers being recognised.

Council leisure professionals must move on to become chief executives. The leader of any organisation must live the vision. Currently in local government there are too many traditional professions represented at that level, protecting the formal structures of the past and the various professions which feel threatened in a more fluid and less predictable society. It is similar to the health authorities,

which at least are tackling the problem of professional protection with the appointment of general managers who do not have their own discipline to protect.

The modern leisure professional can simply direct the numerous human beings who have lost their way in life along their respective paths. Individuals and the community will then find their true selves and will positively contribute once again. Many refer to it as the inner game, but the key to that inner game lies in the magic words — communication, trust and care.

Everyone is different and the wise leaders will see that difference. Leisure more readily holds the key to clarifying the difference in an unpressurised atmosphere.

In the whirlwind of change it is not only leisure that lasts a lifetime — people do too. "In amongst the artifacts of culture, technology and social organisation we remain soft and naked — born from the womb, eating, sleeping, loving, reproducing, for all that we have made and thought and dreamed and become, we have carried our basic needs with us and these make the same material and interpersonal demands as they made 100,000 years ago. There are recurrent patterns of family kinship with their taboos, loyalties and loves, and people in various cultures show common responses to birth, marriage and bereavement", writes Anthony Fry in *Safe Space*.

People are emotional creatures. The best organisations and leaders own up to that reality and treat people as humans — not automations. Traditional managers will have to stop being so worried about who is leading whom. To become leaders some managers will have to learn to admit their followers know more than they do and that they are simply the catalyst.

In many areas, leisure is not only the key to individual and organisation development, but is equivalent to economic development, which equals community development which means people development.

Hopefully leisure professionals will rise to the fore in the public and private sectors. Councils have to ask are they "enabling" this new style of leadership? If not, they should beware. If they are not part of the solution, they are part of the problem.

Les Morgan is director of leisure and economic development at Wear Valley DC

# THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

FIGURE 11

As a motivated Local Authority Chief Leisure Officer, I would like to point out some of the problems which I see as not only a barrier to good competitive tendering in the future, but also and more importantly to me, the barrier in moving forward with vision by Local Authorities i.e. The Management of Change.

I state at the onset that of course as with everything in everyday life, we already have some good Leisure Departments and Councils, some bad, and possibly most in between who hold fort. There are also various reasons, often outside the control of the Officers, Chief Officers, Chief Executive and even the Members, why visions do not appear and goals are not achieved and why true management does not take place. This is often the reason for Officers moving into the private sector or for many middle and junior management staff moving on.

What I wish to do in this article is to give hope, strength and enthusiasm to the number of positive people working with pride and commitment in the local authority sector and possibly motivate others to think about how they manage even for the benefit of their fellow staff. Let me start with some quotes:-

"It is inherently easier to develop a negative argument than to advance a constructive one."

"Creative thought (the precursor to invention) requires an act of faith." (George Gilder in *Wealth and Poverty*).

"The exclusively analytic approach run wild, leads to an abstract hapless philosophy." (Tom Peters - *In Search of Excellence*).

"Managers do not love the product, in fact they are defensive about it." (Frederick Haltsburg - referring to Local Authority Managers).

"The central staff plays it safe by taking the negative view and as it gains power it stamps all the life and initiative out of the company." (Tom Peters).

"Set and maintain standards of excellence. Anybody who accepts mediocrity - in

school, in job, in life - is a guy who compromises and when the leader compromises, the whole damn organisation compromises." (Charles Knight).

We are in local authority accustomed to using legislation to explain why things cannot be done, instead of looking for ways of doing things. Looking to the past for security rather than opportunities of the future.

The unfortunate thing about most local authorities and the delicate role that they play, is that many decisions are compromises. Compromises as to the lack of finance or will to be able to do exactly what they want, compromises politically as to which area receives the next housing repairs or redevelopment, leisure complex, public toilets, etc., and compromises on the personal effort required to push it through. In a local authority it takes a very strong political leader, combined with a very strong departmental leader to move that authority forward with any great thrust. Local authorities are often very traditional establishments with Chief Officers who have grown up in fairly stagnant, traditional times, often with some form of military backgrounds, especially those in the leisure field. I believe, Britain in general suffers very badly from its traditions and its military background. Military metaphors in today's management are totally inadequate. Those philosophies are born out of tradition, structure, class and formality, the excellent companies and initiatives today, are born out of innovation, informal communication, enthusiasm and an apparent absence of a rigidly formed chain of command.

Basically, the one burning issue which identifies well managed Departments or District Councils is that the leading Officers like what they do and get enthusiastic about it. They are leaders in the true sense of the word, not bosses. This could well highlight one of the great difficulties in local authority procedures i.e. the appointment structure. In the private sector, people in important management positions are not only appointed by people working in

Local authorities are having to become more and more like companies, moving into areas of competitive tendering, having to give better value for money and becoming far more accountable to rate-payers. Les Morgan Leisure Officer for the Wear Valley District Council takes a closer look at how successful change is possible.

the field, because they are enthusiastic themselves, but they are also selected for their ability to engender enthusiasm among their associates.

Too often, local authorities have a closed system view of the world, that view centred on what ought to be done to optimise resource application by taking into account only what went on inside the company. Let us look at some aspects readily associated with an excellent company, or department, and some problems identified from those who have failed.

The successful organisation will:-

- 1 Try things.
- 2 Have staff who feel like winners.
- 3 Have managers who are not frightened to fail, even at a low level.
- 4 Create a sense of belonging - a company culture.
- 5 Deal with personalities rather than systems.
- 6 Have true leaders.
- 7 Have a leader or Chief Executive who is also the Manager of the values of the organisation.
- 8 Carry out "skunking" work. Work carried out on the boundaries of acceptability.

The struggling organisations (especially in the private sector because local authorities are "safe") are:-

- 1 Stagnant.
- 2 Bureaucratic.
- 3 Safe.
- 4 Protective.
- 5 Managing by form or structure, position or title.
- 6 Lack a sense of commitment.

Local authorities are having to become more and more like companies. We are moving into areas of competitive tendering, we are having to give better value for money and we are becoming far more accountable to our ratepayers, i.e. the customers. How many local authority organisations "just get by". A leading Executive of American Express once said "If you do not shoot for 100% you are tolerating mistakes, you will get what you asked for".

I am not saying that local authorities should be competing with the private sector in all areas, that would just be impossible. I am saying that if the customer has a choice and is looking for a clean, well run building, with hot water for showers, without the fancy decoration and exclusivity, he



does expect the place to be efficient and clean. Also, no matter who the customer meets within the organisation, the first person they meet is the company, and the best companies will abide by the philosophy that every one is the company. This once again is philosophy that starts at senior management. I do not know of too many Chief Officers who spend time creating their department's culture to think in this way, but perhaps they do not have time to come out of their safe office.

What is the best way of paying attention to your customers? - Listening. Listening at its best is near the edge of the state of the art and is a long, long way from commissioning polls or convenient panels to discuss yesterday's tastes. This major role is arguably to spin out ideas that pragmatic internal entrepreneurs and problem solving management can "steal", fiddle with, and apply - today.

"If an organisation is to work effectively the communication should be through the most effective channel, regardless of the organisational chart." (David Parker of Howlett/Parker)

Leisure overall is probably

the most effective weapon that a local Council will have to create an identity, a sense of pride, and form a vision of the future for its constituents. The leisure professional at the present time is also changing quite dramatically, we have had some clear champions and leaders in the past, but those people are now predominantly working in the private sector as consultants. They are running their own private businesses, they are taking their principles (often frustrated in local authority) into the market place - they have belief!

If I were to say that successful organisations encourage the entrepreneurial spirit among their people because they push autonomy remarkably far down the line - have to have management who are willing to fail - go with the philosophy that if they are not making mistakes they are not making decisions and as Charles Knight argues "You need the ability to fail - you cannot innovate unless you are willing to accept mistakes"; do you think of your own council or department? How many local authorities are nurturing champions who are out to make lots of tries and consequently suffer some failures (within reasonable limits of course)?

How many managers organise their staff through memoranda, rather than informal communication systems which nurture confidence and belief? It is rather unfortunate that the bureaucratic system within which we operate in local authority, often fosters the negative "safe" philosophy which unfortunately to most people, epitomises local authority. It is only when the chemistry is right, i.e. a sound political council with a strong positive leader, combined with positive Chief Officers, that a future champion may emerge, who is prepared to take risks and offer what are assumingly, "way-out" ideas.

We can all "turn up" and do our job, but what we really need is a team spirit where we see peer pressure rather than orders from the boss, as the main motivator. The fact is that the "culture" of Local or Regional Authorities does not generally foster the correct environment for departmental champions to appear. All too often, good young enthusiastic staff, who could well take a pride in their work, are held down for the fear that their ideas could be wrong and could embarrass either senior Officers or the Council itself. That environment is now changing - it has to.

People with ideas are starting to make waves, they are becoming more outspoken and they have various vehicles now through which to do that. Local Authorities are also having to look to their laurels and adjust to their changing political and financial climate. We are now seeing, even in the public sector, exciting projects and images. Some of those may have to be partly financed and jointly managed with the private sector, but what is wrong with that? Communities in rural areas are extremely underprivileged and there is now a growing North/South divide, but because of that, true champions are now appearing. Their talents, enthusiasm, belief and pride are finally starting to pay dividends.

I would suggest that Local Authorities are now turning the corner and are beginning to be managed more and more like companies. For anyone enthused by any of the aspects that I

have been talking about, they should firstly read "In Search of Excellence - Lessons from America's best Run Companies" by Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, and they should certainly see the video "A Passion for Excellence" by Tom Peters, and the book of the same name. People must believe in themselves and their vision to step forward and take the flack. Many unfortunately get knocked down along the way, but you can be sure, just as Peter Brucker once observed "Whenever anything is being accomplished it has been done, I have learned, by a monomaniac with a mission". Nothing ever just happens, people make it happen. If you have any champions in your department, company, council, nurture them, they are your future.

Just to finish and bring it up to date, quoting from the Working Party report "Management Training for Leisure and Recreation in Scotland" chaired by Professor LA Gunn, when talking on trends in leisure and recreation, the Committee conclude "The general message is that leisure and recreation managers must be more aware of and concerned about changes in their markets and in the larger environment, more prepared to take initiatives in suggesting necessary policy responses and more aggressive in competing for scarce resources; more conscious of the rules as entrepreneurs and developers of new markets; more professionally competent as resource - managers seeking to demonstrate value for money; more open to collaboration across the public/private sectors and with the voluntary sector; in general very much more "pro-active" than "reactive" in meeting the challenges of change".

Are you, or is your Council, providing the necessary culture to foster or create this new type of manager, this new leader of these new champions. How many managers in Local Authority, "manage by committee" - MBWA - If you do not change it now, tomorrow may be too late!

The only thing which is constant in life today is change - are you managing your organisation to deal with it?

## MANAGING MOMENTUM

### THE STORY SO FAR OF WEAR VALLEY'S LEISURE GROWTH

In 1982 Wear Valley District Council applied, along with many other District Councils, for the large £4m Sports Council grant for the new S.A.S.H. concept (Standardised Approach to Sports Halls). This was the project which the Sports Council believed would play a part in not only the Sports Council's future, but also the future of leisure and sports provision throughout the country, as stated in their publication "The Next Ten Years".

Wear Valley were successful in their bid and in December 1982, advertised for a Manager who would manage not only S.A.S.H., but also the totally refurbished Brancepeth Miners' Welfare Hall (a substantial brick building set in the 2.275 acres of ground within which S.A.S.H. has been built), and the outdoor tennis court and bowling green.

In May 1983, Les Morgan was appointed to that post and, with the wholehearted backing of the Council, created the SPECTRUM LEISURE COMPLEX. This Complex has taken up the initiative shown by the Council and capitalised on the availability of space within the grounds of this partially wooded site, developing the area to its full potential, thus providing a platform to expand a leisure philosophy of broad based usage and innovative management. The Council viewed the Spectrum as very much a leisure ideal, catering for as broad a sector of the community as possible; and although it was not be the largest in the land, it did and still does have one of the broadest bases.

On the 16th June 1984, the Spectrum opened with both the District Council and Sports Council viewing the provision of these new facilities as the core to a new philosophy towards leisure within the area - in fact, Wear Valley District Council itself, at this point began to take cognisance of leisure. In an area of high unemployment and poor health, leisure began in some way, to replace the routine of work, supplying fulfilment, a sense of achievement, while also supplying the necessary framework for social contact. The Council then started to develop a comprehensive leisure policy for all their facilities as portrayed by the Spectrum with activities for young and old, active and passive, able and disabled and beginner to internationalist.

The Complex is sited in Willington, which is a small town just outside Crook and close to Bishop Auckland, but with comprehensive programming and marketing, attracts people from close at hand Durham but also Darlington, Sunderland, and Newcastle. This is mainly possible through the provision of activities or events which would not normally be available to those members of the public in their own vicinity, e.g., excellent dry ski slope facilities with video instruction.

The Management of the Spectrum Leisure Complex follow a modern leisure approach, thus making it a "marketable product" in the eyes of the public and commercial sector. This initially meant the changing of the title of the Complex from "The Willington Deneside Recreation and Community Centre" to simply "Spectrum Leisure Complex". The name was swiftly followed by the design of a logo and colour scheme. The logo of course being the Spectrum "S", coupled with the slogan "A New Concept in Leisure". The colour scheme was formed from the District Council colours of blue and gold, with the addition of red and this can most strikingly be seen on the Spectrum ski slope, which is the world's first coloured ski slope in red, blue and gold. The stationery, staff uniforms, posters, signs, litter bins and interior decor were all "customised" to the house colours - as were all other facilities as well as the central Department. One voice - one vision.

As stated, the growth of Spectrum provided a catalyst to increase the interest in leisure within the Council and the pools at Crook and Bishop Auckland were upgraded and renamed the Glenholme Leisure Complex and Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex respectively. Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex re-opened with the addition of two squash courts, sauna, sunbeds, jacuzzi, fitness room and snooker room, in the autumn of 1985 and Glenholme Leisure Complex re-opened in July 1984 with two squash courts, sauna, sunbeds and jacuzzi. Both foyer areas were also upgraded to give a greater orientation to customer care and service.

Further to these initial developments and the creation of the base for a leisure culture in Wear Valley a Leisure Department and Leisure Committee were formed in May 1985. Now for the first time Wear Valley had one department operating all of its major facilities - not only did the facilities all have a corporate aim, but to broaden our outlook even further some new community posts were established.

Two Community Leisure Officers were appointed, each responsible for a geographical area of Wear Valley. Their brief being at the outset to forge greater links within the community, to establish new activities and events in their area, and also to spread the word about the excellent facilities within Wear Valley, as well as active listening.

To make this stage of the development complete, a third post created was that of the Community Fitness Officer, whose brief was to inform the community of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and to encourage increased active participation.

Once the new appointments were made the Leisure Department base was situated in Springfield House in Willington. From this point the story is one of continued growth and "firsts" for Wear Valley.

Wear Valley's fourth leisure facility was opened in October 1986, at Eastgate and called Weardale Leisure Complex. The Council were aware of the lack of provision of facilities within the Dales area of the District, and seized the opportunity to take over the social and welfare facilities of the Blue Circle Cement Works when it was offered. Once a thriving works social facility it had been left in need of repair as its importance waned. A complete refurbishment was carried out creating a new lounge, main hall, snooker room, fitness room and sunbed area and changing rooms located in the very picturesque dales setting including a bowling green, football and cricket pitch.

With the Authority now fully provided for in terms of facilities, the Leisure Department still continued to strive to provide even greater opportunities for the community. To confirm Wear Valley District Council's brief in leisure, Spectrum Leisure Complex won the Regional Sports Council's Management Award for 1986, with the ski slope coming second in the British Ski Slope Association's National Competition in 1987. To "herald" this era of change even further, Glenholme Leisure Complex in Crook converted to a locker system within the wet changing rooms leaving space in the old basket room for Britain's first Hi-Tech Fitness Studio outside London in 1987. Glenholme also became national runners-up in the Sports Council's Management Award of the same year, consolidating even further the winning leisure philosophy of Wear Valley.

Wear Valley was now a nationally recognised as a leading provider of Local Authority leisure facilities and community initiatives.

All aspects of the Leisure Department continued to flourish and it became necessary to review the Department's structure in late 1987 to cope with the ever increasing workloads and demands. The review culminated in the creation of a top management team of four people, Leisure Officer, Principal Assistant Leisure Officer and two General Managers. The Special Committee of 16th November 1987, accepted the establishment review that removed the physical boundaries of Complexes operating in isolation, and created a flatter, more flexible management team with Community Officers linking with facilities (and vice versa) to increase communication between the facilities and the community. At this point the structure within Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex and Glenholme Leisure Complex was also reviewed, and the Community Leisure Officer responsible for the Dales area also took over the day to day management of Weardale Leisure Complex. Due to the great success of the Community Fitness Officer and his "Wear Fit" Campaign it was necessary to appoint an Assistant Community Fitness Officer to further develop this innovative community programme.

This heralded a period of great change for the Department, with internal promotions and new personnel arriving to take up vacated posts. The actual change over took nearly three months and was only just completed in time to move into the new Civic Offices in Crook in March 1988. For the first time in Wear Valley's history all the major Departments were now housed under one roof in the centre of Crook. The Leisure Department staff continued to spread the word both locally and nationally as invited guest speakers at major seminars and conferences, while continually learning and adopting new policies to stay "ahead of the field".

As the fitness boon continued, it became necessary to improve the fitness facilities at Woodhouse Close to cater for the increased demand. "Visions", a new concept in fitness facility, with video, television, lights, sound systems and its own reception desk, was created and opened and officially launched on Monday, 3rd October 1988.

The next major development in June 1988, was that of the integration of the Economic Development function of the Council into the Leisure Department. This gave the Department an even broader outlook, becoming involved in local businesses and industry. This linked the only true non-traditional professions in Local Authority together, and realistically their strengths, unlike others, lie in good communication and marketing skills as well as face to face contact. Economic Development was also seen as continually involved in the overall health of the community.

With more and more local interest in health and fitness, Britain's first Local Authority computerised fitness assessment system was developed in conjunction with Northumbrian Water and launched in 1988. A number of sales have already been secured which shows the regard with which people view both the system and Wear Valley's Leisure Department.

To continue this era of constant change in the late 1980's it became necessary to carry out major repair work on Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex - a pool initially opened in 1967. Owing to the nature and extent of the remedial work the opportunity was taken to totally re-vamp what was a competitive swimming area, with the additional facilities added in 1984, to a pool for the 90's. The facility closed for this work for nine months from July 1989 until April 1990 when the 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> metre pool was split into a 25 metre competition pool, a flume splash pool, a larger still fitness room, a cardiovascular room, new staff and management areas, a state of the art reception and entrance area and improved sauna/sunbed area. The logo also became the flume shape, i.e., an octopus.

The Department's logo goes on - "Invest in Leisure - It Lasts a Lifetime".

## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE? - FROM DESERT TO "DISNEYLAND"

### FOUR YEARS IN THE LIFE OF A POSITIVE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Wear Valley, a District whose life once revolved around the mines was given its first "leisure" facility in 1925 with the building of the Brancepeth Miners' Welfare, a building which was to contain the meeting rooms for the unions, plus dance and snooker halls for the community's social needs. During the 30's and 40's the mines expanded as did the population within the District. This was typical of the industrial growth within County Durham and the North East of England which grew steadily in parallel with the nation's activity until the late 60's.

From the late 60's, this District which contains the source of the River Wear, plus approximately 25% of County Durham's landmass (thus being predominantly rural), recently designated as an area of natural beauty, began to lose its industrial heart. From well over one hundred mines which operated county wide, there are now only nine in the county and none in Wear Valley. From the numerous cinemas which proliferated the area, Wear Valley no longer houses a single cinema. The rail link which once provided the main communications for almost every major community have disappeared and our only rail link now is from Bishop Auckland to Darlington. Those rail links once linked Durham City to the whole of central Weardale, the main spine of communication for the District. The industrial change following the mines was toward into heavy industry which has now also disappeared from our Dales life except for some mineral extraction.

Early in 1983 Wear Valley District Council won a grant of £250,000 from the Sports Council towards the building of a S.A.S.H. centre connected with the original Miners' Welfare. This effectively became the trigger which would transform the dying industrial base of the District into a creative vision of the 1990's and beyond.

In May 1983, approximately one year prior to opening, Les Morgan was appointed as the Manager of what was going to be called the Willington and Deneside Leisure and Recreation Facility Centre. During the first official visit to the District following his appointment, Les, with the backing of the Council, changed that name to the Spectrum Leisure Complex. This in its own way was a very important decision, when what was intended to assist in the community "health" of the District, was a very diverse leisure facility, not a traditional sports centre or a purely community use facility.

Les realised that to make the Spectrum the successful operation required to move the District forward with a positive leisure philosophy, was a centre of regional significance, one which would set standards and allow "visions" to be created. There was also the problem of the two traditional, and to some extent stagnating swimming pools, a poorly maintained dual use school pool, and an athletics track which was called a Sports Centre. All of those facilities were under the Technical Department with not one officer qualified or enthusiastic in sport, let alone leisure. That way May 1983.

By June 1984, the Spectrum Leisure Complex had opened, with the world's first multi-coloured ski slope, with the Duke of Gloucester even taking time out during the official opening ceremony to assess his own skiing skills on the new surface. The project which was originally to cost £750,000, ended up as £1.5 million, but was already giving pride and identity back to a parochial community.

Spectrum set the standard for the future; a phone number individually chosen to create an identity - 747000 was the number with the slogan "Take off at the Spectrum, dial 747000", a flight theme based on the Boeing 747 was then used as the marketing tool to launch the complex to what was at the time an indifferent community. The two major buildings were Arrivals 1 and Arrivals 11; Captain Spectrum was the kiddies cartoon character; ski lessons were pre-flight, in-flight, take off and cruising; and membership became a passport with the applicable passport photograph.

Suddenly, the Council members had something to be more than proud of, somewhere they could take visitors to show them around or to give them hospitality. Somewhere where they could easily identify to the community what they were attempting to do in a positive way with the rates and their support.

June 84 was the launch of the mission.

Within the following two years the Council recognised the leisure expertise which had been formed at the Spectrum and slowly various other facilities were transferred to the care of the team, led by Les Morgan. The pools at Bishop Auckland and Crook, then the Athletics track, then the three Civic Halls followed by Wolsingham's school pool.

One by one the base of these facilities was broadened by the addition of sauna, sun bed and jacuzzi facilities at Bishop Auckland and Crook. The old baths image was changed by re-naming these facilities leisure complexes with their own logos and colour scheme. At the same time the old social welfare club of Blue Circle, deep in the dale was offered to the Council and positively accepted, to be turned into the fourth Leisure Complex. The Council now had a Leisure Complex in each of the three main conurbation areas and one deep in the heart of the dale. Weardale Leisure Complex was opened in October 1986, Spectrum in June 1984, Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex (Bishop Auckland), was extended in June 1985, followed by Glenholme Leisure Complex (Crook), being extended in July 1984.

Seeing this rapid and important change within the district, the Council decided from a major report prepared by Les Morgan and the Treasurer to form a corporate Leisure Department. This was necessary to harness the present facilities while obviously identifying the areas for growth to maximise the Council's potential in this area, which at this time was only seen by a few as the future industrial base of Wear Valley District Council.

With the formation of the Department, key appointments were made in the belief that the emphasis now had to be placed on the community, as ever reducing finances would probably indicate that no new facilities would be provided. At this point Wear Valley employed Britain's first Local Authority Community Fitness Officer combined with two further posts of Community Leisure Officers. New notice boards were placed up in town centres to attempt to communicate to the public in an area with no readily identifiable local paper. The Council also provided its own Civic Newspaper which was made up of approximately 50% of leisure items. Communication must be one of the main tools of any organisation.

The District Council, with the Leisure Officer as one of only five Chief Officers, was being very much influenced by the Leisure ethic. An all important fact, considering the deprivation.

Consolidation, to some extent was attempted throughout 1987 with the positive effect on the community clearly visible as attendances grew. The Department was once again reformed at the end of 1987 with the proposals of an Assistant Community Fitness Officer (to continue and expand the "Wear Fit" campaign), an Activities Officer (to promote regular exercise), a Ski Manager (to organise European ski courses), and further clerical staff agreed to by the Council.

This expansion was continually based on good professional modern management - a team which was effectively managing change and offering the Council and the community something in return. The Department had already won the North Regional Sports Council's Northern Region Management Award for 1986/87 with the Spectrum Leisure Complex and was the winner of the Northern Region, once again with Glenholme Leisure Complex 1987/88, which also became the national competition's joint runner up. The ski slope at its first attempt won the Northern Region Ski Slope of the Year Award from the Ski Slope Operators Association and became the number two slope in Great Britain at the Annual Ski Show in London, in November 1987. All this within 2 years of forming the Department!

This relatively new Leisure Department now accounts for one third of the Council's total net expenditure and in its first year of operation increased the usage of its four main facilities by 12.8%, 25%, 57% and 83%. It has also created positive links with the Health and Education Authorities to start a preventative medicine programme.

The District is presently also pursuing the establishment of the World's first Alpine Leisure Park somewhere in Weardale, and has already committed over £110,000 on the feasibility study. This will, effectively, be the pinnacle of the leisure pyramid and would quite simply take Wear Valley not only into the 1990's but into the next Century as a District which effectively managed change through the most difficult times in Local Government finance. The Alpine Leisure Park would, if successful, be seen in the future quite distinctly as a major turning point for the North East of England with such a positive Council and private involvement.

The mission, therefore, is almost achieved - from a District in a leisure desert with no qualified or motivated staff to one which has achieved national recognition in the two major competitions for leisure facilities, and more media coverage on television, radio, magazine and newspapers - locally, regionally and nationally than could ever be afforded in financial terms by such a small District Council.

Pride is certainly coming back to the District, preventative medicine is coming to the fore, health is once again being talked of in both physical and mental terms - there is a positive future. People are visiting the District, other professionals are germinating the ideas established in Wear Valley and the leisure ethic is sweeping out the old depressing work ethic.

All this in four very swift years, starting with the opening of the Spectrum Leisure Complex.

Now with the opening of the new Council Offices in Crook during March 1988 we have put leisure at the forefront, selling its wares to the public on the ground floor/shop front space - establishing as high a profile as is possible. This is to ensure that we attempt to reach everyone in the community to allow them a glimpse and an opportunity to participate in their "visionary" future.

As all the material says for the Leisure Department in Wear Valley -

"Invest in Leisure it Lasts a Lifetime."

P.S. The Department has now been broadened to the Leisure and Economic Development Department with Les Morgan as the new Director.

# PRESS RELEASE

## A VISION OF THE FUTURE OF BRITISH SKIING WEAR VALLEY'S ALPINE LEISURE PARK

On Tuesday, 26th July 1988, Wear Valley District Council decided once again to step forward with their vision of an Alpine Leisure Park, the first such park in the world.

Following the second stage feasibility study by Deloitte, Haskins and Sells at a cost of approximately £80,000, the Council felt that the ultimate rate of return for investors was such that the project was certainly "a goer".

The District Council have the backing of Durham County Council as well as County Durham Development Corporation and the English Tourist Board, the latter two giving £5,000 and £24,000 respectively towards the second stage feasibility study.

There will be six slopes in the project, two beginner, one intermediate, two advanced and one mogul. One of these slopes will be the world's longest at over 600 metres. To service those there will be a chair lift, two button lifts and three drag lifts.

Other facilities will include a toboggan run, ski lodge, ski chalet, 80 bedroom hotel, two 60 bed ski hostels, fast food restaurant, a large retail unit, speciality shops, entertainment facilities, swimming pool and sports hall, as well as a proposed nine hole golf course, and the possibility of aquatic sports.

The total level of employment at the park is identified as 348 full time and 194 part time posts. This does not include the construction manpower during the building period or any other ancillary industries to grow up around it.

This development is, in essence, Wear Valley District Council's positive management of change, in developing what will be a new industrial base for the area.

Les Morgan, the District Council's Director of Leisure and Economic Development believes that:-

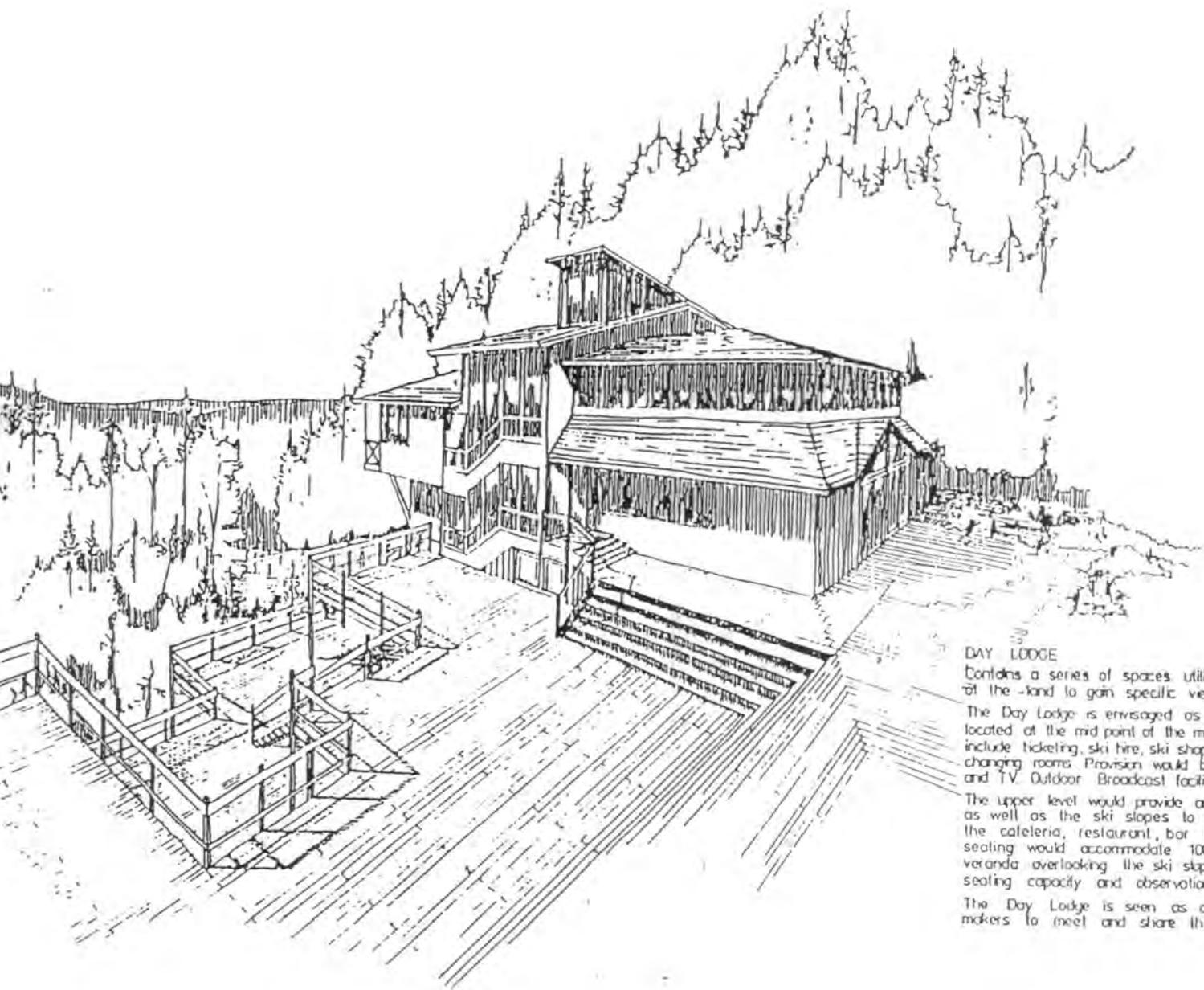
*"This would become the most high profile project in the North of England due to the tremendous media opportunities of attracting World, European and British Championships in the various skiing disciplines to the area. It would, more than any other single facility in the North of England, change people's image towards the area as a whole. The quality of life in the rural areas of the North of England is now second to none and that is our main strength for the future, not the industrial scars of the past which have long since gone. We need a vehicle to show this - the Alpine Leisure Park is that vehicle - in effect it is our catalyst to change".*

This vision within Wear Valley would, for the first time, provide such a powerful base for skiing, it is hoped that the various skiing bodies within the country where there are now approximately 3 million skiers, (300 affiliated ski clubs with an annual growth rate of approximately 10%) would be united in joint activity at such a Complex, especially with the latest video equipment, lecture rooms and teaching areas.

It is now a case of speaking to various people and organisations, i.e., local M.P.'s, Central Government, E.E.C., to ensure a project of such innovation maintains its momentum.

All being well, the world's first Alpine Leisure Park will be opening in 1992 as potentially one of Europe's most innovative attractions - when Europe is, officially open for business.

8th August 1988



#### DAY LODGE

Contains a series of spaces utilising the general slope of the land to gain specific views over the site.

The Day Lodge is envisaged as a single structure with two levels located at the mid point of the main ski runs. The lower level would include ticketing, ski hire, ski shop, first aid, day car, creche, rest and changing rooms. Provision would be made for Administration Offices and TV. Outdoor Broadcast facilities.

The upper level would provide an opportunity to overlook the River Wear as well as the ski slopes to the south. On this floor would be the cafeteria, restaurant, bar and kitchen area. Inside restaurant seating would accommodate 100 people, an external, glass enclosed veranda overlooking the ski slopes would provide a bar, additional seating capacity and observation areas.

The Day Lodge is seen as an important opportunity for holiday makers to meet and share the experience of the Alpine Centre.

### BASE LODGE

The Base Lodge forms a focal point of the scheme. Visitors head towards the Base Lodge and either spectate or participate in the skiing activities or just take advantage of the views over the River Wear from the Balconies.

The building is arranged around an octagonal courtyard/garden area and forms a series of small units containing the following accommodation:-

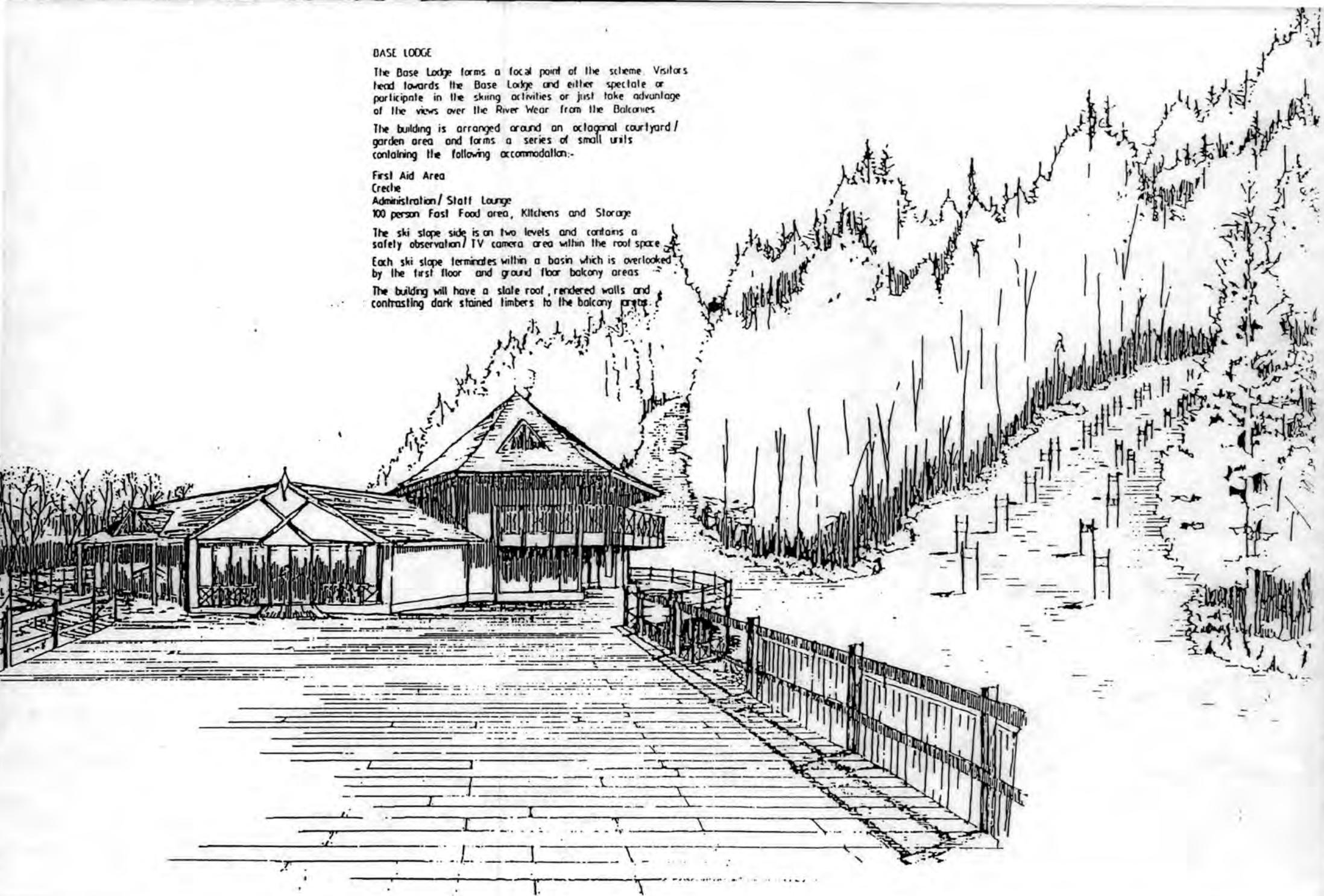
First Aid Area  
Creche

Administration/ Staff Lounge  
100 person Fast Food area, Kitchens and Storage

The ski slope side is on two levels and contains a safety observation/ TV camera area within the roof space.

Each ski slope terminates within a basin which is overlooked by the first floor and ground floor balcony areas.

The building will have a slate roof, rendered walls and contrasting dark stained timbers to the balcony areas.



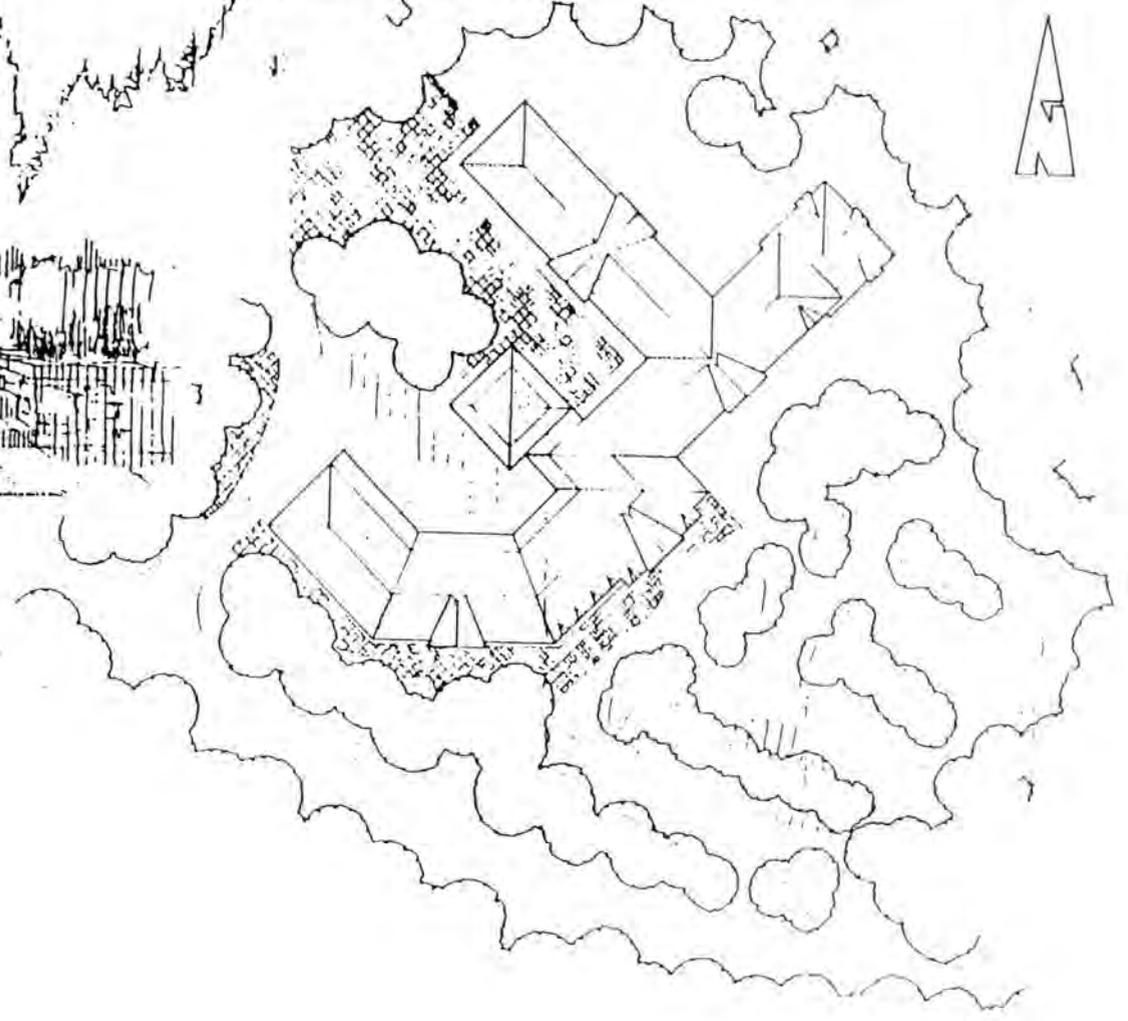


### HOTEL

Situated in a prominent location overlooking the golf course, ski slopes and the Wear River Valley would be a 160 unit hotel. Additional facilities and services within the hotel would include:

- 2 restaurants, bar, function room, swimming pool, health club and fitness centre.
- The carefully proportioned bedrooms vary from single, double, syndicate, disabled persons and family rooms.
- The Hotel provides accommodation within a series of wings which project into the surrounding landscape.

As currently envisaged, the hotel would be a predominant element of the modest 'village' of retail uses, a pedestrian street and public spaces in lieu of trying to establish an 'alpine theme' in the vernacular of Swiss, Austrian or French mountain village. It is suggested that the urban forms, architecture, and spaces be similar in character to those found within and indigenous to Wear Valley. A more appropriate image for inspiration might be that of the traditional 'Hall', with ancillary buildings and large farmhouses more characteristic of the region.



### 1960 HOSTELS

One for Students. One for hikers.

Each Hostel follows a similar design to the cabins with the stairs and exterior lockers left in natural recess.

A washroom stove is strategically placed within the full length

living/dining space to provide a sense of coziness.

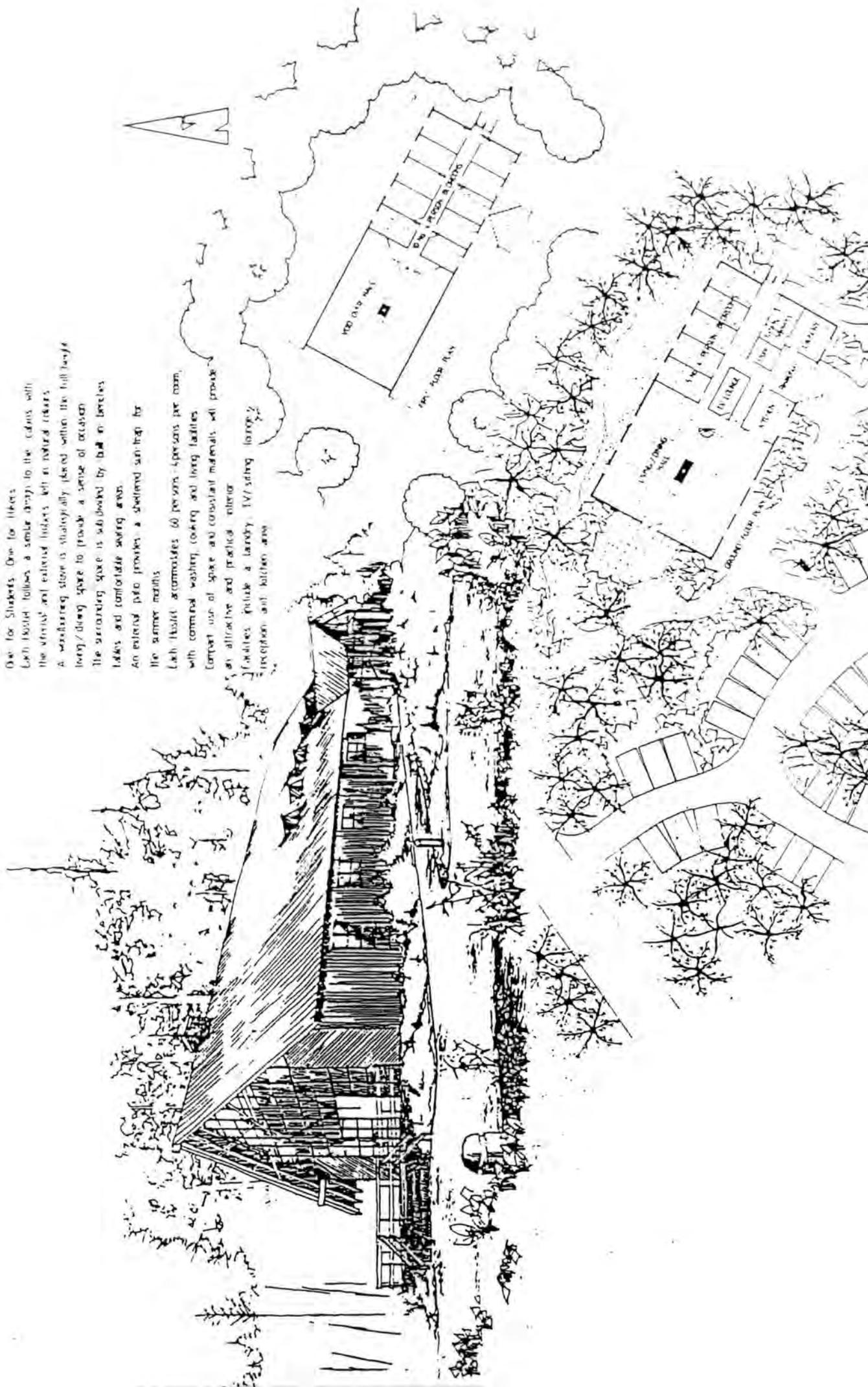
The surrounding space is subdivided by tall in berceles tables and comfortable seating areas.

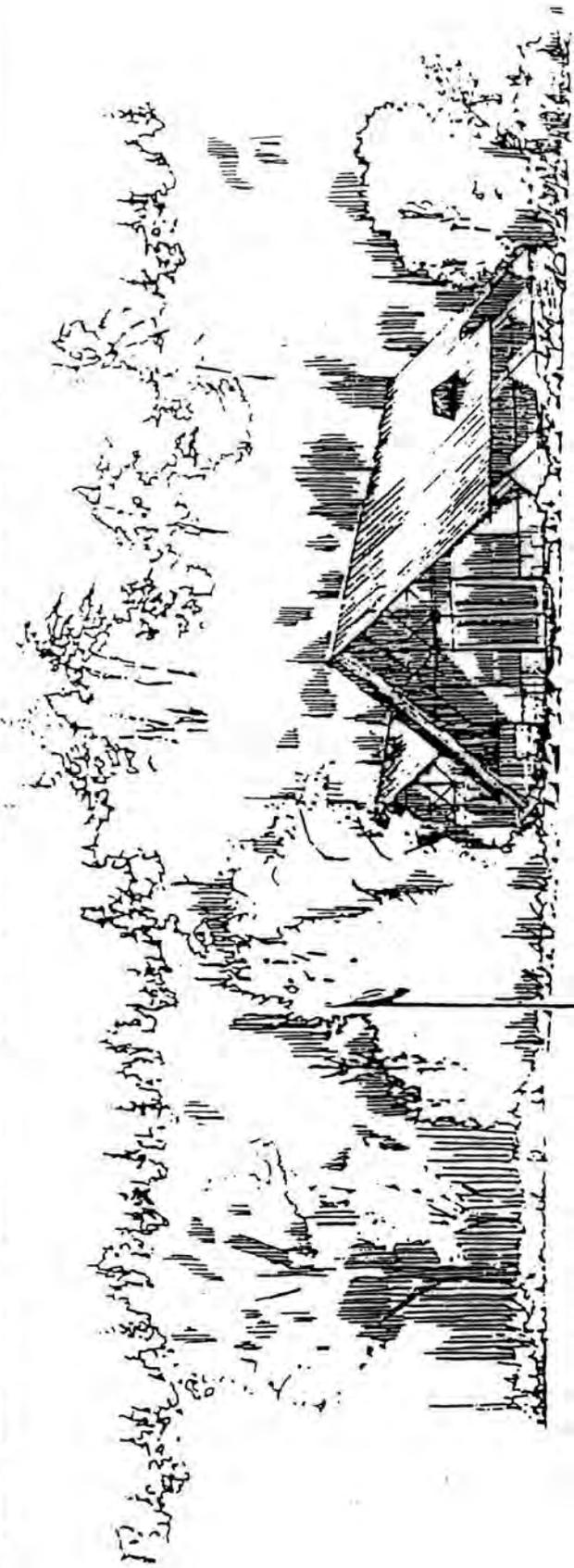
An exterior patio provides a sheltered sun-trap for the summer months.

Each Hostel accommodates 60 persons - 30 persons per room, with complete washing, cooking and living facilities.

Compact use of space and consistent materials will provide an attractive and practical interior.

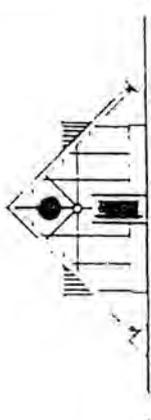
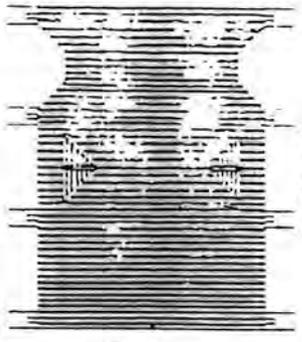
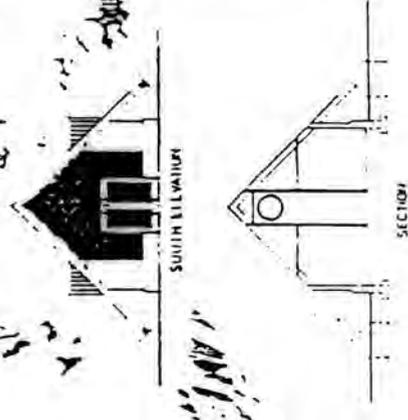
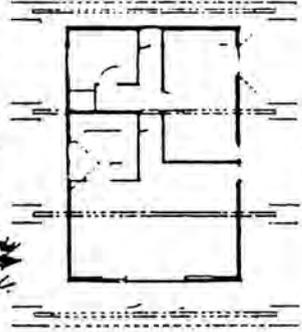
Facilities include a laundry, TV/dining lounge, reception and kitchen area.

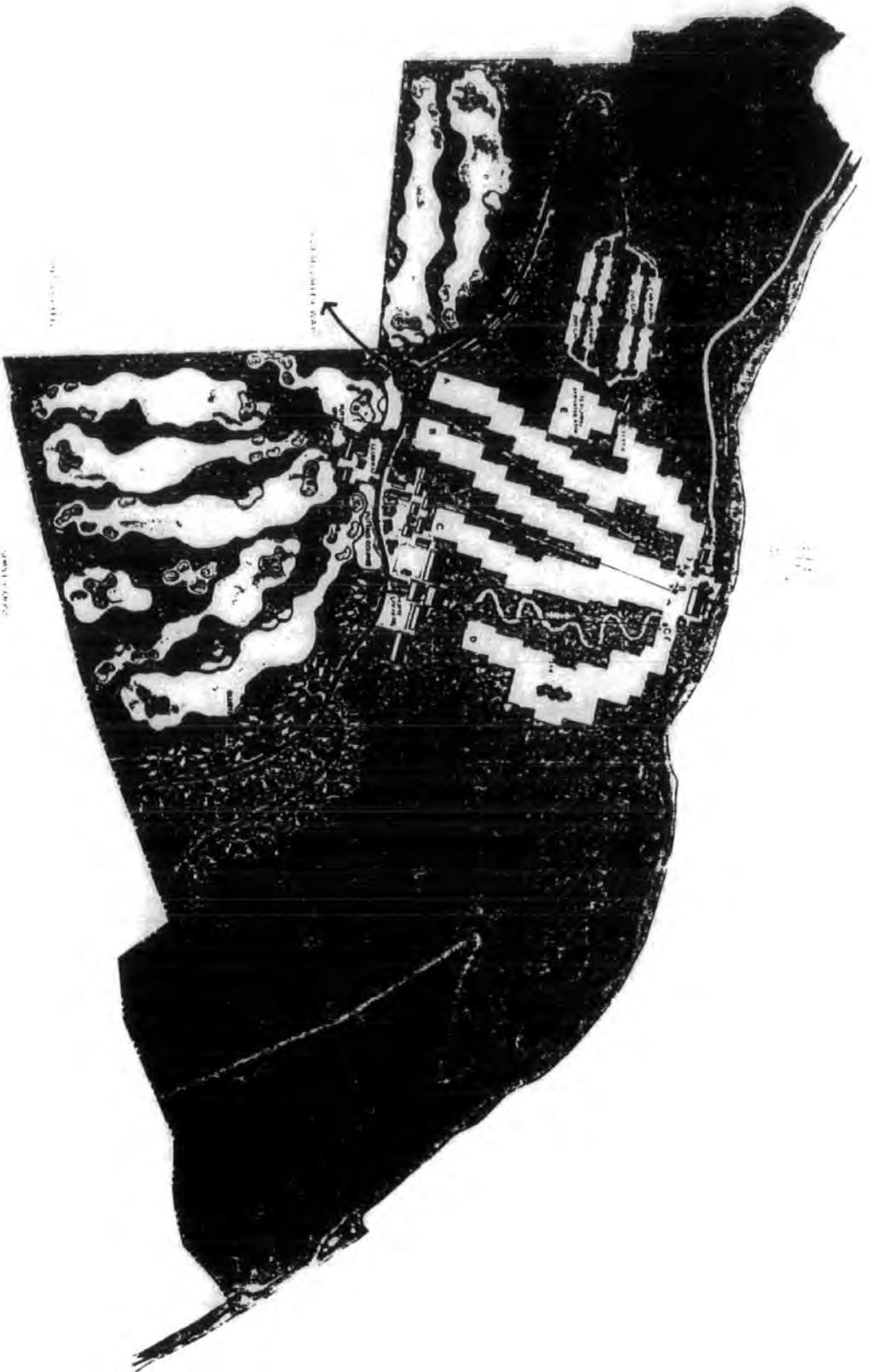




**CHALET.**

Situated near the golf course and along the hillside to the north in a series of descending terraces or clusters will be 80 6-person chalets providing additional over night accommodation. The chalets would be privately owned but managed through the resort hotel as an added bed base of the park. Each chalet provides a double bedroom, sleeping 6, shower room, living/dining area and kitchen forming an integral part of the main day room.





Conceptual Master Plan. Wear Valley Alpine Leisure Park  
Wear Valley District Council



WEAR VALLEY IS THE BEST BECAUSE

1. | MANAGEMENT AWARDS | | Spectrum  
Glenholme  
Ski Slope
  
2. | "WEAR FIT" | | 1st Community Fitness Officer  
Hi-Tech/New Gyms - Spectrum  
Woodhouse Close  
"FitTest"  
Liaison with schools/Health Authority  
Fitness Instructors  
Slim & Trim  
Exercise to Music  
Aqarobics
  
3. | ALPINE LEISURE PARK | | Public & Private  
Sector Initiative/Partnership
  
4. | MARKETING | | Posters  
"What's On"  
Playschemes  
Make a Splash  
"Wear Fit"  
Colours  
Logos  
Slogans
  
5. | PRESENTATIONS | | Bodytalk  
Sports Council  
I.B.R.M.
  
6. | GRANT AID | | Over £300,000 attracted into District
  
7. | TEAM DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME | | P.P.P.'s  
x 4 sessions  
Team Skills Management (TSM)
  
8. | OBJECTIVES | | Quarterley Review reported to Council/  
Agreed.
  
9. | Y.T.S. | | 6 young leisure students x 2 year  
programme.
  
10. | SPECIAL EVENTS | | "It's a Knockout", Superteams,  
Fireworks, Brass Bands, Valentines,  
etc.
  
11. | ARTS DEVELOPMENT | | Full time appointment ) Commitment to  
Arts strategy ) development

- |     |                                     |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 12. | MANAGEMENT TEAM                     | Young<br>Committed<br>Enthusiastic<br>Dynamic<br>Flexible<br>Knowledgeable<br>Balanced Team<br>Professional<br>Willing to try and fail  |
| 13. | CIVIC CENTRE                        | Front of House<br>Display Area<br>Information Point<br>"Close to the People"  |
| 14. | PLAYSCHEMES                         | Extensive<br>Roadshow and Complex Based<br>Specials<br>Staffing<br>Brochures<br>Free Buses  |
| 15. | TOURISM                             | ERDF Study<br>Heritage Line Initiative<br>North Pennines Tourism Consultative<br>Group<br><u>New</u><br>Marketing Award<br>Accommodation Brochure<br>(Objective)  |
| 16. | JUNIOR MANAGERS                     | Weardale (finished)<br>Spectrum - Highly Successful<br>Pat/Jeanette/Colin/Michael   |
| 17. | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT                | Part of Leisure<br>New industrial base for District   |
| 18. | PROGRESS                            | High profile input<br>Leisure lines   |
| 19. | I.L.A.M.                            | Chairman<br>"Coming Together"   |
| 20. | ROLLING PROGRAMME OF<br>DEVELOPMENT | Cockton Hill Pavilion<br>Woodhouse Close L.C. Roof<br>New Gyms<br><u>Future?</u><br>Leeholme Pavilion<br>Bishop Auckland Tennis Courts<br>Positive/professional approach to<br>maintenance and development<br>John Peace<br>Handyman - Tommy, Steve |

21.	COMMUNITY LEISURE OFFICERS	Community based "On the Ground" New Gyms
22.	MISSION CARDS	Mission Statement
23.	MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE	Department which has influenced the whole Council to "change".
24.	DISTRICT IMAGE	Leisure instrumental in giving District a much improved image to prospective - People moving into area Industrialists Developers
25.	WEAR VALLEY FOLDER	Initiated by Leisure.
26.	FLEXIBILITY OF DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE	Management of Change
27.	HANDYMEN	Swift action to maintenance and repair by "caring" tradesmen.
28.	ENABLING OFFICERS	Community Fitness Officer Community Leisure Officer Activities Officer
29.	MEMBER COMMUNICATION	Positive ) Clear ) Coming up with the Supportive ) Goods Quick Decisions )
30.	OFFICER COMMUNICATION - SENIOR TEAM	Bi-monthly meetings. All see Department's 3rd copies.
31.	FLEXIBILITY OF PRICING	To respond to public "desires"
32.	TALENT MANAGEMENT	Use of staff "expertise" in areas outside "normal" role, therefore recognition/achievement.
33.	FIRSTS	Coloured ski slope Snow ski slope European ski courses "Wear Fit" Campaign Hi-tech gym Exercise to music Computer fitness assessments Community Fitness Officer Alpine Leisure Park Mission Cards Shop front offices Linking Economic Development

- |     |                          |   |
|-----|--------------------------|---|
| 34. | TOTAL LEISURE PHILOSOPHY | Not sport or recreation   |
| 35. | ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE   | Shapers<br>Fosters enthusiasm and loyalty<br>Staff who feel like winners. |



**LEISURE DEPARTMENT**

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**EMPLOYEE**

REMEMBER - You are the organisation in the eyes of the public - whether at work or play

We strive to provide and promote excellent leisure facilities both indoor and outdoor combined with programmes accessible to all citizens of Wear Valley via a committed organisation which is both effective and efficient, allowing staff to grow to their full potential

We also aim to secure the maximum utilisation and co operation of all other organisations in the District, to improve the health, both physically and mentally of our community, to make Wear Valley a positive and beautiful place to live and visit into the 1990's

Our catalytic role within the District is vital to ensure our community can react positively to change, thus dealing with the swift advance of the leisure ethic

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18. L. Morgan, Internal document discussing Spectrum Sports Complex, 1989.

19. Many of the posts were funded for a specified period, usually 3 years, and eventually the full cost will be born by Wear Valley District Council.
20. The Labour Party refutes this large amount and claims that it is more in the region of £6 (the issue remains unresolved).
21. (i) Leader of the Liberal Democrats owns a Press Agency, is scrutineer for the N.U.J., chief advisor and scrutineer for the Electoral Reform Society and all claims made regarding his behaviour were never upheld.
21. (ii) The Leader of Wear Valley District Council refutes most of the claims reported to the press by the Liberal Democrats because Thompson Newspapers, owners of the Northern Echo, are very large contributors to the Conservative Party and are therefore committed to highlighting the internal conflicts within Labour council administrations.
21. (iii) Discussions with leading members of each political group, chief officers, members of the general public have taken place, together with close monitoring of newspaper reports, viewing of committee meeting minutes in an attempt to provide a balanced judgement on the issues.
22. An adjoining local authority, Derwentside, is also carrying out a feasibility study to build a similar Ski Village. The Economic Development and Leisure Officer of Wear Valley and leading councillors have been involved in an advisory and consultancy role.
23. Countryside Commission Document, June 1990
24. Northern Echo 19.6.90
25. Bishop Auckland had a Town Council prior to 1974 Re-organisation and it could not be reconstituted without another major re-organisation.

**Press cuttings and appendices on**

**Wear Valley District Council**

# Council <sup>N/Echo</sup> defends skiing <sup>7/5/90</sup> handover

By CLIFF EDWARDS

A COUNCIL chief has defended a decision to hand plans for a prestige ski holiday development to a company which now faces a huge financial crisis.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council, said Newcastle-based builder Stanley Miller gave the authority 'no worries' when it took over the £60m Wolsingham ski village scheme last October.

Before the handover meeting Miller announced a huge drop in profits blamed on a disastrous performance in Scotland. On Friday the company suspended its share trading on the stock exchange with a share price of 20p — compared to 325p a year ago.

This has thrown into doubt whether the ski village will now be built.

Mr Dobson indicated the council was not concerned by the drop in profits at the time of the handover. He said: "They were making their organisation more acceptable, more feasible, more financially secure."

Mr Dobson said the ski village may still come off if new companies take over the idea which would provide 500 jobs. Planned attractions included dry ski slopes, houses, lakes and a Father Christmas Fantasy Land.

He stressed the council had decided to spend no more on it. Wolsingham councillor Vere Shuttleworth, who believes the Miller position could mean the end of the ski village, said: "I don't think there will be many tears shed in Wolsingham."

"By its very nature, it was going to change Wolsingham, it was going to change Weardale."

Keith Shepherd, chairman of Wolsingham Parish Council, said: "There are differences of opinion, but if it's supposedly bringing jobs into the dale it would possibly be a good thing."

"It would be sad for it not to come about."

# Country ski plan faces new protest

19.06.90

THE Countryside Commission may protest if a council's plan for a ski holiday village comes to fruition.

Shelagh Reynolds, the Commission's senior countryside officer for the North Pennines and County Durham was worried a scheme may not be in keeping with the hill farming and small settlement traditions of Weardale.

Wear Valley District Council is now trying to interest potential developers with its early plans for a £25m ski village at Black Banks Wood near Wolsingham.

The council had backed a later £64m scheme last year touted by crashed property developers Stanley Miller.

The site is just outside the Countryside Commission's designated North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Miss Reynolds said: "If we feel that any scheme was going to have a severe impact on the countryside even if it's on the other side of the boundary, we might well find ourselves saying that this is incompatible with the area."

By CLIFF EDWARDS

The Black Banks scheme — as outlined by the council in 1988 — would include chalets, a hotel, ski hostels, shops, a toboggan run and five dry ski slopes.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council said no final plans had been made yet.

He said: "The Countryside Commission and everyone else would be a part of the of the consultation procedure that would take place. ..."

And he said: "If they did not like what they saw, they would be able to say so."

In a 12-page document produced by the Commission on its aspirations for the North Pennines AONB, it states: "We do not consider the North Pennines is a place for large scale imported leisure facilities."

The Commission favours green tourism with people coming to enjoy and understand the countryside.

Mass tourism where the countryside was an attractive backdrop to "urban-style, purpose-built" facilities had no place in the area, the document claimed.

# Leisure plan <sup>2.7.90</sup> cost jumped 'grotesquely'

A COUNCILLOR has warned that Bishop Auckland's costly new leisure complex will be a severe financial drain on the authority.

Coun Chris Foote Wood, leader of the Wear Valley District Council Liberal Democrats, fears the final bill for work on the Woodhouse complex will reach £2.5m.

When the project was given the go-ahead last year, councillors hoped the former swimming pool could be converted into a water fun complex for just £1.6m.

The new attraction is set to open in a few weeks' time but several opening dates have already come and gone.

Coun Foote Wood said costs for the centre had escalated "grotesquely".

"In my view it is questionable whether or not this scheme was necessary in the

first place," he stormed.

"The baths were completely refurbished about three years ago so why spend over £2m on it?"

"It seems like a huge amount of money to spend for what is a relatively minor improvement."

He warned that the finished complex would place a severe financial strain on the authority.

"When you take into account the interest charges and running costs, there seems little doubt that this is going to be a very costly exercise," he said. "It will be a millstone around poll tax payers' necks."

The authority had to ensure the complex opened as soon as possible to attract youngsters during the school holidays, added Coun Foote Wood.

"Otherwise we will miss out on a lot of extra trade," he warned.



**RHAM**

# Figures show ski study cost

By SIMON LOWES

A COUNCIL spent £177,651 on plans for a multi-million pound Alpine ski village before the idea was handed over to property developers Stanley Miller, according to figures just released.

Wear Valley District Council used the cash to commission feasibility studies on the proposed £64m scheme, earmarked for Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham.

The figure is itemised in a statement of Wear Valley's capital programme for 1989-90.

Les Morgan, the council's leisure and economic development director, said the spending had been a "worthwhile investment." He added: "If you don't put in, you don't get out . . . without the outlay on consultancy we would not have had the opportunity for a £64m project with regional significance."

The authority first aired plans for the Weardale leisure resort two-and-a-half years ago, with later figures putting the potential poll tax payers' contribution at £5m.

Newcastle-based Stanley Miller was brought in to co-ordinate the project last year. After top-level talks the firm proposed expanding the leisure park to three times its original area and adding

leisure facilities to boost costs to over £60m.

But problems securing public sector cash prompted company bosses to suggest a completely self-funding venture as the only way forward.

Because of difficulties getting funding, Wear Valley decided to pull out of the scheme in October. It left the way clear for Stanley Miller to pursue the project with private capital.

But, after hearing the final feasibility study costs, council liberal leader Chris Foote Wood said yesterday: "Setting aside the hidden costs of officer-time the council should ask to be compensated for the money spent on consultancy.

"The council should get recompense from the developers for the preparatory work handed over. And it is now six months since the reins were handed over and we should set a time limit for the developers to submit a detailed planning application."

But Mr Morgan said: "You cannot ask for the money back, you have to show some commitment to be credible. And I would rather wait and get the scheme right than put pressure on and risk affecting the plans." A spokesman for Stanley Miller said ongoing consultancy work was being carried out.

Northern  
Echo  
9.5.90

MORE than anything else in its formative years – a bouncing bairn, though still under five – the Gadfly column has held out against Wear Valley Council's proposed Alpine ski village near Wolsingham.

"Hardly a week goes by without another good reason for opposing the ever more harebrained Heights of Folly," we wrote in April 1989.

At that time the council was still acting as its own developer. In October the buck for the scheme was desperately passed to Tyneside-based construction group Stanley Miller.

Even then, without a blade of grass disturbed, it had cost Wear Valley ratepayers £177,000 plus an unspecified, though doubtless disproportionate, amount of senior officers' time.

On November 15th last year the column called the Heights of Folly a "monumental mistake".

On January 31st 1990 we argued that only two options seemed possible: "Either the Newcastle developer will return this year with a scheme vastly different from the original or they'll drop it altogether. Don't bet against the second."

Since then Stanley Miller's shares have plummeted. On Friday they were suspended on the Stock Exchange while hovering around the 20p mark. A year ago they were valued at £3.25.

At 20p a share the company – which just two days earlier had made optimistic noises about the scheme – is worth about £1m. Heights of Folly was last priced at £64m.

Strictly, of course, it is no longer Wear Valley Council's responsibility. But it wilfully spent ratepayers money on its conception, they chose the developer, they'd claim the glory if the wretched Snow Palace ever get above soil height.

But since the Alpine ski village hasn't now a snowball in hell's chance shouldn't they at last admit it.

L



And if veteran council leader John Richardson is an honourable man shouldn't he – and he, at least – resign immediately?



## Controlling council spending

THE residents of Wear Valley have an investment in leisure facilities and in HAS in March 1989. I spelt out that spending on leisure compared with essential services favoured leisure.

Coun Foote-Wood wishes to slash costs without saying how or where! Conservatives recommend judicious pruning in specific areas — a method used to turn around many loss-making concerns. As shareholders the people should profit from their investment.

Again, property must be maintained but when non-Labour councillors agree to repairs to leisure facilities they find the list of necessities grows as work progresses. Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre is not only well repaired — it changes in size and shape with each contract.

As for multi-million pound palaces, who would pay for a surveyor's report on property they couldn't afford to buy? Coun Foote-Wood voted for a feasibility study for an Alpine Village. The only opposition was Conservative. Thousands of pounds spent on nothing!

On the issue of the Town Hall Conservatives favoured joint ownership with private investment. Liberals canvassed support for public ownership. Labour approved public ownership — and increased the community charge! How then could the Liberals justify not voting?

Conservatives are wary of grandiose schemes and are consistent in opposing unnecessary expenditure.

After all, councils spend other people's money. — Coun Mrs Jean Bramhald, The Grange, 3 Bracks Road, Bishop Auckland.

# WEAR VALLEY ADVERTISER

Thursday, November 1, 1990

## Scoop for Les

WEAR Valley leisure chief Les Morgan has scooped a national leisure award.

He has been named personality of the year by readers of Leisure News.

Mr Morgan, Wear Valley District Council director of leisure and economic development, was one of 24 nominated for the first annual "Rolia" - Recognition of Leisure Industry Achievement - award.

Other contenders included Michael Ward, chairman of European Leisure; Ron Pickering, sports commentator and leisure consultant; Peter De Savary, the leisure entrepreneur, and Richard Carr, chairman of Allied Leisure, who was the runner-up.

The announcement was

BY KATHY MARSHALL

made by entertainer Rory Bremner at a charity dinner in aid of the NSPCC in Birmingham during Leisure Industry Week.

Mr Morgan, who was featured in Leisure News in May, said it came as a complete surprise when his name was read out.

"I just didn't expect to win. I was overwhelmed. It is unbelievable as far as I am concerned. What it does mean is that what we are doing in Wear Valley has been appreciated by many people.

"It is not an individual award, from my point of view, I am only the leader of the team. It is very much a

council and departmental award," said Mr Morgan.

The magazine spoke of Mr Morgan's "innovative management style" and the Wear Fit crusade to reduce coronary heart disease in the North East through community leisure.

The council linked up with South West Durham Health Authority to devise a cardiac rehabilitation programme which has received national acclaim.

The programme is designed to help patients who have suffered a recent heart attack to improve their fitness and help them recover more quickly and effectively.

The scheme is unique as it is based in a leisure complex and not a hospital.

Earlier this year the programme received a two year grant in the region of £20,000 from the Chest, Heart and Stroke Foundation.

In recent years Wear Valley has won two regional Sports Council awards for leisure facilities and the Spectrum Leisure Complex was a runner-up in the national Sports Council awards scheme.

The authority won another national runners-up award for ski slopes.



● Les Morgan



**Dr Bob McManners**

## **Woman's claim on doctor dropped**

INVESTIGATIONS into a woman's allegations against a family doctor have been dropped by the General Medical Council.

A preliminary hearing decided there should be no full-scale inquiry by the body's professional conduct committee into an allegation made against Dr Bob McManners.

Yesterday the woman at the centre of the storm — who is not being identified by *The Northern Echo* — declined to comment on the decision.

Dr McManners, chairman of Bishop Auckland Civic Society and the Bishop of Durham's GP, said: "I am pleased for everybody that the GMC has reached this decision and cleared my name in this way.

"I look forward to being able to return my personal life to normal and to continue to put my energies into serving the people of Bishop Auckland as one of their general practitioners."

Dr McManners, who has received the Bishop's support over the matter, wanted to thank everyone who had shown 'support and concern' for himself and wife Steffa.

He was not present at the preliminary hearing and was told the outcome by post.

A GMC spokeswoman said there was no mechanism by which the woman could appeal against the decision but she could re-submit her complaint.

She said: "The only reason things come before the public hearing is if there's cause to believe serious professional misconduct has occurred."

If cases are proved, the doctor can be struck off.

The Rev Nick Beddow, vicar of Escomb and a member of Bishop Auckland Civic Society, said: "I am pleased his name has been cleared at such an early stage."

Dr McManners had been at the practice of Dr Colin Waine in Escomb Road, Bishop Auckland, at the time of the alleged incident. He has since transferred to a practice in Cockton Hill Road, Bishop Auckland.

April 1991

# Developers win ski plan task

c/fcb 70

**COUNCILLORS appointed a developer for a £30m Alpine ski village yesterday — despite the scheme being labelled a damp squib by the leader of the SLD.**

After a stormy meeting, a resolution to place Stanley Miller Holdings plc in charge of the scheme was passed with five votes against. The company has three months to draw up detailed plans for the funding, construction and operation of the Alpine Leisure Park.

The firm now has the task of raising £20m private investment for the scheme. The other £10m is coming from a £5m EC grant and Durham County and Wear Valley District Council — who are to provide £2.5m each.

Chairman of the leisure committee Keith Reed said the appointment of the firm was an auspicious day for Wear Valley which would lead to the revitalisation and regeneration of the area.

But Coun Chris Foote Wood, along with other opposition members, has been against the scheme since its inception. Last year he wrote a letter to Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley asking him to refuse to give money for the Alpine village.

He objected to the appointment of the firm without any form of competition and thought the £10m from the public sector could be better spent. The company, based in Newcastle, had said they were not prepared to be involved in the competition process so were appointed directly.

Coun Foote Wood also said the borrowing for the council's £2.5m would be an extra burden as the loan debt already stood at more than £50m.



**MELANIE ABBOTT reports from the special meetings**

Conservative Coun Jean Bramhald said she was concerned about spending ratepayers' money on the scheme.

Director of finance and management Allen Dobson said most of the debt was from housing.

Clive Sparrow, from Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, the firm which carried out feasibility studies for the park, said: "It is not a damp squib. We recommended Stanley Miller taking all factors into account and felt on balance this was the right way to put the project forward."

Labour Coun Reed, said: "Up to 500 jobs will be created. It is a great shame the opposition hasn't mellowed but has become more vitriolic."

He said the success of Spectrum Leisure Complex's slope with 28,000 dry skiers visiting it showed the scheme was viable.

The Alpine village, planned for Black Bank Wood, Wolsingham, would include five dry ski slopes including the world's longest. A golf course, swimming pool, hotels and chalets are also included in the development brief.

Coun Richardson said: "It is possible this is the last chance and only chance we will have of breathing life into the area."

The council must now apply to the Department of Environment to be allowed to spend the £10m which would otherwise have to be returned.

# National focus on polling <sup>3/5/97</sup> victory <sup>87</sup>

A WEAR Valley District Council by-election result has caught the attention of national politicians.

As Liberal Democrats yesterday celebrated victory in the Woodhouse Close by-election, parliamentary chief whip Jim Wallace MP called for details of the result.

He plans to use it as evidence of a revival in the fortunes of the party, which has slumped in the opinion polls.

On Thursday, candidate Bill Wade overturned Labour's biggest majority on the council to win by 234 votes.

The Liberal Democrats leader on the council, Coun Chris Foote Wood, said the result was a verdict on the inefficient way the Labour-led council conducted its business.

"I'm looking forward to the full council election in two years time when I believe we have a real chance of establishing a non-Labour administration in Wear Valley," he said.

# 'Stick by

14.08.83

# petition

# spirit' —

# society

A TOWN'S civic society is to write a letter to a council claiming its policy for the development of a town hall goes against the spirit of a 10,000-signature petition.

Bishop Auckland Civic Society will send the letter to Wear Valley District Council calling into question its

proposals for the town hall in the Market Place.

The council is at present pursuing plans to rent out the 120-year-old Grade One listed building to a private developer on a 125-year lease.

Dr Bob McManners, chairman of the civic society, said 10,018 people had signed a petition handed to the council to keep the building in public ownership.

The society believes the intention of those people was to keep it also to keep the hall in public use.

The plans to lease it would effectively put the town hall into private hands for 125 years.

He said: "I think that as a group we feel it is not in the spirit of the intention of the petition."

He said the letter to the council would remind it of that.

Meanwhile, the society is drawing up its own plans for the future of the hall which was closed last October because of structural faults.

Members have opened talks with Wear Valley planning director Paul Worsnop.

Coun Billy Neilson (Lab) said: "I think it's a question of patience. At the end of the day everybody will be satisfied."

# Town hall

28.02.90

# plan faces

# an inquiry

Wear Valley District Council to carry out further investigations into a football club chairman's proposals for a town

council members opted to defer a decision on whether to go ahead with the proposal. Wear Valley District Council chairman Garry Gibson's proposals for Bishop Auckland Town

After the private meeting, Labour councillor Coun John Richardson said: "We have deferred the matter for a full and proper investigation into Mr Gibson's proposals."

According to public records, Mr Gibson has two of his companies have a total of 10 outstanding county court judgements against them.

Mr Gibson has said he has learnt from his own problems made when he had a lack of business experience. His group is

expected to have a net worth of £4.5m by the end of this year.

When told of the decision to defer, he said: "That's fair enough."

Earlier, he was said to have surprised councillors when he told them he intended re-siting the town's library in the main hall of the town hall.

His company, Red Castle Properties Ltd, of Felling, Gateshead, hopes Durham County Council will rent the main hall.

There will be 12 small shops on the ground floor of the town hall.

Mr Gibson's company has offered £120,000 to the council for the 125-year lease of the 120-year-old listed building.

He said yesterday that although he initially believed it would cost around £1m to refurbish the landmark, he now believed it would cost some £700,000.

Ideally, the millionaire property developer wanted to begin work in June in time to open in Christmas this year.

10/14/89

## NEWS FROM

# Ski dream planners move into top gear

DEVELOPERS appointed to coordinate plans for a massive ski and golf village have met with consultants who will work out its fine detail.

The talks at the offices of developers Stanley Miller Holdings plc in Newcastle was attended by four firms engaged by them.

Representatives from London-based leisure consultancy L and R Leisure, management consultants Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, Durham-based landscape architects Clouston's and chartered surveyors Storey, Sons and Parker, attended.

Mr Midgeley said the companies would meet again in four weeks' time to discuss their provisional results.

Stanley Miller is working on a £100,000 budget and is paying the firms for their consultancy expertise. Mr Midgeley said it had agreed with Wear Valley District Council that it would come back to members after four months - at the end of June.

Last week, the developers revealed that they wanted to widen the attractiveness of the council's original ski village plan giving golf an equal prominence, so that the project would have year-round appeal.

The plans are earmarked for the Black Bank Wood outside Wolsingham.

# Frosty reaction to ski plan

FRESH talks aimed at reviving plans for a Wear Valley ski village have been called a waste of time.

Wear Valley District Council should get on with the task of bringing jobs and realistic development to the area, said Chris Foote Wood, leader of the council's Liberal Democrat group.

Earlier, the council announced

they would be having talks with Newcastle-based developers, Stanley Miller, in a bid to salvage plans for a £30m alpine ski village at Wolsingham, Weardale.

Backed by local Labour MPs, Hilary Armstrong and Derek Foster, the council had hoped to win government approval.

But Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley ruled the council

and Durham County Council could not borrow £2.5m each or borrow £5m from the EC.

Coun Foote Wood called the minister's decision "a blessing."

"I urge the council to admit defeat and drop this mad-cap scheme once and for all.

"The climate is right for industrial development and we should be putting more time and

effort into bringing real jobs and development to the area," he said.

He called on the council to back an alternative private scheme to develop skiing at the top end of the Wear Valley.

But Council leader, John Richardson, said the talks with Stanley Miller will go ahead.

"I'm not interested in what Coun Foote Wood has to say

12.04.89

The Northern Echo, Thursday, April 20, 1989

**E NORTH**

**REPORTING THE**

# Chief slams ski village double

THERE is no room for two huge ski villages within miles of each other, a leisure boss said yesterday.

Les Morgan, director of leisure and economic development at Wear Valley District Council said that if proposals to build a second multi-million pound resort were similar to those for the £30m Alpine Village at Wolsingham, there would be a conflict.

A business consortium is putting together a package for another ski resort nine miles from the Wolsingham site at Consett to be considered by the council's neighbouring authority, Derwentside.

Mr Morgan said: "Of course it will have an effect if it goes ahead.

"I have not seen their proposals, but the closer the projects are the more they will conflict."

He said: "There is no room for two

projects if they are similar."

Wear Valley has already spent 18 months planning its scheme. The council has gone through feasibility studies costing more than £100,000 and the project is now in the hands of Newcastle developers Stanley Miller Holdings.

The developers are due to report back to Wear Valley before the end of June.

Last week the council wrote a

letter to the Department of the Environment asking for permission to spend £10m of public money on the scheme which will include dry ski slopes, a toboggan run, hotels and swimming pools.

Mr Morgan said he felt the proposals for the Consett resort were a form of flattery. Wear Valley had proved the idea was feasible and now other bodies were jumping on to the same idea.

He said of the Consett scheme: "I am quite sure that when the consultants hand it to the financial side they will find that the two schemes cannot exist."

Meanwhile Coun Chris Foote Wood has written to Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley asking him not to sanction the spending of £2.5m by Wear Valley, £2.5m by Durham County and £5m by way of an EEC grant.

## Surcharge

MR Dobson, the Statutory Treasurer of Wear Valley District Council, cannot plead ignorance of the law because he is an IPPA and FCIS (Echo July 24).

Any increased administration costs arising from sending out 50,000 proper poll tax forms can be recouped by surcharge, from councillors Lee, Wilson, Neilson, Richardson, Terrans and Mr Dobson (section 159 - 161 Local Govt Act 1972)

Because of the Stanley Miller (dry-ski) and DEWJOC (Woodhouse Leisure Complex) affairs I wrote to the European Commission on July 18th 1989 requesting that all EEC aid to UK councils be stopped. Thus the cash blow feature (Echo July 22)

KEN ABRAHALL

26 Jackson Street  
Coundon Grange

10/8/89.

from  
HEAR ALL SIDES.

# Battle on as councillor quits seat

By LAWRENCE DONEGAN

A WEAR Valley district councillor is to resign due to pressure of work — and the war of words in the run-up to the by-election has already begun.

Bill Oxbrough, councillor for Escomb, will stand down at the next full meeting of the council on October 4.

Mr Oxbrough yesterday thanked his constituents and fellow Labour councillors for their support but added he was no longer able to combine his work at the Royal Mail with council commitments.

He was elected unopposed as councillor 27 months ago.

Labour leader John Richardson said the council would be sorry to lose the 'exemplary' contributions of Coun Oxbrough.

News of the resignation and an impending by-election was greeted by opposition members.

Coun Chris Foote Wood, leader of the Liberal Democrats, said his party would be selecting a candidate to fight the seat.

He paid tribute to Coun Oxbrough's work as a councillor but said it would not be enough to retain the seat for Labour.

"I confidently predict that we will win this seat in the same way we have won the last two council by-elections.

"We had already targeted Escomb for the 1991 elections.

"Victory this time will confirm that the Labour Party is on its way to losing its majority on the council," he said.

Billy Neilson, chairman of Wear Valley Labour Party, said yesterday he was confident his party would retain the seat.

"It is interesting to see the opposition parties have decided to put up a candidate this time.

"But I am sure the electors of Escomb and Witton Park will remember that the Liberals have taken no interest in their area for a very long time," he said.

21 08 89

# New talks over ski village plan

A COUNCIL'S managing director yesterday revealed he was engaged in talks with two potential saviours of the £64m Weardale Alpine ski village scheme.

Wear Valley District Council managing director Allen Dobson's comments came in reply to a call to scrap the idea following the collapse of developers Stanley Miller.

Liberal leader Coun Chris Foote Wood put a motion to yesterday's policy and finance meeting urging the council to abandon promotion of the ambitious leisure project.

The council originally spent £177,000 on feasibility studies and preparatory work for the scheme — with a dry ski slope, chalets, lakes and a Father Christmas Fantasy Land on a site near Wolsingham.

Following difficulties raising public sector finance for the plan,

the council pulled out and passed it on to Tyneside builders Stanley Miller for development last October.

But a question mark has hung over the project's future since Stanley Miller was put in the hands of the receiver last month after announcing losses of £4.5m.

Coun Foote Wood said the council should "be realistic," adding that no private funding had been offered since plans were first aired.

But Mr Dobson hit back, saying: "The council no longer has any financial involvement and it would be illogical not to give information to any possible developers who could pick the scheme up.

"I can not reveal their identity at this stage, but I am talking to two parties who are interested."

Coun Foote Wood's motion was defeated by nineteen votes to three, with one abstention.

N/Echo.

22/9/89.

SWD

UP YOUR STREET 5

## Talks held on ski plan

COUNCIL officials met with developers yesterday to discuss costings for an ambitious Alpine leisure complex in Weardale.

Les Morgan, the director of leisure and economic development at Wear Valley District Council, said talks were held with representatives of property developers Stanley Miller.

The company was taken on by the council to make its vision of a dales ski centre a reality.

In July, Stanley Miller unveiled plans for a £50m complex which would need £10m funding from the public sector. The council asked the company to return with a breakdown of the costs.

At a meeting within the next two or three weeks, members are expected to decide whether they will seek Environment Secretary Chris Patten's approval to find the £10m public-sector cash for the development.

The council has already been turned down by Mr Patten's predecessor, Nicholas Ridley, when representatives discussed a smaller scheme.

## Ski plan 13.9.89. cash move

DETAILED costings on an estimated £50m Alpine leisure resort scheme are now in the hands of a council backing the project.

Consultants working on proposals for the scheme, at Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham, are being led by Newcastle property developers Stanley Miller.

Originally the financial breakdown was scheduled for submission by the end of July.

But that period was extended and now Stanley Miller have handed the figures over to Wear Valley District Council.

It is thought the council will use the figures to back its argument for Government help. They are to approach Environment Secretary Chris Patten for permission to spend £10m of public sector cash on the project.

Approval, which has been rejected once by Mr Patten's predecessor, is vital to the plans.

## Why such secrecy?

ON being challenged about a golf course adjacent to the planned ski slopes in the Wolsingham area, Wear Valley District Council leader John Richardson replied: "No comment." (Echo March 13)

I wonder how many people in the area have been asked if they even want a ski slope let alone a golf course, neither of which is the sport of the average working-class person, the elderly or the unemployed.

I have also read many times of Wear Valley Council meetings being held "behind closed doors." Why all the secrecy? Are the ratepayers not entitled to know what is being done with their money?

Incidentally, it is definitely not being spent in Binchester where I live. Residents here have to walk on disgraceful footpaths full of holes filled with water. One thing we don't need is a golf course because we have our very own obstacle course, it's called the road.

MRS G. HUMBLE

3 Gladstone Terrace  
Binchester

# Ski plans costs due

CONSULTANTS working on plans for a £50m Alpine leisure complex will deliver their detailed costings to a council next week.

The team of consultants led by Newcastle property developers Stanley Miller will hand the document to Wear Valley District Council.

The council asked for the costings and construction information to strengthen its case when it goes to Environment Secretary Chris Patten in an attempt to get backing to spend £10m public cash on the project.

His predecessor, Nicholas Ridley, has already refused to allow the district council and Durham County Council to spend £2.5m each on building a more modest ski village.

And he did not allow Wear Valley to apply for a £5m grant from Europe.

At a meeting on July 6 where revamped plans for the village at Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham, were unveiled, councillors asked Stanley Miller to come up with the costings by the end of this month.

The ambitious proposals for the resort include six dry ski slopes, two lakes, chalets, hotels and a Father Christmas fantasy land.

# Ski decision awaited

A COUNCIL is still waiting for a response from the Government on whether it is allowed to spend £10m of public money on a new ski village.

Wear Valley District Council bosses applied to the Department of the Environment last month for the extra spending power to foot public bills for a planned £30m dry ski complex at Black Bank Road, Wolsingham.

The council needs permission to spend a hoped for £5m grant from the EEC as well as to use £2.5m of Durham County Council cash and £2.5m of its own money on the project.

A spokesman for the DoE could only confirm yesterday that the department was looking into the application.

Meanwhile, Stanley Miller Holdings Ltd, the Newcastle-based

developer now masterminding the scheme, is due to come up with a feasibility study on it some time next month.

Yesterday, Wear Valley director of leisure and economic development Les Morgan said he did not know when Stanley Miller representatives would be ready to present the study to the council or when the Government was likely to respond.

## Ski village firm set for meeting

13/7/87  
DEVELOPERS working to finalise plans for an ambitious £50m Alpine village in Weardale will meet councillors at the end of the month.

A spokesman for Newcastle developer Stanley Miller said representatives would meet Wear Valley District Council.

He said: "We are still putting together the more detailed proposals but as yet there is still no firm date on when we will go back to the council."

At a meeting last week at which councillors backed the firm's proposals, Stanley Miller was

asked to come back with the detailed costing and construction schedules.

The information will be used by the council to strengthen its arguments when it again approaches Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley asking for his go-ahead to use £10m of public sector cash.

Mr Ridley has already refused to allow the council and Durham County Council to spend £2.5m each on the project. And he did not allow Wear Valley to apply for a £5m EEC grant.

10/8/89.

SWD

**REGION**

13

# Alpine resort — costs delay

DETAILED costings for a £50m alpine leisure resort are running behind schedule.

Plans to triple the size of the proposed resort near Wolsingham have meant Newcastle developers Stanley Miller need more time to prepare the figures, said a company spokeswoman yesterday.

In July, Wear Valley District Council agreed to press on with a bigger scheme after former environment minister Nicholas Ridley refused government funds for a £24m proposal.

The council, asked for costings on the £50m scheme by the end of July to strengthen its case when it goes again for government backing.

"With the scheme being bigger than we originally thought, costing it has taken longer. It is such an important scheme that we want to make sure everything is spot on," said the spokeswoman for Stanley Miller.

Wear Valley director of leisure and economic development Les Morgan said he had been expecting the costings this week but as councillors are in recess there is 'no problem.'

Northern Echo

**DURHAM**

# Concern over line's future



**Wear Valley District Council**

**Simon Lowes reports from the planning committee**

**THE proposed new light rapid transport system in Cleveland could cut off a planned tourist lifeline to a massive dales leisure project.**

Plans were in the pipeline to extend the existing Darlington to Wear Valley branch line to cater for the proposed Alpine Village development in Wolsingham.

But the threat posed by the new Cleveland link could hit hopes of shipping in thousands of potential visitors.

Yesterday's Wear Valley District Council planning committee also heard that a possible introduction of steam trains as a tourist attraction on the branch line was now at risk.

A consultants' report recommends the light rapid transport system being considered by Cleveland County Council should run through Cleveland to Teesside Airport and Darlington.

The route would operate independently of British Rail but use their existing tracks and replace the present service between Darlington Middlesbrough and Saltburn.

But a report by Durham County Council economic chiefs warns the scheme could jeopardise the passenger service between Bishop Auckland and Darlington.

A regular weekend service from Bishop Auckland into Weardale has proved a popular tourist route.

Speaking of the threat to future development of the 'Heritage Line', Coun Don White (Lab) said: "Rather than talking about closure they should be discussing the two lines complementing each other. This could bring many people from Teesside and Darlington to Weardale

The committee agreed to inform Durham County Council of its concern.

● Plans for providing a fishing lake and leisure facilities at Witton-le-Wear Lido were thrown out by councillors

## 'Green' battle wins backing

**COUNCILLORS** have backed opposition to a 'green' threat posed by two proposed opencast schemes around a small village.

A 100-acre plantation has been earmarked by minerals firm HJ Banks for extraction of 100,000 tonnes of coal and 200,000 tonnes of fireclay and brickshale.

The 27-hectare site lies just outside Oakenshaw, near Crook. Another application for opencast strip mining of coal and clay at nearby Stockley Fell plantation has been submitted by Rackwood Colliery Co. Ltd.

An action group formed by village community association members is campaigning against the proposals.

Protestors claim giving the sites the go-ahead would leave them almost totally surrounded by opencast workings and hit a 'wildlife corridor' of woodland.

They claim the site would lie within 250m of a group of 35 houses and would produce unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance.

The two planning applications are to be considered by Durham County Council.

But yesterday's Wear Valley District Council planning committee recommended passing on objections to the two schemes.

Council leader John Richardson said: "We must object on environmental and ecological grounds against the removal of a heavily-wooded area."

● Council officials yesterday backed Ministry of Defence plans to install communications facilities in Stanhope.

But the planning committee said masking materials should be used to reduce the environmental impact. Proposals include two dish aerials, a prefabricated building, fuel tank and access road.

and someone shouting in the back lane. After seeing the

# Chief backs branch line cash demand

PLANNING chief Robin Brooks has backed a report demanding more cash for the Darlington to Wear Valley railway line.

He supports Durham County Council claims that the line could play a major role in linking Darlington to tourist spots like the proposed Alpine leisure complex and the Durham Dales.

By CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE

importance of the industrial development behind the branch line.

"The hinterland of the branch line is enjoying improved economic development opportunities," he wrote.

And an improved service would be useful for people getting to work or going to social events, he said.

"The railway has an important role to play in developing the potential of these opportunities.

The line links Darlington with a string of smaller settlements in rural Weardale via Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Bishop Auckland.

"The line serves the site which is being considered for a freight depot at Faverdale. It is also the planned long-term link for baled waste to disposal sites in Weardale and the vital link to the cement works at Eastgate."

It offers a regular service to Bishop Auckland and a Sunday service in the summer months for day trips into Weardale.

Calls for the extra cash are being made on British Rail and the Department of Transport.

Mr Brooks, Darlington's Chief Planning Officer, is to urge members of the borough's development committee on Wednesday to back Durham County Council in its call for increased investment by transport chiefs for the branch line.

"It is important to Darlington's general economic wellbeing that the branch line is properly equipped to meet all needs," said Mr Brooks.

And he stressed the im-

## Probe plan for leisure service

A BRITISH Standard for a council's leisure management could help fend off outside competition for contracts.

chiefs are proposing bringing in leading consultants for a 'quality audit' on the way they run services.

The Government has approved outline plans for compulsory tendering for local authority sport and leisure facilities.

The assessment would pave the way for the council to gain 'British Standards Institute BS5750' certificates for its operation of the district's facilities.

Free competition for the contracts, to last between four and six years, could be phased in during 1993.

A report to Wednesday's finance committee says 'approval to internationally recognised systems standards' could help the council's own workforce win tenders.

And, in preparation, Wear Valley District Council leisure

# THE CHALLENGE OF THE DECADE

WEAR Valley can look forward to new challenges and exciting developments in the decade ahead.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council, also hopes the 1990s will bring increasing prosperity as the council aims to do everything possible to attract more firms into the area and help create more jobs.

The most ambitious plans for Wear Valley is the Alpine leisure resort at Black Banks Wood near Wolsingham, now being developed by the private sector and set to cost £84 million.

The plans include six dry ski slopes, two lakes, chalets, hotels and a Father Christmas fantasy land. Much closer to fruition is the pioneering Dales Skill and Enterprise Centre due to open in Stanhope in May.

"We are looking forward to the opening of the centre. It will create jobs and help stimulate the economy in the dales," said Mr Dobson.

The £540,000 centre at Castle Gardens is a joint initiative of Wear Valley District Council, Durham County Council and the Rural Development Commission which has provided the capital cost.

BY KATHY MARSHALL

The centre will provide advice and information facilities for training, craft workshops, tourist information centre, shops and a cafe and will provide jobs for about 25 people.

The New Year will see the future use of Bishop Auckland Town Hall decided.

There is also the future development of The Elms in the Market Place - the old technical office which is on the market at the moment. We anticipate that will be dealt with in the next few weeks," said Mr Dobson.

The council is also awaiting the report of the Government Inspector who headed the public inquiry into the Bishop Auckland Local Plan which will shape the future of town in the decade ahead.

"I am particularly excited about the possibility of having a business park in Bishop Auckland itself, that is subject to the finding of the public inquiry," said Mr Dobson.

He is delighted at the success of South Church Enterprise Park. It has been so successful that Phase III has been brought forward and it is likely that all the space available will soon be developed.

New sites have been earmarked for industry including a prestige site at Low Willington. Mr Dobson said the theme of the nineties is all about building bridges - both literally and metaphorically.

A vital new road link will preserve the historic Newton Cap viaduct. The 130-year-old former railway viaduct is to be converted to carry A689 traffic from Bishop Auckland to Crook, Wolsingham and Weardale, over the River Wear.

County highway chiefs believe the viaduct conversion will be the first of its kind in the UK. Work is due to start in the Spring of 1991.

Improvements are also planned to the A96 Willington to Spennymoor Road at Jubilee Bridge and together with those that have already taken place on the A690 at Brancepeth will provide direct routes to the A1 motorway.

In Crook, a new superstore is to be built by the Co-op at Highfield bringing new jobs to the town.

# Brake bid on leisure centre spending

OPPOSITION chiefs are bidding to halt a council's spending at £2.1m for refurbishment work on a major leisure centre. The scheme at Bishop Auckland's Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex was originally approved with a budget of £1.6m. But building problems added another £500,000 to the Wear Valley District Council bill.

The provisional opening date for the redeveloped centre was April 13 this year, but work to ensure the main swimming pool is watertight has caused further delay for builders John Laing Construction.

Now the Liberal Democrat group is calling for spending to be capped at £2.1m for what they label a "grandiose scheme".

And they are demanding an ex-

planation why the work was necessary just three years after a major repair and renewal programme at the building.

Liberal Democrat leader Chris Foote Wood, who will put the proposals before Monday's policy committee, said: "The previous renovation scheme went way over budget and the council was severely criticised by the District Auditor.

"Now it seems we are heading the same way again,

"We are in favour of the council providing leisure facilities, but the controlling Labour Group seems to think the ratepayers will pay any amount on the poll tax for its grandiose schemes."

Explanations would also be sought on why two squash courts were built and then one removed and why

"major structural faults" were not found during the previous scheme.

Labour leader Coun John Richardson said: "The money spent at Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex is in accordance with professional advice given by consultants."

Coun Richardson said he was not prepared to discuss possible exempt information until seeing the agenda for Monday's meeting.

The Northern Echo, Friday, March 9, 1990



# Anger at poll tax 'secrecy'

THE poll tax level in Wear Valley District was agreed yesterday — but householders were not told what it will be.

The Labour-controlled council, which has attracted strong criticism from the Campaign for Freedom of Information, was setting its first-ever poll tax.

But, before doing so, it ensured that no Press or public could hear the reasons behind the figure or what the figure is.

The unusual move means the public — many of whom will have to find more cash

to pay the tax — will be in the dark until a rubber-stamping full council meeting at 2pm this afternoon.

Liberal Democrat leader Chris Foote Wood said he believed many people would be angered by the council's stance.

He said: "It is totally reprehensible that the controlling Labour group should seek to prevent people from knowing what their recommendation is on poll tax."

A clue to the tax came in a document leaked earlier this week. The paper stated

it would be just under £300 but only if there are no new projects. It is virtually certain there will be none.

Maurice Frankel, national director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information has said councils' private interests can be protected by their holding meetings behind closed doors.

At the policy and finance committee yesterday, Liberals unsuccessfully moved that Press and public be allowed to listen to the debate.

Wednesday, January 24, 1990

## Secrecy must be challenged

*THE Northern Echo* has received a letter which we feel obliged to draw to the attention of readers. It is from the legal director of Wear Valley District Council, Elisabeth Ashness, and warns this newspaper not to publish information which the council regards as "exempt." If we do, the council "will consider its position with a view to action being taken to prevent further disclosures."

By "exempt" the council means information which some officers and members want to keep secret, for the time being at least, from the public. In particular Mrs Ashness refers to two articles, published in some editions of *The Northern Echo* earlier this month, concerning the proposed leasing of Bishop Auckland town hall.

It may come as no surprise to the ratepayers of Wear Valley, particularly those 10,000 who signed a petition against the sale of the town hall, that discussions about the future of their property should take place behind closed doors. They might however be disturbed that the council is prepared to pursue its policy of secrecy with such zeal.

Sadly this letter is not written in isolation. The one area in which many Labour-controlled councils and Conservative Government are united is their mutual desire for secrecy; all too often using restrictive legislation to cover embarrassment rather than to protect the public.

The **Government's** obsession with secrecy manifested itself in the Spycatcher shambles where the world had access to a book which British citizens were not allowed to read. Now legislation bans broadcasters from interviewing elected members of certain political parties, the new Official Secrets legislation does not accept the public interest as a justifiable breach of the Act and Cabinet papers, even though 30 years old, have been locked away for a lifetime.

Closer to home, **local authorities** are increasingly eager to close their doors on the Press and public. Last year, for example, Durham's environment committee decided that a company which stored deadly toxic waste at Seaham should not be prosecuted. There may have been a sound reason for such a decision but, whatever it was, the public was not told. Similarly, when *The Northern Echo* investigated proposals to bring toxic waste incinerators to Teesside, the local authorities were forbidden from releasing essential details. To find the relevant information we simply contacted the United States where such petty restrictions are not tolerated.

There are similar examples in most areas of officialdom. **Water companies** make their decisions, affecting the water we must drink and the bills we must pay, in secret. Some **police forces** appear increasingly reluctant to give out information and Northumbria Police Authority recently chose to consider secretly two issues, the success of its new helicopter and the number of accidents involving police vehicles, because it was "counter-productive" to discuss them in public. Even **judges** send perpetrators of certain crimes to jail without allowing their names to become known.

We would be the first to admit that, as a newspaper, we have a vested interest in the freedom of information. But we ought not to be alone. It is difficult to believe that the British public does not demand the right to know what actions are carried out in its name, be they at national or local level. Yet it apparently chooses to ignore the restrictions and instead supports further controls on the Press. It might well be remembered that, unlike doctors and priests, the journalist has no special privilege in the eyes of the law over and above that of the ordinary citizen. Restricting the rights of the Press is effectively restricting the right of the individual.

The International Press Institute, in its yearly review of the world's media, concludes that Britain has a less than half-free Press. In his report to Helsinki the Institute's director reports that Britain used to be one of the frontline countries in freedom of expression but Press freedom is now severely curtailed.

In this increasingly restrictive climate it must be the responsibility of the Press, with the support of the public, to ensure that those who seek to stifle information and free speech, from Wear Valley to Whitehall, are challenged at every turn.

CLIFF EDWARDS reports from Wear  
Valley District Council's policy and  
finance committee

A BOUNDARY review in which arguments for a new town council will be dealt with, may begin within a year.

Managing director of the council, Allen Dobson, made the announcement which will mean traders in Bishop Auckland, who have been pushing for a new council, will have to wait for a decision.

He said: "We have indicated that our next job will be to deal with a boundary review, hopefully — if resources are available — within the next year."

Bishop Auckland Chamber of Trade submitted its proposals to the Boundary Commission for the new local council last year.

The Commission, however, will send the dossier back and recommend the traders to submit it to Wear Valley as the body responsible for carrying out such reviews.

The council says it can only do that when it is sure of the financial implications a third tier of local government would have on the size of the poll tax bill.

The meeting saw a bitter argument between Liberal Democrat leader Coun Chris Foote Wood and Coun John Richardson, the chairman and leader of the Labour group.

Angry Labour members called on Coun Foote Wood to retract a statement in which they claimed he had said the council would not carry out a boundary review.

## Anger over unpaid rents

A COUNCILLOR said she was concerned at the size of a £71,000 debt of unpaid rents owed to the council.

Before members decided to write off the debt, Coun Marie Land (Lib Dem) said: "I think it's a dreadful indictment of the past inefficiency of the debt collecting procedures of this council that we are being asked to make this decision today."

But Coun Billy Neilson (Lab) said: "I can assure Mrs Land if she went in with a machine gun and two rottweilers she wouldn't get a penny piece out of them."

The council needs to wipe away the debts soon so that under new legislation the amount is not charged to poll tax payers.

Director of housing Frank Bouweraerts said officers were doing all they could to recover the cash from former tenants.

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# Town shows fighting spirit

March  
1990

By CLIFF EDWARDS

A TOWN'S new civic society will meet tonight to decide its strategy on how best to serve the people.

An executive committee of the Bishop Auckland Civic Society — formed last month — will meet to map out principles to help safeguard the town's heritage.

The society, set to have a say in Wear Valley District Council's planning process, is a sign of the resurgence of vociferous protest on issues affecting the town.

Dr Bob McManners, chairman of the civic society, said: "There has been a groundswell of public opinion. People started to feel that Bishop Auckland had an unfair crack of the whip."

The society — which evolved from an action group dedicated to protecting the town's Victorian town hall — is one result of the new forcefulness of residents.

Another is seen in plans for a new town council mooted at the start of the year by the local chamber of trade and commerce.

Figureheads in both camps are talking about working together for the town's good.

And leading Labour members at Wear Valley have also welcomed both initiatives.

## 'New wave of protest' grows

Frank Hutchinson, former chairman of the town's amenity association which folded around 1980, welcomed the new "fighting spirit" within the town.

"There was a great deal of apathy in the town. I detect an air of change. It has got to be good for the town. If people do not look after themselves nobody else will," he said.

Dr McManners believes the new wave of protest rose when Durham County Council announced plans — since dropped — to demolish Newton Cap Viaduct.

After the district council moved in February to sell the Grade One listed town hall, more than 10,000 of the town's 24,700 people signed a protest petition.

That decision has now been rescinded by the district council which is now pursuing controversial moves towards renting out the hall on a 125-year lease.

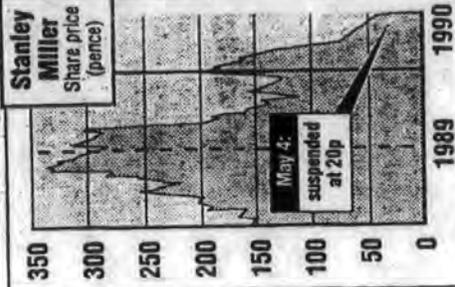
Stanley Miller shares suspended after 305p fall in a year

# Cash crisis hits building giant

5/5/90

N/Echo

By TERRY MURDEN, Industrial Journalist of the Year



Source: Wise Speke

THE crisis-hit company behind two major leisure and commercial projects in the North-East was plunged into further trouble yesterday.

Stanley Miller, the region's second-biggest building company, saw its shares suspended on the Stock Exchange and its directors were last night locked in talks as speculation mounted over the company's future.

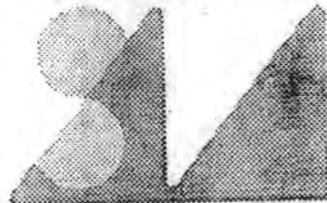
The share price plunged from 48p to 15p before recovering to 20p when it was suspended 'pending financial clarification'.

It is understood that cash flow problems have hit the firm whose share price stood at 325p just 12 months ago.

High interest rates have already claimed victims in the construction industry this year, though Stanley Miller's problems are more deep-seated.

Earlier this year Tyneside building company Brims called in the receiver and last month London-based Rush & Tompkins with major interests in Teesside and Tyneside and other parts of the region followed suit.

Stanley Miller, which employs 700 in three divisions, is involved in two big developments in the



Stanley Miller

ski village, was incensed that the company had said earlier in the week it was still committed to the project.

He said: "They must have known what was happening."

Alastair Balls, the chief executive of Tyne and Wear Development Corporation, said Miller's problems would have little bearing on the Tyneside scheme as its partner Rosehaugh was the driving force behind it.

Miller has a recent history of problems and has delayed releasing its annual figures for the past three weeks.

It ran up big losses in its Scottish housebuilding division and in January it issued a profits warning.

Brokers' analysts, who had massively downgraded profit forecasts, have recently given up guessing what the figures might be.

The company's biggest shareholder, with a 29.9pc stake, announced on February 12 it was selling and, on February 20, *The Northern Echo* revealed that the company's City broker, Barclays de Zoete Wedd had resigned.

Miller was believed to own the sprawling former British Coal North-East headquarters at Team Valley, Gateshead which it wanted to re-develop.

But *The Northern Echo* revealed on Monday that the 120,000 sq ft block had been bought by Evans of Leeds.



Alastair Balls: 'Little bearing on the Tyneside scheme'

North - the £140m Newcastle East Quayside office and residential scheme and the £60m Alpine holiday village near Wolsingham.

Only this week Miller was talking enthusiastically about the village project.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council, which handed on its 500-job dream of a ski village to the company last October, said he was "very sad" at the news.

Coun Chris Foote Wood, Liberal leader on the council, whose group has been opposed all along to the

- 60.- *Happiness* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1980), p.10.
- 61.- *The Quest for Freedom*, p.92.
- 62.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.91.
- 63.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.118.
- 64.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.324.
- 65.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.286.
- 66.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.30.
- 67.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.73.
- 68.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.101.
- 69.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.162.
- 70.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.606.
- 71.- *The Outsider*, p.105.
- 72.- *Britannica Great Books*, vol.54, p.772.
- 73.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.606.
- 74.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.606.
- 75.- *Existentialism and Humanism*, p.28.
- 76.- *The Narrow Corner*, p.191.
- 77.- *Of Human Bondage*, p.168.
- 78.- (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967) , p.168.
- 79.- Iris Murdoch, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1953), p.65.
- 80.- *Britannica Great Books*, vol.7, p.423.
- 81.- Richard Hibler, *Happiness Through Tranquility. The School of Epicurus* (London: University Press pf America, 1984), p.43.
- 82.- *Marriage and Morals* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1984), p.43.
- 83.- S. Maugham, *The Merry-Go-Round* (London: Heinemann, 1916), p.86.

## Rival ski village plan 'one of many'

A COUNCIL boss yesterday said a business consortium's idea to create a huge ski village in his area was merely one of many which his authority was considering.

Neil Johnson, chief executive officer of Derwentside Council said it was not tied to a proposal to create another multi-million pound ski village which might rival that planned by neighbouring Wear Valley District Council at Wolsingham.

He said the council was putting together a brief which would be circulated nationally and internationally in an attempt to find a developer for 635 acres of land left vacant after the closure of the Consett steelworks.

The business consortium, which includes former British skier Conrad Bartelski, was one of many which had so far expressed an interest.

RHAM

# Figures show ski study cost

By SIMON LOWES

A COUNCIL spent £177,651 on plans for a multi-million pound Alpine ski village before the idea was handed over to property developers Stanley Miller, according to figures just released.

Wear Valley District Council used the cash to commission feasibility studies on the proposed £64m scheme, earmarked for Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham.

The figure is itemised in a statement of Wear Valley's capital programme for 1989-90.

Les Morgan, the council's leisure and economic development director, said the spending had been a "worthwhile investment." He added: "If you don't put in, you don't get out... without the outlay on consultancy we would not have had the opportunity for a £64m project with regional significance."

The authority first aired plans for the Weardale leisure resort two-and-a-half years ago, with later figures putting the potential poll tax payers' contribution at £5m.

Newcastle-based Stanley Miller was brought in to co-ordinate the project last year. After top-level talks the firm proposed expanding the leisure park to three times its original area and adding

leisure facilities to boost costs to over £60m.

But problems securing public sector cash prompted company bosses to suggest a completely self-funding venture as the only way forward.

Because of difficulties getting funding, Wear Valley decided to pull out of the scheme in October. It left the way clear for Stanley Miller to pursue the project with private capital.

But, after hearing the final feasibility study costs, council liberal leader Chris Foote Wood said yesterday: "Setting aside the hidden costs of officer-time the council should ask to be compensated for the money spent on consultancy.

"The council should get recompense from the developers for the preparatory work handed over. And it is now six months since the reins were handed over and we should set a time limit for the developers to submit a detailed planning application."

But Mr Morgan said: "You cannot ask for the money back, you have to show some commitment to be credible. And I would rather wait and get the scheme right than put pressure on and risk affecting the plans." A spokesman for Stanley Miller said ongoing consultancy work was being carried out.

Northern  
Echo  
9.5.90

MORE than anything else in its formative years – a bouncing bairn, though still under five – the Gadfly column has held out against Wear Valley Council's proposed Alpine ski village near Wolsingham.

"Hardly a week goes by without another good reason for opposing the ever more harebrained Heights of Folly," we wrote in April 1989.

At that time the council was still acting as its own developer. In October the buck for the scheme was desperately passed to Tyneside-based construction group Stanley Miller.

Even then, without a blade of grass disturbed, it had cost Wear Valley ratepayers £177,000 plus an unspecified, though doubtless disproportionate, amount of senior officers' time.

On November 15th last year the column called the Heights of Folly a "monumental mistake".

On January 31st 1990 we argued that only two options seemed possible: "Either the Newcastle developer will return this year with a scheme vastly different from the original or they'll drop it altogether. Don't bet against the second."

Since then Stanley Miller's shares have plummeted. On Friday they were suspended on the Stock Exchange while hovering around the 20p mark. A year ago they were valued at £3.25.

At 20p a share the company – which just two days earlier had made optimistic noises about the scheme – is worth about £1m. Heights of Folly was last priced at £64m.

Strictly, of course, it is no longer Wear Valley Council's responsibility. But it wilfully spent ratepayers money on its conception, they chose the developer, they'd claim the glory if the wretched Snow Palace ever get above soil height.

But since the Alpine ski village hasn't now a snowball in hell's chance shouldn't they at last admit it.

And if veteran council leader John Richardson is an honourable man shouldn't he – and he, at least – resign immediately?



## Controlling council spending

THE residents of Wear Valley have an investment in leisure facilities and in HAS in March 1989 I spelt out that spending on leisure compared with essential services favoured leisure.

Coun Foote-Wood wishes to slash costs without saying how or where! Conservatives recommend judicious pruning in specific areas — a method used to turn around many loss-making concerns. As shareholders the people should profit from their investment.

Again, property must be maintained but when non-Labour councillors agree to repairs to leisure facilities they find the list of necessities grows as work progresses. Woodhouse Close Leisure Centre is not only well repaired — it changes in size and shape with each contract.

As for multi-million pound palaces, who would pay for a surveyor's report on property they couldn't afford to buy? Coun Foote-Wood voted for a feasibility study for an Alpine Village. The only opposition was Conservative. Thousands of pounds spent on nothing!

On the issue of the Town Hall Conservatives favoured joint ownership with private investment. Liberals canvassed support for public ownership. Labour approved public ownership — and increased the community charge! How then could the Liberals justify not voting?

Conservatives are wary of grandiose schemes and are consistent in opposing unnecessary expenditure.

After all, councils spend other people's money. — Coun Mrs Jean Bramhald, The Grange, 3 Bracks Road, Bishop Auckland

# WEAR VALLEY ADVERTISER

Thursday, November 1, 1990

## Scoop for Les

WEAR Valley leisure chief Les Morgan has scooped a national leisure award.

He has been named personality of the year by readers of Leisure News.

Mr Morgan, Wear Valley District Council director of leisure and economic development, was one of 24 nominated for the first annual "Rolia" - Recognition of Leisure Industry Achievement - award.

Other contenders included Michael Ward, chairman of European Leisure; Ron Pickering, sports commentator and leisure consultant; Peter De Savary, the leisure entrepreneur, and Richard Carr, chairman of Allied Leisure, who was the runner-up.

The announcement was

by KATHY MARSHALL

made by entertainer Rory Bremner at a charity dinner in aid of the NSPCC in Birmingham during Leisure Industry Week.

Mr Morgan, who was featured in Leisure News in May, said it came as a complete surprise when his name was read out.

"I just didn't expect to win. I was overwhelmed. It is unbelievable as far as I am concerned. What it does mean is that what we are doing in Wear Valley has been appreciated by many people.

"It is not an individual award, from my point of view, I am only the leader of the team. It is very much a

council and departmental award," said Mr Morgan.

The magazine spoke of Mr Morgan's "innovative management style" and the Wear Fit crusade to reduce coronary heart disease in the North East through community leisure.

The council linked up with South West Durham Health Authority to devise a cardiac rehabilitation programme which has received national acclaim.

The programme is designed to help patients who have suffered a recent heart attack to improve their fitness and help them recover more quickly and effectively.

The scheme is unique as it is based in a leisure complex and not a hospital.

Earlier this year the programme received a two year grant in the region of £20,000 from the Chest, Heart and Stroke Foundation.

In recent years Wear Valley has won two regional Sports Council awards for leisure facilities and the Spectrum Leisure Complex was a runner-up in the national Sports Council awards scheme.

The authority won another national runners-up award for ski slopes.



● Les Morgan



Dr Bob McManners

## Woman's claim on doctor dropped

INVESTIGATIONS into a woman's allegations against a family doctor have been dropped by the General Medical Council.

A preliminary hearing decided there should be no full-scale inquiry by the body's professional conduct committee into an allegation made against Dr Bob McManners.

Yesterday the woman at the centre of the storm — who is not being identified by *The Northern Echo* — declined to comment on the decision.

Dr McManners, chairman of Bishop Auckland Civic Society and the Bishop of Durham's GP, said: "I am pleased for everybody that the GMC has reached this decision and cleared my name in this way.

"I look forward to being able to return my personal life to normal and to continue to put my energies into serving the people of Bishop Auckland as one of their general practitioners."

Dr McManners, who has received the Bishop's support over the matter, wanted to thank everyone who had shown 'support and concern' for himself and wife Steffa.

He was not present at the preliminary hearing and was told the outcome by post.

A GMC spokeswoman said there was no mechanism by which the woman could appeal against the decision but she could re-submit her complaint.

She said: "The only reason things come before the public hearing is if there's cause to believe serious professional misconduct has occurred."

If cases are proved, the doctor can be struck off.

The Rev Nick Beddow, vicar of Escomb and a member of Bishop Auckland Civic Society, said: "I am pleased his name has been cleared at such an early stage."

Dr McManners had been at the practice of Dr Colin Waine in Escomb Road, Bishop Auckland, at the time of the alleged incident. He has since transferred to a practice in Cockton Hill Road, Bishop Auckland.

April 1991

# Developers win ski plan task

c Feb 70

**COUNCILLORS** appointed a developer for a £30m Alpine ski village yesterday — despite the scheme being labelled a damp squib by the leader of the SLD.

After a stormy meeting, a resolution to place Stanley Miller Holdings plc in charge of the scheme was passed with five votes against. The company has three months to draw up detailed plans for the funding, construction and operation of the Alpine Leisure Park.

The firm now has the task of raising £20m private investment for the scheme. The other £10m is coming from a £5m EC grant and Durham County and Wear Valley District Council — who are to provide £2.5m each.

Chairman of the leisure committee Keith Reed said the appointment of the firm was an auspicious day for Wear Valley which would lead to the revitalisation and regeneration of the area.

But Coun Chris Foote Wood, along with other opposition members, has been against the scheme since its inception. Last year he wrote a letter to Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley asking him to refuse to give money for the Alpine village.

He objected to the appointment of the firm without any form of competition and thought the £10m from the public sector could be better spent. The company, based in Newcastle, had said they were not prepared to be involved in the competition process so were appointed directly.

Coun Foote Wood also said the borrowing for the council's £2.5m would be an extra burden as the loan debt already stood at more than £50m.



**MELANIE ABBOTT** reports from the special meetings

Conservative Coun Jean Bramhall said she was concerned about spending ratepayers' money on the scheme.

Director of finance and management Allen Dobson said most of the debt was from housing.

Clive Sparrow, from Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, the firm which carried out feasibility studies for the park, said: "It is not a damp squib. We recommended Stanley Miller taking all factors into account and felt on balance this was the right way to put the project forward."

Labour Coun Reed, said: "Up to 500 jobs will be created. It is a great shame the opposition hasn't mellowed but has become more vitriolic."

He said the success of Spectrum Leisure Complex's slope with 28,000 dry skiers visiting it showed the scheme was viable.

The Alpine village, planned for Black Bank Wood, Wolsingham, would include five dry ski slopes including the world's longest. A golf course, swimming pool, hotels and chalets are also included in the development brief.

Coun Richardson said: "It is possible this is the last chance and only chance we will have of breathing life into the area."

The council must now apply to the Department of Environment to be allowed to spend the £10m which would otherwise have to be returned.

# National focus on polling ~~15/77~~ victory 87

A WEAR Valley District Council by-election result has caught the attention of national politicians.

As Liberal Democrats yesterday celebrated victory in the Woodhouse Close by-election, parliamentary chief whip Jim Wallace MP called for details of the result.

He plans to use it as evidence of a revival in the fortunes of the party, which has slumped in the opinion polls.

On Thursday, candidate Bill Wade overturned Labour's biggest majority on the council to win by 234 votes.

The Liberal Democrats leader on the council, Coun Chris Foote Wood, said the result was a verdict on the inefficient way the Labour-led council conducted its business.

"I'm looking forward to the full council election in two years time when I believe we have a real chance of establishing a non-Labour administration in Wear Valley," he said.

# 'Stick by petition spirit' — society

14.08.89

A TOWN'S civic society is to write a letter to a council claiming its policy for the development of a town hall goes against the spirit of a 10,000-signature petition.

Bishop Auckland Civic Society will send the letter to Wear Valley District Council calling into question its

proposals for the town hall in the Market Place.

The council is at present pursuing plans to rent out the 120-year-old Grade One listed building to a private developer on a 125-year lease.

Dr Bob McManners, chairman of the civic society, said 10,018 people had signed a petition handed to the council to keep the building in public ownership.

The society believes the intention of those people was to keep it also to keep the hall in public use.

The plans to lease it would effectively put the town hall into private hands for 125 years.

He said: "I think that as a group we feel it is not in the spirit of the intention of the petition."

He said the letter to the council would remind it of that.

Meanwhile, the society is drawing up its own plans for the future of the hall which was closed last October because of structural faults.

Members have opened talks with Wear Valley planning director Paul Worsnop.

Coun Billy Neilson (Lab) said: "I think it's a question of patience. At the end of the day everybody will be satisfied."

## Town hall

28.02.90

## plan faces

## an inquiry

Wear Valley District Council to carry out further investigations into a football club chairman's proposals for a town

council members opted to defer a decision on whether to go ahead with the proposal. Wear Valley District Council chairman Garry Gibson's proposals for Bishop Auckland Town

at the private meeting, Labour councillor John Richardson said: "We have deferred the matter for a full and proper investigation into Mr Gibson's proposals."

According to public records, Mr Gibson's proposals for his companies have a total of £1.5m outstanding county court judgements against them.

Mr Gibson has said he has learnt from his business problems made when he had a business experience. His group is

expected to have a net worth of £4.5m by the end of this year.

When told of the decision to defer, he said: "That's fair enough."

Earlier, he was said to have surprised councillors when he told them he intended re-siting the town's library in the main hall of the town hall.

His company, Red Castle Properties Ltd, of Felling, Gateshead, hopes Durham County Council will rent the main hall.

There will be 12 small shops on the ground floor of the town hall.

Mr Gibson's company has offered £120,000 to the council for the 125-year lease of the 120-year-old listed building.

He said yesterday that although he initially believed it would cost around £1m to refurbish the landmark, he now believed it would cost some £700,000.

Ideally, the millionaire property developer wanted to begin work in June in time to open in Christmas this year.

10/4/89

## NEWS FROM

# Ski dream planners move into top gear

DEVELOPERS appointed to coordinate plans for a massive ski and golf village have met with consultants who will work out its fine detail.

The talks at the offices of developers Stanley Miller Holdings plc in Newcastle was attended by four firms engaged by them.

Representatives from London-based leisure consultancy L and R Leisure, management consultants Deloitte, Haskins and Sells, Durham-based landscape architects Clouston's and chartered surveyors Storey, Sons and Parker, attended.

Mr Midgeley said the companies would meet again in four weeks' time to discuss their provisional results.

Stanley Miller is working on a £100,000 budget and is paying the firms for their consultancy expertise. Mr Midgeley said it had agreed with Wear Valley District Council that it would come back to members after four months — at the end of June.

Last week, the developers revealed that they wanted to widen the attractiveness of the council's original ski village plan giving golf an equal prominence, so that the project would have year-round appeal.

The plans are earmarked for the Black Bank Wood outside Wolsingham.

# Frosty reaction to ski plan

FRESH talks aimed at re-viving plans for a Wear Valley ski village have been called a waste of time.

Wear Valley District Council should get on with the task of bringing jobs and realistic development to the area, said Chris Foote Wood, leader of the council's Liberal Democrat group.

Earlier, the council announced

they would be having talks with Newcastle-based developers, Stanley Miller, in a bid to salvage plans for a £30m alpine ski village at Wolsingham, Weardale.

Backed by local Labour MPs, Hilary Armstrong and Derek Foster, the council had hoped to win government approval.

But Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley ruled the council

and Durham County Council could not borrow £2.5m each or borrow £5m from the EC.

Coun Foote Wood called the minister's decision "a blessing."

"I urge the council to admit defeat and drop this mad-cap scheme once and for all.

"The climate is right for industrial development and we should be putting more time and

effort into bringing real jobs and development to the area," he said.

He called on the council to back an alternative private scheme to develop ski-ing at the top end of the Wear Valley.

But Council leader, John Richardson, said the talks with Stanley Miller will go ahead.

"I'm not intrested in what Coun Foote Wood has to say

12.04.89

The Northern Echo, Thursday, April 20, 1989

THE NORTH

REPORTING THE

# Chief slams ski village double

THERE is no room for two huge ski villages within miles of each other, a leisure boss said yesterday.

Les Morgan, director of leisure and economic development at Wear Valley District Council said that if proposals to build a second multi-million pound resort were similar to those for the £30m Alpine Village at Wolsingham, there would be a conflict.

A business consortium is putting together a package for another ski resort nine miles from the Wolsingham site at Consett to be considered by the council's neighbouring authority, Derwentside.

Mr Morgan said: "Of course it will have an effect if it goes ahead.

"I have not seen their proposals, but the closer the projects are the more they will conflict."

He said: "There is no room for two

projects if they are similar."

Wear Valley has already spent 18 months planning its scheme. The council has gone through feasibility studies costing more than £100,000 and the project is now in the hands of Newcastle developers Stanley Miller Holdings.

The developers are due to report back to Wear Valley before the end of June.

Last week the council wrote a

letter to the Department of the Environment asking for permission to spend £10m of public money on the scheme which will include dry ski slopes, a toboggan run, hotels and swimming pools.

Mr Morgan said he felt the proposals for the Consett resort were a form of flattery. Wear Valley had proved the idea was feasible and now other bodies were jumping on to the same idea.

He said of the Consett scheme: "I am quite sure that when the consultants hand it to the financial side they will find that the two schemes cannot exist."

Meanwhile Coun Chris Foote Wood has written to Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley asking him not to sanction the spending of £2.5m by Wear Valley, £2.5m by Durham County and £5m by way of an EEC grant.

## Surcharge

MR Dobson, the Statutory Treasurer of Wear Valley District Council, cannot plead ignorance of the law because he is an IPFA and FCIS (Echo July 24).

Any increased administration costs arising from sending out 50,000 proper poll tax forms can be recouped by surcharge, from councillors Lee, Wilson, Neilson, Richardson, Terrans and Mr Dobson (section 159 — 161 Local Govt Act 1972)

Because of the Stanley Miller (dry-ski) and DEWJOC (Woodhouse Leisure Complex) affairs I wrote to the European Commission on July 18th 1989 requesting that all EEC aid to UK councils be stopped. Thus the cash blow feature (Echo July 22)

KEN ABRAHALL

26 Jackson Street  
Coundon Grange

10/8/89.

HEAR ALL <sup>from</sup> SIDES.

# Battle on as councillor quits seat

By LAWRENCE DONEGAN

A WEAR Valley district councillor is to resign due to pressure of work — and the war of words in the run-up to the by-election has already begun.

Bill Oxbrough, councillor for Escomb, will stand down at the next full meeting of the council on October 4.

Mr Oxbrough yesterday thanked his constituents and fellow Labour councillors for their support but added he was no longer able to combine his work at the Royal Mail with council commitments.

He was elected unopposed as councillor 27 months ago.

Labour leader John Richardson said the council would be sorry to lose the 'exemplary' contributions of Coun Oxbrough.

News of the resignation and an impending by-election was greeted by opposition members.

Coun Chris Foote Wood, leader of the Liberal Democrats, said his party would be selecting a candidate to fight the seat.

He paid tribute to Coun Oxbrough's work as a councillor but said it would not be enough to retain the seat for Labour.

"I confidently predict that we will win this seat in the same way we have won the last two council by-elections.

"We had already targeted Escomb for the 1991 elections.

"Victory this time will confirm that the Labour Party is on its way to losing its majority on the council," he said.

Billy Neilson, chairman of Wear Valley Labour Party, said yesterday he was confident his party would retain the seat.

"It is interesting to see the opposition parties have decided to put up a candidate this time.

"But I am sure the electors of Escomb and Witton Park will remember that the Liberals have taken no interest in their area for a very long time," he said.

21 08 89

# New talks over ski village plan

A COUNCIL'S managing director yesterday revealed he was engaged in talks with two potential saviours of the £64m Weardale Alpine ski village scheme.

Wear Valley District Council managing director Allen Dobson's comments came in reply to a call to scrap the idea following the collapse of developers Stanley Miller.

Liberal leader Coun Chris Foote Wood put a motion to yesterday's policy and finance meeting urging the council to abandon promotion of the ambitious leisure project.

The council originally spent £177,000 on feasibility studies and preparatory work for the scheme — with a dry ski slope, chalets, lakes and a Father Christmas Fantasy Land on a site near Wolsingham.

Following difficulties raising public sector finance for the plan,

the council pulled out and passed it on to Tyneside builders Stanley Miller for development last October.

But a question mark has hung over the project's future since Stanley Miller was put in the hands of the receiver last month after announcing losses of £4.5m.

Coun Foote Wood said the council should "be realistic," adding that no private funding had been offered since plans were first aired.

But Mr Dobson hit back, saying: "The council no longer has any financial involvement and it would be illogical not to give information to any possible developers who could pick the scheme up.

"I can not reveal their identity at this stage, but I am talking to two parties who are interested."

Coun Foote Wood's motion was defeated by nineteen votes to three, with one abstention.

N/Echo.

22/9/89.

SWD

UP YOUR STREET 5

## Talks held on ski plan

COUNCIL officials met with developers yesterday to discuss costings for an ambitious Alpine leisure complex in Weardale.

Les Morgan, the director of leisure and economic development at Wear Valley District Council, said talks were held with representatives of property developers Stanley Miller.

The company was taken on by the council to make its vision of a dales ski centre a reality.

In July, Stanley Miller unveiled plans for a £50m complex which would need £10m funding from the public sector. The council asked the company to return with a breakdown of the costs.

At a meeting within the next two or three weeks, members are expected to decide whether they will seek Environment Secretary Chris Patten's approval to find the £10m public-sector cash for the development.

The council has already been turned down by Mr Patten's predecessor, Nicholas Ridley, when representatives discussed a smaller scheme.

## Ski plan 13.9.89. cash move

DETAILED costings on an estimated £50m Alpine leisure resort scheme are now in the hands of a council backing the project.

Consultants working on proposals for the scheme, at Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham, are being led by Newcastle property developers Stanley Miller.

Originally the financial breakdown was scheduled for submission by the end of July.

But that period was extended and now Stanley Miller have handed the figures over to Wear Valley District Council.

It is thought the council will use the figures to back its argument for Government help. They are to approach Environment Secretary Chris Patten for permission to spend £10m of public sector cash on the project.

Approval, which has been rejected once by Mr Patten's predecessor, is vital to the plans.

## Why such secrecy?

ON being challenged about a golf course adjacent to the planned ski slopes in the Wolsingham area, Wear Valley District Council leader John Richardson replied: "No comment." (Echo March 13)

I wonder how many people in the area have been asked if they even want a ski slope let alone a golf course, neither of which is the sport of the average working-class person, the elderly or the unemployed.

I have also read many times of Wear Valley Council meetings being held "behind closed doors." Why all the secrecy? Are the ratepayers not entitled to know what is being done with their money?

Incidentally, it is definitely not being spent in Binchester where I live. Residents here have to walk on disgraceful footpaths full of holes filled with water. One thing we don't need is a golf course because we have our very own obstacle course, it's called the road.

MRS G. HUMBLE

3 Gladstone Terrace  
Binchester

# Ski plans costs due

CONSULTANTS working on plans for a £50m Alpine leisure complex will deliver their detailed costings to a council next week.

The team of consultants led by Newcastle property developers Stanley Miller will hand the document to Wear Valley District Council.

The council asked for the costings and construction information to strengthen its case when it goes to Environment Secretary Chris Patten in an attempt to get backing to spend £10m public cash on the project.

His predecessor, Nicholas Ridley, has already refused to allow the district council and Durham County Council to spend £2.5m each on building a more modest ski village.

And he did not allow Wear Valley to apply for a £5m grant from Europe.

At a meeting on July 6 where revamped plans for the village at Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham, were unveiled, councillors asked Stanley Miller to come up with the costings by the end of this month.

The ambitious proposals for the resort include six dry ski slopes, two lakes, chalets, hotels and a Father Christmas fantasy land.

# Ski decision awaited

A COUNCIL is still waiting for a response from the Government on whether it is allowed to spend £10m of public money on a new ski village.

Wear Valley District Council bosses applied to the Department of the Environment last month for the extra spending power to foot public bills for a planned £30m try ski complex at Black Bank Wood, Wolsingham.

The council needs permission to spend a hoped for £5m grant from the EEC as well as to use £2.5m of Durham County Council cash and £2.5m of its own money on the project.

A spokesman for the DoE could only confirm yesterday that the department was looking into the application.

Meanwhile, Stanley Miller Holdings Ltd, the Newcastle-based

developer now masterminding the scheme, is due to come up with a feasibility study on it some time next month.

Yesterday, Wear Valley director of leisure and economic development Les Morgan said he did not know when Stanley Miller representatives would be ready to present the study to the council or when the Government was likely to respond.

## Ski village firm

## set for meeting

13/1/87  
DEVELOPERS working to finalise plans for an ambitious £50m Alpine village in Weardale will meet councillors at the end of the month.

A spokesman for Newcastle developer Stanley Miller said representatives would meet Wear Valley District Council.

He said: "We are still putting together the more detailed proposals but as yet there is still no firm date on when we will go back to the council."

At a meeting last week at which councillors backed the firm's proposals, Stanley Miller was

asked to come back with the detailed costing and construction schedules.

The information will be used by the council to strengthen its arguments when it again approaches Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley asking for his go-ahead to use £10m of public sector cash.

Mr Ridley has already refused to allow the council and Durham County Council to spend £2.5m each on the project. And he did not allow Wear Valley to apply for a £5m EEC grant.

10/8/89.

SWD

REGION 13

# Alpine resort — costs delay

DETAILED costings for a £50m alpine leisure resort are running behind schedule.

Plans to triple the size of the proposed resort near Wolsingham have meant Newcastle developers Stanley Miller need more time to prepare the figures, said a company spokeswoman yesterday.

In July, Wear Valley District Council agreed to press on with a bigger scheme after former environment minister Nicholas Ridley refused government funds for a £24m proposal.

The council asked for costings on the £50m scheme by the end of July to strengthen its case when it goes again for government backing.

"With the scheme being bigger than we originally thought, costing it has taken longer. It is such an important scheme that we want to make sure everything is spot on," said the spokeswoman for Stanley Miller.

Wear Valley director of leisure and economic development Les Morgan said he had been expecting the costings this week but as councillors are in recess there is 'no problem.'

**URHAM**

# Concern over line's future



Wear Valley  
District  
Council

Simon Lowes reports from  
the planning committee

**THE proposed new light rapid transport system in Cleveland could cut off a planned tourist lifeline to a massive dales leisure project.**

Plans were in the pipeline to extend the existing Darlington to Wear Valley branch line to cater for the proposed Alpine Village development in Wolsingham.

But the threat posed by the new Cleveland link could hit hopes of shipping in thousands of potential visitors.

Yesterday's Wear Valley District Council planning committee also heard that a possible introduction of steam trains as a

tourist attraction on the branch line was now at risk.

A consultants' report recommends the light rapid transport system being considered by Cleveland County Council should run through Cleveland to Teesside Airport and Darlington.

The route would operate independently of British Rail but use their existing tracks and replace the present service between Darlington Middlesbrough and Saltburn.

But a report by Durham County Council economic chiefs warns the scheme could jeopardise the passenger service between Bishop Auckland and Darlington.

A regular weekend service from Bishop Auckland into Weardale has proved a popular tourist route.

Speaking of the threat to future development of the 'Heritage Line', Coun Don White (Lab) said: "Rather than talking about closure they should be discussing the two lines complementing each other. This could bring many people from Teesside and Darlington to Weardale

The committee agreed to inform Durham County Council of its concern.

● Plans for providing a fishing lake and leisure facilities at Witton-le-Wear Lido were thrown out by councillors

## 'Green' battle wins backing

COUNCILLORS have backed opposition to a 'green' threat posed by two proposed opencast schemes around a small village.

A 100-acre plantation has been earmarked by minerals firm HJ Banks for extraction of 100,000 tonnes of coal and 200,000 tonnes of fireclay and brickshale.

The 27-hectare site lies just outside Oakenshaw, near Crook. Another application for opencast strip mining of coal and clay at nearby Stockley Fell plantation has been submitted by Rackwood Colliery Co. Ltd.

An action group formed by village community association members is campaigning against the proposals.

Protestors claim giving the sites the go-ahead would leave them almost totally surrounded by opencast workings and hit a 'wildlife corridor' of woodland.

They claim the site would lie within 250m of a group of 35 houses and would produce unacceptable levels of noise and disturbance.

The two planning applications are to be considered by Durham County Council.

But yesterday's Wear Valley District Council planning committee recommended passing on objections to the two schemes.

Council leader John Richardson said: "We must object on environmental and ecological grounds against the removal of a heavily-wooded area."

● Council officials yesterday backed Ministry of Defence plans to install communications facilities in Stanhope.

But the planning committee said masking materials should be used to reduce the environmental impact. Proposals include two dish aerials, a prefabricated building, fuel tank and access road.

and someone shouting in the back lane. After seeing the

# Chief backs branch line cash demand

N/Echo.  
11/12.89

PLANNING chief Robin Brooks has backed a report demanding more cash for the Darlington to Wear Valley railway line.

He supports Durham County Council claims that the line could play a major role in linking Darlington to tourist spots like the proposed Alpine leisure complex and the Durham Dales.

By CHRISTINE FIELDHOUSE

importance of the industrial development behind the branch line.

And an improved service would be useful for people getting to work or going to social events, he said.

"The hinterland of the branch line is enjoying improved economic development opportunities," he wrote.

The line links Darlington with a string of smaller settlements in rural Weardale via Newton Aycliffe, Shildon and Bishop Auckland.

"The railway has an important role to play in developing the potential of these opportunities.

It offers a regular service to Bishop Auckland and a Sunday service in the summer months for day trips into Weardale.

"The line serves the site which is being considered for a freight depot at Faverdale. It is also the planned long-term link for baled waste to disposal sites in Weardale and the vital link to the cement works at Eastgate."

Mr Brooks, Darlington's Chief Planning Officer, is to urge members of the borough's development committee on Wednesday to back Durham County Council in its call for increased investment by transport chiefs for the branch line.

Calls for the extra cash are being made on British Rail and the Department of Transport.

And he stressed the im-

"It is important to Darlington's general economic well-being that the branch line is properly equipped to meet all needs," said Mr Brooks.

# Probe plan for leisure service

A BRITISH Standard for a council's leisure management could help fend off outside competition for contracts.

chiefs are proposing bringing in leading consultants for a 'quality audit' on the way they run services.

The Government has approved outline plans for compulsory tendering for local authority sport and leisure facilities.

The assessment would pave the way for the council to gain 'British Standards Institute BS5750' certificates for its operation of the district's facilities.

Free competition for the contracts, to last between four and six years, could be phased in during 1993.

A report to Wednesday's finance committee says 'approval to internationally recognised systems standards' could help the council's own workforce win tenders.

And, in preparation, Wear Valley District Council leisure

# THE CHALLENGE OF THE DECADE

WEAR Valley can look forward to new challenges and exciting developments in the decade ahead.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council, also hopes the 1990s will bring increasing prosperity as the council aims to do everything possible to attract more firms into the area and help create more jobs.

The most ambitious plans for Wear Valley is the Alpine leisure resort, at Black Banks Wood near Wolsingham, now being developed by the private sector and set to cost £64 million.

The plans include six dry ski slopes, two lakes, chalets, hotels and a Father Christmas fantasy land. Much closer to fruition is the pioneering Dales Skill and Enterprise Centre due to open in Stanhope in May.

"We are looking forward to the opening of the centre. It will create jobs and help stimulate the economy in the dales," said Mr Dobson.

The £540,000 centre at Castle Gardens is a joint initiative of Wear Valley District Council, Durham County Council and the Rural Development Commission which has provided the capital cost.

BY KATHY MARSHALL

The centre will provide advice and information facilities for training, craft workshops, tourist information centre, shops and a cafe and will provide jobs for about 25 people.

The New Year will see the future use of Bishop Auckland Town Hall decided.

There is also the future development of The Elms in the Market Place - the old technical office which is on the market at the moment. We anticipate that will be dealt with in the next few weeks," said Mr Dobson.

The council is also awaiting the report of the Government Inspector who headed the public inquiry into the Bishop Auckland Local Plan which will shape the future of town in the decade ahead.

"I am particularly excited about the possibility of having a business park in Bishop Auckland itself, that is subject to the finding of the public inquiry," said Mr Dobson.

He is delighted at the success of South Church Enterprise Park. It has been so successful that Phase III has been brought forward and it is likely that all the space available will soon be developed.

New sites have been earmarked for industry including a prestige site at Low Willington. Mr Dobson said the theme of the nineties is all about building bridges - both literally and metaphorically.

A vital new road link will preserve the historic Newton Cap viaduct. The 130-year-old former railway viaduct is to be converted to carry A689 traffic from Bishop Auckland to Crook, Wolsingham and Weardale, over the River Wear.

County highway chiefs believe the viaduct conversion will be the first of its kind in the UK. Work is due to start in the Spring of 1991.

Improvements are also planned to the A96 Willington to Spennymoor Road at Jubilee Bridge and together with those that have already take place on the A690 at Brancepeth will provide direct routes to the A1 motorway.

In Crook, a new superstore is to be built by the Co-op at Highfield bringing new jobs to the town.

# Brake bid on leisure centre spending

OPPOSITION chiefs are bidding to halt a council's spending at £2.1m for refurbishment work on a major leisure centre. The scheme at Bishop Auckland's Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex was originally approved with a budget of £1.6m. But building problems added another £500,000 to the Wear Valley District Council bill.

The provisional opening date for the redeveloped centre was April 13 this year, but work to ensure the main swimming pool is watertight has caused further delay for builders John Laing Construction.

Now the Liberal Democrat group is calling for spending to be capped at £2.1m for what they label a "grandiose scheme".

And they are demanding an ex-

planation why the work was necessary just three years after a major repair and renewal programme at the building.

Liberal Democrat leader Chris Foote Wood, who will put the proposals before Monday's policy committee, said: "The previous renovation scheme went way over budget and the council was severely criticised by the District Auditor.

"Now it seems we are heading the same way again.

"We are in favour of the council providing leisure facilities, but the controlling Labour Group seems to think the ratepayers will pay any amount on the poll tax for its grandiose schemes."

Explanations would also be sought on why two squash courts were built and then one removed and why

"major structural faults" were not found during the previous scheme.

Labour leader Coun John Richardson said: "The money spent at Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex is in accordance with professional advice given by consultants."

Coun Richardson said he was not prepared to discuss possible exempt information until seeing the agenda for Monday's meeting.

The Northern Echo, Friday, March 9, 1990

# Anger at poll tax 'secrecy'

THE poll tax level in Wear Valley District was agreed yesterday – but householders were not told what it will be.

The Labour-controlled council, which has attracted strong criticism from the Campaign for Freedom of Information, was setting its first-ever poll tax.

But, before doing so, it ensured that no press or public could hear the reasons behind the figure or what the figure is.

The unusual move means the public – many of whom will have to find more cash

to pay the tax – will be in the dark until a rubber-stamping full council meeting at 2pm this afternoon.

Liberal Democrat leader Chris Foote Wood said he believed many people would be angered by the council's stance.

He said: "It is totally reprehensible that the controlling Labour group should seek to prevent people from knowing what their recommendation is on poll tax."

A clue to the tax came in a document leaked earlier this week. The paper stated

it would be just under £300 but only if there are no new projects. It is virtually certain there will be none.

Maurice Frankel, national director of the Campaign for Freedom of Information has said councils' private interests can be protected by their holding meetings behind closed doors.

At the policy and finance committee yesterday, Liberals unsuccessfully moved that Press and public be allowed to listen to the debate.

Wednesday, January 24, 1990

## Secrecy must be challenged

*THE Northern Echo* has received a letter which we feel obliged to draw to the attention of readers. It is from the legal director of Wear Valley District Council, Elisabeth Ashness, and warns this newspaper not to publish information which the council regards as "exempt." If we do, the council "will consider its position with a view to action being taken to prevent further disclosures."

By "exempt" the council means information which some officers and members want to keep secret, for the time being at least, from the public. In particular Mrs Ashness refers to two articles, published in some editions of *The Northern Echo* earlier this month, concerning the proposed leasing of Bishop Auckland town hall.

It may come as no surprise to the ratepayers of Wear Valley, particularly those 10,000 who signed a petition against the sale of the town hall, that discussions about the future of their property should take place behind closed doors. They might however be disturbed that the council is prepared to pursue its policy of secrecy with such zeal.

Sadly this letter is not written in isolation. The one area in which many Labour-controlled councils and Conservative Government are united is their mutual desire for secrecy; all too often using restrictive legislation to cover embarrassment rather than to protect the public.

The Government's obsession with secrecy manifested itself in the Spycatcher shambles where the world had access to a book which British citizens were not allowed to read. Now legislation bans broadcasters from interviewing elected members of certain political parties, the new Official Secrets legislation does not accept the public interest as a justifiable breach of the Act and Cabinet papers, even though 30 years old, have been locked away for a lifetime.

Closer to home, local authorities are increasingly eager to close their doors on the Press and public. Last year, for example, Durham's environment committee decided that a company which stored deadly toxic waste at Seaham should not be prosecuted. There may have been a sound reason for such a decision but, whatever it was, the public was not told. Similarly, when *The Northern Echo* investigated proposals to bring toxic waste incinerators to Teesside, the local authorities were forbidden from releasing essential details. To find the relevant information we simply contacted the United States where such petty restrictions are not tolerated.

There are similar examples in most areas of officialdom. Water companies make their decisions, affecting the water we must drink and the bills we must pay, in secret. Some police forces appear increasingly reluctant to give out information and Northumbria Police Authority recently chose to consider secretly two issues, the success of its new helicopter and the number of accidents involving police vehicles, because it was "counter-productive" to discuss them in public. Even judges send perpetrators of certain crimes to jail without allowing their names to become known.

We would be the first to admit that, as a newspaper, we have a vested interest in the freedom of information. But we ought not to be alone. It is difficult to believe that the British public does not demand the right to know what actions are carried out in its name, be they at national or local level. Yet it apparently chooses to ignore the restrictions and instead supports further controls on the Press. It might well be remembered that, unlike doctors and priests, the journalist has no special privilege in the eyes of the law over and above that of the ordinary citizen. Restricting the rights of the Press is effectively restricting the right of the individual.

The International Press Institute, in its yearly review of the world's media, concludes that Britain has a less than half-free Press. In his report to Helsinki the Institute's director reports that Britain used to be one of the frontline countries in freedom of expression but Press freedom is now severely curtailed.

In this increasingly restrictive climate it must be the responsibility of the Press, with the support of the public, to ensure that those who seek to stifle information and free speech, from Wear Valley to Whitehall, are challenged at every turn.

CLIFF EDWARDS reports from Wear  
Valley District Council's policy and  
finance committee

A BOUNDARY review in which arguments for a new town council will be dealt with, may begin within a year.

Managing director of the council, Allen Dobson, made the announcement which will mean traders in Bishop Auckland, who have been pushing for a new council, will have to wait for a decision.

He said: "We have indicated that our next job will be to deal with a boundary review, hopefully — if resources are available — within the next year."

Bishop Auckland Chamber of Trade submitted its proposals to the Boundary Commission for the new local council last year.

The Commission, however, will send the dossier back and recommend the traders to submit it to Wear Valley as the body responsible for carrying out such reviews.

The council says it can only do that when it is sure of the financial implications a third tier of local government would have on the size of the poll tax bill.

The meeting saw a bitter argument between Liberal Democrat leader Coun Chris Foote Wood and Coun John Richardson, the chairman and leader of the Labour group.

Angry Labour members called on Coun Foote Wood to retract a statement in which they claimed he had said the council would not carry out a boundary review.

## Anger over unpaid rents

A COUNCILLOR said she was concerned at the size of a £71,000 debt of unpaid rents owed to the council.

Before members decided to write off the debt, Coun Marie Land (Lib Dem) said: "I think it's a dreadful indictment of the past inefficiency of the debt collecting procedures of this council that we are being asked to make this decision today."

But Coun Billy Neilson (Lab) said: "I can assure Mrs Land if she went in with a machine gun and two rottweilers she wouldn't get a penny piece out of them."

The council needs to wipe away the debts soon so that under new legislation the amount is not charged to poll tax payers.

Director of housing Frank Bouweraerts said officers were doing all they could to recover the cash from former tenants.

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# Town shows fighting spirit

March  
1990

By CLIFF EDWARDS

A TOWN'S new civic society will meet tonight to decide its strategy on how best to serve the people.

An executive committee of the Bishop Auckland Civic Society — formed last month — will meet to map out principles to help safeguard the town's heritage.

The society, set to have a say in Wear Valley District Council's planning process, is a sign of the resurgence of vociferous protest on issues affecting the town.

Dr Bob McManners, chairman of the civic society, said: "There has been a groundswell of public opinion. People started to feel that Bishop Auckland had an unfair crack of the whip."

The society — which evolved from an action group dedicated to protecting the town's Victorian town hall — is one result of the new forcefulness of residents.

Another is seen in plans for a new town council mooted at the start of the year by the local chamber of trade and commerce.

Figureheads in both camps are talking about working together for the town's good.

And leading Labour members at Wear Valley have also welcomed both initiatives.

## 'New wave of protest' grows

Frank Hutchinson, former chairman of the town's amenity association which folded around 1980, welcomed the new "fighting spirit" within the town.

"There was a great deal of apathy in the town. I detect an air of change. It has got to be good for the town. If people do not look after themselves nobody else will," he said.

Dr McManners believes the new wave of protest rose when Durham County Council announced plans — since dropped — to demolish Newton Cap Viaduct.

After the district council moved in February to sell the Grade One listed town hall, more than 10,000 of the town's 24,700 people signed a protest petition.

That decision has now been rescinded by the district council which is now pursuing controversial moves towards renting out the hall on a 125-year lease.

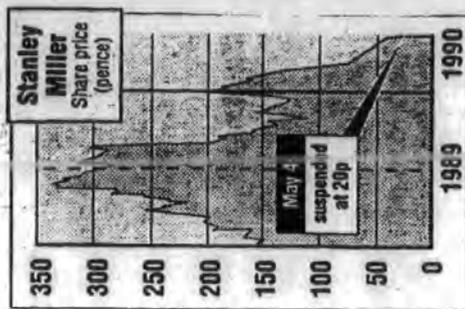
Stanley Miller shares suspended after 305p fall in a year

5/5/90

N/Echo

# Cash crisis hits building giant

By TERRY MURDEN, Industrial Journalist of the Year



Source: Wise Speke

THE crisis-hit company behind two major leisure and commercial projects in the North-East was plunged into further trouble yesterday.

Stanley Miller, the region's second-biggest building company, saw its shares suspended on the Stock Exchange and its directors were last night locked in talks as speculation mounted over the company's future.

The share price plunged from 48p to 15p before recovering to 20p when it was suspended 'pending financial clarification'.

It is understood that cash flow problems have hit the firm whose share price stood at 325p just 12 months ago.

High interest rates have already claimed victims in the construction industry this year, though Stanley Miller's problems are more deep-seated.

Earlier this year Tyneside building company Brims called in the receiver and last month London-based Rush & Tompkins with major interests in Teesside and Tyneside and other parts of the region followed suit.

Stanley Miller, which employs 700 in three divisions, is involved in two big developments in the



**Alastair Balls:**  
'Little bearing on the Tyneside scheme'

North - the £140m Newcastle East Quayside office and residential scheme and the £60m Alpine holiday village near Wolsingham.

Only this week Miller was talking enthusiastically about the village project.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council, which handed on its 500-job dream of a ski village to the company last October, said he was "very sad" at the news.

Coun Chris Foote Wood, Liberal leader on the council, whose group has been opposed all along to the



**Stanley Miller**

ski village, was incensed that the company had said earlier in the week it was still committed to the project.

He said: "They must have known what was happening."

Alastair Balls, the chief executive of Tyne and Wear Development Corporation, said Miller's problems would have little bearing on the Tyneside scheme as its partner Rosehaugh was the driving force behind it.

Miller has a recent history of problems and has delayed releasing its annual figures for the past three weeks.

It ran up big losses in its Scottish housebuilding division and in January it issued a profits warning.

Brokers' analysts, who had massively downgraded profit forecasts, have recently given up guessing what the figures might be.

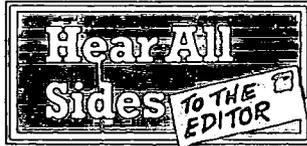
The company's biggest shareholder, with a 29.9pc stake, announced on February 12 it was selling and, on February 20, *The Northern Echo* revealed that the company's City broker, Barclays de Zoete Wedd had resigned.

Miller was believed to own the sprawling former British Coal North-East headquarters at Team Valley, Gateshead which it wanted to re-develop.

But *The Northern Echo* revealed on Monday that the 120,000 sq ft block had been bought by Evans of Leeds.

30.5.90

III



## Labour and leisure

IN ANSWER to R.Moore (HAS 23.3.90) and W.Dobinson (HAS 11.4.90), only the Liberal Democrats on Wear Valley Council have the courage to make positive proposals to reduce Labour's grossly inflated "leisure" spending, currently costing every poll tax payer £60 a year.

The ever-increasing cost of "refurbishing" the Woodhouse Close Leisure complex, for the second time in three years, has continually escalated from an original estimate of £1.2m to £1.6m to £2.1m and beyond, to the detriment of many areas in the district where play facilities are minimal or non-existent.

People want local facilities near at hand, not multi-million pound palaces that cost the earth to build, staff and maintain.

We fought our corner for a £200,000 reduction of leisure spending which would have reduced the poll tax burden, but were defeated by the combined votes of Labour, Tory and Independent councillors.

After that, we were not prepared to support the high level of poll tax set by Labour, but we do support spending on essential services. We abstained on Labour's overall "package" rather than vote separately on hundreds of different items.

It is clear the only way to curb Labour's extravagant spending in Wear Valley is to return the Liberals to power next year. -  
**Coun Chris Foote Wood**, Liberal Democrat Group leader, Wear Valley DC.

# Poll tax chaos with £1.5m unpaid and worse to come

NEARLY £1.5m is owed to a district council in unpaid community charge six months after it was implemented.

By the end of October, £6,406,000 should have been collected by Wear Valley Council, but only £4,916,000 had been received.

Council chiefs say poll tax computer systems are inefficient, large backlogs in paperwork exist, people are getting unnecessary reminders and the morale of overworked staff is low.

People who do pay are likely to face large rises next year.

Next year's poll tax demand will be at

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By CLIFF EDWARDS

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least £50 above the present £308, when the government cuts relief to councils. Inflation is likely to swell the figure more.

Leading Labour member, Coun Billy Neilson, said of the £1.5m shortfall: "That will be an escalating figure."

As the year proceeds, it would become more difficult for people to pay their mounting debt.

He said: "There will be a financial problem and the financial problem can only be relieved by imposing a greater community charge next year.

"It's inevitable that poll tax payers are

on an escalating spiral as far as payment is concerned."

A report to the council states that collection of outstanding money was affected by the "inability of the systems to work correctly".

Embattled managing director Allan Dobson states: "This has resulted in many chargepayers receiving reminders unnecessarily, and increasing substantially the workload and frustration of staff."

The council has, however, made inroads into the amounts owed. When 8,000 reminders were sent out at the end of August, 2,000 people paid a total of £177,000.

In all, 77pc of the charge in Wear

Valley has been paid.

Mr Dobson's report says the council is "attempting to make arrangements" to start full recovery proceedings.

However, he warns that care must be taken as there was still a backlog of 5,500 register amendments and 1,335 poll tax and housing benefit amendments to be processed.

Mr Dobson said yesterday that because poll tax regulations were received late, there was no time to develop efficient computer systems to cater for all of the tax's complications.

"There's got to be a much more effective look at the system. Community charge is a very difficult tax to administer," he said.

## Ski village doubts start party storm

A LABOUR-controlled council will pull out of plans for a £60m ski village because it cannot stand the political heat, an opposition leader claimed.

Wear Valley District councillor Chris Foote Wood said the Labour leaders' expected decision tomorrow not to go ahead with attempts to supplement the costs with £5m of ratepayers' money was due to pressure from Liberal Democrats.

The council, which initiated proposals for the ski village at

Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham will continue to act as enablers for the scheme, now headed by Newcastle property developers Stanley Miller.

In a report to the council, company boss Harry Midgley has said that because of difficulties getting the Government to sanction public sector cash spending, the project should be completely self funding.

But Labour leader Coun John Richardson dismissed the allegations.

## Call to scrap ski village

THE £64m Weardale ski-village plan should now be declared "extinct", claims a council opposition leader.

Wear Valley District Council spent £177,000 on proposals for the Alpine-style resort earmarked for Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham.

Following difficulties in finding public sector cash for the project, it was handed over to Tyneside building company Stanley Miller last October.

But the future of the ambitious scheme was left in doubt after the collapse of Stanley Miller last month.

And now council Liberal leader Coun Chris Foote Wood says the whole idea should be scrapped.

28/2/90

Northern  
Echo

11

HERE'S a resume of last week's City news for those who don't habitually read the business pages.

Stanley Miller plc, described as a "troubled Tyneside builder," suffered a "further setback" when its City broker suddenly resigned.

Miller had already forecast a profits fall and seen its biggest shareholder sell up.

The company's shares are sliding and there is speculation, reported the business bods, that its "prestige" Newcastle quayside development might be affected.

Here are two more facts which weren't mentioned at the time.

1. Stanley Miller is the company named by Wear Valley Council to develop the Heights of Folly ski village above Wolsingham.

2. Wear Valley Council has already spent £150,000 of ratepayers money on the project.



## Rival ski village plan 'one of many'

A COUNCIL boss yesterday said a business consortium's idea to create a huge ski village in his area was merely one of many which his authority was considering.

Neil Johnson, chief executive officer of Derwentside Council said it was not tied to a proposal to create another multi-million pound ski village which might rival that planned by neighbouring Wear Valley District Council at Wolsingham.

He said the council was putting together a brief which would be circulated nationally and internationally in an attempt to find a developer for 635 acres of land left vacant after the closure of the Consett steelworks.

The business consortium, which includes former British skier Conrad Bartelski, was one of many which had so far expressed an interest.

# Leisure MATTERS!

## Investment in leisure....

In May 1985, Wear Valley District Council decided to co-ordinate its Leisure Department development under a corporate mission. Since this time the Leisure and Economic Development Department has operated with the same aims and objectives and believe in the motto of "Invest in Leisure — It Lasts a Lifetime".

### The Department's mission statement is:

"We strive to provide and promote excellent leisure facilities and programmes, accessible to all citizens of Wear Valley, combined with modern economic opportunities via a committed organisation which is both effective and efficient, allowing staff to grow to their full potential, whilst pursuing exemplary levels of customer care.

"We also aim to secure the maximum utilisation and co-operation of all other organisations in the district (public, private and voluntary), to improve the health, both physically and mentally of our community, to make Wear Valley a positive and beautiful place to live and visit into the 1990's.

Our Catalytic role within the district is vital to ensure our "community" can react positively to change, thus dealing with the swift advance of the leisure/employment ethic, and our continual search for excellence."

This bi-monthly section in the Wear Valley Advertiser will be used to keep the community up to date with our activities and the first month will be used as an introduction to inform you of a selection of our programmes and activities.



Back Row, left to right, D. Natrass, I. Thompson, P. Dobson, K. Archer, M. Handy, C. Blackburn. Front Row, left to right, R. Ord, J. Rasmussen, J. Thompson, L. Morgan, J. Aldred.

## How do you go about providing leisure for as many people as possible?

It is not simply up to one organisation to provide the Local Authority intend to act as the catalyst that enables various other bodies who have their own energies and ideas to achieve their aims.

The Leisure and Economic Development Department is staffed by a dedicated and enthusiastic team of trained professionals who have the experience and expertise to deal with every sector of the leisure market — both active and passive.

We have four full time Officers specifically trained to work in the community who are one of the most important things the Council can do is to create an identity for the area through the active promotion of industry, tourism and local events.

We have had many successful joint ventures, the most notable being:

### Arts

The arts programme is blossoming with many voluntary groups now finding a foothold with

the support given by the District Council. We are also linking many projects in the field with schools and voluntary groups to enrich and enhance the culture of the area — as well as document many of the past histories which would otherwise disappear.

### Tourism

The Department acts very much as a shop window for much of the tourism in the area by providing accommodation lists and information

on the District, to either attract people here or provide them with contacts for accommodation.

### Major Events

The Department promotes many major events throughout the year, whether it is special concerts in leisure facilities, fun runs, painting competitions, even the annual fireworks display which is the single largest gathering of people within the district.

### Cardiac Rehabilitation Group

In a District which has

a coronary heart disease rate of 25% above the national average, which is one of the worst in the world, the District Council is linking with the Health Authority to try and tackle this problem. In South West Durham a third of the deaths in males and over a quarter of the deaths in females are from this disease and in the past five years, over 3,000 people have died from it and there is no sign of a downward trend.

We have, therefore,

through our Community fitness Officers, devised a programme with the Health Authority which has proved extremely successful and has attracted a grant of £20,000 from the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association to ensure its survival for two years.

There are also various clubs around the District which have the support of the District Council, e.g. Crook & District Athletics Club, Football Clubs, various arts and voluntary organisations,

as well as, of course, talented individuals.

The District Council, therefore, provides firm foundations for the growth or creation of many of these organisations which then enhance the opportunities within the community.

### Question:

What leisure facilities are there in Wear Valley?

### Answer:

Spectrum Leisure Complex, Willington; Woodhouse Close Leisure Complex, Bishop Auck-

land; Glenholme Leisure Complex, Crook; Weardale Leisure Complex, Eastgate; Wolsingham School Swimming Pool, Wolsingham; Peases West Sports Centre, Crook; Town Recreation Ground, Bishop Auckland; Cockton Hill Recreation Ground, Bishop Auckland; Leeshome Recreation Ground; Henknowle Recreation Ground; Glenholme Park, Crook; Civic/Town Halls; Numerous playgrounds throughout the District.

## Our first and possibly the best initiative was the "Wear Fit" Campaign

The Campaign followed on from the unique appointment of Britain's first Local Authority Community Fitness Officer, Kevin Archer, on February 3, 1986, and has since developed to acquire nationwide recognition from its original community base.

The Campaign is part of a total leisure concept which has been geared both towards identifying and meeting trends in health and fitness and towards meeting specific local needs through a community involvement strategy. This is reinforced by Wear Valley's Community Leisure Officer and Arts Development Officer.

### Getting the Most from the Campaign

As a local resident, "Wear Fit" would like to invite you to participate in the benefits of "FitTest". This is a unique opportunity for you to do something positive about your health and fitness as a unique personal level.

As well as carrying out fitness assessments, the "Wear Fit" Cam-

aign also has a number of community based activities such as the "Ton Up" Challenge as Peases West sports Centre from Monday, June 4, 1990.

The challenge is simple. Can you complete 100 miles around the track either walking, jogging, running or a mixture of all three, in 13 weeks between 12.00 noon and 2.00 p.m. each weekday? Why not come along and try? Many already do from 5 to 70 years of age.

### Training for Teachers

"Wear Fit" also organises seminars and exhibitions on a local level both for the community at large and small local groups.

### Wear Here to Help

One area of major concern to the "Wear Fit" team is that of coronary heart disease. Not only does the Campaign aim at reducing the risk of coronary heart disease by promoting a more "healthy lifestyle" it is also involved with the Local Health Authority and offers a cardiac rehabilitation



**FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL NEEDS.....**

**WEAR FIT CAMPAIGN**

**AEROBICS TEACHERS COURSE**  
ISA validated

**FITNESS INSTRUCTORS TRAINING WORKSHOPS**  
In association with ILAM

**FITNESS ASSESSMENT TRAINING WORKSHOPS**  
In association with ILAM

**SKIING INSTRUCTORS COURSE**  
Throughout the year Spectrum Ski School hosts and organises A.S.S.I. Courses for would be Ski Instructors

**CONTACT** LEISURE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
Civic Centre, Crook, County Durham, DL15 9ES  
Telephone: (0288) 745555

programme for those people who have a heart problem.

The "Wear Fit" Campaign is instrumental in providing opportunities for nationally recognised fitness instructor and exercise to music qualifications

whilst at the same time it is still able to deliver a varied, successful community programme, which has captured the public's imagination and continues to grow as "Wear Fit" becomes part of life in Wear Valley.





**LEISURE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**QVIC CENTRE CROOK COUNTY DURHAM, DL15 9ES**  
**TELEPHONE (0388) 765555**

**GLENHOLME LEISURE COMPLEX**

**NEW ROAD, CROOK CO. DURHAM DL15 8PU**

This award-winning family leisure facility set in Glenholme Park, Crook with

**Swimming Pool, Squash Sauna, Sunbed and Hi-Tech Fitness Suite**

offers a variety of activities that will cater for your leisure needs

For further details of our Programmes, Prices and Opening Times

**Please telephone (0388) 763204**



**WEARDALE LEISURE COMPLEX**

**Eastgate Weardale Bishop Auckland County Durham, DL13 2AA**  
**Tel: (0388) 517567**

Set in the Core of the Durham Dales at the heart of Weardale and positioned in the lee of the beautiful North Pennines

**WEARDALE LEISURE COMPLEX**

affords a real "get away from it all feeling" for those who take the time out to enjoy it.

It is just off the main road (A689) between Stanhope and Eastgate on the banks of the River Wear with ample on-site parking

**A pleasant dual-use Swimming Pool set in school grounds and available to the public**

There are **SWIMMING LESSONS** available and organised **GROUP SESSIONS**, especially for children and women

Call for details!

**Wolsingham School Pool**

**Leazes Lane, Wolsingham Bishop Auckland Co. Durham, DL13 3DN**  
**Telephone (0388) 527024**

**DIARY OF EVENTS**

**JUNE**

- 14 Crook Athletic Club: Clover Leaf Relay, Peases West, 6.30 p.m.
- 28 Wolsingham School

**JULY**

- 5 Launch of Playscheme Activities, 1.30 p.m., Newgate Centre, Bishop Auckland (next to Asda)
- 8 Cycle Race
- 8 Woodhouse Close Carnival, 2 p.m., Watling Road Recreation Field
- 9 Scottish and Newcastle Pool Competition, Spectrum Leisure Complex
- 23 Start of Summer Playscheme
- 23 Junior Ten-Step Award Scheme, Peases West, 12 noon to 1 p.m. Free Monday, Wednesday and Friday (close August 31).

**AUGUST**

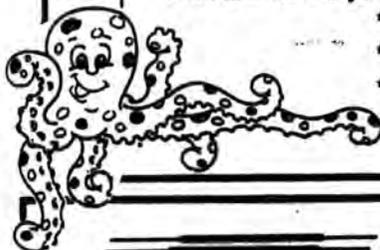
- 4 and 5. Artists' Exhibition, Stanhope Town Hall
- 11 and 12. Artists' Exhibition, Stanhope Town Hall
- 12 McDonalds Carnival, Town Recreation Ground, Bishop Auckland
- 15 Glenholme Leisure Complex, Special Inflatable Day, 1.30 p.m.
- 18 and 19. Artists' Exhibition, Stanhope Town Hall
- 19 Final Wear Valley Knockout Bowls Competition, Spectrum Leisure Complex, 2 p.m.
- 21 Weardale Leisure Complex, Inflatable Day, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., cost 55p
- 25 and 26. Artists' Exhibition, Stanhope Town Hall
- 27 Weardale Triathlon, 9 a.m., Wasterley Reservoir
- 28 Spectrum Leisure Complex, Magic Carpet Theatre Company
- 31 "Wear Fit" Ton-Up Prize Giving Ceremony, Peases West, Crook, 12.15 p.m.

**Re-Opening AUGUST 4, 1990**  
**WOODHOUSE CLOSE LEISURE COMPLEX**

Woodhouse Lane, Bishop Auckland, County Durham. Tel: (0388) 602557

After major refurbishment the all new and improved facilities available for everyone includes:-

- \* 25m, 6 Lane Pool
  - \* Teaching Pool
  - \* Two Octopus Theme Flumes and Splash Pool
- ...and the creation of 220m<sup>2</sup> of Fitness Area.
- Other features include Sauna / Jacuzzi, Sunbed, Squash Court, Function Room and Snooker Room.



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## VII

CONCLUSION

Local government, with no equivalent set of arrangements either in this country or abroad, operates within the overall legislative framework set down by Parliament and there has always been considerable scope for the local parameters to be largely drawn by administration and political local elites. Although always subservient to, and largely dependent for finance from central government, local government has been relatively free in the past to develop its own set of internal arrangements. Since 1979 there has been a reduction in the scope for local discretion and choice as the wave of legislative changes has been put into effect at local level. This onslaught has resulted in a high degree of instability as the administrative and political elites attempt to maintain a reasonable level of service provision within a framework of uncertain funding. Each new law necessitates alteration to internal structures, working practices and personnel as councils respond to a re-definition of their role.

Local authorities are no longer self sufficient, near monopoly providers. If they are to maintain their role in the future and continue their existence they must not simply pass on areas of work to outside agencies. M.G. Clarke, Director of the Local Government Management Board, sees the changes taking place in local government as an opportunity for local government to continue its role as enabler, orchestrating a whole range of provision on behalf of its community. By taking on a wider interest in the interests of the community as a whole and in helping to resolve any issues concerned with its health the 1990s will produce a more genuine local government.<sup>1</sup> Evidence suggests that, as with other British local authorities, there has been a reassessment of the role of Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street Councils with the instigation of a range of initiatives to respond to demands placed upon them. Each district has, by varying degrees changed in a number of significant ways in an attempt to become, or as in the case of Wear Valley, to maintain a role as an enabling authority. Both local

authorities have changed their structures, processes and personnel to cope with new legislation but Wear Valley in many cases anticipated changes and has been carrying out many of the requirements for a number of years. Both councils have commissioned research on consumer preferences and are becoming as Jones and Stewart envisage "consumer orientated".

Wear Valley is already an enabling authority open to change, and innovative, with many outside links, it uses many new techniques and the strong and committed partnership between officers and members ensures a visionary approach. Two stated aims are to make Wear Valley the best district council in the county and to take on the role of good community government. In theory Chester-le-Street district is run along corporate management lines but in actuality there is a great deal of departmentalism with Chester-le-Street officers protecting their own vested interests. There is a major difference in the way each council sees its role: for Wear Valley the overall well-being of the community and political decisions on choosing the means to achieve this aim is central to the political and administrative leadership. Chester-le-Street on the other hand responds to local needs but there is no evidence to suggest a wider role than that of provider of services.

Leisure is fashionable, fits with current views on how life should be lived and is therefore an adaptable area with scope for new initiatives. Both Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street have seen this service as a focus for bringing about change in their districts. They differ in the level to which they have incorporated leisure services into their organisational effectiveness. Both the Chief Officers and members at Wear Valley are absolutely certain leisure should be the focal and co-ordinating point around which all other services are centred. There has been a very clear objective to transform the Council and economically rejuvenate the area and an almost paranoiac drive to change attitudes. Chester-le-Street District Council has also recognised the important role of leisure services but wants gradual change rather than a dramatic transformation. There is a definite disinclination to invest heavily in leisure because of the lack of tangible results and

Chester-le-Street is concerned mainly with improving traditional services like housing. There seems little chance of a leisure ethos pervading all council business at Chester-le-Street as it does at Wear Valley because of resistance from very strong councillors.

The heavy expenditure devoted to leisure services at Wear Valley has certainly raised political temperatures and increased the level of debate. Leisure spending has increased in importance at Chester-le-Street too but the scale of political details is in no way comparable to what can be seen at Wear Valley. By focussing all local authority business around leisure services and using it as a mechanism to increase the overall well being of the community the political/administrative elites in Wear Valley have had to contend with vociferous opposition to nearly all their plans.

As Wear Valley economic development and leisure officers know to their cost, local councils still provide a range of services and the way finances are devoted to each service is a decision made with the advice of professional officers. When councillors are seen by the electors who they represent to be behaving irresponsibly in favouring one service at the expense of others and if too much finance is devoted to one service at the exclusion of others there ensues greater politicisation and increased opposition to plans. No one services area should be in a position to dominate other service areas, as in Wear Valley because local authorities are concerned with balancing all the needs of the community with the resources available to satisfy those needs.

As Sir Geoffrey Vickers points out: "Multiple criteria of success are inherent in the government of any political or social unit, however small. For the multiple needs and diverse standard of expectations of people bring together in a place, inter-act or limit each other in ways which cannot be ignored. Functional organisations can ignore problems which they set for each other, and when in doubt they can simplify their choices by referring to their functions as defining their primary responsibility for general organisations, even the smallest have been built in priorities to guide them in their multi-value choices. They must decide not only what to do but what to want - more exactly what

to value most in the concrete situation of every decision. They must define and re-define the unacceptable, not in one dimension but in many<sup>3</sup> and as Jones and Stewart point out: "Political - management systems must make a multi-valued choice between services and search for synergy. Any organisation based on function alone implies a depoliticisation - decisions made on technical grounds alone".<sup>3</sup>

It would be very difficult without further empirical research to say how other district councils throughout Great Britain compare to Wear Valley and Chester-le-Street in their provision of leisure services. What has emerged from this research is that there is no magic formula to explain why the business of one small district council, Wear Valley, in the N.E. of England could have been transformed by using leisure as a focal point around which other service areas were centred and then became subservient. The one over-riding factor that seems likely to explain the crucial importance that leisure has in Wear Valley District Council and to a lesser degree in Chester-le-Street, must surely be the role of leisure professionals. Leisure professionals appear to have their own "leisure culture" consisting of an aggregation of values, beliefs and guidelines for behaviour that are distinctive from, and inconsistent with, the administrative culture of other local authority professionals. The culture peculiar to leisure officers, and most surely given greatest expression at Wear Valley District Council, (and to a lesser degree at Chester-le-Street) has evolved over a number of years and has a variety of sources; some are the personal attributes of individual officers with an emphasis on youth, fitness and dynamism; and also there is the exclusive nature of entry to the body of professional leisure officers who possess theoretical knowledge, have undergone training and abide by a professional code of conduct. The growth of the leisure culture has been conditioned by many characteristics. The majority of leisure professionals have had experience of working in leisure related fields outside of local authorities, particularly in commercial concerns and have used this experience to aid the development of an extensive range of leisure amenities within local authorities. Their specialist knowledge has enabled them to make persuasive recommendations to politicians in local government and as Bacon points out we now have a new generation of sophisticated

lateral-thinking entrepreneurial generalists in the leisure service department of local government.<sup>4</sup> Although the importance of leisure professionals was evidential before 1979 there has been an escalation in importance since then, as the dramatic changes have unfolded.

Clearly leisure has become a hotly debated issue at Chester-le-Street and Wear Valley and will continue to be so for some considerable time as each struggles to maintain its existence and looks for ways of surviving the central government onslaught. Local government is still an important part of the political system and not merely a complex set of administrative units. The system of local government as we know it still allows elected members to represent and articulate the demands of their local people and bring to account the administrators who implement the policy set down by those members. Leisure can, and should have, a crucial role to play in any future scenario. Leisure services in local government are at a major crossroads and decisions made in the next decade will determine whether they emerge as a major front-line service, alongside education and housing or as a residual service from which the main functions have been taken over by the private sector leaving only gaps in provision to be met. Leisure services are therefore a microcosm of the problems facing local government and major political decisions need to be taken in both Chester-le-Street and Wear Valley as to how much of a role the leisure services will be given. The role that these leisure professionals take in decisions will vary from council to council.

Leisure is an important service area within local government and will no doubt feature in future developments. Indeed it could be argued that leisure is a social service in the truest sense of the word, unlike many more traditional services, and has an overall pervasive quality that can permeate the whole of council business. It is not only a service with a high profile due to its fashionable and attractive image but the still small amount of specific legislation relating to it allows considerable scope for innovation and change. It is one area of council business that could possibly expand rather than contract like other services. Leisure departments, because of their historical development, and with the nature of the service are in a much more favourable position to increase outside links with private, statutory and voluntary agencies. Many councils have a myriad of already established links.

Leisure departments have strong inter-related links with other local authority service departments and can occupy a catalytic role in any future development for the authority as a whole. By aiming to achieve a leisure service which concerns itself with the overall physical, social, and economic well being of the local community, it could be said that leisure is the one service to justify the *raison d'etre* of local government. It is a service that could be used as a lynch pin by enabling the administrative and political leadership to have a corporate view of all council business and therefore it provides a unifying element. The political importance of leisure is therefore unquestionable.

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### Afterword

Research and writing up the main body of this thesis was completed in the early part of 1991. Since then, many dramatic changes have taken place at Wear Valley District Council and the press cuttings in Appendix B give some indication of the scale of those changes.

Just one month before the May 1991 local council elections it was announced that the Director of Leisure and Economic Development had offered his resignation to take up the post of Chief Executive at Moray District Council in his native Scotland. Before he left he commended the Labour Party for its courage in taking up the Alpine Ski Village scheme. In his opinion the scheme had the full support of the English Tourist Board, the Sports Council and the E.E.C. and only collapsed because of the liquidation of Stanley Miller Holdings Ltd.

Preceding the May elections there ensued a bitter election campaign in which leisure spending became the central issue fought over by both parties. The Liberal Democrats' manifesto outlined the very large leisure deficit recorded under the Labour administration and pointed out specific leisure areas where they were prepared to make cuts, if elected.

The election resulted in a spectacular landslide victory for the Liberal Democrats as the party took 28 of the 40 seats and obtained overall control of the Council. Labour retained only 8 seats, the Independents retained or obtained 4 and the Conservatives lost all 3 of the seats they had held. (Before 3rd May 1991 Liberal Democrats had only 6, Independents and Conservatives held 11 and the Labour Party a comfortable 23). It was indeed a remarkable political feat which The Guardian hailed as a "victory out of the blue". Radio 4 claimed it was a "Shock to everyone". The one person who was not surprised at all by the victory was the new Leader of the Council. In the course of many conversations with Mr. Foote-Wood it was obvious that he had strategically planned for victory since the period between 1976 to 1979 when his party had held power in alliance with the Independents. It has been his life's dream that if he could not become a Member of Parliament (he has unsuccessfully been selected in a

number of constituencies but suffered defeat in general elections) then he would like to be the Leader of Wear Valley District Council. He has worked ceaselessly to rid the district of what in his view was an inefficient Labour administration.

The celebrations surrounding the electoral victory were tinged with sadness on 4th May 1991 as the Leader of the Labour Group who had held the reins of power for 12 years suffered a heart attack and was taken to hospital. It was claimed that the stressful nature of the bitter campaign and the realization that his party would in future sit on the opposition benches contributed to his illness. As a mark of respect the new Leader of the Council called off all celebratory interviews until it was clear that Mr. Richardson was recovering. He is now back in Council Chamber opposing many of the changes introduced by the new council.

True to their election pledges the Liberal Democrats have introduced immediate changes. The Committee system has been streamlined to save money and both officer and member time. Council proceedings are being opened up to the general public with meetings planned throughout the district. The first ever meeting held outside the council chamber attracted an audience of 100 but not one Labour member turned up. This led the Leader of the Council to deride the opposition for non-attendance but in its defence the Labour Leader (still Mr. Richardson) claimed that the time coincided with a Labour Party meeting.

Reducing secrecy and allowing public consultation and participation are key aims of the Liberal Democrats and to this end they have produced a new Policy Document "Wear Valley Action" setting out future plans. As one would expect, given past experience, many disputes and arguments have developed since May. The Labour Party claims that new policies are unworkable and disputes the openness apparently in operation. They cite the secrecy surrounding the decision to appoint the son of the Managing Director (formally Chief Executive) as the successor to the outgoing Director of Leisure and Economic Development and the claims that spending cuts can be brought into effect.

The Manager Director's decision to take early retirement in March 1992 has increased speculation that decision making is now highly secretive with Labour demanding statements on the real cause of his departure. (The new Managing Director is the former Finance Director.)

The Liberal Democrats claim to have made an immediate saving of £22,000 by restructuring the Staff of the Leisure and Economic Development Department and paying Mr. Morgan's successor (the ex-Director) less than he was paid. There are plans to cut 15 leisure posts and to organise meetings with staff to secure further savings.

The plans for the £60 million Ski Village have officially been shelved but the £177,000 feasibility study will be made available to other organisations at a price. Being voted into office gave the Liberal Democrats a mandate to end "the farce that will cost £24,000 per annum in interest charges for 15 years payable on money borrowed for the Scheme".

With regard to Bishop Auckland Town Hall which the Labour Party had planned to sell off to a private developer the new administration proposes to refurbish the listed building at a cost of £2.7 million. Working with Durham County Council the aim is to provide an exhibition centre, library, consumer protection and tourism office.

Plans are afoot for scrutinizing all areas of leisure spending. Of course, as one would expect, the Labour Party are opposing most of them. The scene appears to be set for continued debate. Leisure spending was certainly the most crucial political issue, above all others at Wear Valley that brought about the landslide victory.

**Footnote:** Details of all these changes can be found in the press cuttings following this section.

**APPENDIX B**

**Press cuttings on Wear Valley District Council**

**from April 1991 onwards**

# Liberals score dazzling success

THE Liberals swept to spectacular success in the former Labour stronghold of Wear Valley in the local elections early today.

A massive swing towards the former main opposition party became evident from the earliest returns when Labour seats fell one after another.

The biggest scalp of the night for Chris Foote-Wood's Liberal Party was deputy Labour leader Billy Neilson in the Henknowle ward who polled the most votes in his area.

Chris Foote-Wood said when 16 Liberals had been elected with still more than ten seats uncalled: "I would say to the public thank-you.

"People wanted a change and we have presented our policies which have found favour with the majority of the electorate." He said it seemed at that stage that he would indeed be leading a new Liberal council.

During the last four years, two main issues had provided the most controversy - John Richardson's Labour Party.

Possibly the most contentious was Labour's pursuit of an alpine ski village at Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham.

Liberals were able to gain political points as the ruling group followed the plan through from an early £24m project to a £60m scheme including a 'Father Christmas fantasy land'.

The ski village idea was eventually effectively shelved.

One of the main doorstep topics for the Liberals was Labour's spending on sport in leisure.

In October 1988, the council took the decision to close 120-year-old Bishop Auckland town hall because of structural faults.



Chris Foote-Wood: Almost certain to be the new leader of Wear Valley

Throughout the succeeding year, controversy raged as the Labour group wrestled over the problem of what to do with the Grade I listed landmark.

At one stage, Labour chiefs considered selling it. However, following the submission of a 10,000-name petition calling for it to remain in public ownership the plan was dropped. The town hall is now undergoing a £2.7m refurbishment.

Coun Richardson could not be contacted last night but Billy Neilson said: "It's a very disappointing night. People get what they want and the best of luck to them.

"The Labour Party has been in control for 12 years and obviously people have decided they wanted a change.

"A change is not always for the better and the next four years will prove that."

He added that the result would not influence the Bishop Auckland Parliamentary constituency results in the next General Election. And he promised that the district council's Labour group would 'bounce back'.

But there was great news for Labour when they captured Darlington, a previously hung council and considered a key barometer to national voting patterns.

● North results: Page 8.

} Landslide sends senior  
Labour figures tumbling

**SOUTH DURHAM**

# Shadow on Labour success as majorities are reduced

**KEY TO RESULTS:**  
 \* Retiring candidate  
 r Retiring councillor

**Wear Valley**

<b>Coundon Grange</b>	
C. Hoyle Wood (Lab)*	588
C. Coundon (Lab)*	547
M. Gribbles (Lab)	207
P. Jackson (Lab)	178
Lib hold	
<b>Crook North</b>	
C. Crook (Lab)	510
C. West (Lab)	306
Lib gain	
<b>Crook South</b>	
C. Hoyle (Lab)	330
C. Brown (Lab)*	858
C. English (Lab)	842
A. Richardson (Lab)	758
C. Richardson (Lab)	756
C. Brown (Lab)	748
Lib gains, Lab hold	
<b>Escomb</b>	
A. Perkins (Lab)*	481
S. Marks (Lab)	232
Lib hold	
<b>Henkenshaw</b>	
C. Anderson (Lab)	568
C. Todd (Lab)	482
J. Jones (Lab)	482
C. Nelson (Lab)	426
Lib gains	
<b>Howden-le-Wear</b>	
C. Brown (Lab)	415
C. Johnson (Lab)	274
C. Johnson (Ind)	175
Lib gain	
<b>Hunwick</b>	
C. Cunningham (Lab)	389
C. White (Lab)	274
Lib gain	
<b>Stanhope</b>	
C. White (Lab)	427
J. Chaffell (Lab)	426
C. South (Lab)	277
C. D. Donovan (Ind)	269
C. Palmer (Ind)	208
C. Stanton (Lab)	142
C. Chapman (Lab)	137
Lib gain from Lab, Ind	
<b>Stanley</b>	
C. Patterson (Ind)	407
C. Wright (Lab)	326
Ind gain	
<b>St Helen's Auckland</b>	
C. Southwell (Lab)*	463
C. Farnham (Lab)	449
C. Todd (Lab)	429
C. Gilbert (Lab)	348
Lib gain, Lab hold	
<b>St John's Chapel</b>	
C. Hammond (Lab)	324
C. Eury (Housewife)	273
C. Haysler (Lab)	104
C. Clonham (Green)	55
Lib gain	
<b>Tow Law</b>	
C. Grogan (Lab)	345
C. Jones (Lab)	278
P. Spencer (Ind) 257	
Lib gain	
<b>Wington East</b>	
C. Richardson (Lab)	1,151
A. Seddon (Lab)*	1,148
C. Reid (Lab)*	1,136
C. Jackson (Lab)	506
C. Mackay (Lab)	501
C. Hepple (Lib) 453	501
Lab holds	

**Teesdale**

<b>Barnard Castle East</b>	
C. Banker (Ind)*	443
C. Brancham (Ind)	307
C. Collier (Lab)*	349
C. Walker (Ind)	136
C. Huncherfield (Ind)	439
Lib hold	
<b>Barnard Castle West</b>	
C. Cross (Lib Dem)*	444
C. C. Ingram (Lab)	177
C. Guthrie (Lab)	125
C. Mockford (Ind)	94
C. Robinson (Lab)	203
C. Stoker (Ind)*	343
C. T. Wilson (Con)	222
C. Watson (Ind)	208
C. Widdow (Ind)	502
Lib hold two	
<b>Etherley</b>	
C. Eddy (Ind)*	363
C. Rose (Ind)	223
C. Walton (Ind)*	290
(Ind hold)	
<b>Evenwood with Ramshaw</b>	
C. Bolder (Lab)	521
C. Gosson (Ind)	520
C. Smith (Ind)	479
K. Watson (Ind) 290	
Lab gain from Ind	
<b>Gainford and Winston</b>	
C. Backwell (Lab)	328
C. Fergus (Con)*	442
C. McCrard (Ind)*	373
(No change)	
<b>Greta</b>	
C. Hughes (Ind)	121
C. Smith (Ind)	115
(Ind hold)	

WEAR Valley was the Liberal Democrats' best result in the North-East last night, but other areas of South-West Durham remained stubbornly Labour.

Labour candidates swept to victory in the Sedgefield District Council elections. But a shadow was cast over proceedings when it became obvious that many Labour candidates had been returned with reduced majorities.

With virtually no Conservative opposition it looked as though the controlling group had paid a harsh price for being in charge during the implementation of the poll tax.

And even before a single vote was cast

yesterday the Labour group had a massive 22-seat headstart. Twenty-seven seats were up for grabs, but there were few upsets.

Labour member Warren McCourt lost his seat in Chilton. But the Labour ranks were swelled by the addition of long-time Ferryhill town councillor Brian Avery.

Following his election to the district Council Avery said: "This has been a tremendous result for everyone concerned."

"I have served on the town council for 12 years and will continue to do so. Hopefully I can do the same as a district representative for Chilton."

There was controversy before the count even started when Labour members complained about protests by Putting People First candidates Alan Kelly and

Brian Gibson over alleged irregularities in the postal vote.

Independent members fared better than expected. David Elliott, Ruth Evans, Tony Moore and Eric White increased their majorities against Labour opposition. All declared themselves well pleased with the result.

Former councillor Brian Roberts, who was standing under the banner Aycliffe First Abolish Sedgefield District, even managed to poll 114 votes.

Darlington, previously a hung council with the Conservatives the largest party, came Labour control, with major casualties the former Tory Mayor Barrie Lamb and long-standing independent Jimmy Whelan. In Teesdale council chairman Ken Walton came in last position out of four

candidates fighting his seat. In Hambleton Labour stalwart Stafford struggled off controversy resignation as agent for David A in Richmond to win a seat.

Liberal Democrats also came about alleged irregularities on the paper in Richmondshire.

Elsewhere in the North-East it tale of Labour maintaining, and areas, strengthening its grip on council seats.

Councils in the north of the region solidly Labour, with a high proportion of seats being gained by the party vote being necessary.

Hartlepool proved a blacked Labour, with three seats lost, much delight of local Tories who aim to, seat at the General Election.

<b>Middleton-in-Teesdale</b>	
D Austin (Ind)*	293
J Gillin (Ind)	181
B Stephenson (Con)	251
K Toward (Lab)*	307
Lab hold two	
<b>Streatham and Whorlton</b>	
C Corneil (Ind)	82
P Mitchell (Ind)	58
A Theastone (Con)	118
(Con gain)	
<b>Romaldkirk</b>	
M Sandbrook (Ind)	64
K Saxby (Ind)*	171
G Watson (Ind)	68
(Ind hold)	
<b>Tort Hill and Lands</b>	
J Armstrong (Ind)*	244
P Roosen (Green)	18
(Ind hold)	

**Sedgefield**

<b>Neville</b>	
D Elliott (Ind)*	666
E White (Ind)* 616	367
A Elgie (Lab)	362
J Tomlinson (Lab)	362
Lab hold two	
<b>Bimpreux</b>	
E Elmer (Lab)*	336
R Turner (Ind)	270
R Roberts (Abolish Sedge Dist)	114
Lab hold	
<b>Middlestone</b>	
J Everson (Lab)*	1009
W Walters (Lab)*	958
J Kison (Lab)*	910
J Hackett (Lab)	778
Lab hold three	

<b>Old Trilmon</b>	
J Burton (Lab)*	822
T Ward (Lab)*	769
E Dinning (Lab)	360
Lab hold two	
<b>Unostested</b>	
<b>Sheph Middleham</b>	
M Smith (Lab)*	r
Lab hold	
<b>Comforth</b>	
A Hodgson (Lab)*	r
K Howard (Lab)*	r
Lab hold	
<b>Fleahum</b>	
J Hewitt (Lab)*	r
Lab hold	
<b>New Trilmon and Trilmon Grange</b>	
L Horvess (Lab)*	r
Lab hold	
<b>Sheffo</b>	
F Wray (Lab)*	r
J Wray (Lab)*	r
Lab hold	
<b>Tudhoe</b>	
B Graham (Lab)*	r
V Robson (Lab)*	r
Lab hold	
<b>West</b>	
J Fleming (Lab)*	r
C Goslon (Lab)*	r
J Woods (Lab)*	r
Lab hold	
<b>Spenny Moor</b>	
B Ord (Lab)*	1180
R Turner (Ind)	1000
A Mumford (Lab)*	999
A Clarr (Lab)	972
Lib gain one, Lab hold two	

**Darlington**

<b>Sedburgh</b>	
B Cuthbertson (Ind)*	r
Ind hold	
<b>Hummersknott</b>	
S Brown (Con)*	1463
A Marshall (Con)*	1429
W Moorhead (Lab)	344
D Watson (Lab)	292
Con hold	
<b>Cockerton East</b>	
E Greaves (Lab)*	1262
B Thistlethwaite (Lab)*	1223
E Gardner (Lab)*	1193
F Beadle (Con)*	879
B Lamb (Con)*	915
T Soames (Con)	779
Lab gain two from Con	
<b>Eastbourne South</b>	
R Francis (Lab)*	856
J Skinner (Lab)*	837
F Stah (Con)	234
Lab hold	
<b>Cockerton West</b>	
B G Hutchinson (Lab)*	1053
B Rider (Con)	277
M Walmsley (Con)	260
E Wilson (Lab)	978
Lab hold	

**Central**

A Flinn (Lab)*	714
I Hartley (Lab)*	744
I Smith (Con)	281
K Wright (Con)	268
Lab hold	
<b>Eastbourne North</b>	
W Dixon (Lab)*	590
B Glenton (Lab Ind)*	340
J Scott (Con)	319
A Smith (Lab)*	457
Lab hold	

<b>Laacelles</b>	
B Bloxame (Lab)*	934
B Plummer (Lab)*	833
N B Lease (Con)	387
Lab hold	
<b>Park West</b>	
H Scott (Con)*	1164
C Smith (Con)*	1038
R Crowther (Lab)	381
J Whelan (Lab Ind)*	354
Con hold	
<b>Hurworth</b>	
P Foster (Con)*	912
A Gibson (Con)*	871
J Greenwood (Lab)	308
M McTague (Lab)	236
Con hold	

<b>Middleton-St-George</b>	
B Lamb (Con)*	477
D Moses (Con Ind)*	448
A Waring (Lab)	384
Con hold	
<b>Whessoe</b>	
E Roberts (Con)*	634
A Day (Lab)	207
Con hold	
<b>Bank Top</b>	
J Williams (Lab)*	821
J Taylor (Lab)*	800
D Mason (Con)	339
J Ruck (Con)	318
Lab hold	

<b>Mowden</b>	
R Lewis (Con)*	1334
J W Stancon (Con)*	1314
R Cowley (Lab)	419
P Charleson (Lab)	402
Con hold	

<b>Colleges</b>	
P Stamford-Bowley (Con)*	826
E Richmond (Lab)	812
L Henderson (Lab)	293
M Swift (Lab)	273
J Parker (Lib Dem)	259
I Barnes (Lib Dem)	231
Con hold	

<b>North Road</b>	
K Walker (Lib Dem)*	724
J Cresswell (Lib Dem)*	643
M Carter (Lab)	328
G White (Lab)	630
M Menzies (Con)	260
S Menzies (Con)	238
Lib hold	

<b>Lingfield</b>	
F Robson (Lab)*	1172
A Robinson (Lab)*	1251
M Roberts (Con)	642
A Emmets (Con)	489
Lab hold	

<b>Northgate South</b>	
D Long (Lab)*	839
E Young (Lab)*	819
A Gibbs (Con)	329
C Waring (Con)	329
Lab hold	

<b>Northgate North</b>	
M Robinson (Lab)*	820
N Town (Lab)*	771
S Johnson (Con)	262
C Smith (Con)	232
A McPherson (Lib Dem)	182
S Walker (Lib Dem)	182
Lab hold	

<b>Heighington</b>	
M Boynton (Con)*	465
E Thompson (Ind)	400
Con hold	

<b>Haughton West</b>	
D Lyonette (Lab)*	1142
N Thomas-Hall (Lab)*	1008
A Richmond (Con)	569
D Robinson (Con)	558
Lab hold	
<b>Harrowgate Hill</b>	
J Lazenby (Lab)*	1142
R Flahwick (Con)*	1128
G Durham (Lab)*	952
J Whelan (Lab Ind)*	886
I Campbell (Con)	835
M Nicholas (Lab)	808
J Thompson (Con)	710
Lab gain from Lab Ind, Lab gain from Con, Con hold	

<b>Barton</b>	
Campbell Dawson (Ind)*	1008
Edward Simpson (Ind)	569
No change	
<b>Colburn</b>	
John Church (Lib Dem)*	1142
Lynn Miller (Ind)*	1128
Heien Grant (Ind Social Dem)*	952
Del Griffiths (Lab)	886
No change	
<b>Kirby Hill</b>	
Michael Graham (Ind)*	710
Cliff Watson (Ind)	558
No change	

<b>Richmond Central</b>	
Roy Cross (Ind)*	1142
Cive Worral (Lib Dem)	569
No change	

<b>St Michael with St Luk</b>	
Jim Corpe (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Urevalle</b>	
one vacancy	
one vacancy	
one vacancy	

<b>Askrigg</b>	
John Abraham (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Aysgarth</b>	
Anthony Abraham (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Bolton Manor</b>	
Nigel Watson (Ind Lib Dem)	Ind Lib Dem hold
Ind Lib Dem hold	

<b>Catterick with Tunstall</b>	
Sydney Green (Ind)*	one vacancy
Ind hold	

<b>Croft on Tees</b>	
Hugh Lamb (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Griston and Upper Swales</b>	
Raymond Adams (Ind)	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Hewess and High Abbots</b>	
Roger Stott (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Hipswall</b>	
George Irwin (Lib Dem)	one vacancy
Ind hold	

<b>Layburn</b>	
Keith Jones (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Lower Dale</b>	
Dennis Potts (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Lower Swalesdale</b>	
Paul Cullen (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Middlesham and Corveda</b>	
Peter Hibbard (Ind)*	Ind hold
Ind hold	

<b>Reeth</b>	
one vacancy	
one vacancy	

<b>Richmond West</b>	
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# Leisure head on move for top job

A COUNCIL'S high-profile leisure boss is resigning to become chief executive of a local authority in his native Scotland.

Les Morgan will leave Wear Valley in July to take over at Moray District Council.

He said last night that his decision did not reflect any disillusionment, following the collapse of his cherished scheme to build a ski slope in Weardale.

"It was obviously disappointing because it was a good project," said Mr Morgan, who has worked at Wear Valley for eight years.

"My time at Wear Valley has been very good so far as I'm concerned. We have developed a lot of



**Les Morgan:  
on the  
way  
back to  
Scotland.**

things, and the council is regarded as the leading local authority for fitness in the country."

News of Mr Morgan's departure comes with local elections ahead in which leisure spending is one of the most controversial issues. The Liberal Democrats have said they will cut 15 leisure jobs if they win power on May 2.

# Voters force PM to delay big test

04.05.91

PRIME Minister John Major said last night he was in no hurry to call a General Election.

The first significant test nationwide of his performance at No 10 saw a crushing string of Tory defeats and setbacks in the local government elections.

Voters wiped out any ideas he may have had of risking a General Election in June.

Some 42 councils slipped from Tory control and the party lost 1,135 seats, with only 245 gains, in the town halls of England and Wales. They gained three councils which previously had no overall control.

It was the Tory heartland in the South, from Kent to the far West, which took a pounding as hundreds of hitherto Conservative seats changed hands.

A new analysis of 87 marginal English constituencies gives Labour an overall majority of five in the House of Commons.

A jubilant Labour leader Neil Kinnock demanded an immediate General Elec-

## 'There's no hurry' says Major after Tory losses

tion as his party scored victories from one end of the country to the other, gaining 708 seats, with 218 losses.

Labour also gained control of 17 councils but lost overall power in seven.

The Liberal Democrats triumphed on a scale even they had not dared to expect, taking 750 new seats, with 230 losses, and winning control of 17 councils.

Last night Mr Major said the results were "a little disappointing but quite bearable" and claimed Labour had "peaked" and could not win a General Election.

Later he said: "I will call a General Election when I think it is right to call one. But there is no hurry from my point of view.

"It is disappointing but bearable. The

Liberals clearly did extremely well. They did better than expected and I congratulate them for that."

For the first time since he took over Ladbroke's the bookmakers are now quoting Labour as favourites to win the next General Election.

And Labour has moved into a two-point lead over the Conservatives, according to a new opinion poll.

The Daily Express ICM poll has Labour on 40pc with the Tories at 38pc. The Liberal Democrats have moved up five points to 19pc.

Mr Major is now facing considerable pressure from some of his Cabinet colleagues to stave off the election not merely until next autumn, but to wait until the spring of 1992.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Demo-

crats' leader, described the results as "a stunning achievement" and spelled out his terms for backing either of the other two parties in the event of a hung Parliament.

It was an undertaking to introduce legislation within the Parliament to bring in proportional representation. Unless he received such a pledge neither Mr Kinnock nor Mr Major "need bother picking up the telephone".

Mr Kinnock, speaking in Stirling, said the possibility of a pact with the Liberal Democrats was "hypothetical" because, on the basis of the results, Labour would form the next Government.

The traditionally tranquil South-West of England, usually associated with retired colonels and seaside landladies, has emerged as a hotbed of Raving Loonyism after the local elections.

Five Loony candidates gained six seats on local councils in Devon and Cornwall.

One, Freddy Zapp, was elected on to two neighbouring Cornish town councils.

○ North round-up: Page 6.

# Labour's joy is premature, says prof

Labour may be claiming a victory in Thursday's local elections, but as reporter **DAVID TAYLOR** discovered from North-East political expert Prof Hugh Berrington, perhaps they shouldn't be celebrating yet.

THE Tories may have taken a battering in the local elections, but Neil Kinnock's dreams of a Commons majority are premature, according to a North-East political expert.

Nationally, there were substantial gains for the opposition parties at the expense of the Conservatives when the voters went to the polls on Thursday.

The Tories lost about 800 seats and 40 Conservative councils tumbled as both Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders claimed they had scored a stunning success.

But while the council results have surely put paid to any thoughts of a June General Election, Professor Hugh Berrington, of Newcastle University's politics department, believes Labour cannot be overjoyed with their showing.

He said: "The result really is double-

edged for Labour. They gained about 450 seats which was much as expected and substantially better than in 1987. If you could transfer those figures to a General Election they would represent a hung parliament.

"Although the results show a great improvement for Labour since four years ago, they show a definite reduction since last year. It is certainly not a great success and I don't think it gives Labour any

cause to think they would have a Parliamentary majority."

As expected, Labour's stranglehold on the North-East was barely loosened, despite a shock Liberal Democrat victory in Wear Valley.

Prof Berrington said: "You would need to look at Wear Valley in detail to explain that result. All I would say is we have seen rather short-lived but nevertheless quite strong bursts of support for the Liberal Democrats before that have only persisted for a while."

Certainly the most eye-catching result in the region was Labour's gaining control in Darlington, where Tory MP Michael Fallon clings to a majority of 2,661.

Prof Berrington said: "I have some sympathy for Michael Fallon's point of view that if Labour couldn't win Dar-

lington at this time they would be in a pretty bad way.

"A Labour win in Darlington was very much in line with the national picture. Michael Fallon cannot feel very secure. All I hear is that he has been ill at ease about it for some time, which is obviously realistic. The result just illustrates what he already knew - it is a seat that might go at the next election."

Prof Berrington said he felt the results had come out largely as expected, except for the excellent performance of the Liberal Democrats, who gained 17 councils and held on to three.

He said: "I was surprised by the showing of the Liberal Democrats, they have advanced well beyond 1987 which was a very good year for them anyway. This was a very good result for them."

He said the Conservative party hier-

archy was likely to be feeling anxious about the damage which the Liberal Democrats could now inflict by pinching seats in a General Election.

He said: "I wouldn't say it is a three party race, but I would go about three quarters of the way to saying that. A year ago we were writing off the centre party - we can't do that any longer."

As for speculating about the likely date of the next election, he said it was an absurd and impossible practice.

He added: "Choosing when to hold a General Election has nothing to do with reality, it is all about a Prime Minister's perception of the world. The timing will be governed by the economy, opinion polls, and inflation reality, but it is very much a personal decision for John Major."

## Wear Valley

### Bishop Auckland Town

M Land(Lib)* r	860
G Carr(Lib)*	823
S Dent(Lab)	508
M Jones(Lab)	421
K Pattinson(Con)	250

Lib hold and gain

### Cockton Hill

J Harrison(Lib)*	1,350
J Goldsborough(Lib)*	1,332
J Smith(Lib)*	936
M Hurst(Con)r	390
B Laurie(Lab)	303
J Bramhall(Con)r	249
M Adlington(Con)r	241

Lib gain

### Coundon

M Wigley(Lib)*	1,375
T Russell(Lib)*	1,367
P Adams(Lib)*	1,165
R Dawson(Lab)	922
P Graham(Lab)r	618
J Lee(Lab)r	493

Lib gain

### Willington West

H Dowson(Lab)* r	650
G Taylor(Lab)* r	635
J Smith(Lib)	699
D Allan(Lib)	631

Lab hold

### Woodhouse Close

W Wade(Lib)* r	753
C Sanderson(Lib)*	657
A Hutchinson(Lib)*	599
F Foster(Lab)r	554
J Bryan(Ind Lab)r	440
T Dodd(Lab)	372
N Button(Ind Lab)	335
J McConkey(Con)	33

Lib hold and gain

### West Auckland

D Wallis(Ind)* r	631
E Harker(Lab)*	438
T Woods(Lab)	42
F Moore(Lib)r	435

Ind hold, Lab gain

### Wharfedale and Helmington Row

D Halliday(Lib)*	612
J Bailey(Lib)*	611
I Bousfield(Lab)r	511
E Whitton(Lab)r	510

### Wolsingham

V Shuttleworth(Ind)* r	80
D Wilson(Dairyman)* r	83
G Chatfield(Lib)	318
R Hill(Lib)	316
E Wilson(Lab)	172
E Murphy(Lab)	144

Ind holds

# Sadness tinges the day after

04-05.91

WHILE the Liberal Democrats of the Wear Valley were basking in the glory of national recognition for their famous victory, it was a very muted day for the new Opposition Labour group.

Many were pre-occupied with the fate of John Richardson as he battled for life in Bishop Auckland General Hospital. His Willington home town is the only remaining bastion of the Red Rose — its five seats all remaining Labour.

Any slight satisfaction that the Labour party may have had from the town's results will have vanished with the news of Coun Richardson's heart attack.

The Liberals last held power in the district in an alliance with Independents from 1976 to 1979. Labour had held sway from the launch of the Wear Valley Council in 1974 and resumed after the brief rest to keep crushing majorities right up until a year or so ago.

It was then that the early signs of the Liberals' coming dominance first showed.

At three by-elections at West Auckland, Escomb and crucially on the problem-plagued housing estate of Woodhouse Close, they won seats from the ruling group.

After that, and as the campaign began, Labour held 23 seats and the Liberals six in the 40-seat, 21-ward council.

On Thursday, Labour had to drop just three seats to lose its overall majority to the combined forces of the main opposition, the Tories and the eight formidably entrenched Independents.

The results were delayed because of a heavier than expected 50 per cent turn-out — in the 1987 local elections only 30 per cent of voters went to the polls.

When the final results were announced in the early hours, the new ruling group had 28 seats, Labour had eight and there were four Independents.

In the event, Labour took only one seat from the Liberals — that of one of their sitting councillors Adrian Moore.

By CLIFF EDWARDS

The major figures to fall included housing and environmental services committee chairman Billy Neilson, leisure chairman Don White, planning chairman Alan Brooks-bank and technical chairman Tommy Hall.

Indeed, Coun Richardson, the policy and finance chairman, was the only chairman of a major committee who kept his seat.

And the Tories, all three in the Cockton Hill ward, were wiped out.

Yesterday Coun Chris Foote Wood, the new Liberal leader of the council, said he did not want to talk politics because of Coun Richardson's condition.

But the reasons for the victory seem rooted in Labour's policies. Attempts to set up a £60m Alpine ski village at Wolsingham were looked upon as sheer folly by many voters.

The Labour group's plans for the Bishop Auckland Town Hall created a huge furore in 1989 when it was revealed that its lease may be sold to a private developer.

After a 10,000-name petition called for it to remain in public ownership, Coun Richardson's party embarrassingly had to climb down. The hall is currently being refurbished at a cost of £2.7m.

Spending on leisure centres — including the spiralling cost of works at the Woodhouse Close Complex — was also grumbled about. The council runs four centres for its 60,000 population.

In addition, there was also considerable unrest about way a number of issues were handled in secret at the council. The Liberals have promised to "throw the doors open".

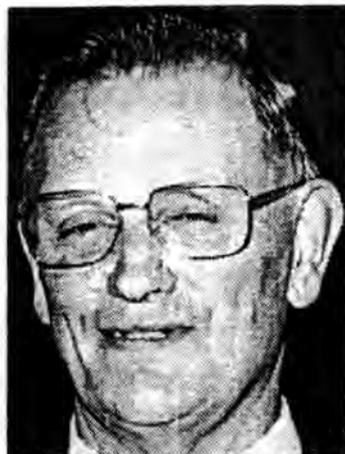
A deflated Billy Neilson yesterday said his party would analyse the results but was quite certain they would not reflect upon the majorities of the area's two sitting Labour MPs Derek Foster (7,035) and Hilary Armstrong (10,162).

Lab hold		Still NOC	
Newcastle		Hambleton	
North Tyneside		Harrogate	
South Tyneside		Ryedale	
Gateshead		Independent hold	
Sunderland		Teesdale	
Easington		Richmondshire	
Durham City		Lab gain from NOC	
Donwentside		Darlington	
Chester-le-Street		Langbaugh	
Middlesbrough		Lab lose to NOC	
Hartlepool		Stockton	
York		Con lose to NOC	
Lib Dem gain from Lab		Scarborough	
Wear Valley			
NOC = No overall control			

Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	Seats lost and gained from the above 23 councils
Total seats 676	Total seats 183	Total seats 219	Independent
Gains 39	Gains 6	Gains 49	Total seats 140
Losses 34	Losses 49	Losses 9	Gains 14
Difference +5	Difference -43	Difference +40	Losses 16
			Difference -2
			Other
			Total seats 14
			Gains 3
			Losses 2
			Difference +1

**THE NEW COUNCILS — Teesdale:** Ind 23, Lab 5, Con 2, Lib Dem 1. **Darlington:** Lab 30, Con 18, Lib Dem 2, Ind 2. **Sedgfield:** Lab 33, Lib Dem, 8, Ind 7, Con 1. **Wear Valley:** Lib Dem 28, Lab 8, Ind 4. **Stockton:** Lab 26, Con 18, Lib Dem 8, Other 1, Vacancies 2. **Hambleton:** Con 22, Ind 13, Lib Dem 5, Other 5, Lab 2. **Richmondshire:** Ind 30, Lib Dem 3, Con 1.



**RICHARDSON: 'stable'**

## 4 05 91 Heart attack after result

A FORMER Labour council leader suffered a heart attack just hours after learning of his party's most crushing political defeat.

Coun John Richardson was said to be stable and without pain in Bishop Auckland General hospital last night.

He had returned to his home at Carville Estate, Wellington, after watching the local election count at Crook when he suffered the attack at around 5am.

Coun Richardson, the first-ever chairman of Wear Valley District, was rushed for intensive treatment at Bishop Auckland General Hospital after his wife telephoned a doctor.

Only hours before, Coun Richardson, 69, had to stand and watch the demise of his ruling Labour group on the council in a massive swing against his party to the Liberals.

Council chief executive Allen Dobson said: "He has been working very, very hard over the last week and he has taken a lot of stress.

"Obviously, it would be a very sad night for Coun Richardson. He is so committed to the area and his politics.

"It would be folly to say last night did not have any affect on him. That would inevitably put him under a lot of stress."

New Liberal leader of the Coun Chris Foote Wood yesterday called off a string of interviews on the poll result to show respect for his defeated opponent.

He said: "I am extremely sorry to hear of Coun Richardson's condition. I wish him a speedy and full recovery and I look forward to him returning in full health to the council chamber."

At Thursday's poll, Coun Richardson's ruling Labour party's 23 seats on the 40-seat council was pared down to just eight by Liberals who now have overall control with 28 members.

# Liberal's council revamp 'to save time and money'

A COMPLETE streamlining of Wear Valley Council's structure — to save time and money — was announced yesterday.

The sweeping changes introduced by the Liberals include a vast reduction in sub-committees and working parties, fewer councillors sitting on the panels and fewer evening meetings.

Liberal leader Coun Chris Foote Wood said the changes would save both money and time and free council officers from time-consuming meetings.

He said: "We will retain five major committees — policy and four service committees — but the structure will be changed.

"Instead of a total proliferation of sub-

By BARBARA STEEPER

committees, working parties and study groups, each committee will have a sub-committee.

"If there is work to be done, instead of setting up a new working party, it will be referred."

Coun Foote Wood said meetings would run in eight-week cycles rather than six weeks and they would all take place on Wednesdays.

He said: "The number of meetings will be drastically and radically reduced.

"I believe a tremendous amount of time has been wasted, not only of members but of officers.

"Major committees and full council will be held in the evening enabling

working people to be councillors and free them from the back-breaking round of meetings they have had to endure."

The Liberals believe this new policy will be widely welcomed.

Coun Foote Wood said: "Officers will know four days out of five they will be free to do their job and the public will be able to attend meetings more easily.

"We will get more work done — councillors will be able to concentrate on the issues, set the policy and leave the detail to the officers."

The Liberals also plan to hold at least one council meeting each year out in the district.

The first will be arranged for Stanhope in honour of the new council chairman, 56-year-old Maurice Almond.

○ Rumours that chief executive Allan Dobson was leaving began following the spectacular success of the Liberals in last week's Wear Valley local elections.

The traditional Labour stronghold crumbled as the Liberals reduced the 23 seats to eight.

Mr Dobson said: "I have heard people have been told I am taking early retirement but that is certainly not the case.

"I have no intention of leaving. I am a politically-restricted officer and work for whoever happens to be in power

"I have no intention of resigning and I have no idea where these rumours began but I would like to say I will consider the next few years a challenge, which I always enjoy."



nce we are swagger bound to  
turn to the local elections, it's fair  
suppose that the Lib Dems' most  
pendous achievement nationally  
as in Wear Valley.

"A victory out of the blue," said  
the Guardian; "a shock to almost  
everyone," added Radio Four.

Gadfly readers, of course, were  
tirely prepared for such an up-  
aval.

As long ago as November 15, 1989,  
we forecast that the Liberals – then  
with just a handful of council seats  
– would take control at the next  
election.

A year ago we wrote that the only  
thing which could save the "bor-  
rowed time Labour administration"  
was knocking 10p off a pint at  
Crook Civic Hall – advice which  
they foolishly ignored.

And on April 24, commenting on  
the cynical rash of official plaque  
unveiling by Labour councillors, we  
suggested that they, too, knew they  
were about to be wiped out.

Labour's humiliation was partly  
because of hopelessly ill considered  
policies like the Heights of Folly ski  
village and the move to sell off  
Bishop Auckland town hall.

But the real reason they lost was  
that their understanding of the  
electorate was unchanged since the  
1960s, when many of them were  
elected. The Lib Dems, alone, got off  
their backsides and discovered the  
needs of the nineties.

09.05.1990

# Ski village project is shelved

14.06.91

A £60M ski village development has been officially shelved.

Wear Valley councillors have agreed to inform Durham County Council and other interested bodies that they will no longer promote the ambitious Wolsingham scheme.

But the council's £150,000 feasibility study will still be available at a price and applications for similar schemes will be considered without prejudice.

Coun Chris Foote Wood (Lib) told councillors that Wear Valley residents were totally behind shelving the scheme, which was the brainchild of outgoing leisure director Les Morgan.

"We have taken this issue to the people and they have given us an overwhelming mandate to end this farce once and for all," he told a meeting of the full council.

"This development is not the type we want to see in the Wear Valley and a lot of money has already been spent on this issue apart from staff time.

"It has been paid for by borrowed money — the poll tax payers are having to pay £24,000 a year for 15 years to pay back the capital and interest."

The village was earmarked for land

By BARBARA STEEPER

near Wolsingham, and would have comprised 60 chalets, a hotel, ski hostels, toboggan runs, swimming pool, shop space and five ski slopes.

The idea failed to win backing from the-then Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley and was put on ice when Stanley Miller Holdings, the firm appointed to organise private backing, went into liquidation.

Labour councillor George Taylor said had it not been for the recession the project might well have come to fruition and it could not be ruled out that a private developer might take it up.

Mr Morgan told the meeting he felt the scheme had been somewhat misunderstood and slammed the debate.

"The English Tourist Board supported this, the EEC and the Sports Council supported it," he said.

"If the company hadn't gone into liquidation, we might have had a £60m development in the Wear Valley.

"I commend the previous administration for having the guts to go with that."

Members voted by an overwhelming majority in favour of the motion to shelve the scheme.

24.06.91

# Just who decided to shelve the grandiose ski village scheme?

I AGREE with the outgoing Wear Valley Council leisure director Les Morgan, when he says that the ski village scheme had been somewhat misunderstood (Echo June 14).

The Liberal Democrats set out to ensure that the public misunderstood what the scheme was really all about.

For them to suggest, however, that it was they who officially shelved the scheme would be both untrue and unwise.

Untrue because the scheme was shelved when the council was Labour-led, after that administration, along with the Tories and honest Independants, accepted the realities of recession.

Unwise because that amounts to gloating that improvements to infrastructure and environment and the creation of over 500 jobs had also been shelved.



## Hear All Sides

It is difficult to promote grandiose schemes when the public see essential local services being cut to bare minimum. But it is a fact is that theme parks and the like do bring benefits to communities.

All right, the people gave the Wear Valley Liberals an overwhelming mandate in the recent elections. But a mandate to do what? A mandate to look to the past and become culturally deficient? Or a mandate to display guts and lead the district towards the next century with pride and optimism? - **P.R. Graham, Chairman Labour Party, Coundon Branch, 23 Park View Terrace, New**

## Coundon, Bishop Auckland.

**IN PEACE:** When the Alpine Ski Village in Weardale was conceived in 1987 the Conservatives demanded an abortion. They were overruled. The scheme proceeded until 1990 when it was realised that the village was stillborn. It had been expensive, but the time had finally arrived to bury the remains.

However, it was exhumed in May this year when the electorate were told that the Liberal Party would kill off the Alpine Village. How strange - at least some of the candidates had approved both the conception and the burial.

There is no doubt that an abortion would have saved a lot of work and expense - but one can only hope that a very battered Alpine Village can now rest in peace. - **Jean Bramhald, The Grange, 3 Bracks Road, Bishop Auckland.**

# Council goes into Action

27.06.91

W.V. ADVERTISER

**WEAR Valley District Council has put forward an 'action' programme for the next four years.**

Wear Valley Action covers all aspects of life including economic development, tourism, housing, planning, road schemes and the environment.

The initial draft for the blueprint was prepared by the leader of the council, Coun Chris Foote Wood, with the full support of the majority Liberal Democrat group.

The draft document will be put to the next policy and finance committee and council in July.

"Although I have written the initial draft it is my intention that everyone should have input into the final document," said Coun Foote Wood.

"We have, therefore, opened up the process to everyone, all members of the council, council officers, the public and all local businesses and voluntary organisations.

"There will be a full public participation exercise, probably in September to coincide with the consultations over the Wear Valley District Plan."

Coun Foote Wood says for the council to succeed in its aims and objectives it is essential to have the full backing and support of the people of Wear Valley and it is vital they

By KATHY MARSHALL

make their views known.

"Every aspect of our policy, on housing, economic development, tourism, recreation and leisure, under-pinned by our planning policies, both in general and in detail, must be and will be related to our overall key aim of increasing our population," said Coun Foote Wood.

Cutting out waste, saving energy and recycling used materials will be given a high priority.

The council is determined to cut the deficit on running the leisure complexes 'by whatever means are possible consistent with keeping these facilities open and available to the public'.

The council also wants to provide basic facilities in all parts of the district and says every village should have its own recognised play areas - even if it is only an enclosed space initially without play equipment.

Plans for a £60m ski village near Wolsingham have now been officially shelved but the council's feasibility study will still be available at a price and applications for similar schemes will be considered without prejudice.

Housing aims include plans to encourage new private house building, making an effort to bring in housing associations into all parts of the district to provide specialist accommodation, rural housing, low cost accommodation, housing for rent and to re-develop demolition sites such as at Lee-holme and throughout the Dene Valley area; taking action on empty and derelict property - especially if council owned - and encouraging private owners to improve or sell their empty property.

Economic development is the council's highest single priority and tourism is seen as an essential part of the council's strategy on economic development.

The Government's decision to bring smaller authorities like Wear Valley into consideration for 'poll tax capping' is causing concern.

Coun Foote Wood said: "The decision could have an extremely serious effect on the Wear Valley District for the 1992/93 financial year, possibly preventing us from making any new initiatives at all and forcing cuts even in the most basic services the council provides.

"We sincerely hope this will not happen but councillors and public must be aware of this grim possibility."

27.06.91

SIR, - I agree with outgoing Wear Valley District Council leisure director Les Morgan when he says the ski village scheme 'had been somewhat misunderstood'.

The Liberal Democrats on Wear Valley District Council set out, quite deliberately, to ensure that the public misunderstood what the scheme was really all about.

For them to suggest, however, that it was they who 'officially shelved' the scheme is both untrue and unwise.

Untrue because the scheme was actually 'shelved' when the council was Labour led, and as a consequence of that administration, along with Conservatives and Independents, ac-

# A mandate for what?

## LETTER

cepting the realities of the recession.

Unwise because that would be to gloat to the public that improvements to the infrastructure, realisation of incoming cash, creation of over 500 local jobs and improvements to the environment had also been 'shelved'.

It is necessary to appreciate the difficulty in

promoting 'grandiose' schemes to a public who, at the same time, see essential local services being cut to bare minimum.

But the undeniable fact is that councils who enjoy theme parks and the like, in their midst, can pass on the benefits to their communities.

All right, the people gave the Wear Valley Liberals an 'overwhelming' mandate in the recent elections.

But a mandate to do what? A mandate to look to the past and become culturally deficient? Or a mandate to display guts and lead the district towards the next century with pride and optimism?

I fear the former will prevail with these particular Liberals and the latter, like the ski village, will be 'officially shelved'.

**P R Graham,**  
chairman,

The Labour Party.  
Coundon branch

Town council

# Son appointed as head of department

THE son of Wear Valley Council's chief executive Allen Dobson has been appointed head of the authority's leisure department without the job having been advertised.

Yesterday the council's Liberal Democrat leader Coun Chris Foote Wood defended the appointment, saying changes in the department's management structure would save more than £22,000.

The decision was made in private during a full council meeting on Wednesday.

Paul Dobson becomes the council's leisure and tourism director on a salary scale up to £22,473. He succeeds Les

By MARTIN SHIPTON

Morgan, who has left to be chief executive of a district council in Scotland. Mr Dobson has been given the job on a salary scale lower than Mr Morgan's.

Coun Foote Wood said: "Mr Paul Dobson was previously designated as deputy to Mr Morgan. We have every confidence in the ability of Mr Dobson to head the leisure department."

He added: "If we had brought in someone else to take over Mr Morgan's job there would have been no savings to the authority."

Coun Foote Wood confirmed staff members had been verbally warned not to discuss the proposed management changes before Wednesday's meeting. "It was standard procedure. It was dealt with internally. I am not aware of anything out of the ordinary in this situation."

A spokesman for the Wear Valley branch of the local government officers' union Nalgo said the branch had been consulted about the changes in the leisure department's managerial structure and had no objections.

Criticism of the previous Labour council's leisure policy was a major plank

in the Liberal Democrats' election manifesto in May, when they won the authority by a landslide.

Coun Foote Wood said: "The leisure centres which cost the council a lot of money are there and we can't pretend they are not there. It is our determination to manage these facilities as economically as possible. We are already committed to reducing the leisure deficit, and are looking at ways and means of doing so."

He said public consultations would take place in September, after which budget proposals would be drawn up for the next financial year.

N/Echo. 26/7/91.

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# 'Have a say in your future,<sup>N/Echo</sup> offers council

26/7/91

RESIDENTS are being offered a say in the future as councillors prepare the Wear Valley Action plan.

The district council hopes to hear from anyone with ideas — but then the suggestions with plans for economic development, housing, community needs, tourism and the environment, will go to the public in a series of meetings.

Liberal leader of council Chris Foote Wood said that only after local people had expressed their ideas would the "strategy for the future" be adopted.

A report to a special meeting next week of the policy and finance committee by chief executive Allen Dobson says: "In presenting the Wear Valley document to members, I would emphasize that, at this stage, it is purely a draft.

"I would hope, therefore, that any minor alterations to the document could be picked up

during the consultation stage, together with the many suggestions I anticipate will be made by members of the public."

The public would also be asked for their comments on the Wear Valley Local Plan — the planning blueprint for the area.

The Action plan hopes to broaden the local economy and create more job opportunities and make the area more attractive for industry.

It would also like to ensure an adequate supply and range of housing for everyone including those with special needs. The council also hopes the environment around houses is protected and enhanced.

Councillors want to promote good transport links, better shopping and more comprehensive shopping facilities. And there are other targets on the environment, leisure and tourism.

Coun Foote Wood said: "There will be public meetings

## Meeting 'success'

A COUNCIL'S first ever meeting outside its headquarters was a huge success, its Liberal leader said yesterday.

Coun Chris Foote Wood said he was "delighted" that more than 100 people turned out to watch proceedings at Stanhope Town Hall on Wednesday night.

He said: "It was their biggest public attendance ever in the history of Wear Valley District Council.

"People were very interested. It was a tremendous evening."

Coun Foote Wood has claimed the Labour party boycotted the meeting. Labour leader Coun John Richardson denied the charge saying a Labour group meeting on an important issue began earlier and over-ran the start time at Stanhope.

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29.7.91

## Leisure changes will save £22,000

CHANGES to a council's leisure and tourism department will result in savings of more than £22,000 a year.

A spokesman for Wear Valley District Council said the Liberal-run council had taken the opportunity to cut costs in the department after the resignation of the former director of leisure and tourism Les Morgan.

The spokesman said "The council agreed a new staffing structure which will meet the challenge of managing leisure and tourism operations and also provide clear lines of responsibility to meet the requirements of competitive tendering legislation."

He said that as a result, savings of £22,000 a year had been made.

The department is now headed by Paul Dobson. His assistants will be Judith Rassmussen and Dennis Natrass.

Ian Thompson, the leisure contracts manager, will be responsible for the day to day management of leisure facilities.

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# Details of

Northern Echo 29.7.91

# town hall

# revamp to

# be agreed

THE refurbishment of an historic town hall will come a step closer this week when plans for the work are agreed.

Members of Wear Valley District Council's planning committee will agree the council's own plans for the £2.7m refurbishment of Bishop Auckland Town Hall.

The detailed plans for the crumbling Grade One listed building will be passed on Wednesday.

The issue of the town hall's future was one of the most contentious of the former Labour administration's reign. At one stage 10,000 people signed a petition for the hall to remain in public ownership.

The detailed proposals to be discussed at the committee include the demolition of the south east corner of the building which will be replaced by a tower matching the existing building.

The 120-year-old town hall's roof will be replaced and its exterior will also be refurbished.

A report to the meeting states: "There will be some minor changes to the exterior incorporated, including the opening of the main entrance to its original double form."

Planning director Paul Worsnop said: "This proposal is very much

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By CLIFF EDWARDS

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to be welcomed since it not only provides for the improvement and restoration of a key listed building in the heart of Bishop Auckland's conservation area, but it also brings uses into the building which will ensure that it acts as a focus of activity in the centre of Bishop Auckland which will be an asset to the town centre in general."

The plans include an exhibition gallery in the basement and ground floor, a library, consumer protection facility and tourism office also in the ground floor.

In the first floor there will be a concert hall and on the second floor a new gallery will be built to provide sound and lighting for the concert hall. A small function room will also be on that floor.

Council officers say they want to see a sample panel of the new stonework before any construction work begins.

Durham County Council experts have said archaeological remains could be present under the south east part of the building, which was formerly an open courtyard.

Mr Worsnop said: "I feel the council should commission an excavation. Any remains of interest discovered would belong to the council and could be displayed in the gallery area."

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# Bishop Auckland's disappearing railway line

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**N**OT a month after we forecast the demise of the Bishop Auckland-Darlington railway line comes BR's draft network map for ten years hence.

Guess what's not on it?

Since BR claims there are no closure plans and that the new diagram is very much incomplete, we have been comparing it against the existing network map.

The good news is that every other line in the North-East, including the supposedly threatened Esk Valley, is on both. So are once endangered routes like Scarborough to Bridlington, Settle and Carlisle and the underused rural branches in Lincolnshire.

The maps appear remarkably similar, in fact, except for the branches to Barton on Humber, Sinfen Central and (third) Lanark.

The bad news is that they look to be going in the same direction as Bishop Auckland.

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## Leader happy with first 7/8/91 three months

THE Liberal leader of a council yesterday said he was happy with the progress made in his first three months in power.

Coun Chris Foote Wood, Liberal leader of Wear Valley District Council, said: "I am pleased to say our new administration has had a smooth passage in its first three months."

He said his administration had taken immediate cost-saving action to streamline the committee structures of the council and had introduced a major new policy document on which the public will be consulted next month.

But Labour leader Coun John Richardson, deposed in the Liberal landslide on May 2, said Coun Foote Wood could not achieve all his aims.

He said: "Nothing has changed. The rent arrears are still as high as ever. Repairs are still waiting to be done in the council house estates."

# Liberals happy with progress

WEAR Valley Liberal Democrats are happy with the progress made in their first three months in power on the local district council. The Liberals gained a landslide victory in May when they overturned a large Labour majority to

take 28 of Wear Valley Council's 40 seats. Taking over at the council's annual meeting on May 8, the new administration set about streamlining the committee system. The size and numbers of council committees

was drastically cut-back and evening meetings brought in, saving time and cost and making proceedings more open to the public. The council has now met outside Crook for the first time ever when a meeting in Stanhope

Town Hall attracted an audience of 100. More venues are to follow, including Bishop Auckland Town Hall which is now undergoing a major refurbishment after being closed in 1988. Reorganisation of the

council's Leisure department has resulted in an immediate saving of £22,000 a year, and administration is to meet all leisure staff to discuss ways of making better use of the leisure complexes and other facilities and to reduce the current operating deficit.

Other savings have helped fund local projects.

The Friends of the Heritage Line have been given a £2,000 grant to help restore Stanhope Station, and a community-funded play area at Howden-le-Wear will now have the grass cut.

Much larger sums have been committed to economic development, with a major investment in land at Low Willing-

ton for housing and industry. The Liberals have introduced a major policy document for the district, Wear Valley Action, setting out their aims and objectives for the next four years.

This will go to a wide-ranging consultation exercise in September, with a series of public meetings and exhibitions in the district.

Liberal Council Leader, Coun Chris Foote Wood said: "Our aim is to provide homes, jobs, a better environment and more efficient services. We want the public to be better informed and more involved in decision making.

"We will fulfil as much of our programme as we can, subject to outside constraints and remembering that the Council could well be poll tax capped next year."

12.08.91. NORTHERN ECHO LETTERS

**FRESH AIR:** What a refreshing breath of fresh air has swept through the council chambers of Wear Valley.

At last someone is actually consulting the people - a novel idea in itself. I wonder why no-one has thought of it before.

Willington consists of only Labour councillors and the lack of their presence at the full council meeting seems to suggest that the party is more important than the people who voted them in. - Olive Linge, 6 Luxmoore Avenue, Willington.

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Northumb. Echo

## The pitfalls of a cricket ground

IT emerged yesterday that the new Liberal Democrat leadership of Wear Valley District Council has thoughts of building a first class cricket stadium on a former pit heap in the tiny village of Hunwick, near Willington. It instantly provoked memories of the old Labour administration's well-intentioned but ultimately-doomed plans for an Alpine ski village in Weardale, one of the reasons cited for Labour's crushing defeat at last May's local elections. It may be that money to finance a county-standard ground can be mainly covered by a Government land reclamation grant and the profits from selling off adjacent land for housing. But we note council leader Chris Foote-Wood's somewhat vague references to a "fixed sum" council contribution and wonder what that might mean to the local taxpayers of Wear Valley. If Coun Foote-Wood can engineer a scheme which brings first class cricket to South West Durham with no burden on the local electorate he will earn the respect and admiration of many. If not, he can expect swift retribution at the ballot box.



# Council to meet traders for talks on future of markets

**STALLHOLDERS** will meet council chiefs in the next few weeks to thrash out ways to keep two floundering markets alive.

Liberal leader of Wear Valley District Council, Coun Chris Foote Wood, said he hoped to have a meeting within two to three weeks with market traders who have staged demonstrations against feared "privatisation".

Coun Foote Wood said: "We want to allay their fears. We're not going to sell the markets."

An option to hand over the management of the markets to a specialist private company was still on the table, however.

By **CLIFF EDWARDS**

He said the declining Crook and Bishop Auckland markets would be able to gain specialist advertising, draw a wider variety of stallholders and save money for the council and the ratepayer.

Market traders, however, fear that rents would soar immediately a take-over happened.

Of a possible price rise, Coun Foote Wood said: "I'm not going to pretend that cannot happen."

"We have often got complaints from the shopkeepers in the town who feel that the market traders have an unfair advantage."

He said a private operator would not

simply be brought in to put up rents, it would be given the task of expanding the market - and that could mean putting stalls down pedestrianised Newgate Street in Bishop Auckland.

That concept is one which has excited market traders for years and what many have unsuccessfully called for in the past.

The Liberals say, however, that if private management is taken up and seen to fail it would be discarded.

Les Wilson, secretary of the Bishop Auckland and Crook Market Traders' Association has said rents would soar with privatisation and stallholders would be "treated like scum".

The markets would eventually die as a result of such a move.

Coun John Richardson (Lab) said his party was opposed to any privatisation and he shared stallholders' fears that rents could rise dramatically.

He said: "The cost of the stalls could be exorbitant to the stallholders and they could abandon the market in significant numbers."

"That's something that the administration will have to consider if they are going to enter into negotiations with a developer."

The previous Labour administration had considered the same solution to the markets but dismissed it because of opposition from trade unions.

Traders have been invited by the Liberals to come up with their ideas for the future development of the markets.

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## Opening of 19.08.91 new station

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A NEW railway station will be officially opened on Sunday as its first train pulls in.

Durham County Council chairman Mick Terrans will do the honours at around 10.10am at the new Witton Park station - which local people and the Friends of the Heritage Line have fought for.

The train from Bishop Auckland will be welcomed in by a band. Its departure, set for 10.23am, will be signalled by Wear Valley District Council chairman Maurice Almond.

A spokesman for the Friends of the Heritage Line said the new stop would give local people access to Weardale, Darlington and Cleveland and people from those areas would be able to enjoy the countryside around Witton le Wear and Escomb.

Tree Country Hotel

# Councillor dreams of county cricket on a pit spoil heap

By CLIFF EDWARDS

A COUNCIL leader has a dream of turning a levelled pit spoil heap into a venue for first class cricket.

Wear Valley Council leader Coun Chris Foote Wood believes an industrial wasteland at Hunwick, near Willington, County Durham, could be transformed into a site where Durham County Cricket Club would play some of its games.

The Liberal said: "Why shouldn't we have first class cricket here? There's no reason why not.

"This cricket ground could finally flatten the lingering misconception of Wear Valley as an area of colliery pit heaps."

The derelict Roughlea Colliery site would be levelled by opencasting firm HJ Banks which was given planning permission by the previous Labour administration for a large recreational area, including a cricket pitch for the Hunwick Cricket Club.

Now Liberals want the tiny village club to host the big matches - and consequently welcome international cricket stars.

In the deal struck with the Labour administration, the firm was allowed to build around 50 homes - the major profit-making part of the agreement.

The council will gain ownership of the cricket pitch once completed.

No work has yet been done on the project as both the council and the company are waiting for financial help in the form of a 100pc reclamation grant from the Department of the Environment.

Coun Foote Wood said he envisaged the grant becoming available in the next 12 months and work beginning soon after.

HJ Banks is set to pay for changing facilities at the ground. Coun Foote Wood said the council may get involved financially but with a fixed sum.



Chris Foote Wood (left) and planning committee chairman John Cunningham at the site

Picture: BRIAN CLOWN

Labour's Coun John Richardson, who was council leader until May, said: "He is riding on the back of what we agreed two years ago.

"I would welcome first class cricket coming to Wear Valley but at the present moment there's a tremendous amount of work to be done.

"I am anxious to see it take place. I

want to see something that's tangible - not just pie in the sky."

If the new dream is to be realised, the ground would have to satisfy a series of requirements before it was considered good enough to host a county game.

It would have to have minimum facilities including a pavilion. The pitch would have to be inspected by the

Durham CCC groundsman to ensure it was good enough and also analysed by a representative of the domestic game's governing body, the Test and County Cricket Board.

Mike Gear, chief executive of Durham CCC said: "We are very pleased that something is being developed there and we will watch with interest."

# Solicitor appointed to head new-look council

N/ECHO 7.12.91

By BARBARA STEEPER

A 32-YEAR-OLD solicitor is the new head of Wear Valley District Council.

The council's legal director Liz Ashness will become the head of administration, just weeks after chief executive Allen Dobson announced his retirement.

She will lead a newly-created department including legal services, committee administration, personnel, central services and electoral registration.

Chief director of finance Eddie Scrivens has been promoted to the new post of director of finance.

Economic development officer Myles Handy will be director of a new economic development and tourism department and leisure director Paul Dobson becomes director of leisure and marketing.

The ruling Liberal Democrats claim the restructure would save the council up to £29,000 a year in wages but this was yesterday rejected by Labour leader Coun John Richardson.

Liberal leader Coun Chris Foote Wood said: "Instead of having a chief executive with

overall responsibility for all activities, Wear Valley Council will be run by a very capable team of chief officers with Liz Ashness ensuring co-ordination between departments."

Mrs Ashness qualified as a solicitor in December 1984 and moved from private practice in Norwich to become assistant solicitor to North Norfolk District Council in May 1986.

She joined Wear Valley District Council in December 1988 as district solicitor.

The new arrangements take effect immediately with officers officially taking on their new roles from January 1.

Coun Richardson said yesterday that he did not believe the move meant a financial saving as, "the cost of Mr Dobson's retirement will far outweigh the saving. All this comes at a time when the council is in serious trouble because of charge-capping."

Mrs Ashness said yesterday she was delighted to accept the post and looked forward to the challenge.

"My role is take an over-view of council policy and to co-ordinate," she said.

"The council faces difficult times with the community-charge capping, the Council Tax, local government re-organisation and the threat of tendering for professional services.

*'The council faces difficult times with community-charge capping, the Council Tax, local government re-organisation and the threat of tendering for professional services.'*

**Head of Administration Liz Ashness**



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News

## SOUTH DURHAM

# 'Savage' cuts lead to protest

WEAR Valley councillors yesterday slammed Government proposals for charge capping and pledged to lead a delegation to London in protest.

Next year's district council budget may have to be cut by £1 million, a move members of the policy and finance committee described as "savage."

Liberal leader of the council, Chris Foote Wood, said the proposals demanded a cut in an already slim budget and this would affect the lives of everyone living in the Wear Valley.

"As a district council we need all the help we can get to tackle problems in the area," he said.

"If our budget is reduced by this amount it will undermine our capacity to deal with the problems we are facing.

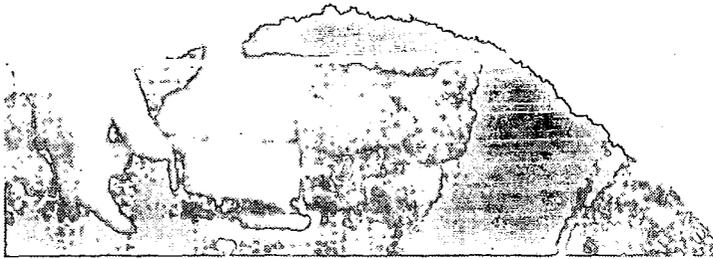
"I find it particularly iniquitous that this council is being penalised for good housekeeping."

It was agreed to form a delegation of three councillors and an officer to lobby Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine.

Labour leader Coun John Richardson said the news meant the ruling party would not be able to carry out all it had promised.

"This will have a savage and drastic effect on the living standards and quality of life in the district," he said.

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Alan Robinson: Family "saw changes" before crash

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# Liberal leader refutes claims

THE LIBERAL leader of Wear Valley District Council yesterday refuted claims that the full truth had been withheld about the chief executive's retirement.

Coun Chris Foote Wood said procedures had been followed "to the letter" in the run-up to Wednesday's announcement that Allen Dobson would leave in March.

Coun Foote Wood said if Labour opposition leader John Richardson wanted a public debate, he himself was in a position to put the wheels in motion.

The statement that Mr Dobson is to leave followed a week of speculation about his future.

The statement said the chief executive was retiring at his own request and would leave the council on agreed terms and with best wishes.

Coun Richardson said he could

not accept the statement and claimed the relationship between Mr Dobson and Coun Foote Wood was the real cause for his departure.

Coun Foote Wood said yesterday: "Coun Richardson was given every opportunity to ask questions and he asked a number which were answered.

"If he has further questions as a member of the council he clearly has avenues open to him to institute such a debate.

"We have followed procedures correctly and to the letter and we have informed the public at the first possible opportunity."

Mr Dobson has a dual role as chief executive and treasurer.

Coun Foote Wood said it was likely the two responsibilities would be separated.

"We will have to give very serious consideration to how we will fill the gap," he said.

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# Workers get a pay rise

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for obvious reasons and when we came to calculate this year's allowances we used that figure in our calculations."

Tory councillor Peter Jones slammed the increase and called for a policy change.

He says special responsibility  
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## Ski village doubts start party storm

A LABOUR-controlled council will pull out of plans for a £60m ski village because it cannot stand the political heat, an opposition leader claimed.

Wear Valley District councillor Chris Foote Wood said the Labour leaders' expected decision tomorrow not to go ahead with attempts to supplement the costs with £5m of ratepayers' money was due to pressure from Liberal Democrats.

The council, which initiated proposals for the ski village at

Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham will continue to act as enablers for the scheme, now headed by Newcastle property developers Stanley Miller.

In a report to the council, company boss Harry Midgley has said that because of difficulties getting the Government to sanction public sector cash spending, the project should be completely self funding.

But Labour leader Coun John Richardson dismissed the allegations.

## Call to scrap ski village

THE £64m Weardale ski-village plan should now be declared "extinct", claims a council opposition leader.

Wear Valley District Council spent £177,000 on proposals for the Alpine-style resort earmarked for Black Banks Wood, Wolsingham.

Following difficulties in finding public sector cash for the project, it was handed over to Tyneside building company Stanley Miller last October.

But the future of the ambitious scheme was left in doubt after the collapse of Stanley Miller last month.

And now council Liberal leader Coun Chris Foote Wood says the whole idea should be scrapped.

28/2/90

Northern  
Echo

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HERE'S a resume of last week's City news for those who don't habitually read the business pages.

Stanley Miller plc, described as a "troubled Tyneside builder," suffered a "further setback" when its City broker suddenly resigned.

Miller had already forecast a profits fall and seen its biggest shareholder sell up.

The company's shares are sliding and there is speculation, reported the business bods, that its "prestige" Newcastle quayside development might be affected.

Here are two more facts which weren't mentioned at the time.

1. Stanley Miller is the company named by Wear Valley Council to develop the Heights of Folly ski village above Wolsingham.
2. Wear Valley Council has already spent £150,000 of ratepayers money on the project.



# Council <sup>N/Echo</sup> defends skiing <sup>7/5/90</sup> handover

By CLIFF EDWARDS

A COUNCIL chief has defended a decision to hand plans for a prestige ski holiday development to a company which now faces a huge financial crisis.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council, said Newcastle-based builder Stanley Miller gave the authority 'no worries' when it took over the £60m Wolsingham ski village scheme last October.

Before the handover meeting Miller announced a huge drop in profits blamed on a disastrous performance in Scotland. On Friday the company suspended its share trading on the stock exchange with a share price of 20p — compared to 325p a year ago.

This has thrown into doubt whether the ski village will now be built.

Mr Dobson indicated the council was not concerned by the drop in profits at the time of the handover. He said: "They were making their organisation more acceptable, more feasible, more financially secure."

Mr Dobson said the ski village may still come off if new companies take over the idea which would provide 500 jobs. Planned attractions included dry ski slopes, houses, lakes and a Father Christmas Fantasy Land.

He stressed the council had decided to spend no more on it. Wolsingham councillor Vere Shuttleworth, who believes the Miller position could mean the end of the ski village, said: "I don't think there will be many tears shed in Wolsingham."

"By its very nature, it was going to change Wolsingham, it was going to change Weardale."

Keith Shepherd, chairman of Wolsingham Parish Council, said: "There are differences of opinion, but if it's supposedly bringing jobs into the dale it would possibly be a good thing."

"It would be sad for it not to come about."

# Country ski plan faces new protest

19.06.90

THE Countryside Commission may protest if a council's plan for a ski holiday village comes to fruition.

Shelagh Reynolds, the Commission's senior countryside officer for the North Pennines and County Durham was worried a scheme may not be in keeping with the hill farming and small settlement traditions of Weardale.

Wear Valley District Council is now trying to interest potential developers with its early plans for a £25m ski village at Black Banks Wood near Wolsingham.

The council had backed a later £64m scheme last year touted by crashed property developers Stanley Miller.

The site is just outside the Countryside Commission's designated North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Miss Reynolds said: "If we feel that any scheme was going to have a severe impact on the countryside even if it's on the other side of the boundary, we might well find ourselves saying that this is incompatible with the area."

By CLIFF EDWARDS

The Black Banks scheme — as outlined by the council in 1988 — would include chalets, a hotel, ski hostels, shops, a toboggan run and five dry ski slopes.

Allen Dobson, managing director of Wear Valley District Council said no final plans had been made yet.

He said: "The Countryside Commission and everyone else would be a part of the of the consultation procedure that would take place.

And he said: "If they did not like what they saw, they would be able to say so."

In a 12-page document produced by the Commission on its aspirations for the North Pennines AONB, it states: "We do not consider the North Pennines is a place for large scale imported leisure facilities."

The Commission favours green tourism with people coming to enjoy and understand the countryside.

Mass tourism where the countryside was an attractive backdrop to "urban-style, purpose-built" facilities had no place in the area, the document claimed.

# Leisure plan cost jumped 'grotesquely'

A COUNCILLOR has warned that Bishop Auckland's costly new leisure complex will be a severe financial drain on the authority.

Coun Chris Foote Wood, leader of the Wear Valley District Council Liberal Democrats, fears the final bill for work on the Woodhouse complex will reach £2.5m.

When the project was given the go-ahead last year, councillors hoped the former swimming pool could be converted into a water fun complex for just £1.6m.

The new attraction is set to open in a few weeks' time but several opening dates have already come and gone.

Coun Foote Wood said costs for the centre had escalated "grotesquely".

"In my view it is questionable whether or not this scheme was necessary in the

first place," he stormed.

"The baths were completely refurbished about three years ago so why spend over £2m on it?"

"It seems like a huge amount of money to spend for what is a relatively minor improvement."

He warned that the finished complex would place a severe financial strain on the authority.

"When you take into account the interest charges and running costs, there seems little doubt that this is going to be a very costly exercise," he said. "It will be a millstone around poll tax payers' necks."

The authority had to ensure the complex opened as soon as possible to attract youngsters during the school holidays, added Coun Foote Wood.

"Otherwise we will miss out on a lot of extra trade," he warned.

# Poll tax chaos with £1.5m unpaid and worse to come

By CLIFF EDWARDS

NEARLY £1.5m is owed to a district council in unpaid community charge six months after it was implemented.

By the end of October, £6,406,000 should have been collected by Wear Valley Council, but only £4,916,000 had been received.

Council chiefs say poll tax computer systems are inefficient, large backlogs in paperwork exist, people are getting unnecessary reminders and the morale of overworked staff is low.

People who do pay are likely to face large rises next year.

Next year's poll tax demand will be at

least £50 above the present £308, when the government cuts relief to councils. Inflation is likely to swell the figure more.

Leading Labour member, Coun Billy Neilson, said of the £1.5m shortfall: "That will be an escalating figure."

As the year proceeds, it would become more difficult for people to pay their mounting debt.

He said: "There will be a financial problem and the financial problem can only be relieved by imposing a greater community charge next year.

"It's inevitable that poll tax payers are

on an escalating spiral as far as payment is concerned."

A report to the council states that collection of outstanding money was affected by the "inability of the systems to work correctly".

Embattled managing director Allan Dobson states: "This has resulted in many chargepayers receiving reminders unnecessarily, and increasing substantially the workload and frustration of staff."

The council has, however, made inroads into the amounts owed. When 8,000 reminders were sent out at the end of August, 2,000 people paid a total of £177,000.

In all, 77pc of the charge in Wear

Valley has been paid.

Mr Dobson's report says the council is "attempting to make arrangements" to start full recovery proceedings.

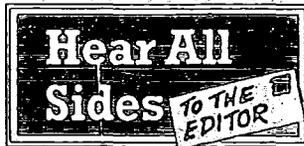
However, he warns that care must be taken as there was still a backlog of 5,500 register amendments and 1,335 poll tax and housing benefit amendments to be processed.

Mr Dobson said yesterday that because poll tax regulations were received late, there was no time to develop efficient computer systems to cater for all of the tax's complications.

"There's got to be a much more effective look at the system. Community charge is a very difficult tax to administer," he said.

30.5.90

III



## Labour and leisure

IN ANSWER to R.Moore (HAS 23.3.90) and W.Dobinson (HAS 11.4.90), only the Liberal Democrats on Wear Valley Council have the courage to make positive proposals to reduce Labour's grossly inflated "leisure" spending, currently costing every poll tax payer £60 a year.

The ever-increasing cost of "refurbishing" the Woodhouse Close Leisure complex, for the second time in three years, has continually escalated from an original estimate of £1.2m to £1.6m to £2.1m and beyond, to the detriment of many areas in the district where play facilities are minimal or non-existent.

People want local facilities near at hand, not multi-million pound palaces that cost the earth to build, staff and maintain.

We fought our corner for a £200,000 reduction of leisure spending which would have reduced the poll tax burden, but were defeated by the combined votes of Labour, Tory and Independent councillors.

After that, we were not prepared to support the high level of poll tax set by Labour, but we do support spending on essential services. We abstained on Labour's overall "package" rather than vote separately on hundreds of different items.

It is clear the only way to curb Labour's extravagant spending in Wear Valley is to return the Liberals to power next year. -  
**Coun Chris Foote Wood**, Liberal Democrat Group leader, Wear Valley DC.