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**INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND:  
UNREALISED OR UNREALISTIC?**

**Janet Ruth Davison B.Sc.**

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**Presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Department of Geography  
University of Durham**

**October 1990**



**14 MAY 1992**

# INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND:

## UNREALISED OR UNREALISTIC?

JANET RUTH DAVISON B.S.C.

(Presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy)

### ABSTRACT

In recent years, integrated rural development (IRD) has become accepted as a panacea to rectify shortcomings in the sectoral, largely uncoordinated, rural development system currently operating in England. IRD may be defined as a multi-sectoral approach to rural development. Individual and disparate policies are brought together and coordinated in order to form a comprehensive rural development strategy which takes account of, and where necessary, reconciles the social, economic and environmental needs of rural areas.

This thesis examines, from an organisational perspective, the feasibility of pursuing integrated rural development. The primary task was to create a coherent conceptual model framework of IRD. The objectives were two fold: first, to identify the common parameters of IRD; the basic principles and strategies engendered in this development approach; second, to develop from these a critical platform from which to determine the relevance of the IRD concept to England's rural development system, with all its administrative complexity.

Much of the enquiry has centred upon the study of inter-organisational behaviour, looking particularly at 'integrated' rural development initiatives in progress. The aim has been to identify the key factors which govern the relationships between organisations, especially those which appear to facilitate or hinder inter-organisational coordination.

This institutional approach to the study of rural development has much to offer, both in terms of improving our understanding of the dynamics of England's present administrative system and in the assessment of the potential for integrated rural development in the future. On this basis it is evident that IRD is in reality, far less convincing than the ideas which underpin it. Indeed, when taking into account contemporary organisational processes it becomes apparent that integrated rural development is not a viable development approach.

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## COMMON ACRONYMS

ADAS	Agricultural Development Advisory Service
CEC	Commission of the European Communities
CoSIRA	Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (merged with the Development Commission in April 1988)
CPRP	Countryside Policy Review Panel
CRC	Countryside Review Committee
DoE	Department of the Environment
EEC	Economic European Community
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESAs	Environmentally Sensitive Areas
ESF	European Social Fund
FEOGA	European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund
IDPs	Integrated Development Programmes
IRD	Integrated Rural Development
IRD Project	Integrated Rural Development project of the Peak District National Park
LFA(s)	Less Favoured Area(s)
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food
MSC	Manpower Services Commission
NESTWOP	North East Staffordshire Officers Working Party
PPJPB	Peak Park Joint Planning Board
RCC	Rural Community Council
RDA(s)	Rural Development Area(s)
RDC Business Service	Rural Development Commission Business Service (formed April 1988)
RDP(s)	Rural Development Programme(s)
RPRT	Rural Planning Research Trust
TRRU	Tourism and Recreation Research Unit

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Integrated rural development is a convenient concept by which to ascribe to the need for greater organisational policy coordination. This thesis concerns the feasibility of creating and pursuing coherent, coordinated rural development policies within an administrative system dominated by policy fragmentation and exclusive sectoral concerns. By looking beyond the ideals of the IRD concept to the organisational realities of its implementation, an area of research largely neglected, it makes an important contribution to a debate which has been consistently at the fore of rural development issues for some fifteen years.

In this chapter, the author's research is placed within the context of rural geographic enquiry. The aim is to create a means of 'signposting' which demonstrates the evolving nature of rural development studies and in so doing places this study in its contemporary setting. Consideration is given to the breadth of rural development research, with its multi-disciplinary perspective, before examining the emergence of integrated rural development (IRD) as a panacea for current rural administrative ills. The final section in this chapter details the author's research methodology.

#### **I.1 The Nature of Rural Geography**

Rural Geography, since shedding its preoccupation with agriculture in the early 1970s (Cloke, 1985), has experienced a significant burgeoning of interest and scope of study. Indeed it has more than fulfilled Clout's early ambitions for the discipline set down in 1972, where he defined rural geography as, "the study of recent social, economic, land-use and spatial changes that have taken place in less densely populated areas which are commonly recognised by virtue of their



visual components as 'countryside.'" (Clout, 1972: 1). The most exciting development has been its readiness to look to and accommodate, the perspectives of other disciplines in its search for explanations of the dynamics observed. Thus Pacione, writing just twelve years after Clout's plea for a broadening of research enquiry, describes rural geography as a 'multi-faceted phenomenon' which, "interacts with a host of other sub-disciplines within geography and has strong linkages with related fields of interest in economics, sociology, politics and planning." (Pacione, 1984: 1). Consequently, rural studies cover the whole gamut of rural concerns, from general rural geography texts (Phillips and Williams, 1984; Gilg, 1985; Robinson, 1990) to those grappling with specific issues: rural deprivation (Lowe, Bradley *et al.*, 1986a; McLaughlin, 1986a), community studies (see reviews by Martin, 1976; Newby, 1978; Lewis, 1979); rural employment (Clarkson, 1980; Dower, 1980; Hodge *et al.*, 1981; Gilg, 1983); land-use (Best and Rogers, 1973; Best, 1981); rural power structures (Buchanan, 1982; Knox, 1982; Cloke, 1987) and central-local government relations (Social Science Research Council, 1979; Goldsmith, 1986). This multi-disciplinary approach to the study of rural areas is to be welcomed, not least because it reflects the diversity and complexity of the subject matter. Thus the author's study, while rooted within geographical traditions, looks to the complementary fields of planning, policy making and organisational theory for both inspiration and insight.

## **I.2 Defining Rural Development**

The issue of rural development is itself far ranging, both in subject and authorship, for it is a term open to broad interpretation. The well worn debate of how one defines rural, and equally, what one means by development, rears its head once more. Yet it is an area that requires clarification in a thesis concerned with this very subject.

The problem of defining rurality has, at some time, occupied the minds of most researchers and writers, working within the realm of rural studies(1). The resulting definitions provide different perspectives on rurality depending upon the originator's conceptual concerns. Hoggart and Buller (1987) suggest that three substantive, yet inter-related groupings of definitions exist: the socio-cultural, the occupational and the ecological.

Certainly with regard to Britain, the first two approaches suffer from a number of limitations. Socio-cultural definitions of rurality are founded on the premise that differences in behaviour and attitude exist between inhabitants who live in 'rural' areas and those who live in 'urban' areas. In such definitions 'rural' is associated with adherence to 'traditional' values; a strong sense of family and community and a suspicion of socio-political change. In contrast, urban areas will display opposite values. The fundamental weakness in any value based definition is the assumption that uniformity of attitudes exists within a given community. Such uniformity does not exist, nor can any values be said to be unique to rural or urban environments - comparable attitudes will be found within certain sections of any community or population.

Indeed any distinctions that may have existed in the past, due in part to the relative isolation of rural areas, have been consistently eroded by television and improved mobility, both of which have increased the interaction between rural and urban areas. A different and more useful perspective to come out of this approach which gets to the very crux of the 'what is rural debate?', is that which focuses on the issue of people's perception of rurality. Palmer *et al.* (1977) demonstrated that people's images of the countryside are structured along a number of dimensions which they identified in terms of accessibility, activity, degree of crowding, facilities/settlement, scenery, evaluation (eg. relaxing versus disturbing) and emotion/reflection. In this context the definitions offered are pertinent and to the point. To paraphrase: 'rural' applies to any area that most people think of as being 'rural' (Thorburn, 1971; Moss, 1978).

The second approach, identifying rural areas on the basis of the dominance of employment in primary industries, particularly agriculture and forestry, is also an inappropriate means of definition, although it would have been applicable earlier this century. Today, the economic base of most rural areas is no longer dominated by agriculture but in common with urban areas, by employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors (see Chapter III).

This leaves just the 'ecological' definitions to provide a reference point as to what constitutes 'rural' and it is this subset that has been the focus of geographic enquiry. These definitions express 'rural' in terms of its environmental setting and are primarily concerned with the spatial distribution of the population, landscape and land-use. They range from largely intuitive definitions of rural areas such as that offered by Green (1971), who argues for a regionally based definition of rurality which distinguishes areas highly integrated into the socio-economic affairs of nearby metropolitan areas from those that are not, to more formal statistical definitions based on the analysis of various indices deemed to indicate rurality, such as distance from urban centres, population density etc. (Cloke, 1977; Webber & Craig, 1978).

However, as Shaw (1979a) points out, few of the statistically derived classifications provide a basis for a definition of rural areas that reflects their distinctive characteristics. The most satisfactory in this respect are those based on the appearance of the landscape and land-use. Thus the definition most widely used is that proposed by Wibberley, who states:

rural "describes those parts of a country which show unmistakable signs of being dominated by extensive uses of land either at the present time or in the immediate past."

(Wibberley, 1972: 252)

Similarly, Clout (1972), cited above, refers to rural areas as those that are recognised as such by the presence of various visual elements generally associated with the countryside.

Cloke has since suggested that the rural environment cannot be defined by referring to simple functional elements and that a composite definition, incorporating land-use, the economy, rural settlement, community and society, would provide a better approximation of the overall concept of rurality. He proposes that the countryside should be viewed in terms of an area which:

"(i) is dominated (either currently or recently) by extensive land uses, notably agriculture and forestry;

(ii) contains small, lower order settlements which demonstrate a strong relationship between buildings and extensive landscape, and which are thought of as rural by most of their residents;

iii) engenders a way of life that is characterised by a cohesive identity based on respect for the environmental and behavioural qualities of living as part of an extensive landscape."

(Cloke, 1985: 5)

With some doubt as to the validity of the last point, this definition appears the most sound and all embracing, and in the context of this thesis, the most relevant of those in current use.

Many attempts have also been made to define what is meant by 'development' and like rural, it is a term open to many different interpretations. As a concept, rural development originated with reference to the Third World, primarily to distinguish comprehensive development initiatives that aimed to tackle a range of issues to alleviate rural poverty (health, education, infrastructure, etc), from the single sector agriculture development schemes of the late 1960s. It was evident that these schemes, despite large investments in crop research and production (particularly the introduction of high yielding, fast maturing varieties) had failed to improve the productivity and incomes of the majority of subsistence farmers and similarly had failed to generate work and incomes for an even larger landless and jobless rural population (Williams, 1981).

Although the principle of a development strategy that encompasses action on several fronts, ie looks towards 'rural' as opposed to purely 'agricultural' development is recognised, differences in emphasis have confused the meaning

of the term from the outset (ODI, 1979). For some, rural development is used in its literal sense; that is any development initiative undertaken in a rural area whether small or large scale, and whether an isolated initiative or part of a major scheme. For others, rural development, while seen to involve several functions, is regarded as being distinct from agricultural development. Still others suggest it comprises all types of activity including agriculture. Rural development may also be used to refer to any rural strategy, regardless of content, that in some way improves the economic and social life of the rural population, particularly the rural poor(2).

This latter 'people' definition of rural development, with various modifications and refinements, is most frequently used in the context of both developed and developing nations. Thus Goulet states that development:

"Covers the entire gamut of changes by which a social system, with optimal regard for the wishes of individuals and sub-systemic components of that system, moves from a condition of life widely perceived as unsatisfactory in some way toward some condition regarded as 'humanely' better."

(Goulet, 1977: 333)

With Europe in mind, The Arkleton Trust states that rural development:

"aims at the development of viable self-sustaining rural societies that are not based on agriculture alone."

(Arkleton Trust, 1983: 10)

Both definitions provide a useful starting point as to the objectives of rural development, but require further refinement to reflect that rural development is also a dynamic process. As Ball states:

"Development is a process - a state of becoming. As such it involves change. However, development is not just the situation at the beginning nor at the end of change. It is instead the ongoing evolutionary transformation that modifies what exists at the beginning to what exists at a later point in time."

(Ball, 1974: 1)

Similarly, the Arkleton Trust argues:

"Rural Development is also a continuous process which must adjust to changes in both circumstances and aspirations. It can never be said that a particular area or society has 'achieved' rural development."

(Arkleton Trust, *ibid.*)

Combining both the 'people' and the 'dynamic' elements of rural development, Copp offers the following definition:

"rural development is a process, through collective efforts, aimed at improving the well-being and self-realisation of people living outside urban areas."

(Copp, 1972: 519)

This is an interesting definition that raises yet another issue, the assumption that rural development should primarily benefit the rural population. The whole question of who ultimately benefits from development is discussed in conceptual terms in Hoggart and Buller (1987), but what should concern us here is the apparent failure (certainly with respect to Britain and other western countries) to acknowledge the wider role played by rural areas in society. Clearly the needs of those who live and work in the countryside must be met, but rural areas are also a national resource - they provide our food and other primary products, offer recreation and act as nature reserves. Moreover they accommodate our infrastructure and communication networks. Rural areas cannot be divorced from this wider context and it is with reference to this that the author has examined the process of rural development.

### **1.3 The Study of Rural Development**

#### Recognising rural needs

Broadly speaking, studies pertaining to the development of rural areas have followed a pattern of shifting emphasis as research areas have gained and lost their popularity. The study of rural deprivation for example, emerged as a short-lived yet hard-hitting focus of research activity in the late 1970s and early 1980s, stimulated in part by the report of the standing conference of Rural Community Councils on the Decline of Rural Services issued in the August of 1978. A flurry of studies on the social and economic plight of rural communities followed, covering the spectrum of service provision from health, education,

housing and employment, to shopping opportunities and accessibility. An annotated bibliography of rural deprivation studies prepared by Neate (1981) indicates the wealth of material devoted to this subject, while collections such as those by Walker (1978) Shaw (1979b) and Lowe *et al.* (1986a) provide a useful synthesis of the key research concerns. Two additional studies of note are Moseley's (1979) work on rural accessibility and the Association of County Council's report, Rural Deprivation published in the same year.

Most of this work has interpreted rural deprivation in one of two ways; either as a consequence of inequalities in the structure of society or as a result of the decline in the quality or quantity of rural service provision. However, McLaughlin (1986) suggests that beneath the very public debate that ensued during the 70's lay a hidden agenda. The emotive issue of rural deprivation was principally orchestrated and exploited by rural local authorities and other interested parties to highlight the crises facing local government. According to McLaughlin there were two main areas of concern: first, the crisis of loss of identity brought about by local government reform in 1974, with the weakening of local government in relation to central government and the increasing centralisation of decision-making; second, a crisis of fiscal equity which focused on the growing dependence of local government on central government funds with the result that central government has become increasingly involved in the direct provision of previously local services.

Moseley (1980) makes a similarly telling observation. The study of rural deprivation, he suggests, has focused almost entirely on the plight of the individual, the 'consumers' of deprivation rather than the 'producers'. Moseley proposes that this is a serious weakness, not only in terms of understanding rural deprivation but also with regard to the nature of rural development itself. The argument that a better understanding of the rural condition may come from focusing on the activities of institutions outside of the locale, where the majority of decisions are actually taken, rather than on the rural population or region, is one we will return to later.

The rural deprivation debate highlights the underlying tensions and power structures that exist within the whole arena of rural policy formulation and implementation. It implies that policy decisions and outcomes should not be taken at face value but should be seen within the overall context of the state, relations between the centre and the locality and between different agencies and institutions, all of which affect how decisions are made. This has clear implications for the study of rural development. It requires rural researchers to look beyond the rural domain and acknowledge the processes that have brought about that which they observe. In particular this involves an appreciation of areas traditionally not their concern: the function of the state in society, the policy process, and leading on from this, organisational theory.

### The role of the state

The role of the state is a broad and complex conceptual area, littered with an array of sometimes contradictory at other times complimentary theories and ideals(3). The first issue which needs to be addressed is how the state should be conceptualised. There are two approaches. The first sees the state as a condensate of class-based social relations (Poulantzes, 1978), suggesting that power is exercised through government institutions by the dominant social, economic and political fractions within society. In contrast, the alternative approach assumes that power is vested in the organisations themselves and that the state is in turn represented by an amalgam of these, institutions. This is the approach adopted in most rural studies (Cloke, 1989), and used by the author. It is a pragmatic approach which enables the performance of the state to be investigated by focusing on particular government departments and other official organisations operating at the centre.

The nature of power within the state is a further area which one must appreciate, although the actual form this takes is open to debate. Cloke and Little (1990) identify four main schools of thought: the pluralists, who argue that

the state is an independent arbitrator on the conflicting demands of diverse interest groups in society and that in a democracy power is freely available to all elements; the elitists, who suggest power lies with elite minority groups and that state activities are structured to favour their interests; the managerialists who argue that power lies in the hands of professional 'managers' or 'gatekeepers' who, through technical knowledge and manipulation of decision making, are able to influence policy in favour of their own interests and their class peers; and the structuralists who regard the state as the arena where different classes compete for political power and in turn the state seeks to reflect the current balance of class influence and further the requirements of capital interests.

In many cases it appears that the state is not tied by the narrow definitions advanced and tends, through its various operations, to straddle several conceptual boundaries. Cloke and Little (1990) for example, provide numerous examples from rural policy making to illustrate each group of concepts described above. Given this situation it seems preferable to be fairly catholic in one's view of power relations within the state, acknowledging that at different times and in different situations different power subsets will come into their own. Whatever the views on the actual nature of the state, its influence on rural affairs has been considerable. Cloke (1987) provides several examples, but two areas in particular should concern us here. First, the state has sought, through successive measures, to centralise decision making, reducing local government autonomy and with this its ability to govern. This has been achieved through the divide and rule principle, sharing services between different agencies, and by keeping a tight hold on the purse strings, imposing very strict borrowing and spending limits on local government (Goldsmith, 1986; Hambleton, 1979).

The second example concerns the undeniably privileged yet wholly unjustified position that agriculture occupies in the state allocation of rural resources, being the dominant recipient of grant aid and subsidy despite its commercial status (Bowers and Cheshire, 1983). As the most political of all rural issues, with a

very effective voice to protect its interests, in the form of the National Farmers' Union and Country Landowners' Association, and the presence of landowners and others with vested interests in parliament, its dominance is likely to continue. Indeed it is now advocated that as agriculture's traditional role as food producer is on the wane, it should concern itself more with rural development (Advisory Council for Agriculture and Horticulture, 1978; NFU, 1984; CEC, 1986a; MAFF, 1987c). Others however, argue that the undue emphasis on agriculture has seriously weakened the balanced development of rural areas (Wibberley, 1981).

Despite the increasing hold of the centre over rural and local government affairs and the loss of other previously local powers to the regional health and water authorities (adding incidentally a regional dimension to the study of the state, see Saunders, 1985), the local state appears to retain sufficient autonomy and complexity to continue to influence local policy matters and has itself been the subject of much research (Cockburn, 1977; Boddy and Fudge, 1984; Duncan and Goodwin, 1988; Cloke and Little, 1990). Pahl (1979), on examining the local political context in which decisions are made, identified six main determining factors. In summary these are: the political history of an area; the organisation and social affiliations of political parties; the pattern of relationships with central government; the organisation of professional officers; the existence of alternative public or private power bases and interest groups in the local area; the degree of overlap between economic and party political interests.

Taking points one to three together, it is evident that while there is a move towards centralised control, and the function of the local state needs increasingly to be seen in the context of central-local relations (Cooke, 1983), it is still able to exercise a degree of freedom of discretion in terms of locally determined policies and the implementation of those centrally derived. Studies by Alexander (1982), Byrne (1983), and Glover (1985), for example, indicate that different authorities continue to display varying attitudes in terms of policies and expenditure. However, as Butler and Stokes (1971) have shown, the local state

tends to be conservative in outlook, if not also in political allegiance, with the result that it is generally supportive of the role of central government (Cloke, 1987).

The balance of power within the local state is a fine one and is subject to the same classification of power relations defined above. Broadly speaking, most power lies with local government (Cockburn, 1977), and specifically with those elected as councillors, advised by local government officers who must execute the decisions made. However, with the increasing sophistication and complexity of local government, brought about through local government reform, which increased the size of local authorities, their complexity and with this, their professional base, evidence suggests this is no longer the case. Officers are playing a far greater role in determining policy, whether it be the result of the need for professional guidance, or actively orchestrated through the supply of selective information to elected councillors (Knox, 1982; Laffin, 1986). In some instances it has been shown that power does not lie exclusively with either side but with an elite group of leading politicians and officials who are able to influence policy decisions and outcomes. The role of such a group is considered in detail in Blowers' (1980) examination of the politics of local planning. Similarly, Buchanan (1982) in a study of the preparation of Suffolk County Council's structure plan revealed the presence of a powerful minority of three officers and two committee chairmen who exercised considerable power, and to a great extent determined the content of the plan, its preparation, public consultation and final form.

The degree of vested interest in rural affairs (Pahl's final two points) is another formative influence on rural policy which will ultimately reflect the relative power of groups within society. It becomes particularly important when such interests move from the realms of pressure group to those of decision maker i.e. where those elected as councillors have their own interests to safeguard. Butler & Lowe (1982), conducting research in Suffolk revealed that one in six members of the County Council were farmers or landowners. An illustration of local

power relationships is also provided by Buller and Hoggart (1986) who identify the power of 'non-decision making'. Using the case study of house building they demonstrate how a particular group, in this case rural residents of 'higher social economic status', wishing to protect their living environment, are able to influence outcomes in their favour purely by other interested parties anticipating their views. Thus in respect to new housing, developers are reluctant to submit applications for residential development in areas dominated by the middle classes for fear of invoking local opposition, and local planning authorities are similarly reluctant to approve any applications for development in such areas.

It is also interesting to note that while there may be a number of alternative power bases (conservationists versus farmers for example) canvassing for, and in some areas promoting policies that will further their own cause, the innate conservatism that pervades the rural state, and that of rural society, will in most instances work towards maintenance of the status quo rather than reform.

### The Policy Process

The entire milieu of political undercurrents that sit so tidily beneath the state banner are further complicated when one overlays the organisational processes of policy formulation and implementation. These have been increasingly called into question as concern grows over the effectiveness of organisations to translate agreed policies into appropriate action. Either policy is enacted differently from that originally intended (Blacksell and Gilg, 1981), falls short of initial aspirations (Hanrahan and Cloke, 1983), or has unexpected repercussions which create new problems, see for example the wealth of literature highlighting the conflicts between the various countryside policies of conservation and agriculture (Warren and Goldsmith (1974); Shoard (1980); Green (1981); Lowe et al, 1986).

The recognition of what has become commonly termed the 'implementation gap' has created a whole new area of study that looks beyond policy making to focus

on these processes by which policy is implemented and the factors that in turn influence the processes themselves. While much of this research provides a valuable insight into part of the policy process (see Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973; Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Dunsire, 1978), the view that policy implementation should be seen as distinct from policy formulation (referred to as the rational model or top down approach) is being increasingly challenged as an over-simplification of a complex, dynamic relationship. Of primary concern the inherent difficulties of actually identifying in the policy process, where policy formulation stops and implementation begins.

This criticism has led to the creation of alternative 'bottom up' or hybrid models that favour a more complex view of the policy process. These reflect the integral nature of formulation and implementation and accept that initial policy decisions may be modified by those responsible for its enactment (Barrett 1980; Hambleton, 1981), including possibly, inputs from other organisations (Hjern and Porter, 1981; Thrasher, 1983). It is a subject area that rebounds in theoretical considerations of the merits and otherwise of the two approaches (see Lewis and Flynn, 1979; Healey, 1979; Barrett and Fudge, 1981; Healey *et al*, 1982; Barrett and Hill, 1984). Whatever view held, and it is the author's belief that the policy process should be viewed as an integrated whole, the key concern must be to gain an insight into the organisational environment within which policies are made and enacted. Thus, we need to look at the way goals and priorities are set, the inter-relationships between these and agreed policies, the interaction between policy formulation and implementation, and the constraints and opportunities that are presented to organisations during the policy process.

To properly understand that observed requires a further conceptual base. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) look to three areas: organisation theory, the impact of public policy and inter-governmental relations. Jenkins (1978) also refers to organisation theory, focusing on the sociology of organisations, to aid understanding of their internal operations and to political sociology, to provide a context for their scope and limits of action. Similarly, Healey (1979),

referencing the role of the state, suggests public agencies should be viewed with an understanding of the political and economic framework within which decisions are made, powers exercised and resources allocated. From this perspective, she argues, gaps between policy and implementation merely reflect the changing balance of interests, political priorities or availability of resources.

Bardach (1977) adds a further complexion, perceiving implementation as a series of loosely related games played by the actors or individuals within the organisation, who seek to get the most out of the implementation process. Building on this concept, Barratt and Fudge (1981) point to the need for an 'action perspective' on the policy process. This acknowledges the inter-relationship between policy and action while continuing to focus on the role played by actors and their respective agencies and the factors which influence their behaviour. Again, this approach includes an appreciation of organisational and political perceptions and inter-organisational relationships. Moreover, they argue, attention should move away from policy to examine the organisation (or parts of organisations) themselves: what is going on, who is doing it and why?

This philosophy has been central to the approach adopted by the author in this study. To seek answers to these very questions it has been useful to draw primarily on the concepts and analyses developed within the discipline of organisational theory, looking particularly at the organisational contexts (including that of the individual) which shape both intra- and inter-organisational relationships. Much of this literature relates to American experiences in the public sector. Organisations however, display similar tendencies on both sides of the Atlantic, and certainly the work of Thompson (1967), Benson (1973), Hall *et al.* (1977) and Rogers and Whetton (1982), retain their relevancy when applied to the English administrative scene. There is also a modest number of home-based studies, Brazier and Harris (1975), Leach and Moore (1979), and Leach (1980), focusing on the inter-relationships between district and county councils. Research projects conducted by the Institute of Operational Research have also made a significant contribution to the study of

inter-organisational relationships. The town expansion scheme at Droitwich by Friend, Power and Yewlett (1974) is the best-known, but other work of note includes that by Friend (1976, 1980) and Sutton *et al.* (1977). Research on central-local government relations has also provided a useful insight into an area which, given its complexity, has only been touched on here, see for instance, Social Science Research Council (1979) the work of Rhodes (1980a/b), and Laffin (1986) and the volume of essays edited by Goldsmith (1986) which report the main findings of research sponsored by the Social Science Research Council (now the Economic and Social Research Council) as part of its initiative on inter-governmental relations.

Research into rural policy and action has also focused attention on planning policy and its role in rural development, not least because it too has suffered from difficulties of implementation (Blacksell and Gilg, 1981). This apart, the value of many of the planning texts (see Working Party on Rural Settlement Policies, 1979; Martin and Voorhees Associates, 1979; Cloke, 1983; 1987; Bruton, 1983) is in their description of land-use and settlement policies. These, although not specifically rural, nor possessing any influence over the majority of important decisions which are taken outside of the formal planning process, serve, in the absence of anything more appropriate, as makeshift rural development policies in most of Britain's rural areas.

This situation illustrates the problems of achieving considered, consistent and complementary rural policies within existing institutional structures with the fragmentation of rural responsibilities between local government, central government and various private and public sector agencies. The need for coordination between these bodies is generally accepted and in many cases organisations are required to interact with one another in order to implement policies or achieve certain objectives. District and county councils for example, are required to cooperate with regard to local service provision and planning. Similarly, they must liaise with the regional health and water authorities and with various central government departments whose activities impinge upon their

own. The difficulties of achieving this inter-agency coordination have been well documented (see for example Leach 1980a; Glyn-Jones, 1979; Packman and Wallace, 1982) and are considered in detail in chapter's IV and V. The fundamental problem appears to be, quite simply, that organisations are reluctant to compromise their own position in order to accommodate another's.

The need to view the countryside in the round with corresponding coordinated policies was first recognised by the Countryside Review Committee in its report, The Countryside Problems and Policies (1976). This report with its quite radical stance for the time, highlighting 19 areas of potential rural policy conflict, sparked off a whole new area of enquiry that remains pertinent today. In particular it encouraged a generation of reports that have focused on the lack of clarity surrounding the development of rural areas and the issue of policy interaction. Those of note include the report of the House of Lords select Committee on European Communities (1979), Policies for Rural Areas in the European Community; the DoE commissioned study by Smart & Wright (1983), Decision Making in Rural Areas; the report of the Tourism & Recreation Research Unit (1981), which looks specifically at policy implementation in National Parks, and two EEC commissioned works by the Rural Planning Research Trust (1983) and the Dartington Institute (1984), which examine rural development in selected Less Favoured Areas.

Useful descriptive accounts of rural development policies and the need for coordination are provided by the Arkleton Trust (1979, 1983), and other works published by them under the authorship of Woods (ed. 1980), Tracy (1982) and Bavisser et al. (1983). The local government associations have also contributed to this dialogue with a number of reports. The Association of District Councils, issued its first, Rural Recovery, Strategy for Survival in 1978 with subsequent reports from the Association in 1982 and 1986. The Association of County Councils issued its review of rural policies in 1987, the same year that the Countryside Commission published the report of the Countryside Review Panel, with its wide-ranging recommendations as to the future direction of countryside

and rural development. It is from this body of work and the ensuing debate that the concept of IRD has emerged.

#### **I.4 Integrated Rural Development: Current State of Knowledge**

Integrated rural development (IRD) has been in vogue for some time. Frequently talked of, consistently cited, it has become accepted as a panacea to rectify shortcomings in the rural development system currently operating in England. A system where neither central government nor local authorities, nor the ad-hoc agencies have any clear idea of their objectives for rural areas, nor any idea of the inter-relationships that may exist between their policies and those of others. The movement towards integrated development has marked a major change in policy-makers and practitioners thinking alike. The most striking aspect however, has been the imprecision with which the term has been used, being confusingly and indiscriminately applied to any number of rural schemes that have vague pretensions of crossing organisational divides. IRD has unfortunately been reduced to a catchword, a slogan, often falling victim to faddish thinking and ill-conceived rhetoric at the expense of serious debate and analysis. Thus it remains a field in which theoretical considerations and preliminary definitions are required before serious dialogue can commence.

#### **IRD in the developing world**

The key to understanding IRD, as with rural development itself, lies with the developing world, where the concept originated and has been practised with varying degrees of success since the late 1960s. It evolved from the notion of rural development, but looked beyond the recognition of need merely for comprehensive action to a merging of these separate development programmes into one integrated programme that facilitated complementary and simultaneous action across several fronts. It was from this recognition of what Cohen describes as a "superficially trite but conceptually complex rule that in rural development everything is related to everything else" (Cohen, 1979b:196), that the concept of integrated rural development was conceived.

One of the first initiatives to promote the IRD concept, though not the term, was that proposed by the Ford Foundation in 1966, in an effort to aid India's recovery from the famine of the same year. The Ford Foundation argued that an intensive, focused and integrated effort was required to stimulate India's agricultural sector and suggested a ten point programme of action. This focused on: adequate and accessible farm supplies, adequate farm credit; intensive educational programmes; individual farm plans; stronger village institutions; assured prices for agricultural products; marketing outlets; rural public works; evaluation and analysis; and, last but not least, a coordinated approach. This plan subsequently formed the basis of India's Intensive Agricultural District Programme (Brown, 1971; Mothan and Evenson, 1975).

IRD's formal debut came with the Comilla Project of East Pakistan. This project, also begun in 1966, has been well documented elsewhere (see for example Raper *et al.* 1970; Stevens, 1976). Suffice it to say here that it focused upon an integrated attack on production constraints and the coordination of a diverse range of rural services including farm credit and inputs, farmer training, the organisation of cooperatives, adult literacy, irrigation, flood prevention and infrastructure. One of the project's early successes was the positive image it projected outside of Pakistan and the widespread publicity it attracted (Cohen, 1979b), quickly becoming heralded as a 'model' for integrated rural development. Thus IRD, with its multi-sectoral approach to the promotion of economic growth and the socio-economic well-being of the rural population became widely, if somewhat loosely adopted as the next generation of rural development strategies in the Third World(4).

The word 'loosely' is used advisedly, for as with rural development IRD is a concept plagued with differences of emphasis which confuse both its definition and its implementation. Some advocates (Ahmed, 1975; Cohen, 1979a) see IRD as means of addressing the problems of coordinating a complex system of diverse yet inter-related rural policies and activities, with the various sectors being incorporated within a single administrative framework, usually a special

IRD project agency which partially replaces existing separate institutions. In this respect IRD becomes a strategy for reorganising a government's rural development administration (ODI, 1979; Weitz, 1979). Others however, regard project based development as IRD. This may in practice be simply a package of projects, separately funded but running in parallel within a specific area. The Overseas Development Institute (1979) for example, describes three types of area projects, all of which have been labelled 'IRD' while not being particularly 'integrated' in their application focusing on various elements of development within a single sector. Others similarly concentrate on the spatial characteristics of IRD and its general restriction to specific geographic areas, defined according to physical or administrative criteria (Belshaw, 1977; Friedmann, 1975; Livingstone, 1979), but seek to distinguish between 'integrated' and 'comprehensive' area projects. Thus, according to Livingstone, an integrated development programme occurs where there is incomplete divisibility and thus particular activities cannot be carried out efficiently on an independent basis. A comprehensive plan on the other hand (comprehensive in that it provides for social and economic development) remains divisible and the separate components are quite capable of independent implementation. This distinction has also been made by the Overseas Development Institute, "IRD means not only comprehensive action, but also integrated action" (ODI, 1979:2).

For other proponents, integrated rural development, as rural development before it, is seen primarily as a 'poverty orientated approach' (FAO, 1978). Used in this context IRD infers the integration of deprived rural groups into an expanding rural economy and of the integration of this economy into the country's overall economic system (Kotter, 1974; Leupolt, 1977; FAO, 1978). Still others suggest IRD infers coordinated action by both government and by the people for whom it is intended and it is this characteristic which distinguishes IRD from other rural development programmes (Ahmad, 1975).

Whilst there may be no emerging consensus of integrated rural development in conceptual terms, an examination of the wealth of literature, both reviewing

individual projects and the notion of IRD itself, (Kotter, 1974; Ahmad, 1975; Leupolt, 1977; Mehmet, 1978; Cohen, 1979a; Livingstone, 1979; Weitz, 1979) indicates that certain characteristics recur with a regularity which suggests a degree of commonality between approaches. From these it is possible to conclude that IRD is:

- (i) centred on particular geographical areas;
- (ii) multi-sectoral: there is no agreed set of project components, although IRD generally infers both economic and social development and most schemes have an agricultural element;
- (iii) a strategy for policy coordination and administration; the previously disparate activities being brought together within a single administrative framework or alternatively being controlled although not replaced by one coordinating agency;
- (iv) concerned with decentralisation and public participation.

The isolation of these parameters is useful for several reasons: first, they provide an indication of the operational requirements of IRD; second, they can be used to distinguish IRD from other development practices; and third, accepting that IRD, a development approach founded in the Third World, may be grafted onto existing development practices in this country, they provide the context in which to examine the relevance of IRD to England's present rural administrative dilemma. Certainly it is evident that were IRD to be pursued with any seriousness in this country, institutional and administrative reform would be required to facilitate the coordination of organisational policies and activities, currently the domain of a variety of fiercely independent organisations. And it is this which brings us on to a final, pertinent point. It is evident from current experience in the developing world, that as a development strategy, IRD is costly to implement in terms of human and financial resources and is invariably plagued with management and administrative problems (Ruttan, 1975; Cohen, 1979a; Amor *et al* 1979; ODI, 1979; Siffen, 1979). Taking a Eurocentric view, one could dismiss such difficulties as problems generally inherent in Third World administrative structures, but such a view would be unfair.

The fundamental problem arises from the very nature of IRD itself. Being multi-sectoral, IRD schemes possess a number of different development objectives and it is evident that there is often a conflict of interests between these objectives, and confusion over their implementation, as different agencies follow their own priorities while ostensibly coordinating with others. How one provides incentives to ensure adequate coordination has yet to be satisfactorily resolved and these problems have consequently led to a decline in international funding for IRD projects (IDO, 1979). Several writers, while not rejecting the content of IRD schemes, but their workability, suggest such activities should be simultaneously available within single sector schemes but not necessarily integrated (Ruttan, 1975; Morris and Gwyer, 1983). Of course in England single-sector development is the norm, and the question those calling for IRD here must ask, is whether this one implicit requirement of IRD, that of assuring inter-organisational coordination, would be any easier to fulfil in the competitive organisational climate of England's rural administrative scene, and indeed that of the European Community where many major policies now originate, than in those developing countries where it has sadly faltered.

### IRD in Europe

It is only in the last decade that rural development has begun to be seriously recognised as a necessary policy aim in Europe. With the exception of agriculture, the focus of its own exclusive development programme, the Common Agricultural Policy, the emphasis of the European Community, as Britain, has been primarily one of regional development, pursued through the European Social and Regional Development Funds and perceived in terms of urbanisation, industrialisation and improved infrastructure. Over the years however, it has become increasingly evident that the effects of the Community's agricultural, regional and social policies have not only failed to reduce regional disparities, but in the case of CAP have actually increased them as capital investment has continued to benefit the regions and centres already well developed (CEC, 1981b; Traill, 1980; Tracey, 1982). The effect of these policies on rural

development is in consequence damaging: the "spread" effects to rural hinterlands has been limited and the over-riding trend has been to hasten the movement of the rural population from the countryside to the town (Tracey, 1982; Arkleton Trust, 1983).

The need for the European Community to play a more active and positive role in the restructuring and development of rural areas has no doubt led to considerable soul searching within the great institutions of Brussels. As yet little of real substance has emerged, bar a brief flirtation, accepting the need for greater EC policy coordination, with the notion of integrated rural development. In all, 15 research projects into IRD were commissioned during the course of 1979 and 1980 (CEC, 1979; CEC, 1980b). The majority however are disappointing in their scope. Eleven of the projects present little more than desk top analyses of current rural problems in the less favoured areas of selected member states (Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Ireland and Britain) and predictable lamentations on the uncoordinated nature of EC and national policies (see Henrichsmeyer *et al.* for a synthesis of the findings).

Of the four applied studies, only one, based in England's Peak District National Park conformed to the IRD parameters defined above. It entailed a multi-sectoral approach to the economic and social development of the areas concerned and demanded coordination of individual organisational policies and activities. The Peak Park IRD project ran from 1981 to 1988 and involved an array of different public authorities with correspondingly different policy objectives. Its primary objective was to see if economic, social and environmental interests of the agencies concerned could be harmonised and if public agencies and rural communities could work together in the development and conservation of rural areas. A special system of grant aid was duly devised and implemented to encourage development schemes which provided social economic and environmental benefits (PPJPB, 1984). A detailed evaluation of the operations of this scheme and an assessment of how well it performed are given in Chapter IV.

The remaining three IRD studies described optimistically as 'Integrated Development Programmes' (IDP) were pilot schemes intended to promote multi-sectoral development in the Luxembourg Province of Belgium, the Lozere Department in Southern France and the Western Isles of Scotland. Despite their promising titles financial support from the EC has been limited to agricultural development and although it was anticipated that the schemes could attract other EC funding and national grant aid for the development of other sectors this has for the most part failed to materialise. The aim of the IDP scheme in the Western Isles for example, was to promote socio-economic development in an area where agriculture alone could not support the population (Arkleton Trust, 1983; Baviskar, 1983; Robinson, 1990). However, while considerable investment has been directed towards improving the viability of crafting and developing the fishing industry, both fish farming and processing, other economic activities, such as Harris Tweed and the knitwear industry, which could benefit from similar investment fall outside of the scope of funding from the EC's Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund.

Two other aspects of the Western Isle's IDP are also worth noting. First there has been within this 'integrated' scheme conflict between the interests of economic development (the need to use locks for fish farming and improvement of the land) and those of conservation (the need to protect an important ecosystem.) Thus we have the ironic situation of one agency (the IDP) encouraging farmers to proceed with improvement schemes and another, the Nature Conservancy Council offering compensation to those who do not. In turn, both actions are at the expense of the others: so much for policy integration! Second in 1987, five years into the scheme, IDP expenditure totalled some £28 million (Houston, 1987) approximately twice that originally estimated. It is this provision of large amounts of additional funding that proves a severe limitation on the future operations of these Integrated Development Programmes, and certainly precludes their extension to other areas.

Similar approximations of integrated rural development have also been implemented in individual member states (see Clout, 1984). In France, the Interministerial Fund for Rural Development (FIDAR) aims to coordinate development measures and resources in mountain and other less favoured areas. It has some funds, but most of its efforts are directed towards the administrative coordination of existing development aid, emanating from a variety of government organisations. The programmes it supports are 'integrated' in concept, in that they cover not just agriculture but other sectors of the rural economy, public services and infrastructure. However, much of rural France falls outside of FIDAR's remit and these areas continue to face problems of overlapping and diverging policies and instruments which merely mirror the equally diverse set of demands that are increasingly being placed on rural land resources (Aitchison, 1989). Upland areas in Germany have also been the recipients of special 'integrated' development projects. But integration here, has tended to be largely intra-sectoral centering around agricultural landscape and job diversification measures targeted at individual farmers and using existing state and EC provisions, although their overall objectives, that of counteracting migration from the areas, improving incomes and developing tourism are more broadly based. Similarly the Inland Areas Programme of the Cassa per il Mezzogiorno in Southern Italy while cited as integrated development schemes have in practice shown a marked bias towards agricultural development and public works (Arkleton Trust, 1983).

In Britain, there are currently three agencies which on paper at least have the potential to achieve a more integrated approach to rural development, Scotland's Highland and Islands Development Board, the Mid-Wales Rural Development Board and England's Rural Development Commission. The Highlands and Islands Development Board was established in 1965 to promote social and economic development in the remote northern parts of Scotland, to rationalise land-use and to integrate the region with national economic growth. Despite its wide-ranging remit the Board has tended to focus its activities on three 'growth areas', Fort William, Inverness and Caithness and to concentrate

on agricultural support and economic development, stimulating new private enterprises especially in the areas of tourism, fishing, craft and manufacturing industry (see Baviskar, *et al* 1983). A government review of the first two decades of the HIDB concluded that many of its activities and procedures were soundly based (Industry Department for Scotland, 1987) but it has been criticised on a variety of grounds (Carter, 1975). Its chief problems appear to have been in dealing with contrasting situations in the region; its overlap of activities with other bodies (Mackay and McNab, 1979) and the close cooperation required (and not always achieved) with both local government and the local communities themselves. Interestingly, the Board appears well aware of these problems. In its evidence to the House of Lord Select Committee on Policies for Rural Areas in the European Community (1979) it stated:

"The HIDB is generally in favour of approaches to integrated rural development .... (however) the difficulties in stimulating any substantial development of manufacturing, tourism and alternative enterprises - let alone in an 'integrated' way - in many rural areas should not be understated."

The Development Board for Rural Wales was set up in 1977 to do a broadly similar job to that of the HIDB, but without recourse to agricultural development. Like its Scottish counterpart it too has concentrated on the creation of employment, through the direct provision of sites and buildings particularly to attract manufacturing industry and grants and loans and to support new businesses and various advisory services. While again, it has been successful in those areas it has focused upon (see Williams, 1984), it has not escaped criticism. Notably, it failed until fairly recently to actively involve the local population. This omission has been highlighted by Wenger (1982) who argued that the absence of such involvement led to policies out of keeping with local expectations. The Board's lack of power over agriculture and forestry has also been cited as a serious limitation on the development of comprehensive and integrated economic policies for the area (Minay, 1977). It is interesting to note that the finances available to the DBRW (approximately £12.5 million annually) are much smaller than those received by Mid-Wales in the form of agricultural support (Robinson, 1990).

England's Rural Development Commission, has far fewer powers and resources to hand than its Celtic cousins and as Cloke (1988) so aptly describes, plays the role of 'minnow' alongside the 'whale', the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food, in the development of Britain's rural areas. With an annual budget of between £25-£30 million, it is charged with promoting the social and economic development of rural areas. It concentrates most of its activities in those areas identified as being in greatest need, the Rural Development Areas, and funds a range of economic and social initiatives, usually in partnership with local authorities, other public agencies and the private and voluntary sectors.

In an attempt to encourage greater cooperation and coordination between these bodies, the Commission launched its Rural Development Programme (RDP) initiative in 1984. This centres upon the preparation and subsequent implementation of a comprehensive development programme for each Rural Development Area. These RDPs are prepared annually by special committees comprising representatives from local authorities, Rural Community Councils, the Commission and occasionally the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food and tourist boards. They set out the various organisational policies for the area and identify future development schemes and initiatives. In concept, the RDP is the first significant attempt to encourage a more integrated approach to the development of England's rural areas. Its reality falls a little short of this ideal but never-the-less it is an initiative to be applauded and consequently it is considered in detail in Chapter IV.

In addition to the Rural Development Commission's Rural Development Programmes and the Peak Park's IRD project, evidence of the first tentative steps towards policy coordination can be found amongst various projects and different policy instruments currently operating in England. The Upland Management Schemes of the Countryside Commission for example, seek to reconcile agricultural and conservation objectives(5). The Tourism Development Action Plans of the English Tourist Board look to intra-sectoral policy coordination between organisations with responsibility for tourism. Local

development initiatives such as the Staffordshire Moorlands Project and East Fellside and Alston Moor Project(6) work on the basis of informal local agency cooperation to further the social and economic development of the areas concerned. Other projects such as Hereford and Worcester County Council's Rural Community Development Project (Hereford and Worcester CC, 1981; Arkleton Trust, 1980) and schemes promoted by the Rural Community Councils have looked towards the integration of the local community into the rural development process, promoting community awareness and self-help schemes. A number of local authorities have also experimented with area management schemes which are designed to deal with the specific problems of an area through coordinating the efforts of different groups and agencies. To date, little attempt has been made to use the experiences of these initiatives to further our understanding of IRD and certainly the feasibility of integrating all aspects of rural development is an area in which we have limited experience.

It is evident from the preceding discussion that while much has been written on the desirability of policy integration, very little attention has been paid to the actual practicalities involved in its implementation: is IRD really feasible? Here then, is an important field for research: research to understand the demands integration makes upon the organisations involved, the processes involved in inter-agency coordination and the degree to which such arrangements are able to live up to expectations. This institutional approach to the study of rural development has much to offer, both in terms of improving our understanding of the dynamics of the present rural development process and in our assessment of the potential for integrated rural development in the future.

## **I.5 Research Methodology**

### **I.5a Research approach and objectives**

This study was initiated in response to the current debate on the future direction of rural development, and in particular its failure, in advocating organisational

coordination/integration, to take into account the implications of pursuing such a strategy within existing administrative and institutional structures. The primary aim has been to augment existing studies, concerned with the evaluation of specific policy instruments and their interaction with others, with one which places the organisation at the centre of the analysis, on the premise that this is ultimately where policy coordination is determined.

On beginning this study, the first task was to create a conceptual model framework of IRD. The objectives were two-fold: first to identify the common parameters of IRD; the basic principles and strategies engendered in this development approach; second, to develop from these a critical platform from which to determine the relevance of the IRD concept to England's rural development system, with all its administrative complexity. From the model of IRD which began to emerge early in the research, it became evident that the successful implementation of IRD is dependent upon the feasibility of bringing together and coordinating the disparate policies and actions of a multiplicity of contributing agencies. It was therefore necessary to examine the inter-relationships and interactions of these organisations, focusing particularly on the process of inter-organisational coordination.

Three rural development initiatives, displaying varying degrees of 'integration', were selected for study. By default, rather than design (there being no other suitable schemes in existence), all three involved areas designated, in one way or another, as disadvantaged. This narrow study base could be seen as a weakness in the research - there are many different 'countrysides' in England and it would be that different forms of integrated rural development are appropriate to different areas. While this is accepted in part, the author would argue that organisations, and these are the primary unit of study, remain largely consistent regardless of the countryside in question. Thus the aim was to achieve a better understanding of the inter-relationships of organisations; their policies and actions and to identify the factors which govern such behaviour, especially those which appear to facilitate or hinder inter-organisational

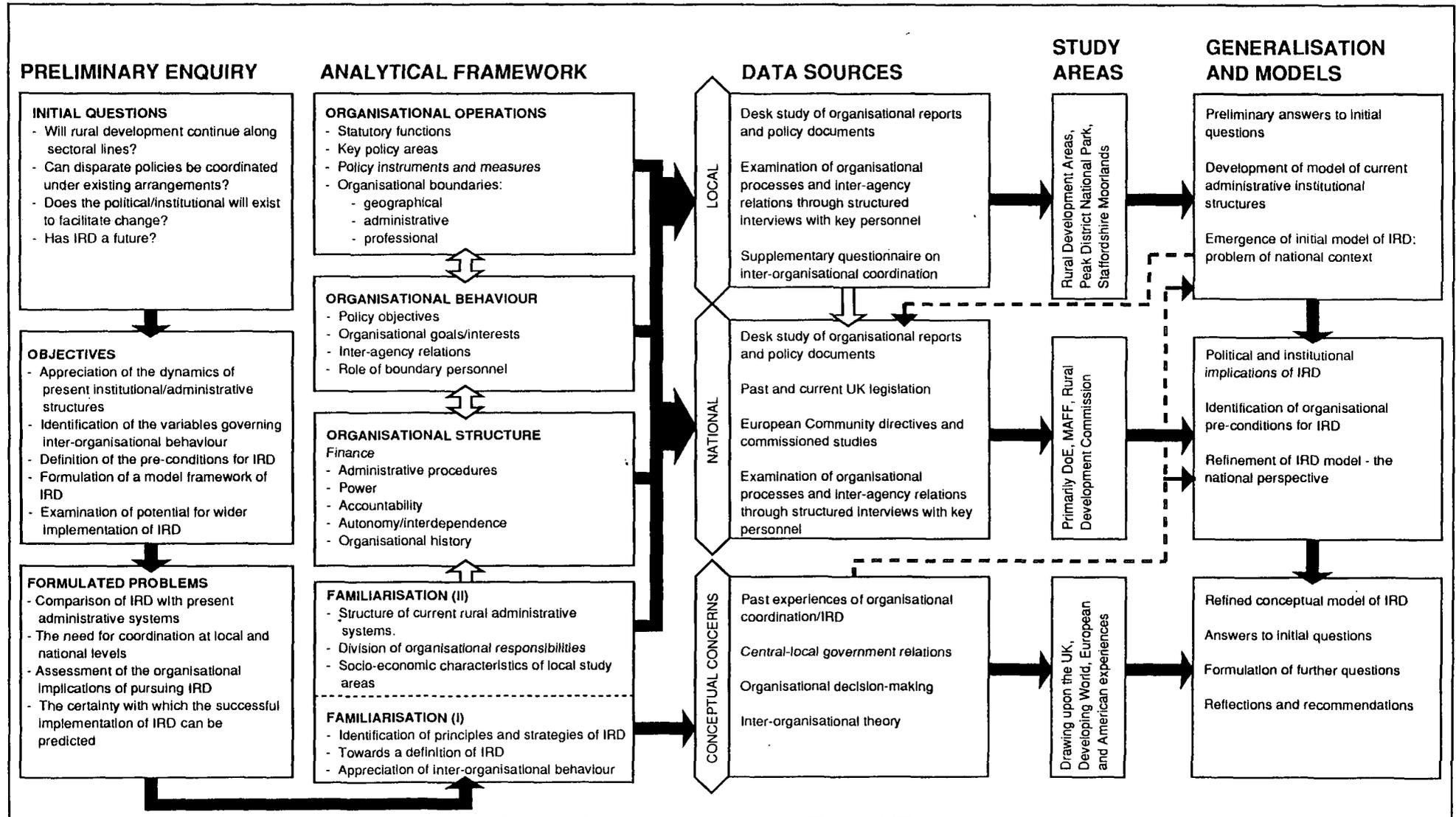
coordination. It was anticipated that these observations, which were likely to be common to many organisations working in rural areas, could then be used to examine the potential for greater organisational coordination/integration in the future, across the full spectrum of English 'countrysides'.

In summary, the research objectives were identified as follows:

- (i) An appreciation of the dynamics of England's present institutional and administrative structures;
- (ii) The identification of the variables governing inter-organisational behaviour;
- (iii) The definition of necessary and sufficient conditions for inter-organisational coordination;
- (iv) The formulation of a conceptual model framework of IRD;
- (v) An examination of the potential for the wider implementation of IRD, perhaps by defining scales and circumstances in which it can be successful.

These research objectives formed the basis of this study. The research design is presented in figure 1.

**Figure 1 Research design: Integrated rural development in England**



## **I.5b Study Areas**

In recognition of the potential for integration of policies and actions at local and national governmental levels, both tiers were selected for study. The role of regional coordination was disregarded, given the limited number of policy-making organisations at this level and accepting that present structures allow for interaction/coordination at the county or district level.

### Local: from parish to county

Local study areas were selected on the basis of current experience of 'integrated' rural development. Only two initiatives fulfilled this criterion: the IRD Project based in the Peak District National Park and the Rural Development Commission's Rural Development Programmes operating in the Rural Development Areas. By way of contrast, a local liaison initiative, the Staffordshire Moorlands Project, which had served as the 'model' scheme for the Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) was also selected for study.

The number of organisations involved in the Rural Development Programmes (150 plus) scattered right across the country, made it necessary to focus research efforts on four areas, the East and West Rural Development Areas of County Durham and those of Staffordshire and Derbyshire. County Durham was chosen for a detailed pilot study on the basis of access and Staffordshire and Derbyshire on the grounds that the overlap of some organisations between the RDP, Peak Park IRD project and the Staffordshire Moorlands Project, would provide a useful comparison of the three initiatives. This detailed fieldwork was augmented by desk analysis of information supplied by a further 18 RDP groups (there are 27 in all) concerning their organisational composition and consultation procedures. Their strategy statements and annual Work Programmes were also examined. In addition, the author had access to the full unedited responses submitted to the Development Commission by the RDP groups as part of an evaluation exercise conducted in 1986(7).

Within the local study areas research focused on:

- (i) The identification of the differing perspectives of the organisations involved in the local initiatives studied, and their respective reactions to the demands of joint working;
- (ii) An examination of inter-departmental and inter-agency relationships and the degree of inter-organisational coordination;
- (iii) The role of agency personnel in the inter-organisational process.
- (iv) An assessment of the extent to which each scheme has been able to achieve its objectives and the type of difficulties encountered in its implementation.

National: centralised policies and state intervention

Reflecting current concern that local coordination may be hindered by conflicting policies determined nationally, the potential for greater coordination between central government departments and agencies was considered. The majority of key national rural organisations were also involved, in one capacity or another, with the local development initiatives selected for study and so much of the assessment could be conducted during the course of this research. Particular attention was paid to:

- (i) The extent to which there is coordination within the policies, funds and actions of the European Community and central government with respect to rural areas;
- (ii) The relationship between agriculture and rural development;
- (iii) An identification of the mechanisms through which central policy coordination could be achieved;

(iv) The degree to which national policies are able to accommodate local rural needs.

The field research was conducted during the spring and summer of 1985 and 1986, with a further phase of interviews with representatives from central government departments and agencies in the early part of 1987. A list of organisations contacted and representatives interviewed during the course of the research is given in Appendix 1.

### **I.5c Research strategy**

The author's approach to this research can broadly be defined as 'interpretive geography' (Eyles and Smith, 1988) ie. to identify, understand and explain that observed; to see the world as those chosen for study, see it: in a nutshell to reconstruct reality (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979). Qualitative research of this kind can employ many approaches and strategies (see Burgess, 1982) all using different complexions on the theme of multiples: multiple investigators to eliminate bias; multiple theories to see what fits where, or multiple sets of data to 'paint' a whole picture of the processes observed/involved. The author chose this latter approach, obtaining different data to relate to different phases of the research process. This included preliminary desk research of documentary evidence, interviews with key personnel, and the quantitative analysis of results, where the 'results' of IRD could be satisfactorily measured. Such an approach, with the compilation of complimentary data, as Sieber (1973) has demonstrated, enables the researcher to form a more balanced view of that observed, with one set of data serving to counter possible imbalances in another.

The 'interview' has itself been the focus of much research attention and Moser and Kalton (1971) identify two main types: the formal and the informal. The formal relies on the preparation of set questions, with answers recorded in a standardised form. To a large extent this approach assumes the researcher already knows the answers they wish to hear and what they ultimately hope to

uncover. To avoid what Rock (1979) refers to as the 'manufacture' of reality, the author selected informal interviewing as the primary research tool, thereby enabling the outcomes of interviews to be as open-ended as possible. These interviews were not however, approached in a totally random, unstructured way. A checklist of topics to be covered by all interviewees (see Appendix II) served as the necessary framework in all meetings held. This approach, as Burgess expresses so succinctly, permitted the author, "to uncover new clues, open up new dimensions of a problem and to secure vivid, accurate, inclusive accounts from informants based on personal experience" (Burgess, 1982: 101).

Once the data had been collected and presented, its interpretation had to be justified and rationalised. This is usually achieved through determining the relationships between theoretical concepts and empirical indicators. Eyles and Smith suggest there are three procedures: "First there is face validity, in that on the face of it the indicator measures the concept.... secondly, there is criterion validity whereby a new indicator can be compared with an existing, generally accepted one.... thirdly there is construct validity which depends on listing whether propositions are confirmed when the new indicator is used." (Eyles and Smith, 1988: 12). While interpretations must be validated in terms of the evidence presented, it is the author's belief that these procedures while interesting in concept, could, if rigorously pursued, hinder rather than enhance the interpretations. Such an approach should therefore be followed intuitively rather than doggedly; as Eyles and Smith also propose, "so much depends on the coherence of the argument and the reason, consistency and honesty of the theorist" (Eyles and Smith, 1988: 11). It is this apparently trite, yet at the same time perceptive rule that the author has attempted to follow during the course of this research.

To test the research procedures and method of enquiry adopted a pilot study, which subsequently formed the core of the Rural Development Programme study, was conducted in County Durham among the organisations participating in the RDP initiative. The combination of desk research and informal

interviews was found to work well and the programme of research for the three study areas is outlined below.

### Familiarisation

This involved preliminary research on the areas selected for study. It was designed to place the author's research programme in its contextual setting. Attention focused upon the social and economic characteristics of the area and the structure of administration, looking particularly at the activities of those organisations with a specific responsibility for its management. Information was obtained through a desk study of organisational reports and policy documents with particular attention being paid to material produced as a result of collaborative efforts. The objective was to produce a research dossier, from which a method of enquiry could emerge, for use during successive stages of the research programme.

### Organisational Evaluation

This involved informal interviews with representatives of the organisations participating in each development initiative. Where required, additional interviews were conducted with senior staff of appropriate national agencies and central government departments. No interviews were refused and in the majority of cases the frankness with which questions were answered provided an excellent insight into the processes of inter-agency working. The information sought fell into three categories:

- (i) Organisational structure: the characteristics of an organisation, including finance, administrative procedure, power, accountability, and autonomy.
- (ii) Organisational operations: the statutory functions and policies of each organisation together with an appreciation of the administrative, geographical and professional boundaries within which they operate.

(iii) Organisational behaviour: closely related to (i) and (ii) above, this formed the central element of the research enquiry and demanded an examination of the degree to which an organisation's structure and operations determine or influence the nature of inter-agency working. Could, for example, certain organisational characteristics be used as indicators of the future success or failure of agency interaction? It was also important to 'scratch beneath the surface' to reveal the ever-present but normally unpublicised and unofficial interests and goals of each organisation in order to determine the degree to which these may inhibit or promote interaction with others. Consideration was also given to the extent to which organisational inter-dependencies (through possessing shared resources or functions, or by the existence of an organisational hierarchy) are a part of, or affect agency interaction. Finally, attention focused on the means by which organisations chose to manage inter-agency relationships: the presence of formal or informal relationships; the use of negotiation and the standardisation of activities. The role of the individual during the process added a further, and very important dimension to the study.

It should be noted that all respondents who participated in the research were assured of confidentiality. To honour this undertaking all quotations derived from the author's research which appear in the text are unattributed. They are identified either by the presence of asterisk preceding the quotation or by the words 'pers. comm.' and the date following it, whichever is most appropriate.

#### Supplementary questionnaire survey

To augment the interview material collected, other organisations concerned with the provision of rural services and operating in the local study areas were requested to complete a short questionnaire on inter-organisational coordination. Again all responses have been treated in confidence. A sample interview sheet and questionnaire survey can be found in Appendix 2.

#### Analysis

The assessment of data collected from the three case studies and its subsequent

analysis, enabled inter-relationships within the data base to be identified. It is at this stage that it was possible to develop a prescriptive model of the dynamics of organisational coordination, and from this formulate conclusions as to the viability of the IRD concept.

## **I.6 Thesis Structure**

This thesis presents the findings of the research programme outlined above. It is organised in such a way as to present a logical examination of the issues surrounding the implementation of integrated rural development. Chapter II describes the institutional structures constituting rural administration in England and considers the growing body of literature concerned with the 'coordination problem'. From this follows a discussion of the administrative implications of pursuing an integrated development approach. Chapter III examines the formulation and implementation of agricultural policy and discusses the way it interacts with other rural policy objectives. The three case studies are presented in Chapter IV. In each case a description of the scheme is followed by an assessment of the extent to which it has been able to achieve its objectives, together with an account of the experiences of those participating. A concluding section summarises the main field research findings. The theoretical explanation for that observed is provided in Chapter V. By drawing upon complementary studies of inter-organisational decision making, a conceptual model of the dynamics of organisational coordination evolves which highlights the antecedents for coordination and the factors that subsequently come into play to facilitate or inhibit successful joint working. Finally, Chapter VI, in consolidating the conclusions of previous chapters questions whether Integrated Rural Development is a feasible development approach.

### A note on acronyms

It should be noted that in the case of certain organisations and when referring to integrated rural development, acronyms are used. To assist the reader, the

full organisational title appears, together with the acronym on its first appearance in each chapter. A list of the acronyms used can be found after the contents page.

## Notes

(1) Cloke and Park (1984) provide a full analysis of the definitions of rurality. See also Cloke (1977, 1979) and Shaw (1979a).

(2) For further discussion on the definition of rural development see : Cohen (1979a); Overseas Development Institute (1979); Hoggart and Buller (1987).

(3) Detailed analyses of the various concepts of the state are provided in Saunders (1979); Johnston (1982); Ham and Hill (1984); Cloke and Little (1990).

(4) Among the best known and most significant IRD projects are the Puebla Project in Mexico; the Cadu Project in Ethiopia; the Lilongue Project in Malawi; the Vihiga Project in Kenya; the Kigoma Project in Tanzania; the Invierno Project in Nicaragua; and the Bicol River Project in the Philippines.

(5) These are documented in: Countryside Commission (1976) The Lake District Upland Management Experiment (CCP 93) and Countryside Commission (1979) The Snowdonia Upland Management Experiment (CCP 122): Cheltenham.

(6) The Staffordshire Moorlands Project is considered in detail in Chapter IV. Information on the East Fellside and Alston Moor Project is contained in the report of the project, Fellside and Moor, published in 1985 by Eden District Council, Penrith, Cumbria.

(7) This concerned the RDP administrative machinery, coordination of organisational policies and programmes, investment in rural areas, role of the Development Commission and suggestions as to how the RDP process could be improved.

## CHAPTER II

### DIVIDED WE ADMINISTER: THE CASE FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

There is no clearly defined policy or unified national objectives for the development of rural areas in England, nor is there any specific institution with overall responsibility for rural affairs. Instead rural interests are fragmented between a multiplicity of different organisations. These organisations operate within and across different administrative tiers, over differing geographical areas and choose to implement sectoral development programmes that frequently pay little regard to the programmes and policies of others with which they may ultimately interact.

The more agencies there are which work in juxtaposition, the more insistent become the demands for better coordination between them, both in what they do and in the ways they plan. This chapter examines the institutional structures constituting rural administration in England and considers the growing body of literature concerned with the 'coordination problem': a movement which has culminated in the advocacy of integrated rural development as the means of resolving the problems of fragmented administration.

#### **II.1 The Rural Scenario: An Institutional Overview**

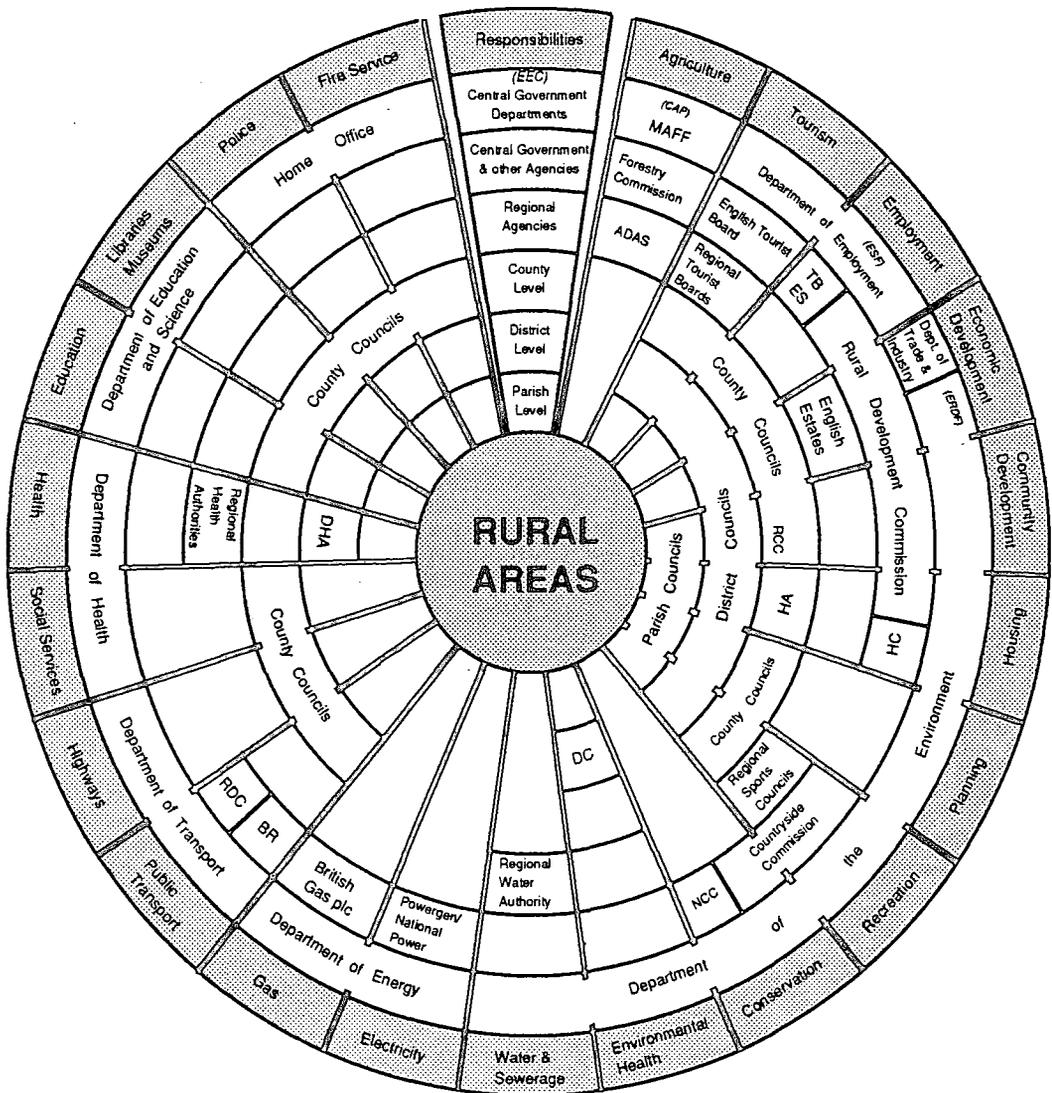
The traditional division of organisational functions and responsibilities along sectoral lines has encumbered rural development with a complex administrative and policy framework that spans all levels and all types of organisation. Thus for any given area it is not unusual to find upwards of 30 or so governmental, public and voluntary institutions at supra-national, national, regional and local levels

concerned, to varying degrees, with its affairs (1). Figure 2 identifies the multiplicity of organisations with an interest in rural areas. It should be noted that this provides a simplified diagrammatic account of the main areas of organisational responsibility. In certain sectors there may be a greater overlap of interests than shown.

At a supra-national level the EEC has several policy instruments which, although not relating specifically to rural areas, can at times play a role in rural development. Those most relevant are its agricultural, social and regional policies. Of these, the Common Agricultural Policy has had the greatest implications for rural areas and is considered in detail in the following chapter. The social and regional policies, implemented through the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund, and concerned primarily with improving employment opportunities through retraining or grant aid for infrastructure or industrial projects, have had only limited impact on England's rural areas to date. This is primarily because they relate to nationally designated regional development areas. In England, reflecting regional policy, 'Assisted Area' status tends to cover old industrial areas of the country which by their very nature are predominantly urban.

With respect to the national scene, the central government departments of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the Department of the Environment (DoE) exert the greatest influence over countryside matters. MAFF, by virtue of its support for the industry which is the major user of rural land and the DoE through its wide range of functions relating to the planning of the environment, local government structure and finance. It also acts as banker and 'watchdog' over the various government agencies concerned with socio-economic development and conservation. Other government departments, notably the Department of Trade and Industry, the Department of Transport and the Department of Health are also involved to varying degrees with matters of countryside concern (eg. designation of Assisted Areas, location and class of roads, provision of health and social services). Indeed, as figure 2 shows, the

Figure 2 Organisational responsibilities in rural areas



- |      |   |      |   |
|------|---|------|---|
| ADAS | Agricultural Development Advisory Service | HA   | Housing Associations                        |
| BR   | British Rail                              | HC   | Housing Corporation                         |
| CAP  | Common Agricultural Policy                | MAFF | Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food |
| DC   | District Councils                         | NCC  | Nature Conservancy Council                  |
| DHA  | District Health Authorities               | RCC  | Rural Community Councils                    |
| ERDF | European Regional Development Fund        | RDC  | Rural Development Commission                |
| ES   | Employment Service                        | TB   | Training Board                              |
| ESF  | European Social Fund                      |      |   |

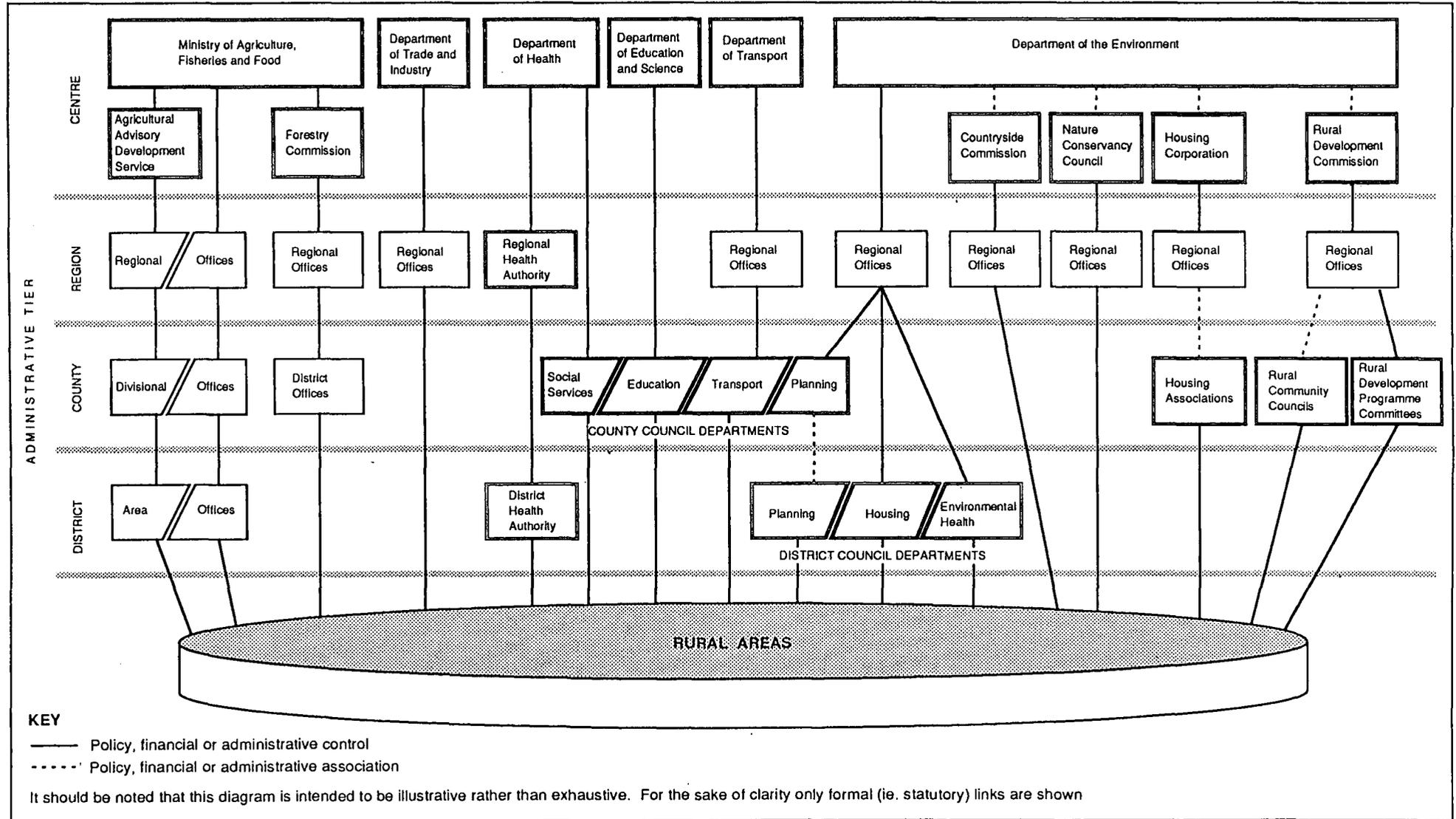
Source: After Association of County Councils, 1979 : 47

policies and activities of no less than nine central government departments, which for the most part are neither specifically nor even primarily aimed towards rural areas, ultimately impact upon them (Countryside Review Committee, 1976: 5).

Still at the national level, there also exists a plethora of government agencies, the Countryside Commission, Rural Development Commission, Housing Corporation, Forestry Commission, Nature Conservancy Council and English Tourist Board, who through their terms of reference, are key players on the rural stage. Beneath these, certain service functions (health, water etc.) are fulfilled by an array of statutory bodies and private sector organisations which for the most part operate on a regional basis. At a local level, rural administration is dominated by local government which can in turn be subdivided into the three tiers of parish, district and county council. Taking local authorities as a whole, they play a major role in rural affairs with responsibility for economic development, highways, education, recreation, tourism and the formulation and implementation of land-use policies.

With so many different institutions engaged in some aspect or other of rural development, relations between them are crucial to effective action. Figure 3 provides a diagrammatic account of the established hierarchical structures which exist between selected organisations operating within the rural arena. Three trends are clearly discernable: first, the centralised nature of decision making and policy execution; second, the dominance of vertical communication channels, relating to specific development sectors, running from central government departments through their respective central and regional agencies to pass either to the enabling local authorities or direct to rural areas and third, the virtual absence of formal linkages within administrative tiers, notably those of central and local government, to counteract this strong sectoral bias. From this it is evident that, for the most part, sectoral policies rain upon rural areas largely uncoordinated and unrelated.

Figure 3 Organisational structures with regard to rural areas



Possibly by default, but more likely by design, the unenviable task of attempting to create order out of chaos has largely fallen to local government. Its potential to facilitate coordination has however waned considerably since the heady days of local government reorganisation in 1974, when talk was of corporate management and county structure plans were upheld as providing the framework for the integration of national and regional policies within a local context (DoE, 1977). The corporate ideal, so strongly advanced by Bains (DoE, 1972) has all but vanished under the strain of financial cuts, to be replaced by less comprehensive policy analysis and by some developments in area management(2). Consequently there is a tendency for local authorities to act as a number of quite distinct departments, a situation which one observer has suggested, "can usefully be seen more as an interorganisational arena than as a unitary body" (Noris, 1985: 9). The Royal Town Planning Institute also expressed similar concern as early as 1976, pointing out that local government reorganisation, (with the splitting of services between county and district councils and the creation of separate water and health authorities) had, far from encouraging corporate planning, actually made it more difficult. It concluded:

"It is simply not possible at present to plan local authority resources coherently to achieve agreed objectives. Coordinated corporate planning becomes in consequence, very difficult."

(RTPI, 1976: 17)

This situation is further aggravated by central government's difficulty in relating to local authorities 'in the round' (Hambleton, 1978: 27). Their insistence on issuing policy guidance etc. along departmental/sectoral lines means that at best the inter-relationships between policies fail to be identified and at worst, local government is faced with implementing conflicting central government measures.

How local coordination should be achieved is, it appears, largely up to individual authorities. Central government circulars (DoE, 131/72; 74/73) stress the importance of local authority goodwill: local authorities should make their own arrangements by way of joint committees, consortia, joint teams, loan of staff and agency arrangements. Emphasis is placed on a variety of flexible arrangements, both formal and informal, in order to produce, "constructive

relationships between authorities" (DoE, 74/73: par.5). However, it is evident that while government circulars may assume coordination will resolve the problem of shared responsibility for local service provision, the reality falls far short of the ideal. In all policy areas affected, health, transport, water, social services and housing, problems of achieving inter-authority coordination are prevalent (Leach (ed), 1980a; Glyn-Jones, 1979; Packman and Wallace, 1982; Working Group on Joint Planning, 1985). A useful perspective as to why such problems occur is given in chapter V. In the meantime these experiences do beg the question, how can those advocating IRD be confident of its success if current coordinative efforts appear fraught with difficulties?

The value of the county structure plan as a vehicle for coordination has also been consistently eroded over recent years. DoE guidance has sought to reduce such plans to land-use documents and to those policies which relate directly to it, such as spatial aspects of economic development. Thus in terms of providing a framework for policy coordination, structure plans are able to contribute little. Even without this downgrading, it is doubtful whether county structure plans or the district council's local plans where they exist, would be able to live up to the early expectations. Indeed the author questions whether the proposed reforms of the present local planning system will be any more effective. Although still at the White Paper stage, the intention is to replace the current two-tier system of county and local plans with a single-tier system of mandatory District Development Plans. These will form the detailed statutory land-use plans at a district level as opposed to the present county level, the only exception being the extraction of minerals which will remain the responsibility of county councils. County councils are in turn required to prepare 'Statements of County Planning Policies'. These will express the broad county-wide strategic policies and provide a framework in which the District Development plans can be prepared. It is intended that these Statements will cover: new housing; Green Belts and conservation; rural economy; economic development; highways and transport; mineral extraction and protection of mineral resources and land reclamation. The Department of the Environment is also looking to ensure development

plans 'fit' within a regional development context, by issuing Regional Planning Policy Guidance prepared in consultation with local authorities, (DoE Cm 569, Jan. 1989).

Despite these changes the fundamental problem of using local planning documents as tools for wider policy coordination will remain. Planning authorities have little direct power, apart from the development control process, to ensure other council departments, and other organisations, adhere to the policies and proposals set down. Moreover, while in principle it is the role of local authorities to interpret central government policies in the light of local circumstances, the balance of power between central and local government is in a state of flux (see Social Science Research Council, 1979; Rhodes, 1980a/b), with it is suggested, local autonomy increasingly losing out to central control (Hambleton, 1979; Bruton, 1983; Miller and Miller, 1982; Goldsmith, 1986; see also Chapter IV, p.104). It should also be remembered that there are a number of policies, agriculture being the prime example, which are implemented without reference to local government.

The need for a more comprehensive approach to rural development has not been totally ignored by central government. The fleeting existence of the Northern Pennines Rural Development Board in the late 1960s(3) and the more successful Highlands and Islands Development Board(HIDB) and Development Board for Rural Wales(DBRW)(4) indicate government's acknowledgement of the need for a multi-sectoral development approach in some areas at least. Closer to home, England's Rural Development Commission has, with government encouragement, steadily extended its role to provide support for a range of economic and social initiatives(5). Moreover, it has sought to encourage others to pursue a broader approach to rural development. Witness the action plans of the late 1970s and early 1980s which required county councils to look at the wider implications of economic development and the ambitious Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) introduced in 1984 which are intended to provide a framework for agency coordination at a local level (see chapter IV).

However, the Commission's potential, in common with the HIDB and DBRW, to act as an agent for rural policy integration across the board is limited. First, its statutory brief and finances restrict its scope. Second, other central government agencies and departments will not allow (unless required by statute) their policies and actions to be dictated by another.

## **II.2 The Coordination Problem Recognised**

The impact of policies on rural areas and the need to improve inter-agency coordination are issues which have received considerable and consistent attention from government, rural agencies, local authorities, pressure groups and academics alike over the last two decades. The initial catalyst for this growing tide of concern came in the form of a series of discussion papers published by the Countryside Review Committee (CRC) in the late 1970s. Described by one observer as "quietly radical" (McNab, 1984: 3) these represent a watershed in the rural policy debate. The first paper was particularly hard hitting:

"...a sectional approach is less and less appropriate to the needs of the countryside. Where separate policies are designed to promote a few particular objectives they spill over, with implications for the others....in some cases initiatives may prove contradictory and mutually frustrating. From the point of view of Government organisation too, there must be potential weakness in a situation where, inevitably, decisions affecting the countryside over a whole range of key activities are the respective responsibility of a number of different Government Departments."

(CRC, 1976: 1, par.7-8)

In support of its argument the Countryside Review Committee identified 19 potential policy conflicts in the field of countryside policy, focusing primarily on environmental and resource issues. It concluded:

"A greater concern with the interaction of policies within appropriate areas - some large, some small is required to assist in promoting effective solutions to the problems of the countryside so that policies for conservation, recreation, transportation and so on are developed in a coordinated manner.... But coordination in any particular area is ultimately dependent on a coherent national approach. For this reason existing inter-departmental consultation on matters concerning the countryside must be kept well oiled."

(CRC, 1976: 9, par.70-2)

The Committee's subsequent reports reiterated the need for greater policy coordination, extending responsibility beyond Whitehall to the regional and local level. It suggested that in many instances the machinery already existed; the Regional Economic Planning Councils and Boards(6) and the corporate management approach adopted by the new local authorities were both cited. At the national level the Committee saw itself as the first step to improved coordination and made what it described as a 'tentative suggestion' that government may also wish to consider legal provision, possibly by:

"placing a new statutory duty on Ministers, Government Departments and public bodies in general - that, in exercising their functions under any enactment, they should have regard to the economic and social interests of rural communities."  
(CRC, 1977(a): 10, par. 62)

In the event this course was not followed and indeed the Committee, like the Regional Development Boards it held in such high regard, was disbanded in 1980(7).

Despite the Countryside Review Committee's demise, the concerns it expressed have been consistently repeated by others. The Strutt Committee, reporting in 1978 called for much closer collaboration of the main organisations concerned with rural affairs and recommended that MAFF be given wider responsibility, particularly relating to the environment. (Advisory Council for Agriculture and Horticulture in England and Wales, 1978). Similarly Rural Voice(8) has included in its 1981 and 1987 Rural Strategy documents, a plea for government to adopt a comprehensive and integrated approach to rural policy to revitalize the countryside, promoting social and economic development without jeopardising its beauty and interest. 1987 also saw the publication of the Countryside Policy Review Panel's (CPRP) report, 'New Opportunities for the Countryside'. Here again measures are sought which will create a 'whole countryside': "a mosaic of functions woven into a healthy economy." (CPRP, 1987: 7). This it is proposed, would best be achieved through the interpretation of policies "at the point where they are applied." (CPRP, 1987: 47) ie. at a local level.

The need for better policy coordination has not gone unnoticed by local government itself. Both representative bodies, the Association of District Councils (ADC) and Association of County Councils (ACC), have published a number of rural policy statements over the last ten years (see: ADC 1978, 1982, 1986, 1988; ACC 1979, 1987). Their concerns are largely the same and despite the period under review, remain disturbingly consistent from one report to another. Diminishing resources, inappropriate blanket policies, inadequate and ineffective coordination and lack of local autonomy are key grievances. Both advocate greater local responsibility for rural development and both, like the Countryside Policy Review Panel seek better coordination of sectoral policies at the local level.

Others are doubtful if local coordination alone will be able to resolve strategic policy conflicts or correct imbalances in resource allocations and suggest responsibility ultimately lies with central government. Some writers have suggested a new 'super' Ministry of Agriculture would greatly improve the coordination of rural policies (Davidson and Wibberley 1977), others that a strengthened DoE would be preferable (Cherry, 1976). Wibberley, as early as 1976, called for the establishment of a separate Ministry of Rural Planning and Development, to be responsible for the integration of the whole fabric of rural areas and certainly this has continued to find favour (Wallace, 1981). Indeed the House of Commons Agriculture Committee in its first report for the 1981-2 session advanced the notion of a Minister of State for Rural Affairs. Others have called for a national rural strategy (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, 1987; Baviska *et al.*, 1980).

An interesting perspective on the whole coordination debate is provided by Smart and Wright in their report, Decision Making in Rural Areas, published in 1983. This report, commissioned by the DoE, is again critical of the lack of coordination of policies at both central and local government levels. However, it suggests that the problems of coordination do not arise through the absence of a department and a Minister with responsibility for coordination, but through

the under-utilisation of systems already in place. Citing MINIS (Ministers Information System) the authors identify the DoE's Directorate of Rural Affairs as being charged with, "the formulation of policies designed to deal with economic and social problems (and) general coordination of inter-departmental policies". These functions they argue, are already tied into the political structure through the Minister whose responsibilities include 'countryside affairs' (Smart and Wright, 1983: 24-5). At a local level, the authors point to the general lack of clarity surrounding rural development and the tendency to pursue ad hoc and often inappropriate policies and actions. Decision makers, Smart and Wright suggest, view problems and solutions in purely functional terms, relating to their own area of responsibility without due regard to the needs of the rural communities concerned. Moreover, this situation is not helped by the similarly sectoral and fragmented advice and control emanating from central government.

To overcome the problems they identify, Smart and Wright advocate greater community involvement in the rural development process and the formulation of Community Development Reports. These they propose, would define local needs and could in the longer term be used as the basis for a rural development strategy, the objective being to coordinate at a local level the activities of central and local government and other agencies. This proposal is not dissimilar to the Rural Development Programmes (mentioned earlier) which have since been introduced into selective rural areas. The overall responsibility for the harmonisation of policies should however remain in Whitehall, and Smart and Wright argue for a more positive interpretation of the existing role of the DoE's Directorate of Rural Affairs, with a strengthening of its remit concerning the initiation and coordination of government policies for rural areas. Moreover, in common with the Countryside Review Committee, Smart and Wright also propose that government should place a requirement on its departments and agencies to have regard to the effect of their policies on rural areas.

### II.3 Integrated Rural Development: a Framework for Reconciliation

The growing dissatisfaction with existing administrative structures during the 1970s and early 1980s created a receptive environment for the 'new' (to Britain) concept of Integrated Rural Development (IRD). Its introduction appears to be largely attributable to the House of Lords Select Committee on European Communities who reported on 'Policies for Rural Areas in the European Community' in 1979. The findings of the Select Committee offer little in the way of surprises: a lack of policy coordination and a failure of Community funds to bring benefits to rural areas as a whole. In the Committee's recommendations however, frequent mention is made of the need to 'integrate policies' and of the desirability of encouraging 'integrated development'. The Select Committee goes as far as to offer a definition:

"Integrated development is an approach to rural affairs based on the idea that there is scope and space in rural areas for new enterprises in addition to traditional activities and that it is possible in many cases for two apparently competing interests or claims on rural land to co-exist without damage to one another. In fact it is very often possible for them to improve and strengthen one another. Thus an integrated rural development programme can not only reconcile agriculture and public access, or landscape conservation and rural industry, but can do so in such a way that each gains from its combination with the other."

(Select Com. on European Communities, 1979-80, HL129, par.54)

This definition is somewhat limited and has caused some misunderstanding by suggesting that integrated rural development is confined to the integration of land use. However it appears this is not what the Committee intended, for it examines the whole range of EEC policies with respect to rural development and concludes:

"a comprehensive approach to rural policy is necessary both to safeguard the future of rural communities and to enable the full potential of rural areas to be realised."

(ibid. par. 76)

A year prior to the House of Lords report, but with far less publicity, the Commission of the European Communities (CEC) resolved to provide financial assistance towards a programme of European research into IRD. While this may

have been the prompt for the stance adopted by the Select Committee, it was nevertheless the Select Committee's deliberations which brought the concept of IRD to the attention of a wider audience. It is immediately apparent on reading the evidence presented to the Committee by some 50 organisations and individuals that the concept of IRD captured the imagination and aspirations of academics and practitioners alike: IRD was either what they were doing, what they were planning to do, or advocated should be done.

Responsibility for developing and refining the concept of integrated rural development remained largely with the European Commission and in 1979 it provided assistance for three pilot 'Integrated Development Programmes' (CEC, 1979). These were based in the Western Isles of Scotland, Department of Lozere, France and the Province of Luxembourg in south east Belgium. Financial support for the programmes was however, limited to agricultural aspects of integration; an obvious weakness in any initiative attempting to promote integrated rural development and one that has not escaped criticism (Agriculture Com., House of Commons, 1st. Report 1981-82; Baviskar, 1983; Arkleton Trust, 1983). In the event these schemes have attracted scant attention and little has been written about their implementation.

Running more-or-less concurrently with the Integrated Development Programmes were a further 12 experimental IRD research projects also funded by the CEC Standing Committee for Agricultural Research (CEC, 1980b). The projects, most of which ran for three years between 1980-83, were based in the Less Favoured Areas of Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Ireland and Britain. Of the three studies based in Britain, two, in common with their European counterparts, were applied studies concentrating on an explanation of the regional situation and an evaluation of current policy operation. The Rural Planning Research Trust (RPRT) undertook a study of the Radnor District in Powys, Wales and the Eden District in Cumbria, England and the Dartington Institute conducted a similar study in Dartmoor, Exmoor and Bodmin Moor, but with greater emphasis given to the aspirations of the local community. In

contrast, the third British study, led by the Peak Park Joint Planning Board, was pragmatic in its approach and chose to implement an integrated rural development project in two villages in the Peak District National Park (this is considered in Chapter IV). Sadly, this was the only study of the 12 commissioned to put the IRD concept into practice.

During the process of research most study groups were attempting to clarify their understanding of IRD. As many definitions emerged as studies, but the following, extracted from the final study report published in 1985 (Henrichsmeyer *et al.*, 1985), is a synthesis of the key elements.

The objectives of IRD are threefold:

- to raise the level of economic performance in all sectors of the rural economy
- to promote the shaping of viable rural communities
- to protect the environment and conserve the natural features and appearance of the landscape.

To achieve these objectives requires:

- the coordination and integration of policies into a consistent rural development strategy
- the establishment of adequate institutional arrangements both within and between the different policy levels (local, regional, national, supra-national).

A number of studies also refer to the need to encourage the participation of the local community.

The findings of the 12 studies, while reflecting the individual nature of the study areas, have a certain commonality: sectoral measures, especially those of agricultural policy, have not been very successful in promoting economic and social development in depressed areas. Moreover, coordination between them has been insufficient. The British studies are particularly critical of the emphasis on agricultural aid(9), arguing that given the weak agricultural multiplier in the UK it does little to assist the development of rural areas as a whole (RPRT, 1983; Dartington Institute, 1984). The overall recommendations of the reports are also fairly universal, centering upon the need to devise complementary

European Community directives in the different policy areas (especially those of agricultural, regional and social development) in order to provide a broad framework of measures and financial assistance within which member states can be encouraged to pursue a more balanced approach to rural development.

In terms of allocating responsibility for policy coordination the studies differ slightly. The majority suggest that central levels (the European Community and national government) should define a set of political framework conditions and that rural development strategies and measures should subsequently be designed to fit these at a regional level. Others, notably the British studies reflecting a different administrative system, recommend that responsibility for policy integration should lie with local government. They suggest however, that a stimulus is needed to encourage effective joint working at this level and in common with their European colleagues recommend that this be achieved through a broad government statement on rural objectives, with a requirement that organisations with any relevant responsibilities review their policies and activities within the framework provided.

#### **II.4 IRD: Towards a Model for Implementation**

Given the wealth of literature concerning the need for better coordination and more specifically that in support of integrated rural development, it is surprising that little, if any consideration has been given to the actual mechanics and administrative implications of translating conceptual concerns into a viable development approach. Certainly, there is no indication that the lessons learnt from past experience of inter-organisational coordination have been applied to further our understanding of the processes involved. Ultimately, the viability of IRD lies in the basic administrative, organisational and institutional issues of coordinating the policies and activities of previously independent agencies. One must determine to what extent IRD can be achieved under existing political and institutional arrangements and to what extent changes are required. In the latter

case one must also assess the feasibility of implementing such changes. Finally, one must consider the degree to which organisations will respond to the demands coordination places upon them, both in terms of joint decision-making and joint working.

A review of the limited literature relating to administering integrated rural development (Ahmad, 1975; Amor *et al.* 1979; Cohen, 1979a; Siffen, 1979 and Weitz, 1979) together with the core recommendations to emerge from the 'coordination debate' detailed above, reveals that integration demands:-

- (i) the presence of a comprehensive rural development strategy;
- (ii) coordination both between and within administrative tiers (referred to as vertical and horizontal integration respectively);
- (iii) one organisation to assume the functions and responsibilities of a coordinating agency;
- (iv) participating agencies to possess complementary goals and functions which are consistent with the overall objectives of the rural development strategy.

These elements are considered in turn below.

The need for a national rural development strategy is largely self-explanatory. It refers to the formulation of a broad policy approach which encompasses the gamut of rural interests and concerns. It sets clear objectives and in so doing, clarifies government intent with regard to the management and future development of rural areas. Above all, it provides a framework within which individual organisations can review and it is anticipated, integrate their respective policies.

Vertical integration, as its name implies, takes place between the different

hierarchical levels, effectively bridging the tiers of national, local and regional administration. It is seen as fulfilling two coordinative functions. The first is to improve the patterns of administrative control within an organisation operating on several administrative levels (see fig. 3). MAFF is such an example with its national headquarters and five regional and 19 divisional offices. The focus is primarily on improving internal communication channels between an organisation's tiers of operation to ensure the individual units are functioning in a unified or mutually supportive manner. In particular, it enables the key decision-makers who usually operate at the top, distant from the point of implementation, to be kept informed of the outcomes of the decisions they take. Sound vertical integration, where functions and policies are clear, will also assist the organisation in its additional task of ensuring horizontal integration at its various levels of operation. The second function of vertical integration centres upon securing coordination and two-way communication between local and national bodies, such as between central and local government. The intention is to prevent policies and activities, whether decided nationally or locally, being at cross purposes with each other. This is an interesting concept and one which could be usefully employed to avoid the present embarrassment of local government having to implement central government policies which are at odds not only with its own policies but also with those of other central government departments. The question is will central government be prepared to listen?

To counteract the centralisation of decision-making and the strong vertical characteristics of the present administrative system, coordination structures are also required within administrative tiers. Horizontal integration lies at the heart of achieving integrated rural development. Specifically it seeks to secure a unity of purpose and joint action by organisations which normally work independently but which operate within the same administrative tier. At present such measures only exist at a local level in the form of county structure plans and in the various arrangements between local authorities and other rural service providers. As we have seen, their effectiveness has been limited, a problem which must be overcome if IRD is to be successfully implemented.

There is also a great need for coordination at the level of central government. It is at this level that matters of local or regional importance requiring inter-agency negotiations are frequently referred, yet coordination with other departments or national agencies is virtually non-existent. It is also the success of integration between the central government departments and national agencies which determines the ease of coordination at lower levels. This is a point the author will continue to stress, for no amount of local coordination can overcome the presence of contradictions within centrally determined policies. Legislation, if forthcoming, may facilitate greater coordination between national agencies but this raises the question as to who assumes responsibility for ensuring that it takes place. There are two options. Responsibility could be allocated to an established organisation such as MAFF or the DoE, or perhaps the Rural Development Commission. Alternatively a new organisation or Ministry could be created for the purpose. Whatever option is selected it is clear that the coordinating agency's profile and powers must be considerably greater than those held by the DoE's Directorate of Rural Affairs, currently charged with this very function.

There is a final point which must be considered here. This relates to the assumption, implicit in the concept of IRD, that organisations are willing to coordinate with others. Before advocating IRD therefore, one must question whether such an assumption is valid. It should be noted that the essence of coordination is joint decision making and joint action with regard to a shared policy environment. The emphasis is on a collective response rather than an individual one. With respect to IRD this demands that agencies possess complementary and compatible policies and actions in pursuit of rural development. This also assumes that rural development is central to organisational activities. However, it is apparent that for a number of agencies whose policies impact upon rural areas, this is not the case. Thus in assessing the viability of IRD one must also address how organisations with strong sectoral loyalties can be convinced that coordination in pursuit of IRD is in their interest.

These demands, as we shall discover in later chapters, are not inconsequential. However, certain steps can be taken to provide an organisational environment conducive to integration. This requires:-

(i) ensuring organisations at the highest policy making and operational levels are committed to the success of joint working and to rural development;

(ii) generating effective administrative mechanisms and procedures which facilitate control and guidance on the one hand and operational flexibility on the other;

(iii) the introduction of financial arrangements that permit partnership payments and mixes of assistance from different 'budget pots';

(iv) reassuring each participating agency that: its interests are being self-guarded; its aims being achieved and that its presence and 'personality' are considered relevant, if not essential, for success.

(after Ahmad, 1975)

With these conditions operative; structures to facilitate horizontal and vertical integration between the participating organisations in place, and an authority taking responsibility for overall coordination, one has the 'model' institutional and administrative framework which integrated development demands. One should not assume however, that such arrangements ensure success:

"the administrative problems of integrated rural development include that sometimes fatal common cold of public administration - the sheer difficulty of doing ordinary things."

(Siffen, 1979: 1)

Indeed, there is a danger of assuming that what we do not have must be better than that which we do, so integrated rural development appears preferable to non-integrated development, but is it? The administrative realities of pursuing an integrated rural development strategy will be considered in Chapter IV.

## II.5 Synopsis

The last two decades have seen growing concern over the institutional structures which constitute rural development in England. A review of the administrative arrangements highlights the dominance of central government departments and agencies and the sectoral nature of policy making and implementation. Moreover, measures for counteracting this sectoral trend and assessing the interaction of policies are weak.

The dissatisfaction with the present system has led to calls to improve inter-agency coordination and integrated rural development is believed to provide the answer. IRD can be broadly described as: a process whereby individual and sectoral policies are coordinated to form a comprehensive rural development strategy which takes account of the social, economic and environmental needs of rural areas (often through local community consultation) and where necessary reconciles conflicting interests.

The majority of studies on rural development have concluded that there is a need for greater integration of policies and have recommended that this is best achieved at a local level within a broad policy framework or rural strategy set by central government. Throughout this debate the administrative and organisational implications inherent in pursuing policy integration have been consistently ignored, yet as the author has shown, these could be considerable.

It is the purpose of this research to examine the organisational realities of integrated development and in the light of these findings, assess whether, given the political will, integrated rural development can realistically be achieved.

## Notes

(1) Several studies have attempted to identify the number of organisations involved and figures range from 30 or so to over 100, depending upon the criteria used. See for example Smart and Wright (1980); Advisory Council for Agriculture and Horticulture in England and Wales (1978) and Dartington Inst. of Community Studies *et al.* (1982).

(2) Experiments in area management have mainly been tried in the inner cities, where the coordination of services at the point of delivery is seen as a useful strategy in the battle against urban deprivation. These schemes, in attempting to coordinate the activities of local authority departments and other concerned organisations, have not been without their problems, see for example, Noad and King (1977), Institute of Local Government studies (1977, 1978), Mason (1978).

(3) The Northern Pennines Rural Development Board was established in August 1968 by the Labour Government and disbanded in March 1971, largely for political reasons, by the incoming Conservative Government. It is of interest in that it marks the first attempts to integrate agriculture with other economic development, particularly forestry and tourism. However its brief existence meant its activities were limited. Detailed accounts of its operation are given by Capstick (1980) and Childs and Minay (1977).

(4) A review of the activities of both Boards can be found in Williams (1984) and the Dartington Inst. of Community Studies *et al.* (1982). A more detailed analysis of the HIDB is provided by Grassie (1983). See also the Board's own annual reports and policy statements.

(5) The Rural Development Commission's Annual Reports provide an insight into its work. The 1984 Report is particularly useful in that it gives a history of the Commission together with a policy statement for the next ten years of its operations.

(6) These were established in 1964 following the introduction of a new national and regional planning framework. The Councils were primarily advisory bodies set up to advise government on the long term planning strategy for their region (eight regions in all). The Boards were comprised of representatives of the main government departments concerned with regional planning and were charged with coordinating the activities of the various departments. All the Regional Councils produced regional strategies during their first ten years of operation which were intended to form the regional framework for development. Rural development however was largely neglected in favour of urban, industrial and infrastructural development.

(7) Despite the disbanding of the Regional Development Boards and Councils, two regional conferences of local authorities remained: The South East Regional Planning Conference and West Midlands Regional Forum of Strategic Local Authorities. They have since been joined by the Standing Conference of East Anglian Authorities and the South East Regional Planning Conference. The Government is also keen for local authorities in other areas to form similar regional conferences. Mention is made of this in its White Paper, *The future of Development plans* (DoE, 1989). All the regional conferences have an advisory, non-statutory role and issue regional guidance primarily on housing, land-use and the economy. They tend to have an urban bias.

(8) Rural Voice is a national alliance of ten organisations: Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE); Agriculture and Allied Workers National Trade Group; Churches (Arthur Rank Centre); Council for the Protection of Rural England; Country Landowners' Association; National Association of Local Councils; National Farmers' Union; National Federation of Women's Institutes; National Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs; National Council of Voluntary Organisations. Established in 1980 its prime concern is with the social and economic well-being of those who live and work in the countryside.

(9) As mentioned earlier, the European Regional and Social Funds can only be used in designated 'Assisted Areas'. In Britain these are primarily old industrial and hence urban areas.

## CHAPTER III

### AGRICULTURE: NATIONAL INDUSTRY OR RURAL CUSTODIAN?

In any discussion on rural policy and development, the rural economy is of primary importance, determining the continued viability of rural areas. Traditionally, the rural economy has been synonymous with that of agriculture, and while its economic importance may be in decline, such traditions ensure agriculture remains the dominant force shaping the countryside today.

Before considering agriculture's unique role in rural development, it is useful however, to place its contribution in perspective, considering briefly the non-agricultural elements of the rural economy. First there are the other traditional rural industries, forestry, mining and quarrying which in particular areas, the more remote western and upland regions for example, may still form the economic base of the rural economy. Of more widespread importance to rural areas as a whole, is the growth in employment in the secondary and tertiary sectors, accounting for more than 80 per cent of rural employment, with more than half of the total employment usually in the service sector (Phillips and Williams, 1984). No two rural areas are the same and consequently the economic activities will vary from place to place. Manufacturing industry for example, may be an important employer in the more accessible parts of the countryside, and the service sector more dominant in those areas where tourism is well developed. Interestingly, it is this latter activity which is regarded as one of the few economic sectors with the potential for generating further rural employment (Development Commn, 1984/85).

The rural economy has also seen a strengthening and merging of ties with the urban economy over recent decades. For the most part, rural employment is no longer "rural" in its true sense. There may be a rural population, but

increasingly it finds employment opportunities concentrated in the nearby urban centres. This pattern is reinforced further by the general growth in commuting, with town dwellers moving into the countryside to live. Thus many rural areas, particularly the more accessible, find that their so-called 'economy' is little more than a service industry, providing dormitory facilities for the metropolitan labour markets.

It is evident from the preceding discussion that agriculture is no longer the dominant rural industry - providing employment for just two per cent of England's total workforce and even in the most rural areas accounting for little more than 10-20 per cent of employment (Development Commn, 1987-88). It could be suggested therefore, that devoting an entire chapter to agriculture at the expense of other rural economic activities cannot be justified. The author would disagree. Agriculture's role extends far beyond primary economic concerns. It is the dominant land-use and consequently determines much of the appearance of our countryside (Countryside Commission, 1974). Moreover, as the traditional rural industry, it is still seen by many as the social and economic linchpin of rural areas (Countryside Review Committee, 1978; Dunning 1979; NFU, 1984.) Consider for example, the inter-dependence that exists between farming and other economic activities: the associated manufacturing and agricultural supply industries; the movement of displaced agricultural labour to the secondary and tertiary sectors; and the diversification of agriculture into services and tourism, with the provision of bed and breakfast, camp sites, 'farm teas' and 'pick-your-own' outlets.

Agriculture is also the only aspect of rural development to have consistently received attention from successive post war governments and consequently to have benefitted from the implementation of a comprehensive range of policies related to achieving defined objectives (Elliot, 1984). Perhaps more importantly it receives, through various European Community and government support measures, an annual investment in excess of £800 million (1); indeed it is the dominant recipient of state resource allocations to rural areas (Bowers and

Cheshire, 1983). It is for these reasons that agriculture, despite its decline as employer, is still able to influence the evolving nature of rural areas and therefore merits the attention it receives here.

Before setting the structure for this examination it is worth highlighting one final aspect of the relationship between agriculture and rural development. It is evident that considerable financial resources are committed every year to the agricultural economy of rural areas. However, it should not be assumed that funds directed towards this sector assisting the development of the countryside as a whole. In fact the opposite has been argued:

"The agricultural sector has been receiving too much attention from governments ...from politicians and even from university research workers and it has certainly been receiving too large a share of the finance available...this over emphasis on strengthening agriculture is becoming a serious weakness in integrated rural development."

(Wibberley 1981: 168)

Since the time of Wibberley's writing the agricultural sector has seen considerable changes amidst the crisis of over-production. This has led to considerable re-evaluation and reflection about the policy options for agriculture and indeed rural areas as a whole. Is there, for example, an opportunity for agriculture to broaden its role and tackle the associated problems of conservation and rural development? Alternatively, should predicted savings from the agricultural budget be redirected to finance development in other sectors? (Rural Voice, 1985; Association of District Councils, 1986).

This chapter examines the formulation and implementation of agricultural policy in Britain and discusses the way it interacts with wider rural development policy objectives. Several key issues are addressed. These relate to the scope of agricultural policy in the context of rural development and consider whether it remains preoccupied with agricultural objectives or whether it increasingly sees itself as the rural custodian of rural areas with policies to match. Thought is also given to how agricultural policy relates to the concept of integrated rural development. The Chapter is broken into four parts. Part I provides an

overview of national and European institutional policy arrangements and their implementation. Part 2 examines agricultural policy in the 1970s and early '80s in order to assess its economic, social and environmental ramifications, and to determine the degree to which it was integrated within itself and with other rural policies. Part 3 concentrates on agricultural policy since 1985. It reviews the reform and reorientation of agricultural policy, and documents its evolving relationship with other rural development sectors. Finally, Part 4 discusses the role of agriculture within the context of integrated rural development.

### **III.1 Agricultural Policy and its Implementation**

Since February 1973 the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF) has been responsible for the formulation and implementation of agricultural policy within the framework of the European Community's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This Policy, regarded as a cornerstone of the EEC, allows for a common approach to interventionist agricultural policies in order to promote closer integration of the economies of member states. The objectives of the CAP, stated in Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome, are little different from those of the UK's 1947 Agricultural Act which, until recently, formed the basis of post-war agricultural policy, and are accordingly:

- (a) to increase agricultural productivity by promoting technical progress and by ensuring the rational development of agricultural production and the optimum utilisation of the factors of production, in particular labour;
- (b) thus to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture;
- (c) to stabilise markets;
- (d) to assure the availability of supplies;
- (e) to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

The cost of operating the CAP accounts for a major part of the European Community's budget. In 1985, 72.7 per cent of the budget(2) was spent on agricultural support measures, financed through the European Agricultural

Guarantee and Guidance Fund (hereafter referred to as 'FEOGA', after its French initials). FEOGA operates under two sections, the Guarantee section which provides various market support mechanisms for the Community's agriculture, and the Guidance Section which provides member States with funds to encourage structural reforms within agriculture. An overview of their operations is given below.

### The Guarantee Section

Within the context of rural development one is tempted to concentrate on the broader socio-structural measures financed by the Guidance Section of FEOGA. However, in practice the operation of the Guarantee section, by virtue of its considerable financial input into the agricultural economy, with 95 per cent of the Community's agricultural expenditure being allocated to price support measures(3), has important consequences for the maintenance and development of rural areas. Under this section, support for the Community's agriculture is provided through levies (import taxes) imposed at the frontiers which protect the Community market from cheap imports. By setting a minimum price (the intervention price) they also provide an assured outlet for produce in the event of excess production and a temporary weakness of the internal market. This is the origin of the Community surpluses, the notorious mountains of butter, beef and grain. Thus the mechanisms of the Guarantee Section are aimed at: a growth in agricultural productivity; ensuring a supply of basic food stuffs at stable prices; ensuring a fair share of agriculture in world trade, with the agricultural sector contributing to the Community trade balance; and of particular relevance to many rural areas, the protection and maintenance of farmers' incomes. To this end farm support prices have been set at very high levels to deal with the income problems of structurally weak holdings. These holdings make a very small contribution in terms of production, but in terms of numbers they predominate in the Community.

### The Guidance Section

The Guidance Section of FEOGA reimburses Member States' part of the

expenditure (normally 25 per cent) which they incur in implementing measures under the socio-structural directives. Until 1985 these were primarily concerned with farm modernisation and amalgamation, the shedding of surplus labour and improved efficiency. The Guidance section is also concerned with supporting agriculture in areas handicapped by structural or natural conditions. It is administered through regulations which automatically become law in all Member States and through more flexible directives which establish the framework within which individual governments can formulate their own legislative and administrative procedures. From its inception a structures policy was envisaged as an integral part of the CAP. It was intended that some 25 per cent of the Community's total agricultural budget would be devoted to structural activities although this proportion has never been reached. In 1985, for example, the Guidance Section accounted for just five per cent of total agricultural expenditure in the Community budget (CEC, 1985: 6)

### **III.2 Agricultural Policy and Rural Development 1973-1985: The Grounds for Confrontation**

The primary social objective of the CAP, which has been integral since its inception, has been the need to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural population in accordance with Article 39(1)b of the Treaty of Rome. This together with certain broader aims inherent in the Less Favoured Areas directive (EEC 75/268) of 1975 (see below) represents the social arm of what was conceived and has remained until the reforms of 1985 a largely agricultural policy with defined agricultural objectives concerned with farm modernisation, amalgamation and productivity. In addition to implementing the Common Agricultural Policy measures in Britain, the Government issued two statements on agricultural policy for the UK in the 1970s. These set out the Government's intent, within the context of the CAP, concerning food production for the short and medium term. The first, Food From Our Own Resources, continued to support the expansion of food production with an emphasis on milk (with its by-

product beef), sugar beet, cereals and lamb. This white paper was subsequently reviewed and superseded by Farming and the Nation in 1979. The conclusion of the Government was that:

"the continued expansion of agricultural net product over the medium term is in the national interest, and...their determination so to frame their policies as to enable a progressive and efficient industry to make an ever-increasing contribution to the well-being of the nation."

(MAFF, 1979: 7)

Thus in the 1970s and early 80s agricultural programmes emanating from the EEC and those determined nationally had a prime focus on increasing productivity and improving farm efficiency. Rural development, with a few exceptions detailed below, was not perceived by European decision makers, nor indeed by successive British governments as an agricultural policy issue.

The first, albeit modest, indication of an interest in broader concerns came in December 1974 with the Minister of Agriculture's announcement that the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS) which is part of MAFF and responsible for policy execution on the ground, was to implement Directive 72/161/EEC concerning socio-economic guidance and occupational training. The directive enables those engaged in agriculture to acquire new occupational skills in order to take advantage of opportunities within and out of agriculture. This has been pursued through the Agricultural Training Board and the agricultural colleges, which provide vocational training and through ADAS which provides socio-economic advice. This work is carried out under the guidance of regional socio-economic advisors, totalling just eight in England and Wales, assisted by special interest advisers, numbering 60 plus. These act as consultants to ADAS field advisory staff, who are the main points of contact with farmers and growers. In outline, the method of operation is to:

- "(a) identify the nature of the socio-economic problems likely to be associated with sizes or types of farm, and with particular areas;
- (b) on the basis of this information, promote awareness of the socio-economic problems and prospects, concentrating on smaller and less viable enterprises;
- (c) follow up appropriate with more detailed group work or advice to individuals;
- (d) liaise with non-agricultural organisations who can assist either by providing

advice or developing employment and business opportunities for farm families."  
MAFF, 1979(5)

The introduction of this directive marked the beginning of the widening scope of agricultural policy, for the first time it looked beyond its agricultural 'blinkers' to recognise economic sectors other than its own and to possess social as well as economic goals.

The new found liberalism continued with the introduction of the Less Favoured Areas Directive in 1975. This directive, which absorbed the hill and upland subsidies that had been in place in Britain since 1946, was conceived primarily as an instrument of social and conservation policy, to be achieved through supporting farming as a viable occupation in areas where natural conditions were less favourable for agricultural production than elsewhere. The directive's opening Article sets out its purpose, "to ensure the continuation of farming, thereby maintaining a minimum population level or conserving the countryside in certain less favoured areas." Three categories of area are eligible for assistance:

- (a) mountain areas in which farming is necessary to protect the countryside, but where farming is limited because of the physical conditions, Article 3(3);
- (b) areas in danger of depopulation and where conservation of the countryside is necessary and where economic returns are below average and the land is of poor quality, suitable mainly for extensive livestock rearing, Article 3(4);
- (c) small areas affected by specific handicaps and in which farming must be continued in order to conserve the countryside and preserve tourist potential or in order to protect the coastline, Article 3(5).

In all three cases the justification for agricultural support is not confined to agricultural issues but to the social, environmental or recreational needs of Less Favoured Areas.

In the UK some 40 per cent of agricultural land has been designated as 'Less Favoured' under article 3(4), with the Isles of Scilly being designated under

Article 3(5), (pers.comm. April 1987). There is no denying that headage payments (per head of sheep and cattle) available under this directive have become, and indeed remain, a significant contributor to net farm income. It has been estimated that in England the direct support system contributes upwards of 25 per cent of the net farm income in Less Favoured Areas (TRRU, 1981: 154). Concern has been expressed however, as to the apparent inequity of the scheme (MacEwen and Sinclair, 1983; Hearne, 1984). According to Green (1983: 7) the lack of ceiling on eligible livestock units has meant that 30 per cent of headage payments go to the largest six per cent of farms, and farms on better land receive four times the support per hectare of those in poor land. Such a situation does little to contribute to the social aims of the directive.

A similar criticism can also be levied at the eligibility terms of MAFF's Capital Grant Scheme for farm modernisation, land improvement etc. that operated until 1985. This was not available to those farms classified by MAFF as part time, ie. those generating less than 250 standard man days of labour, although they may not necessarily be worked on that basis. This meant that about half of the farms in Less Favoured Areas could not receive grant aid (MAFF pers. comm. April 1987). This situation arose primarily through the Government's failure to implement Article 10 of the Less Favoured Areas directive which relaxed eligibility conditions for grant aid under Directive 72/159 for farms with a development plan. This specifically referred to farmers obtaining up to 50 per cent of their income from non-agricultural employment and where total earnings may be only 70 per cent of average earnings.

MAFF also decided against introducing a system of grants and loans for the development of on farm tourist or craft enterprises. Not only did this decision mark a lost opportunity in terms of pursuing a more integrated approach to the development of agriculture and tourism, but it also failed to take into account the broad objectives of the Less Favoured Area directive itself and the scope offered by such a scheme in relation to the work of the socio-economic branch of ADAS introduced just a year earlier. MAFF maintained there was no need

to implement this part of the directive because adequate alternative sources of funding were already available in the UK. This directly contradicted the opinion of the Development Commission who stated that neither they nor the Tourist Boards had sufficient resources to maintain close contact with farmers and to give them the assistance they needed. ADAS on the other hand, it suggested, had the necessary links with farmers and would be well placed to fulfil this role(6). Thus measures which would have been of great benefit to the needs of small farms, to fund capital investment and to encourage diversification thereby improving the income base of farmers in Less Favoured Areas and the viability of such holdings, were disregarded. Such decisions placed the future of these farms and the population they supported in jeopardy, in so doing British agriculture was failing to meet its social obligation, as stated in the directive: that of stabilising the rural population.

In respect of environmental issues, whilst conservation is cited as a primary objective of the Less Favoured Areas directive, it contains no provisions in support of conservation measures. Instead it naively assumes that the maintenance of farming ensures the continued conservation of the countryside. Conversely these measures have in some instances had an adverse affect on the environment (Countryside Commission, 1974, 1977 and 1984). Headage payments, by encouraging maximum stocking rates, actually detract from the conservation objective: high stock numbers require more intensive grazing and encourage the reclamation of permanent grassland and moorland. Grants have been paid to plough and drain sites of wildlife importance, to remove traditional stone walls in favour of non-traditional post and wire fences and to plough moorland of recreational, landscape and wildlife importance. Thus, within the directive itself there exists a conflict of objectives: on the one hand the purely agricultural objectives of increasing farm output and on the other the environmental objectives of conserving the countryside. In the past agricultural objectives have received attractive financial inducements: those of conservation have not.

Of related interest is Britain's restricted use of Article 3(5) of the directive, whereby Less Favoured Areas may be designated in order to conserve the countryside and preserve the tourist potential. This would seem to be closely related to the purpose of National Park designations, of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the area and of providing and promoting opportunities for outdoor recreation. No areas, other than the Isles of Scilly, are designated under this Article, yet 40 per cent of the designated Less Favoured Areas fall within National parks (Countryside Commission pers. comm. April, 1987).

One may conclude that in several instances the Less Favoured Area directive has failed to fulfil its principle aims. Three essential points must be made. First, the directive was conceived as an instrument of social and conservation policy, but its terms of operation have remained wholly agricultural. Second, the Directive's undue reliance on agricultural incentives has undermined the attainment of these wider objectives. Third, these failings have been exacerbated through MAFF's reluctance, at least prior to 1985, to adopt certain 'alternative' measures in favour of the familiar, those directed towards the intensification of farming. Thus it would appear that the continuance of farming has been seen as the objective rather than farming being the means by which broader objectives of conservation and the maintenance of the population could be assured.

The shortcomings of the CAP, in terms of ensuring the comparability of income for all farmers, are also much in evidence. Indeed current budget problems are attributed in part to the artificially high support prices that underpin this objective (CEC, 1986: 3). Consequently, 1981 marked an important watershed in price support policy: the European Commission acknowledged that the link between farm incomes and incomes in the rest of the economy could no longer be maintained (CEC, 1981: 18). The budget situation was such that farmers were required to bear some of the costs involved in disposing of the surpluses

generated by the open-ended support granted in the past and as a consequence it was accepted that farm incomes may not be supported as effectively as in previous years.

It has also become increasingly evident that, contrary to expectations, the improvement in farm incomes has not been shared equally through the Community. Recent studies have shown that income support under the CAP has gone mainly towards improving farm incomes on the better lands rather than on the poorer and to northern Europe rather than the south. In its 1980 report, Reflections on the Common Agricultural Policy, the European Commission admitted that the gap between farm incomes in the richer and poorer regions and between the top level of farm incomes and the bottom one have been steadily widening, and according to an independent report on the Regional Impact of the Common Agricultural Policy published a year later, the blame rests firmly with the Common Agricultural Policy. Taking the average European Community farm support as 100, an index of the level of assistance shows that in the developed regions the index lies between 120 and 135 whereas the corresponding figure for north east Italy and southern France drops to less than 80 (CEC, 1981b). Other authors have similarly shown that the income distribution effects of the CAP are highly skewed (Josling *et al.*, 1972; Traill, 1980). This disparity appears to be due largely to the dynamism of the most progressive areas, which are able to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the CAP. In the words of the European Commission, the Common Market organisations, "based as they are on price guarantees or product subsidies work to the advantage of the largest producers, who already have the most favourable production structures... the CAP has been of greater assistance to the regions which were already rich than it has been to the least favoured areas of the Community...these differences have increased during the 1970s" (CEC, 1980: 8, par.12-13).

The disparity between regions has continued into the 1980s, although according to a more recent report on, The Agricultural Situation in the Community, "whilst

the CAP has not prevented the persistence of income disparities among farmers...there is no evidence that it has aggravated these disparities in recent years." (CEC, 1985a: 138). However, the report does cite field crops, fruit, horticulture and intensive livestock farming yielding above average incomes and those activities characteristic of the Less Favoured Areas, beef and sheep farming and non-specialised farming generally showing lower incomes (pp.125-128). Thus those areas under the greatest threat of rural decline appear to benefit least from farm support prices. Not only do such findings cast doubt over the ability of the CAP to fulfil its social ambitions through a price support system, but it also leads one to consider the consequences that an ostensibly agricultural measure may have beyond those of farming itself. The question inevitably arises as to whether agricultural policy may generate outcomes contradictory to those of other rural policies. In this instance the overall impact of European Community farm policy has been to exacerbate the differential between the advantaged and disadvantaged rural areas. In this respect alone agricultural policy negates the intentions of the European Community's regional policy of "correcting the principle imbalances within the community" (CEC, Regulation EEC 724/75).

Such paradoxes are not limited to price support policy and regional development alone. Agricultural policy has frequently been found to be 'at odds' with other rural interests. The antagonism between agriculture and conservation is an obvious example. The government has sought simultaneously, though not in a coordinated fashion, to promote the viability of farms through MAFF implemented schemes and to conserve and enhance the landscape through the work of National Park Authorities, the Countryside Commission and Nature Conservancy Council. Agricultural subsidies and grant improvement schemes have largely run counter to conservation interests while conservation policies and efforts have sought to forestall such environmentally damaging agricultural development (see for example Lowe *et al.*, 1986; Bowers & Cheshire, 1983).

A certain degree of 'schizophrenia' (Slee 1981: 113) can also be detected within

the instruments of agricultural policy. Surprisingly, several socio-structural directives refer to the need for agricultural solutions to "contribute to the overall economic and social development of each region concerned" (preamble of EEC 72/159 and EEC 72/160), aims not dissimilar to those of rural development. It is therefore with concern that we learn that the measures within these directives work contrary to their intentions. The rationalisation of processing and marketing conditions for agricultural products has led to large scale trading with distant, frequently urban based, selling and processing organisations at the expense of the local rural economy (Molle *et al.*, 1980). In Less Favoured Areas, agricultural subsidies strive to maintain the rural population whilst parallel policy instruments encourage capital investment and the shedding of labour. Similarly, structural policies of farm modernisation and amalgamation in other areas have displaced the agricultural labour force yet failed to create alternative employment opportunities. Thus despite the provision of ensuring a region's development these measures have effectively reduced the size of the rural population able to benefit directly from the CAP(7). More importantly, because of their repercussions on the non-agricultural population and economy(8), they have also worked to the detriment of rural areas as a whole.

This outcome points to a failing of agricultural policy on two counts: first an inability to anticipate the wider social, economic and environmental implications of agricultural measures and second, in cases where policy has recognised the potential of agriculture to contribute to the development of an area, there is the naive assumption that such a role can be met through exclusively agricultural measures. So what implications does this hold for integrated rural development? Of fundamental importance must be the growing realisation that agricultural policy has ramifications that extend well beyond the farmyard gate. Consequently it is not desirable nor realistic for such a policy to be conceived and implemented in isolation from wider rural concerns. Instead it must be viewed in an integral way with other forms of rural activity and if it is to have regard to wider objectives, it must be supplemented by measures either contained within the policy or in a parallel programme which will serve to

reconcile any adverse affects inherent in the parent policy.

### **III.3 Agricultural Policy since 1985: A Conscience Beyond the Farmyard Gate?**

In terms of its fulfilment of Article 39(1) of the Article of the Treaty of Rome which relates to agricultural production and to those of stabilising markets and ensuring food supplies, the CAP has been outstandingly successful. Indeed policy measures, in tandem with scientific and technical advances in agricultural productivity, have achieved results far beyond those anticipated: fears of food shortages have been replaced by concerns over food in surplus. Indeed, the excessive production, together with the environmental consequences and heavy cost burden of the Common Agricultural Policy have become an increasing embarrassment to the Community in recent years. In its 1984 report, The Agricultural Situation in the Community, the Commission cited the "very steep rise" in FEOGA expenditure, due in part to the cost incurred in dealing with excess production, as one of the principle factors in the need to reform the Common Agricultural Policy. FEOGA expenditure rose by nearly 25 per cent a year between 1975 and 1979, and by nearly 30 per cent in 1980 (CEC, 1985: 21). In those same years the Community's own resources increased by between 8 per cent and 13 per cent, (CEC, 1985: 21). Since 1980 FEOGA expenditure has accounted for between 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the Community's total budget, falling to 60.6 per cent in 1983, but rising again in 1984 to 69.9 per cent and again in 1985 to 72.7 per cent(9).

The intractability surrounding FEOGA expenditure has been fully discussed elsewhere (Fennell, 1973; Meester, 1980; European League for Economic Cooperation, 1981; Select Committee of the European Communities, 1980-81, HL 126; 1984-85, HL66 & HL237) and need not concern us here. Suffice to say that from the heady days of 'no holds barred' agriculture in the 1970s, the 1980s have seen the need for agricultural expenditure to be curtailed, with a radical reform of agricultural price support. Responding to this situation the European Council, meeting in Fontainebleau in June 1984, agreed to place specific

constraints on the growth of FEOGA Guarantee expenditure. It was agreed that on average this would grow less rapidly than the Community's own resource base, with a provision for adjustment in exceptional circumstances in the future. This guideline, together with a 1.4 per cent VAT ceiling on the Community's own resources regime, reduces considerably the margin for further increases in agricultural expenditure (CEC, 1985: 6). The Council also accepted the need for a restrictive price policy, with the application of guarantee thresholds for products in surplus or for which budgetary expenditure may increase rapidly. This extended the Community measures introduced in 1977 to curb milk production to include the production of sugar, cereals, rape, sunflower, cotton, tobacco, tomato-based products and wine.

The changing market conditions and threat to farm incomes, resulting from the economic adjustments in agricultural policy, create a new situation for European agriculture: a situation to which it must adapt. The question that has exercised some minds is whether allowances for the Less Favoured Areas and the maintenance of farm incomes are in fact instruments of social engineering rather than farm policy, and if so should support not come from national and European Community Social and Regional Funds rather than FEOGA (Britton, 1981). Others have questioned the dominance of FEOGA in the Community budget and hold the view that rural areas benefit too little from non-agricultural spending under the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund, (Select Com. of the European Communities, Session 79-80, HL 129; Marsh, 1981)(10). In contrast, others have seen the economic reform of agricultural policy as an opportunity to extend agriculture's role in the countryside. In this respect the 1980s have seen modern agriculture increasingly under pressure: those who in the 1970s accepted the dominance of agriculture over other rural interest(11) as inevitable, if not desirable, have found a new voice. Society now demands that agriculture moves beyond its role of producer, employer and provider to take account, both in its support and grant systems and in its advisory work, of its social and environmental obligations: of the social and economic well-being of the rural community (Assoc. of District Councils,

1986) and of the reconciliation of agriculture with the protection of landscape and wildlife (Country Landowners Assoc., 1984; Countryside Commission, 1987). In short, agricultural policy is being pushed towards pursuing an integrated rural development package. Thus the last few years have seen considerable consultation and debate concerning the future direction of European agriculture and within this context, British agricultural policy too (NFU, 1984; Countryside Commn, 1987; Korbey, 1984 and 1985).

Central to the agricultural debate has been the publication of two important papers by the European Commission. These have firmly stated the need to broaden the scope of agricultural policy. The first, Perspectives for the Common Agricultural Policy, published in July 1985 marked an important watershed for European agriculture in that it acknowledged that the CAP required reorientation and called for reflection on the means by which the place of agriculture in society could be better assured. It presented a number of options for the future development of the CAP, identifying the principal fields in which political choices were required: the role of agriculture in the broader perspective of overall rural policy, and the question of direct income aids for agriculture as a complement to a restrictive price policy (CEC, 1985: 48-62).

In January 1986 the Commission published its 'guidelines' on A Future for Community Agriculture, containing the conclusions it had reached as a result of the consultations carried out in connection with its earlier discussion document. The Commission's second paper stated that the central problem facing the CAP was the imbalance between supply and demand of agricultural products and the consequential budgetary problems. This situation arose mainly as a result of the open-ended guarantees which had generally isolated farmers from market forces, but also as a result of institutional prices being set at very high levels to deal with the income problems of structurally weak holdings (CEC, 1986a: 3). However, whilst these problems may have been evident, an acceptable solution has not. As the Commission remarks:

"It is not easy to remedy the situation without at the same time creating income

problems which are socially and therefore politically unacceptable for a very large number of farmers who are marginal in terms of production but whose function, at least in certain cases, is essential for preserving the social balance, for land use planning and for the preservation of the environment."

(CEC, 1986a: 4)

Despite such concerns the Commission recognised that the seriousness of the problems called for urgent and sustained action. It regarded price policy as the main instrument for the development of agriculture in the medium and long term, to be managed in association with measures of co-responsibility<sup>(12)</sup> while taking account of demands within the Community and world markets (CEC, 1986a: 6-15). At the same time it stressed that the policy on prices and markets and the policy on structures constitute an inter-related whole, having the same objectives, ie. those of Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome and should therefore act along coordinated and convergent lines. Within the context of Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome it identified the following priorities:

- "- gradually to reduce production in the sectors which are in surplus and to alleviate the resulting burden on the taxpayer;
- to increase the diversity and improve the quality of production by reference to the internal and external markets and the desires of consumers;
- to deal more effectively and systematically with the income problems of small family farms;
- to support agriculture in areas where it is essential for land use planning, maintenance of the social balance and protection of the environment and the landscape;
- to make farmers more aware of environmental issues;

- to contribute to the development in the Community in industries which process agricultural produce, and thus involve agriculture in the profound technological changes which are taking place."

(CEC, 1986a: 5)

Concurrent with this ongoing dialogue has been the introduction of several new forms of structural guidance which have strengthened existing instruments and introduced several new ones. What we appear to be observing are the first positive attempts towards redefining the role of agriculture in rural areas and

evolving a new Common Agricultural Policy for Europe. Moreover, it is one which not only addresses the problems facing agriculture at present, but which sees a contemporary agriculture attempting to fulfil other previously neglected social and environmental objectives. Thus in 1985 the European Council agreed to a new agricultural structures policy, EEC 797/85 on improving the efficiency of agricultural structures. This became operational in Britain in October 1985 and replaced the original socio-structural policy of 1972. It is designed to take account of the impact of the continuing economic recession on farm development and the need to improve production efficiency without contributing further to the problems of surplus production.

This has brought about a reorientation in the type of activity which can receive aid. The emphasis is on encouraging practices which will reduce production costs, save energy, improve living and working conditions, protect and improve the environment and raise the quality and value of products leaving the farm.

Since the introduction of this new socio-structural policy various amendments have been made which strengthen the contribution made by its various measures in order:

"to help farmers adapt to the new situation of the markets, to help achieve a better balance between supply and demand, to support farming and to contribute to the conservation of the environment and preservation of the countryside."

(CEC, 1986b: 1)

In accordance with the Commission's mandatory regulations, aid is now available through MAFF's farm capital grant schemes for investments relating to the improvement and conversion of production in line with market requirements, updating of the farm holding to cut costs, improve living or working conditions or to save energy and also to encourage good countryside management.

An important feature of the new socio-structural measure is the emphasis on assisting the smaller farm. Terms of eligibility are considerably eased with the full range of grant under MAFF's capital grant schemes now available to

farmers where only 50 per cent of their working time (1,100 hrs per year) and income are generated from the farm business. This is a marked improvement on the previous eligibility conditions where, by MAFF's own admission, there remained a 'significant pool' of small farmers unable to qualify for assistance(13) and could be an indication of agricultural policy beginning to address its social objectives. In many rural areas it is the continued viability of these small holdings that ensures the fabric of the rural community they support is maintained.

Within Less Favoured Areas (LFAs) measures remain similar to those of Directive 75/268, with compensatory allowances and grant aid for pasture improvement, fodder production and access roads. Farm diversification continues to be encouraged through afforestation, agricultural training and craft and tourism. This latter aid has been adopted in the UK for the first time. Whilst these are familiar measures, the Commission has also made provision in the socio-structural policy regulation for member states to adopt a more selective approach to compensatory payments through the adoption of a system of variable headage payments. In so doing the objectives of the allowance would be broadened from the simple one of increasing incomes of those farming under difficult conditions to include production control, environmental protection through extensification, reorientation of production and afforestation.

MAFF is currently considering this provision, which would enable higher levels of compensatory payments to be made to farmers who adapt production or agree to extensify. Although production control is the primary concern, variable headage payments could also be based on the carrying capacity of different types of land. Thus MAFF would be able to adjust payments so that areas of land able to bear fewer stock could receive higher headage payments to encourage lower stocking densities for environmental or other reasons, whilst ensuring comparable Hill and Livestock Compensatory Allowance incomes with farmers elsewhere.

The Commission has also included a further provision which permits compensatory allowances to be extended beyond stock farming to other forms of production, through payments per hectare to farmers agreeing to adapt production or 'extensify'. This measure could also be used to further conservation in the uplands, by for example, providing an annual payment per hectare for moorland management. These proposals are a departure from traditional agricultural policy and if adopted, could together with MAFF's recent decision to implement the tourism and craft measure, go a considerable way towards achieving the broad objectives of the Less Favoured Area directive and thus the more effective pursuit of integrated rural development.

The most radical development, in terms of reconciling agricultural and environmental interests, has also been introduced as part of the new socio-structural measures. Under Article 19 Member States may designate 'Environmentally Sensitive Areas' in which traditional farming practices sympathetic to the environment can be encouraged through financial incentives. This provision, when first introduced in 1985, was particularly far reaching in that it moved away from financial support relating solely to agricultural objectives towards a greater protection for the environment and support for the well-being of the countryside.

Such agricultural leniency was however short lived. The article has since been amended and environmental measures are now required to relate to agricultural objectives. According to the new phrasing, schemes for the support of "environmentally friendly" agriculture are to, "contribute to adjustment and orientation of agricultural production to market requirements." While this may be desirable and indeed may be the result of many schemes, it appears a retrograde step: environmentally sensitive farming involves maintaining traditional systems of husbandry and refraining from intensifying these - not adopting more extensive systems which are not traditional to the area. The amendment does however, enable Member States to reclaim a proportion of the cost of schemes from FEOGA. The maximum amount available is up to

100ECU(£25.50) per hectare (2.47 acres) per annum outside LFAs and payment equivalent to an additional 50 per cent of the Hill and Livestock Compensatory Allowance within LFAs. In practice these Community rates are insufficient to promote the objectives of the scheme. For example under the Halvergate Broads Scheme, operating in England prior to the ESA provision, farmers are offered an annual payment of £50.00 per acre to maintain traditional grazing practices. Considerable supplementation will therefore be necessary by Member States if such schemes are to be effective.

The shortfall in Community funds to support Environmentally Sensitive Areas and the move towards relating what is essentially an environmental measure to agricultural production control is disappointing. Despite these shortcomings, this Article remains an important landmark in terms of attempting to address the agriculture/conservation controversy: it allows the allocation of FEOGA funds to fulfil environmental aims and also provides the first opportunity for MAFF to take responsibility for conservation within agricultural policy(14).

Within the new socio-structural regulation, provision is also made for the introduction of specific regional measures. This provides a framework within which the Commission may, at a later date, propose Integrated Development Programmes to apply in Less Favoured Areas. The intention is to assist in the removal of the structural or infrastructural handicaps suffered by agriculture in certain areas. This is to be achieved by adopting specific measures to encourage agriculture in the region concerned, which is in harmony with the environment and with development undertaken simultaneously in non-agricultural sectors. Should this measure be introduced one must hope that lessons learnt from the earlier round of so call 'Integrated Development Programmes', described in the previous chapter, avoid the preoccupation with agriculture at the expense of encouraging development in other complementary sectors.

In tandem with European Community developments, British agricultural policy has also undergone an important period of reform and redirection. To a certain

extent the environmental provisions contained within the EEC socio-structural regulation 797/85 were pre-empted in the UK by MAFF's announcement two years earlier, on the 30 November 1983, "to provide greater incentives for certain measures in recognition not only of their agricultural importance but also of their value in enhancing the upland landscape." New measures were accordingly incorporated into amended Agriculture and Horticulture Grant and Development schemes in 1984. In addition, some of the more contentious aid measures including hedge removal and land reclamation were removed and others such as land drainage received reduced aid.

Farm schemes of benefit to conservation have continued to receive aid in subsequent capital grant schemes, first through the Agricultural Improvement Scheme, introduced in 1985 and more recently through the Farm and Conservation Grant Scheme, introduced in 1989. Under these schemes grants for conservation measures include: hedges; drystone walls; dykes and other traditional field boundaries; heather regeneration; and shelter belts which include 5 per cent broadleaved trees. All of these measures attract grants of 50 per cent in the LFAs and 40 per cent in other areas; compared with 25 per cent in LFAs and 15 per cent basic for similar measures using non-traditional materials. Grants are also available for energy saving insulation, wind and water powered pumps and generators and for facilities for the storage and treatment of agricultural effluent and animal waste to reduce environment pollution problems (MAFF, 1986b, 1990).

It should also be remembered that it was the British Government which pressed for Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) to be incorporated into the EEC regulation 797/85. In the UK the potential for encouraging environmentally sensitive agricultural practices began in March 1985 with MAFF and the Countryside Commission jointly financing a pilot scheme for the protection of the traditional landscape of the Broads grazing marshes. This area has subsequently been designated an ESA. The Government has looked to the statutory conservation bodies to nominate areas for designation and there are

now 19 ESAs in the UK. These include the Broads, Somerset Levels and Moors, the Shropshire Borders and the Test Valley. All ESAs are designated on the grounds that they satisfy the following criteria:

- "(i) they should be of national environmental significance;
- (ii) their conservation depends on the adoption, maintenance or extension of a particular form of farming practice;
- (iii) encouragement of existing traditional farming practices would help to prevent damage to the environment;
- (iv) each area should represent a discrete and coherent unit of environment interest."

(MAFF, 1985: par.28)

The designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas represents a new and important departure in British Agricultural Policy. For the first time attempts are being made to reconcile the needs of commercial farm management with the need to protect and enhance the environment. A review of the success of ESAs in terms of fulfilling these objectives is to be conducted in 1991.

The new face of British agriculture was launched in January 1986 by Michael Jopling, the then Minister of Agriculture. He spoke of MAFF's widening role in the countryside: not only the interests of agriculture but also environmental and social needs were to be embedded in the policies of MAFF,

"It has been suggested in the past that my department has paid too much attention to the production of increasing quantities of food and the promotion of agricultural efficiency...But our priorities have changed and MAFF has been developing a wider role which covers the environmental and social interests of rural areas."

(Michael Jopling, 6.1.86)

The 1986 Agricultural Act, following a hurried Government sponsored clause added on January 15th 1986, just before the Bill entered the Commons stage, went further still:

"In discharging any functions connected with agriculture in relation to any land the Minister shall...have regard to and endeavour to achieve a reasonable balance between the following considerations:

- (a) the promotion and maintenance of a stable and efficient agricultural industry;
- (b) the economic and social interests of rural areas;
- (c) the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside...
- (d) the promotion of the enjoyment of the countryside by the public."

(Agriculture Act, 1986: 17(1))

This act also introduced, under Section 18, the legislation necessary to designate the ESAs and permitted the introduction of a scheme under Section 22 to encourage the diversification of farm enterprises.

MAFF consultation papers on proposed capital grants, tourism and marketing schemes were published in May 1987 (MAFF, 1987a). Now in place, grant aid is available for ancillary businesses on or adjacent to farms. Activities eligible include processing of farm produce and timber, craft manufacture, the marketing of such products and the provision of recreation, educational and amenity facilities (MAFF 1988a/b). This scheme continues MAFF's own diversification of responsibilities and activities in rural areas; a movement that began with the appointment of socio-economic advisors as part of ADAS in 1975 and continued with the somewhat belated introduction of the on-farm tourism and craft scheme for Less Favoured Areas in October 1985 under EEC regulation 797/85. The Government has also introduced another two new policy initiatives to assist farm diversification and encourage more extensive production.

In February 1987 the Farm Woodland Scheme was announced. This came on-stream in the Autumn of 1988 under the 1988 Farm Land and Rural Development Act, with the primary objective of encouraging the planting of woodland and thereby taking agricultural land out of production. The aim is to plant up to 36,000 hectares over the first three years. The scheme builds upon existing forestry grant schemes but also provides annual payments to bridge the gap between planting and the time revenue is expected to accrue. In broad terms the objectives of the scheme are:

"(a) to divert land from agricultural production and thereby assist in the diminution of agricultural surpluses;  
(b) to enhance the landscape, to create new wildlife habitats, to encourage recreational use, including sport, and to expand tourist interest;  
(c) to contribute to supporting farm income and rural employment;  
(d) to encourage greater interest in timber production from farms and, in the longer term, to contribute to the UK's timber requirements."

(MAFF, 1987b, par.3)

In accordance with the Agricultural Act of 1986, agricultural objectives and those of conservation are to be met by encouraging the planting of broad-leaved woodland.

A second, more controversial scheme in terms of achieving the required balance between agriculture and conservation, was also implemented in 1988. The Set Aside Scheme, aimed at achieving an overall reduction in cereal production of at least 20 per cent for a five year period (John Gummer 8.12.87), enables farmers to take surplus cereal land out of production and use it for a number of other purposes. It may be left fallow, used as rotational fallow with other areas on the farm, used for woodland or for non-agricultural purposes such as recreation (MAFF, 1989). Carefully managed, particularly in the more intensively farmed areas, Set Aside could be used to promote farm developments conducive to the environment, with the creation of wildlife habitats etc. There is however a danger, and this is where the controversy lies, of land being taken out of production to become little more than wasteland. Given the limited time the measure has been in place, it is too early to say if it is able to achieve the dual requirements of agriculture and conservation.

The Set-Aside Scheme and the other recent initiatives described above, form an integral part of contemporary UK agricultural policy and are embodied in the Government's most recent statement of intent concerning Agriculture, Farming UK, issued in March 1987. In stark contrast to the Government's policy document of 1975, Food From Our Own Resources, "Farming UK" now means reducing the productive capacity of British agriculture. It relies upon:

"encouraging farmers where necessary to adjust their output to the changing pattern of demand; to divert their land to other products which are not in surplus; to diversify their business into non-agricultural uses, including tourism and recreation; and in some areas...to farm their land less intensively."

(MAFF, 1987c: 1)

From this simple statement it is evident that UK agricultural policy has been radically reformed and redirected. Within both a national and European context agricultural policy has had to adjust to meet the market needs and wider

demands placed upon agriculture in the 1980s. As changes in agricultural support have been introduced, changes that surplus production makes inevitable, so it has become necessary to respond to pressures facing the farming community by broadening the scope of agricultural policy. The question which needs to be asked is whether such reforms lead to an agricultural policy which is better able to meet society's expectations, not only as efficient producer and provider, but also as maintainer of the rural community and protector of the rural environment.

#### **III.4 Synopsis: The Place of Agriculture in Rural Development**

The preceding discussion has highlighted those reforms and developments which mark a new era in agricultural policy. From this it is apparent that the principle objectives of current agricultural policy are those of reducing or reorientating production to reflect market requirements more accurately and the alleviation of the consequences of price restraints on farm incomes. Clearly agricultural policy remains fundamentally in pursuit of agricultural objectives. To summarise, environmental measures, with perhaps the exception of the designation of Environmentally Sensitive Areas, are linked explicitly to dealing with production control; social objectives remain those of underpinning farm incomes in Less Favoured Areas and encouraging diversification of the farm enterprise into crafts, tourism, recreation or forestry.

Whilst accepting that agricultural policy is governed by self-interest rather than that of rural paternalism there are several instances in which the newly defined policy objectives, and the measures through which they are to be achieved, mark a significant departure from agricultural tradition. Consequently they provide an opportunity for agriculture to develop a more positive and responsive role in the countryside. The European Community's provision for specific measures to assist regions suffering from natural or structural handicaps (EEC 797/85) and

MAFF's new found responsibilities following the 1986 Agricultural Act are particularly far-reaching. Details of these reforms have been given earlier, of relevance here is that endeavours are being made to remedy past shortcomings in agricultural policy. It is realised that the past strategy of 'passing the buck' no longer applies (see for example CEC, 1985: 16, par.53-54). The general economic crisis which has amounted to a reduction in alternative jobs and consequently slowed down the outflow of labour from agriculture, means agriculture must in future look to itself to remedy the consequences of agricultural policy(15). This means improving the economic viability of affected rural areas and in particular encouraging the creation of alternative employment opportunities.

It is obviously too early to assess if these provisions will begin to redress the regional imbalances within agriculture, but the European Community has recognised that to maintain the social fabric of rural areas one must acknowledge the importance of the family structure within European agriculture. The desire exists to preserve the family character while increasing its economic and competitive capacity(16). Thus there is a strengthening of socio-structural measures designed to "take account of the irreplaceable role played by farming in certain areas of the Community and to provide a fair return for the services which farmers render to society in general in terms of land improvements and the safeguarding of the social and environmental equilibrium." (CEC, 1986a: 20). Contemporary agriculture has also begun to pay greater attention to its previously unhappy bed-fellow conservation. It has seen its way clear to develop at least some measures that are able to fulfil the twin objectives of reducing farm output and promoting conservation interests.

Within a British context, what may best be described as a 'blossoming' of MAFF bodes well for the future. The contribution made by ADAS in furthering conservation interests(17) and those of rural development, for example, should not be underestimated. As an agricultural service, potentially in direct contact with every farmer, and possessing a decentralised administrative structure (see

fig. 3), its local knowledge is greater than most other rural organisations. It is frequently the first point of contact and is able to play a valuable role in processing and redirecting information on rural needs, often referring enquiries to other bodies. In particular the profile of its socio-economic group has risen considerably in recent years following the appointment of staff with a proven interest in the work. Enquiries range from tourism to family matters(18) and there is considerable networking between the group and other relevant development agencies. The agencies cooperating in this work include the Countryside Commission, Nature Conservancy Council, Tourist Boards, Rural Development Commission and local authorities.

Through MAFF's growing role in the areas of socio-economic development conservation and by the selective implementation of Common Agricultural Policy measures, the opportunity exists to create an agricultural 'package' for the UK that for the first time can be integrated with other rural development interests. Ironically however, far from being able to use agricultural reform as a catalyst to develop a constructive rural policy we must assume that for the foreseeable future the majority of rural expenditure will continue to be directed towards agriculture. To recap, FEOGA accounts for some 70 per cent of the Community budget and in England about 80 per cent of all rural expenditure goes to agriculture. This obviously limits funds available for progress in other non-agricultural sectors and consequently must frustrate efforts to ensure balanced rural development. Thus we must hope that the broadening of agricultural policy alone will enable agricultural investment to supplement associated rural funds and consequently to be used more effectively than in the past, for a curious paradox has also come to light during the preceding discussions. We accept that the role of agriculture has become less vital, in many rural areas the expansion of the employment base means it is no longer the sustainer of the rural community, yet because its policies implicate rural areas as a whole we recognise that it must be seen as a primary component in any integrated rural development policy.

## Notes

- (1) 1985/86 Annual Review of Agriculture (1987).
- (2) Select Committee on the European Communities (House of Lords) Session 1984-85, (HL237): Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, 17th. Report: 16. This report contains several tables concerning the EEC budget for 1984 and also a breakdown of FEOGA expenditure for the years 1980-85: pp. 15-16.
- (3) *ibid.*
- (4) High institutional prices in pursuit of this objective have in part led to the current budget crisis and to the imbalance between supply and demand for certain agricultural products. See, CEC (1986) 4130/86 (COM(85)750: 3.
- (5) MAFF (Sep.1979) Submission of evidence, in: Select Committee on the European Communities (House of Lords) Session 1979-80 (HL129): Policies for Rural Areas in the European Community, 27th. Report:82-86, HMSO.
- (6) Development Commission (1983) memorandum, in: Select Committee on the European Communities (House of Lords) Session 1983-84, (HL247): Agriculture and the Environment, 20th. Report: 217, HMSO.
- (7) In Western Europe as a whole, almost 30 per cent of the total civilian workforce was engaged in agriculture. This proportion had fallen to 16.5 per cent by 1975 and by the late 1970s to only 8.5 per cent (Capstick,1978). In England agricultural employment has fallen from 387,000 employees in June 1977 to 311,000 in June 1984, a drop of 13 per cent. In rural areas as a whole, agriculture is now less important than manufacturing as a source of employment, 14.1 per cent and 19.9 per cent respectively. There is considerable variation between counties, generally speaking agriculture constitutes over 10 per cent of the employment and in some areas it may be over 20 per cent. Department of Employment memorandum in Select Committee on the European Communities (House of Lords) Session 1985-86, (HL242) Socio-Structural policy in Agriculture, 20th. Report: pp85-86, HMSO.
- (8) The National Economic Development Office (1989) estimates that over the next 10 years a further 58,000-90,000 farm jobs could disappear in England, and that each one shed might be matched by at least one further job loss in support industries such as tractor sales and maintenance.
- (9) See (2) above.
- (10) It should be noted that the ERDF and ESF may be used only in Member State's Assisted Areas. In some Member States there is a clear link between regional assistance and rural areas, this is less so in the UK where regional assistance is largely in favour of declining industrial areas. It is doubtful therefore, if these funds, as implemented in the UK, could be used to support rural development. There is however a non-quota section, amounting to 5 per cent of the ERDF, which may be used in non-designated areas.
- (11) The environmental lobby accepted the expansion and intensification of British agriculture implied in the 1975 White Paper, Food From Our Own

Resources, see for example the Nature Conservancy Council (1977) Nature Conservation and Agriculture, HMSO.

(12) Whereby farmers pay part or all of the costs of disposing of production exceeding a given quantity. Co-responsibility may take the form of a reduction of common prices (the intervention price), a reduction or withdrawal of aids related to maximum quantities, the payment of a levy to cover costs of disposal or a quote restriction on guaranteed production. Co-responsibility is now applied in respect of most products, including sugar, milk, cereals, rape, cotton, sunflower, tobacco, tomato-based products and wine.

(13) UK Agricultural Depts. (Nov.1983) memorandum in: Select Committee on the European Communities (House of Lords) Session 1983-84 (HL247): 6 op. cit.

(14) The origin of MAFF's conservation role lies in Section 11 of the Countryside Act 1968, requiring Ministers and their officials "to have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside". These obligations were extended by various sections of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. Under Section's 32 and 41 Ministers are required, when paying grants to farmers sited within Nature Reserves, National Parks or Sites of Special Scientific Interest, to "further the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the countryside and to take into account any objections the conservation authority may raise in deciding whether or not to award grant."

(15) According to a European Commission sponsored study on the Regional Impact of the Common Agricultural Policy (CEC (1981) Regional Policy Series, No.21, Brussels), as the European Community economies slowed down during the late 1970s and early 1980s the annual shrinkage of the agricultural workforce has been no more than 2 per cent. Instead the price of more efficient farming has been a high level of concealed unemployment with 2 million European Community farmers, 35 per cent of the total, working part-time.

(16) This intention formed part of the declaration at the conference of Stresa in 1958. In the light of current problems it has been restated, see CEC (1985).

(17) Since 1981 ADAS has had a defined conservation role. This followed recommendations in the Advisory Council for Agriculture report of 1978 which were subsequently included in Section 41 of the Wildlife and Conservation Act. ADAS has been required to extend its knowledge of environmental matters and to develop its capacity to guide farmers on conservation. To this end specialist scientific advisers have been appointed. The main objective is to promote the harmonisation of agriculture and conservation interests by creating an awareness of conservation issues and encouraging practical conservation measures at a farm level. Nature Conservancy Council and the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Groups. ADAS is also involved with the Countryside Commission's Demonstration Farms Project and with several experimental schemes to deal with reconciling farming and landscape conservation interests.

(18) From a sample of 5,000 requests for socio-economic advice in England and Wales the major splits are as follows: "adding value 10 per cent; recreation 9 per

cent; tourism 26 per cent; crafts and light industry 5 per cent; other on the farm activities, including woodlands, goats, deer, fish, 16 per cent; off farm activities (contracting and employment) 3 per cent; family matters 6 per cent; representation and advice to other bodies 11 per cent; financial matters 2 per cent; others including general advice on diversification 12 per cent (ADAS, pers.comm. 15.6.87).

## CHAPTER IV

### TOWARDS INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY OF INTERACTION

Ideally, integrated rural development should stem from a national rural policy or 'strategy' with clearly defined and unified rural development objectives. However, as we have discovered in Chapter II, the administrative complexity engendered in England's rural development system, with its multiplicity of contributing agencies, means that short of institutional reform, integrated rural development will invariably be dependent on these disparate policies being brought together. This chapter examines current efforts and initiatives directed towards achieving this unity of purpose.

For ease of analysis the chapter is broken into four parts. In Part IV.1 the Rural Development Commission's 'Rural Development Programme' is considered. This is a national initiative, introduced in 1984, with the aim of encouraging a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the needs of rural areas. Part IV.2 concerns the experimental integrated rural development project based in selected areas of the Peak District National Park. This ran between 1981 and 1988 and was centred upon local community participation and the development of integrated public support measures. In Part IV.3 we turn to examine the Staffordshire Moorlands Project and the peculiarities of its coordinating body, the North East Staffordshire Officers Working Party. Here, member organisations have worked amicably, purposefully and effectively together since the mid '70s. In each case a description of the respective scheme's operation will be followed by an assessment of the extent to which it has been able to achieve its objectives and the type of difficulties encountered in its implementation. The intention is to illustrate the implications inherent in pursuing an integrated development strategy within existing administrative and

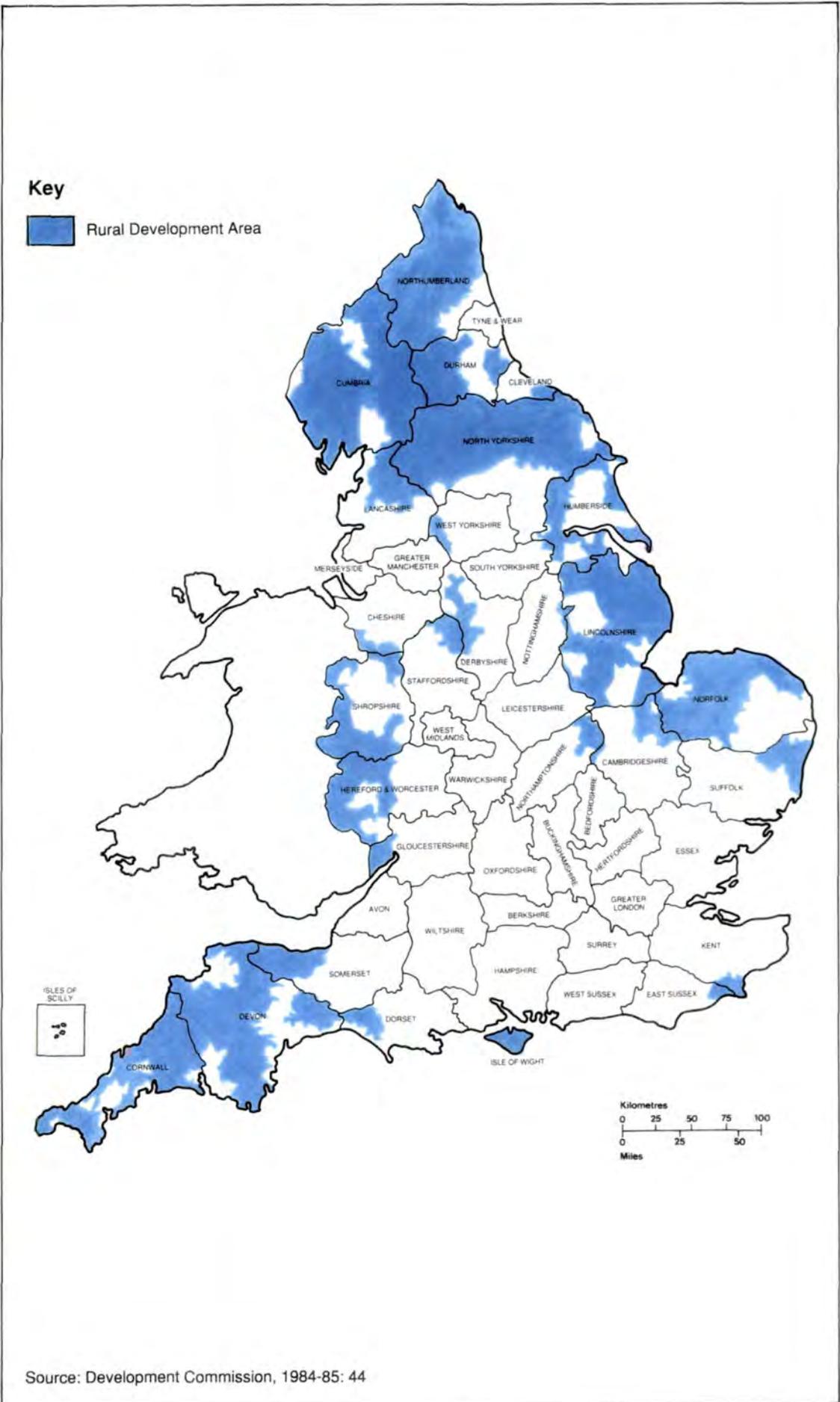
institutional structures. In particular, attention will be drawn to isolating those variables seen to inhibit or promote agency interaction. Finally, Part IV.4 will serve to consolidate the experiences of contemporary integrated rural development within the context of these three approaches. This in turn will lead to a number of preliminary conclusions regarding the process of integrated rural development. These will be developed further in Chapter V.

#### **IV.1 The Rural Development Programme: Towards a Coordinated Approach**

The concept of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs), launched by the Rural Development Commission (then called the Development Commission) in the July of 1984, marked the first practical, and in rural administrative terms, far reaching response to the integrated rural development debate by a central government agency. It was proposed that through an annual work programme and a development strategy which indicated problems, needs, objectives and priorities for action, the RDPs would provide the necessary framework in which all agencies, whether statutory, voluntary or private sector, could pull together to ensure that individual initiatives were worked up and coordinated with those of others (Development Commn, July 1984: 5-6).

RDPs apply to the most needy rural areas in England, as identified by the Development Commission during a review of its priority areas in 1982-83. These areas, recognised as having particularly severe problems of unemployment and/or depopulation, unbalanced social structure, lack of services and isolation were designated 'Rural Development Areas' in June 1984(1). In all, these Rural Development Areas (RDAs) take in country areas in 28 English Counties(2) (see fig. 4), amounting to 35 per cent of the land area and 5 per cent of the people (Development Commission, 1985-86: 9). In terms of rural coverage therefore, the corresponding Rural Development Programmes are a particularly significant administrative tool. Taking in much of rural England, they represent

**Figure 4 Designated Rural Development Areas in England**



the first tentative steps towards integrated rural development:

"It is intended that the Rural Development Programmes will encourage an integrated approach to the whole range of social and economic development issues in each Rural Development Area (and) stimulate and promote more contact, co-ordination and co-operation between the many agencies, authorities and bodies involved with their maintenance and regeneration."

(Development Commn, July 1984: 5)

This is the theory, but what is the practice?

In this section we examine the administration and implementation of the Rural Development Programme. The observations and conclusions presented here mark the culmination of extensive research which brings together the experiences of participating authorities in twenty-one Rural Development Areas. This provides the context for the RDPs 'local' operation. A national perspective has also been gained through examining the response of national agencies and central government departments to the designation of these rural priority areas. Details of the organisations and RDP groups consulted are presented in Appendix I.

It should be noted that for the first four years of the RDPs operations the Development Commission was without its 'Rural' prefix. This was added in April 1988 following its merger with its main agent the Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (CoSIRA). For this reason both forms are used here depending upon the year in question. Alternatively reference is made simply to the Commission.

#### **1V.1a Background**

The introduction of Rural Development Programmes was primarily an expression of the Development Commission's desire to play a more effective role in the development of rural England following its change in status and extended remit in 1984(3). As with most organisations in such a position it

wished to expand its activities, responsibilities and with these its power base, as rural development increasingly became an issue on the political agenda, especially given the problems with which the agricultural sector was beset. Thus the Commission sought to extend its development role, previously confined to industrial site acquisition, factory building and the support of rural voluntary organisations, to include more direct action in respect of community development and the provision of rural services. Rural Development Programmes, with their emphasis on comprehensive development, were seen as the means by which the Commission could achieve this ambition. Moreover, the additional sums made available for this purpose (£20 million for the first year compared with annual expenditure in the previous two years; 1982 and 1983, of approx £13 million) served as a useful palliative for rural pressure groups demanding Government action on the issue of rural development. The Commission's role was to be one of catalyst or partner, offering in most cases short term 'pump priming' for a variety of complementary social and economic development initiatives. Accordingly, the range of activities eligible for Development Commission funding was extended considerably. They now include:

- (a) factory and workshop provision, this continues to attract 100 per cent funding and has traditionally absorbed a large part of the Commission's budget.
- (b) part-funded workshops, built in partnership with local authorities on a 50/50 basis;
- (c) conversion of redundant buildings for employment creating purposes, a 25 per cent grant is available;
- (d) housing projects, including partnership projects for the provision of craft homes and shared equity housing undertaken by Housing Associations;
- (e) village hall schemes - up to 25 per cent of the project cost is available for improvements to existing halls or for the purchase of a village hall where there is no existing community building;
- (f) community development and rural services - there are no guidelines on types of projects eligible, each case is considered on its merits. The Commission's main aims in supporting 'non-economic' projects are to help promote a sense of 'community' within the respective settlement, to complement efforts to strengthen the local economy and to support innovative and novel schemes which meet local needs. Approved schemes will generally attract a Commission contribution of up to 25 per cent;

(g) transport schemes - grant aid of up to 50 per cent of the start-up costs is available through the Rural Transport Development Fund. This was set up at the request of the Department of Transport and is funded by them. £1 million pounds is available annually.

(h) rural information and advice schemes, these are co-sponsored with the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux;

(i) training projects in traditional rural crafts as well as certain modern skills;

(j) tourism schemes, these receive grant aid only if they have the backing, or a financial contribution from the tourist authorities and where there is local support and clear evidence of economic benefit;

(k) rural initiatives fund to encourage self-help and voluntary activity benefiting the community. These funds are administered by the Rural Community Councils, the Commission matches money raised from private sources up to a maximum of £5000 per annum(4).

The range of initiatives eligible for support has enabled the Commission to break quite successfully from its traditional role of factory provider. Schemes funded under the RDP include: a heritage centre in Rye, East Sussex; a play bus for the under fives which tours 12 isolated settlements in the Cambridgeshire Fens; The Dales County Workshop Trail in Yorkshire, a tourist initiative aimed at encouraging tourists to visit local craft workshops; assistance for the Allenheads Village Trust in the North Pennines which is currently building workshops for small businesses, a cafe, a trout farm and community and conference centre.

#### **IV.1b The RDP machinery**

In July 1984 the Development Commission issued its 'Guidelines for Joint Rural Development Programmes'. These describe the required function, scope and form of RDPs and the administrative machinery deemed desirable for their formulation and implementation. They require that each Rural Development Programme should contain both a strategy statement and a work programme. The general strategy for the RDAs taking a five to ten year time scale generally includes:

(i) an assessment of local needs in relation to housing, transport, services,

training, social and community facilities etc;

(ii) a summary of current relevant strategies and programmes upon which the RDP can build, including Structure Plans, Public Transport Plans, Housing Investment Programmes, Local Plans, economic strategy documents and forward plans for education and social services;

(iii) a brief review of expected trends, problems and opportunities in the RDA;

(iv) a statement of objectives and priorities indicating the emphasis that needs to be placed on different social and economic aspects of development within the RDA and indicating those areas with greatest need.

(See Development Commn, July 1984: 7-10)

This strategy document may be viewed as 'setting the scene' for rural development within each RDA: it provides information on the commitments/proposed actions of relevant organisations, demonstrates the integrated nature, or otherwise, of the programme, and the expected impact of such combined inputs. Thus it constitutes the framework in which the Commission and other participating bodies can coordinate their different activities on the ground, and as such, it provides the context in which the annual work programme is justified.

The detailed work programme is required to set out the individual development projects and actions to be undertaken in any given year, together with those anticipated for the following two years to allow an annual roll forward. Activities included in the programme are those requiring support by the Commission, any complementary actions to be undertaken by other bodies; private, public and voluntary, and in the spirit of development catalyst, the Commission suggests that particular attention be paid to those opportunities where its contribution is likely to 'unlock' or stimulate additional funding from other sources.

In its 1984 Guidelines the Development Commission recommends that these Programmes are drawn up by organisations meeting at a county level within each RDA. To accommodate the variance in the spatial scale at which key organisations operate within rural areas (see Chapter II) it is suggested that there should be:



(i) a Strategy Committee, meeting twice a year to monitor/develop the RDP strategy, to deal with cross boundary problems (where RDA's straddle county boundaries), and to ensure coordination/consultation with the various bodies operating in each RDA;

(ii) a Working Party to identify, develop and implement the package of proposed development initiatives and actions which form the working programme of the RDP, and to ensure detailed liaison and cooperation at a local level.

It also advocates that organisational representation of these two administrative units should consist, at a minimum, of representatives of the county council, district councils, its agents, the Rural Community Council and English Estates, the RDC Business Service (previously CoSIRA), and where appropriate the National Park Planning Boards. Additionally, provision should be made for co-opting representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food's Agricultural and Development Advisory Service (ADAS), Tourist Boards, the public utilities, Health Authorities, the private sector and parish councils as appropriate.

With the above requirements fulfilled the Commission anticipates that Development Programmes and the process of drawing them up, reviewing and 'rolling them forward' will:

(i) provide a mechanism through which the various bodies involved in rural development can agree on what they need to do to tackle rural problems;

(ii) stimulate and promote contact and co-operation between the many agencies involved;

(iii) provide a means by which the Development Commission can receive and assess applications for assistance and seek to 'lever' an input from other organisations;

(iv) provide information on the social economic and institutional problems and needs of rural areas which will help to form Development Commission Policy and their advice to Government.

(see Development Commn, July 1984: 5-6)

From the preceding discussion it is apparent that the RDP process does create a formal framework which offers the potential for the coordination of individual organisational policies and actions. It is important here to review this process. Is it an effective means of coordinating efforts, is it living up to expectations?

### **V1.1c RDPs: Living up to expectations?**

A series of questions relating to the objectives of RDPs are presented below; their purpose, to serve as a checklist against which the achievements and shortcomings of the Rural Development Programme can be assessed. To illustrate certain points the author draws upon the accounts and observations of those actively involved in devising and implementing RDPs. To honour assurances of confidentiality these are not attributed to the individuals concerned, instead they are marked by an asterix preceding the quote.

#### The Development Commission and local government: partners or protagonists?

The initial reaction to the Rural Development Programme, by local authorities in particular, was one of scepticism and suspicion; sentiments, which for the most part remain today. Scepticism has focused on four main issues: first, the limited budget available to the Commission (£20 million was secured for the Commission's activities in 1984, rising to approximately £31 million in 1986/87) particularly when set against the wide range of problems facing rural areas and compared to the funds available to mainstream activities such as housing, education, social services, agriculture etc; second, how any initiative of the Development Commission can outweigh the reductions in local services that result from Central government cutbacks in the local authority rate support grant; third, whether the 'rewards' of project finance would exceed the 'costs' of

involvement, in particular the officer time required to prepare lengthy RDP submissions; and fourth, if the Commission is ultimately able to deliver the goods promised. These concerns were common to all local authorities approached. The excerpt below taken from a published personal account of implementing an RDP in Cumbria is just one of many which could have been included here:

"The Development Commission as an agent of Central Government was asking local authorities to co-ordinate our own activities whilst Central Government did nothing to co-ordinate their own ministries. There was a prospect of some additional Development Commission funding but on the other hand Central Government is reducing the Rate Support Grant and restricting expenditure. These actions will lead to reductions in services, especially to the rural areas which will far outweigh any of the initiatives of the Development Commission. Even if the concept is reasonable the main question was how much money would be available? New money was considered particularly important to compensate in some way for reductions in local authority expenditure."

(Hurr, 1985: 9)

Suspicion on the other hand has centred upon the motive lying behind the introduction of RDPs. Local authorities, well acquainted with central government overtures suggest the Government is using the Commission's RDP as a vehicle by which to undermine local government responsibilities:

\* "It may be design, or it may be an accident, but I think its probably design, the Government is using agencies like the Development Commission and its RDP to take up the role and functions of local authorities."

\* "I wonder how much the RDP is geared towards assisting Government to cut back on local authority expenditure, the RDP allows Government to have greater control because we have to request funding through the Development Commission. In the future the allocation of development funds may no longer be a function of a local authority but that of a central government agency."

These extracts, taken from interviews with local government officers, reflect the general dubiety with which Rural Development Programmes have been received by the Commission's core partners. Despite such reservations, any reluctance on the part of local authorities to be involved in RDPs has been countered by financial inducement: the possibility of obtaining some additional investment for their area, however slight, has been reason enough for their involvement:

\* "We're not enamoured with QUANGO's, they mean a loss of power to local authorities, but you've got to live with the situation, they've got the money."

\* "The RDP allows some scope to implement policies which the Council might otherwise be hindered in carrying out because of Government imposed expenditure restrictions."

In all cases the reason given for local authority participation in RDPs has been that of securing funds rather than the desire for coordinated action.

Some local authorities have also expressed concern over the constitutional status of the RDP committees and in particular the involvement of non-elected bodies such as the Rural Development Commission and its agents. Local authorities, it would appear, acutely aware of their own electoral mandate, do not like being told what to do by other non-elected, non-accountable groups. RDP committees fall into this category.

\* "The real decisions are going to be taken by our own individual (County Council) committees - whether Planning, Social Services, Education, Housing etc. and not by a group of other people, in some cases non-elected people."

\* "The RDP committee is in no sense elected yet it makes recommendations to local authorities with their own democratically-elected councillors. There is a distinct danger of being seen to be 'poking one's nose in' or interfering in the territorial responsibility of an elected authority with its own paid specialist staff." Such feelings must ultimately frustrate the Development Commission's ambitions, which foresee the RDP, "persuading sensible and agreed shifts in local policies" (Development Commission, July 1985: 2). Moreover, with monetary gain as the motivating factor for local authority involvement and power-broking of primary concern to the Rural Development Commission, the RDP has been dogged from the very outset by a failure to secure a unity of purpose and in particular one that relates to the well-being of rural areas. A genuine partnership must in consequence be very difficult to achieve.

### Is the RDP machinery workable?

The majority of RDAs have established the administrative and constitutional arrangements advocated by the Development Commission in its RDP Guidelines. This usually comprises a Strategy Committee, which acts largely in

a rubber stamping capacity, and a single Work Programme Group, which is responsible for devising and implementing the RDP. Generally organisations involved are those suggested by the Commission - the county and district councils, Rural Community Council, English Estates and the RDC Business Service. Other Commission staff with responsibility for the RDPs are ex-officio members and attend meetings when appropriate. Local Council Members are involved in the Strategy Committee and officers in the Working Party. All respondents agree that at a local level these administrative arrangements are working well, but expressed dissatisfaction with those operating between the local RDP unit and the Commission itself. These are felt to be unnecessarily cumbersome and bureaucratic. In the words of one district council:

\* "to say that a sledgehammer is being used to crack a nut would not be inappropriate."

The Association of County Councils (ACC) returned a similar verdict in its evaluation of the RDP process:

"With regard to the administration of the system the point is often made that the procedures involved to obtain approval and funding from the Commission are cumbersome and protracted, particularly bearing in mind the comparatively small amounts involved. It is also recognised that the sheer volume of projects submitted to the Commission tends to inhibit a quick response."

(ACC, 1989: 27)

A primary concern of local authorities is the failure of the Rural Development Commission to tie in its timetable for submissions with their budgetary cycle. The Commission demands submissions by October. These must indicate local authority commitment to the funding of projects requiring Commission support. Local authorities, however, feel they are unable to allocate funds before the Government announces its capital allocation decisions in December. The situation can arise where projects approved in principle by a local authority and which go on to receive Commission funding may subsequently be shelved in the light of these announcements.

The volume of information demanded by the Commission has also evoked considerable criticism:

\* "It sometimes seemed that we had to spend more time preparing the Strategy and the 1986-87 Programme than achieving or assessing progress on the 1985/86 RDP... it has encouraged some criticism that the RDA produces a cumbersome paper planning exercise instead of a development programme."

\* "A number of the RDP partners felt that at times they were overwhelmed by the quantities of paper generated."

It could be suggested that this information is required primarily to augment the Commission's limited local knowledge of the Rural Development Area in question. Certainly concern has been expressed over the large amount of information requested for the individual projects:

\* "Experience this year has shown that even after detailed applications have been made, further details are frequently requested. This process is very time consuming and costly for all involved, particularly in relation to the small amount of money concerned for many of the projects."

However as one RDP group stressed:

\* "It is not practicable for the Commission's staff to have a detailed knowledge of all projects in all RDA's nationwide, yet this is what currently seems to be required."

The requirement to produce a detailed strategy statement which is of necessity based largely upon existing approaches is also felt by many RDP groups to be onerous in terms of the time and resources needed for its preparation, particularly as the Commission appears to have done little with them. To this end the Association of County Councils has called for the Commission to give greater attention to evaluating the Strategies, with a view to ascertaining to what extent they accord with its own priorities (ACC, 1989).

Without wishing to over-generalise, research returns suggest (over 75 per cent of those collected) that in the majority of RDAs the formulation of the RDP makes considerable demands upon officers' time. Individual accounts are given below:

\* "Staff input is substantial, probably equivalent to several full-time posts."

\* "An approximate figure of staff time in the County Council would be 2/3 to 3/4 of a staff year. This includes time from three officers in the Department of Planning and Transportation and the Estates Officer. In total about 12-15 officers of various organisations are involved and at a given time this represents 2-3 staff years work on the RDA."

\* "In excess of 50 per cent of the co-ordinators time is on RDA work. The District Councils' Working Party members spend 25-30 per cent of their time. The RCC's Rural Officer and the COSIRA Organiser also put the emphasis of their time in the RDA."

\* "Staff input has varied between agencies, rough estimates, excluding clerical support are: County Council, 1 person equivalent; District councils, 20-30% of one person each; and the Rural Community Council, 30% of the field Officers time and 5-10% of the Directors."

The high staffing commitment required to administer the RDP is one of its principal weaknesses. Concern by local partners focuses upon two inherent problems. First there is the problem of an increased workload without a corresponding increase in manpower. The smaller core partners (English Estates, and the Rural Community Councils) in particular do not have the capacity to make a special staff input without jeopardising their wider areas of responsibility. The local authorities have a little more flexibility, but still no extra staff time. In general it comes down to the county council to keep the RDP process operating. The second problem concerns the cost effectiveness of a scheme which places such heavy demands on officers' time in the participating organisations. In a survey conducted by the Association of District Councils(5) half the authorities commented that in terms of the time and resources needed the RDP is not cost effective and some suggested it could lead to future disenchantment with the RDP. A similar impression was gained in the course of this research:

\* "Relatively senior officers were involved both in the programme meetings devising projects, writing the strategy etc. A cynic might take the view that the cost of preparing the Programme exceeded the value gained from it."

\* "The amount of officers' time spent gathering and processing information is felt to be out of proportion to the benefits received."

Several authorities suggested participation in the RDP is on a trial basis. They made it quite clear, if the benefits of funding do not exceed effort expended they will review their future commitment to the scheme. The Commission, aware of these problems, has indicated that it is prepared to help fund (by up to 50 per cent) project officer posts to enable RDPs to be drawn up and implemented. In several RDAs project officers are now in place.

Manpower worries are not restricted to local RDP partners. The Rural Development Commission itself has faced similar problems. With no increase in personnel to take on the administration of the RDP, its staff of less than 40 at the time of its introduction and already well occupied, were faced with handling meetings and work submissions from 27 RDAs(6). Ironically, the heavy administrative demands of the RDP has actually frustrated hopes of improving organisational coordination. A lack of liaison with the Commission was cited by local partners as one of the shortcomings of the Programme. While Senior Commission staff have responsibility for liaison, the number each covers (5 staff serve all 27 RDA's), together with their other work commitments, not to mention the frequency of staff changes, a consequence of the Commission's use of temporary secondment from other government departments, has limited their role considerably:

\* "A Liaison Officer is essential. Unfortunately contact has been limited to a fairly brief conversation during the regional seminar and some telephone conversations."

\* "We have not had enough contact with the Liaison Officer.. The Joint Committee meeting on the 7th. May 1986 will be the first that our Liaison Officer has been able to attend since the RDP Committee's formation in September 1984."

Regular Commission representation at RDP meetings is obviously essential if proper two-way communication between the Commission and local partners is to be secured. It would also serve to strengthen its knowledge of individual RDAs. This situation has led to complaints that the Commission, whilst being the least well-equipped of all RDP partners to make qualified judgements on the relative merits of local schemes, has cast itself in this role:

\* "Whilst the broad intentions of the Development Commission were admirable, many of their observations and assumptions fitted very uncomfortably with the local realities. I am not convinced that the Commission has any real understanding of the RDA."

In respect of the Commission's own demonstrable efficiency, a lack of local knowledge has invariably slowed down its processing of RDP proposals which has given grounds for further complaints from RDP committees. At the outset of the initiative, Programmes submitted in October took up to six months to

process. This has subsequently been reduced to about three months, but the response time is still considered "inordinately long" particularly given the small amounts of money often involved (ACC, 1989: 15) and local RDP partners continue to warn that it may result in a loss of impetus, particularly among voluntary groups who seek action rather than deliberation.

While response time is unlikely to improve, the issue of lack of local knowledge may be alleviated to some extent following the Commission's merger with CoSIRA and the subsequent decentralisation of selected operations to four regional offices. RDP Liaison Officers are now based in the regions and this should, at the very least facilitate a better understanding of the regional context, if not foster closer working relationships with local RDP groups. It has also been suggested that a partial block grant system (pers. comm. and ACC, 1989) administered by the local RDP Committee could overcome some of these problems of delays in project approvals. However it is unlikely that the Rural Development Commission will surrender any of its decision-making responsibilities and with them its power, without good cause. Pleasing local partners is not such a cause.

Although it must be accepted that the RDP, by virtue of its additional tier of rural administration is slower to operate, much of the delay has been caused by the Commission deferring decisions on schemes pending further information from sponsors:

\* "A detailed project justification sheet was sent to the Commission in October 1985. However, it was not until the end of January after 3 months, that the Commission decided further details were needed. As a result a decision on funding was not received until April, which inevitably caused slippage of the project from one year into the next although it was ready to commence in 1985/86."

Experiences such as this are common, often leading to a to-ing and fro-ing of potential schemes between the Commission and its local partners. This has given rise to frustration and a loss of enthusiasm for the RDP concept. Local partners have described the Commission as being 'over-bureaucratic', as pursuing a 'highly centralized decision making process', and as having a 'preoccupation with

the machinery of operation at the expense of flexibility and informal response'.

The situation has arisen out of a failure to agree on working practices, largely brought about by a lack of certainty over the types of projects eligible for funding. To place the problem in perspective the Commission's guidelines have been under constant review since the RDP's launch in 1984, pending negotiations with other national agencies (see later). Indeed it was not until September 1986 that clear statements were issued on the funding of tourism, community development and the rural service projects, and those on training didn't materialise until the Summer of 1988. In addition the Commission exacerbated this uncertainty by announcing in its 'Further Guidance' notes to RDP Committees:

\* "A project which appears to meet the appropriate criteria is not assured of funding from the Commission... this could mean that no funding is forthcoming for certain projects in some years (depending on the nature of RDP bids individually and countrywide)."

(Development Commn, July 1985: 16)

In response, RDP committees, critical of the Commission's 'woolly and unspecific' guidelines, unsure of the types of projects it may be prepared to assist in any given year and holding with the principle of 'once bitten twice shy', (having submitted projects in accordance with available guidelines only to find future involvement in this area is 'under review' or funds are not available) are requesting initial reactions to proposed projects on the basis of outline proposals. The Commission however, experiencing the problems of a London based organisation attempting to place schemes within their local context and also very aware of the Department of Environment's desire to vet (until recently) all the non-conventional (i.e. non-industrial) applications, feels that unless a project is obviously a non-starter it can only respond to outline applications by indicating a willingness to assist, and inviting further details on the basis that it was to put a case to the DoE and therefore needs all the available information. Thus an intransigent situation has arisen. Its magnitude is only too apparent when considering the 1987/88 annual round of RDP submissions. The Commission reported:

"Overall some 1,116 projects have been put forward for financial support... the apparent growth in the number of projects masks a substantial proportion which are re-submissions from the previous year. Only a small proportion are genuinely new projects. Despite the number of re-submissions, only about one fifth of the applications received were in detail, and even these often did not contain the basic data which the Commission requires to make a judgement."

(Development Commn. Response to RDP Committees 1987/88: 2-3)

And so it's back to square one. The Commission duly responds,

\* "The Development Commission may be able to help these projects and invites detailed applications."

And local partners duly protest,

\* "The level of details sought on these types of projects is very considerable and can involve a lot of work. Obviously there is an extreme reluctance to provide such a level of detail on the basis of such an uncommitted response from the Commission."

This predictable chain of events can only be broken down by positive commitment and a degree of compromise from local partners and the Commission alike. If submission procedures and more specifically information standards agreeable to both cannot be worked out, there is every danger of the RDP concept falling into disrepute. There is however some cause for optimism. As from October 1990 regional offices will handle the processing and approval of annual RDP submissions. Moreover, the DoE has accepted that most 'unconventional' projects are not quite so 'unconventional' after all, thus removing the need for this additional tier of rubber stamping. Let us hope these developments go some way towards improving the situation.

### Have RDPs raised the rural profile?

"At a national level throughout the year the Commission has had discussions with a wide range of bodies including the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, The English Tourist Board, the Sports Council and the Arts Council about the RDPs. All have indicated a willingness to be involved actively in the process and we perceive that there is now considerable recognition of our RDPs amongst these and other bodies and a willingness to use them as a means of allocating resources to the rural areas."

(Development Commn Response to RDPs for 1986/87: 2)

On Development Commission evidence alone, RDPs would appear to be serving a useful purpose, they can be used to highlight the problems of the countryside and consequently to promote greater rural awareness. Several RDP committee respondents also referred to the value of the RDA 'label'. They suggested that being nationally recognised confers status and consequently raises the rural profile. Consequently, non-core RDP agencies are more inclined to consider the implications of their policies for the rural areas concerned. In East Sussex for example, the Regional Council for Sport & Recreation has working parties studying recreation provision in rural areas, and in Northumberland there are plans for ADAS and the RDP authorities to come together to study 'Agricultural change and its impact on the Countryside'.

In considering whether the RDP has improved rural awareness among the participating agencies, respondents were equally divided. There were those who felt the rural areas concerned have always been of local significance and consequently the RDP has had little effect and conversely, those who felt its introduction had improved their perception of rural problems:

\* "Involvement in the RDP process has certainly raised the profile of rural issues both among Members involved in the County (Strategy) Committee and among officers of the local authorities."

To place this latter response in context one should note that few county or district councils have defined rural policies or any other structured mechanism through which to achieve rural development. In some cases the formulation of RDPs has focused minds and encouraged local authorities to identify specific rural development needs and priorities for action, issues previously neglected on the assumption that rural needs will invariably be met through overall development strategies for the district or county area. A raising of the rural profile is obviously to be welcomed. However, it should not be assumed that improved organisational awareness implies corresponding positive action. The degree to which the Rural Development Programme is able to influence organisational policies and actions: the actual process of rural administration and development, is considered below.

## Are Rural Development Programmes a catalyst for rural development?

On paper at least, the range of initiatives in which the Development Commission is prepared to participate appears promising (see earlier and also Development Commission 1984: 19-53). In practice however, the Commission has some way to go before achieving the diversity of involvement promised when the RDP concept was launched. It is not very encouraging for example, to learn how it is spending its money. Taking 1988/89 as an example, the Commission's funding of RDP schemes amounted to some £16.5 million. Of this, £14.6 million was allocated to the provision of industrial premises and a further £0.4 million to projects to improve the local economy (predominantly training and tourism). This left just £1.5 million for social and community projects: those 'innovative and new' schemes which we are led to believe, the Commission is so anxious to encourage (Rural Development Commn, 1988/89).

It is equally disturbing to learn that RDP partners have observed a certain reticence on the part of the Commission to fully commit itself to these new schemes:

\* "Although the Commission has been encouraging RDP committees to review their priorities for projects, the projects approved have tended to be very conservative ones, sticking closely to the Commission's interests in multiple use, resource sharing and factory building. Support for less conventional projects has not been forthcoming."

\* "The most positive response is on workshop construction. This is most encouraging to us. However, schemes with tourism or environmental content which lead to more jobs indirectly and support for local services are less favourably received."

These accounts typify other local partners' experiences of project submissions. In general, workshop developments receive a clear response approval or otherwise, but for 'unconventional' projects the reply is much more circumspect.

As an indication of where local partners see the emphasis lying, the bids for funding in 1988/89 can be broken down as follows. Of the 994 bids received by

the Commission, 39 per cent were applications for workshops and 34 per cent for social and community projects, which include sport, fieldworkers, health and social services, housing, art and education, advice, and information initiatives. Tourism and tourism-related projects, a new venture for the Commission, account for 13 per cent of the 1988/89 bids. Other economic development, support for small businesses and training, is a modest 3 per cent. Other schemes which together account for the remaining 11 per cent of submissions include RDP Project Officers, promotion of the RDAs/RDPs, environmental schemes and funding of local education authority schemes.

It could be argued that citing an apparent discrepancy between funding allocations and local authority bids is misleading - factory development is understandably more costly than the provision of for example a community mini-bus. While the author accepts this argument in part, further statistical analysis highlights the seriousness of the problem. Of the 1988/89 bids for industrial workshops 67.5 per cent received grant aid. This compares with 50 per cent of the social and community service bids and just 24 per cent of the tourism and other economic development bids.

There are three explanations one may advance for this apparent turn-around in Commission attitude. The first, to be considered in detail later, concerns the ambiguity surrounding the Commission's legitimate areas of activity; it is very aware of the danger of treading on another organisation's toes. The second centres upon the Commission's awareness of the political and practical need for careful management of a limited budget; it admits, for example, to uncertainty over the scale and timing of the non-workshop projects, (Development Commission 1987/88 Response to RDP Committees: 3). The third, discussed earlier, relates to its failure to indicate to local partners the type of non-industrial projects it envisages funding. Its expectations and their assumptions may be very different. What is certain is that local partners will be looking for a more positive response from the Commission in future RDP

rounds if they are to continue to take seriously its early commitment to support comprehensive development.

On the other hand, it is apparent that local partners themselves are not responding as readily to the RDP concept as was hoped. Accepting that it is difficult to isolate the impact of the RDP from other factors, the impression gained during the course of this research is that the majority of schemes coming forward for Commission funding are not as a direct result of, nor in response to the RDP initiative. Workshop schemes, for example, have been an integral part of the Rural Development Commission's operations for many years and providing the level of funding is maintained there is every reason to suppose they will continue within or out of the RDP context. Other initiatives so far included in RDPs, particularly local authority sponsored, tend to be priority projects for which a full budget has already been secured. A contribution from the Development Commission is seen as a bonus, but with the exception of the 100 per cent funded workshop programme, it is not seen as a catalyst for development. The reason given by those participating in the RDP is that in the majority of cases financial support which averages 20 per cent for non-workshop schemes is not an adequate contribution. Acutely aware of their own limited resources (see later), and knowing that any new initiative is likely to involve the diversion of funds from existing mainstream services, local authority partners are looking for a substantial financial commitment from the Commission. Grant aid in the region of 30-50 per cent has been floated by some (Rural Viewpoint, April 86: 3). This said, two RDP groups participating in the research did feel that despite the limited incentives available, the RDP has been instrumental in focusing local attention and resources in their RDA. Both felt it was unlikely that schemes would have taken place without the designation. There are also the bids made by local community groups and others which may otherwise not attract funding.

Several RDP committees mentioned the role of Elected Members on their Committee. The involvement of the 'right influential members' was felt to be

necessary to secure allocations for RDA projects from county and district budgets at a time of general cutbacks, and also to provide a strong political impetus to draw any extra resources from both the outside public sector and the private sector. On the whole, however, most authorities envisage that the difficulties of securing funds for specific RDP projects, which in relation to other commitments are a low priority, will remain:

\* "Lack of finance has prevented projects being submitted. Currently two projects are experiencing serious delays because of lack of authority finance."

There is also the question of whether the RDP attracts involvement from non-core agencies. To date, bar the occasional joint funding of a particular project, their participation appears somewhat limited. As mentioned earlier, the time and energy required to take part in the RDP process can in itself be a disincentive. Furthermore, the level of funding can mean that for many agencies there is little to gain financially from directing their equally scarce manpower and financial resources to the time consuming process of devising and implementing new initiatives to meet the needs of rural areas, particularly if such objectives fall outside of their general brief.

Whilst accepting that workshop provision continues to dominate submissions, the RDP has certainly facilitated the Commission's potential involvement in a range of activities precluded under the old grant aid system. Thus in terms of furthering the Commission's role as provider and partner, the RDP, it would appear, has met with moderate success. The role of catalyst, however, to which the Commission also aspires, is less easily attained. As the evidence presented earlier suggests there is every danger that the RDP as it operates at present is undermining this very objective it exists to promote. In the words of one respondent, speaking on behalf of many local partners:

\* "Funds available from the Development Commission are either (a) so uncertain (in terms of what is acceptable under their criteria), (b) so small, (c) so tedious to get hold of - the hassle involved is immense - that its contribution is often not seen as a catalyst for development at all."

Do Rural Development Programmes achieve coordination of organisational policies and actions?

(i) The national perspective

From the very outset the Development Commission has been aware that in its attempts to stimulate comprehensive development it may stray into the territory of other government bodies. Thus coordination, already an explicit objective of RDPs, has been high on its own list of priorities. Negotiations have been underway with the English Tourist Board, Sports Council, Manpower Services Commission (now called the Training Board), MAFF etc., in an attempt to clarify the extent to which the Commission should become involved in their respective areas of concern. During this time the Commission has been in a state of flux regarding its role in these fields. For example, consultations over two years were necessary before the Commission's participation in the tourism and sports sectors could be defined sufficiently for it to issue clear RDP guidelines, and with regard to training projects progress has been even slower. In 1987, the Commission accepted it had failed to 'get its act together' with Manpower Services Commission and that attempts were underway to 'salvage' the working party (pers.comm, March 1987) Guidelines finally emerged in the Summer of 1988, four years after the RDPs introduction. One could argue that given the Commission's need to consult with these agencies, the launch of the RDP was premature. The ensuing uncertainty has undoubtedly been detrimental to the RDP concept. It does however serve to illustrate one of the problems of trying to achieve coordination, the inordinate length of time the consultation process can take.

The Commission's efforts have led to a modicum of success in other fields, with some agencies using the RDA designation as a means of allocating resources to rural areas. The Housing Corporation for example reviewed its provision for rural areas during 1984 and has made a specific allocation for village schemes, mainly in RDAs. Similarly, the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux is co-sponsoring with the Commission a development fund scheme again

focusing on the RDAs. The aim is, "to encourage novel and innovative schemes for identifying and meeting the needs of rural areas for information and advice". (Development Commn, RDP Guidelines Circular 25.9.86: 3). Both organisations have set aside £50,000 per annum for a five year period which began on 1 April 1986.

A number of changes in other sectors have however had very important ramifications for rural areas which the minor successes cited above can do little to offset. The Department of Trade and Industry's review of the size and scope of Assisted Areas in 1984 for example, which resulted in their concentration on the urban Midlands, urban Tyneside, Durham, Cleveland and the far South West, reduced considerably the rural area which falls within Assisted Area boundaries (Development Comm, 1984/85: 5). This obviously slows down the economic revival of previously designated rural areas, for not only do they lose the incentives associated with Assisted Area status (7) but also grant aid from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for major rural infrastructure projects. This can mean that in practice far more public expenditure is being taken away from RDAs than is being invested in them through the Rural Development Commission. It also has a knock-on effect in terms of the successful implementation of RDPs in such areas. The lack of regional development grants can for example hinder the take-up of factory units and hence slow down or delay advance factory building under the programme. The Commission has consequently come under increasing pressure both to substitute for the loss of funds in these areas and also to canvas for Rural Development Areas to be recognised as nationally aided areas (as are the Assisted Areas) and thereby eligible for ERDF assistance(8).

Government rate support grants and expenditure limits have also taken their toll on the rural counties. The allocation of the 1986/87 rate support grant resulted in a reduction in grant of 2.4 per cent, following a fall of 1.7 per cent in the previous year. 11 of the 28 counties containing RDAs lost grant, including those with sparse populations (Development Commission 1985/86: 6). Local authority

expenditure is already under pressure and reductions such as these not only restrict their ability to respond positively to the Commission's Rural Development Programme, but also their capacity to maintain the vital rural services for which they are responsible:

\* "Whilst the idea of using limited funds to catalyse action is understood, the reality of the situation is that problems are so widespread and finances so inadequate that what is really required is more general funding to assist with the provision of basic services, housing and transport."

Controls on capital expenditure allocations have further reduced the local authorities' ability to contribute to schemes in partnership with the Rural Development Commission and others, foregoing worthwhile and much needed additional investment. The Commission cites the sudden decline in demand for its 50/50 workshop programme as one of the casualties. The number of schemes coming forward fell from 105 in 1983/84 to 55 in 1985/86 (Development Commn, 1985/86: 13). In particular, attention should be drawn to the risk as regards Government targets and penalties.

\* "An authority could find itself in the ludicrous predicament of receiving a grant from the Commission towards a project which it has supported, and then having to pay back to the Treasury a larger penalty payment than the grants received."  
(Rural Viewpoint, April 1986: 3)

There would appear to be a case here of the Government's left hand not knowing quite what the right is doing, or alternatively, knowing and intentionally giving with the left and taking with the right! Thus the Commission allocates sums towards improving the lot of rural areas, whilst local authorities who are themselves a major source of funds for tackling the same rural problems, face crippling expenditure constraints. If this chronic and paradoxical situation does not improve there is every possibility that the Government's actions concerning local authority finance will jeopardise the development initiative it ultimately funds. The Development Commission is in a very difficult position.

#### (ii) The local perspective

The very essence of the RDP may be that of encouraging intra- and inter-agency interaction, but an immediate limiting factor would appear to be the imbalance of organisations and interests represented at a local level. In general,

the extent to which organisations other than the core participants are involved in the process is limited. It is argued that to include other organisations could inhibit progress - the size of the group may become unmanageable and there could be a problem of communication as individuals with differing experiences and interests become involved. Thus only six of the 21 RDP groups studied have representation of non-core organisations on either their RDP Committee or Working Party. In general this is limited to one or two additional organisations, those most commonly involved being ADAS and the regional Tourist Board. Few RDP groups have working parties for specific topics and those that do exist tend to function on a very ad hoc basis. In general the process of consultation is fulfilled by inviting comments on draft documents sent to a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations who, it is perceived, may have a current or potential interest in the RDA. Most RDP groups have found the response from this activity to be disappointing, there being little in the way of positive comments on the principles of RDP or an indication of a willingness to participate, merely corrections on matters of fact. As mentioned earlier some areas now have project officers in post (part-funded by the Commission) to improve liaison and coordination both among the core participants and the many other organisations which may need to be involved.

It is of course not only other organisations that need to participate in the RDP process in order for it to be successful. Local authorities themselves provide a wide range of services which impact on rural areas. Evidence suggests that this range of services is not normally represented separately in the RDP group. It is generally upheld that planners, as the 'Jack-of-all-trades' within local authorities are those most able to represent council interests, and it is therefore the planning department which takes the lead. This assumes however, a degree of feedback and liaison between local authority departments.

It must be appreciated that communication procedures within individual authorities differ considerably: some have well developed methods of information dissemination, with others coordination is of a more ad hoc nature.

Moreover, it is up to individual officers acting on behalf of the local authority to relay the relevant information to other concerned departments. In this respect the majority lie within the two extremes of those committed to the RDP concept and actively seeking to encourage inter-departmental RDP working groups, and those who regard the RDP exclusively as a planning function with no need to consult or involve others. In several cases other local authority departments, some of whom are pressing for projects to be included in the RDP, expressed concern at their lack of active involvement in the programme, the feeling of being in at the 'tail end' of schemes, too late to contribute their views. This problem may all too frequently be exacerbated by the dominance of economic development interests in the RDP Working Parties. The plethora of planning officers and officers from English Estates and the RDC Business Service not only implies a tendency to concentrate on, or favour developments with which they are most familiar and will work on themselves, but it can also lead to a reluctance to accommodate what they see as less orthodox and unproven means of rural development. These are often the community/social development schemes submitted by other local authority departments, sometimes other interested organisations or by their fellow RDP partner, the Rural Community Council. In most RDP groups the Rural Community Council is the only organisation present to represent non-economic development interests.

There is also no provision within the RDP to ensure local community involvement in the identification and development of schemes proposed for their locale. There is for example, a notable lack of consultation with parish councils. In general it is felt that the Rural Community Council, being a 'grass roots' organisation, should be able to provide the necessary bridge between the rural communities concerned and those who ultimately make the decisions. In several areas this overstretched communication system has been augmented by introducing community development officers, funded through the RDP. Referred to as 'patchworkers' these, as their name suggests, work within a given 'patch' or area, identifying local needs and where appropriate stimulating self-help. The patchworkers are then able to report back to their respective RDP Working

Party on specific needs and RDP schemes can be initiated in response, in the knowledge that they are assured the backing of the local community. The intention is to enable the 'top down' approach pursued at present to be modified to one approaching a 'bottom up' development process, which one could argue is more appropriate to an initiative aimed at encouraging an integrated response to rural development.

Having discussed the limitations of the RDP as it exists at present, there is justification in questioning whether the RDP has the potential to improve inter-agency coordination were the membership extended, something the Commission appears anxious to encourage (pers. comm. March 1987). For this we must turn again to the experiences of those actively involved in the RDP process. The promotion of greater awareness of the work of other organisations and of their priorities is seen by the majority of respondents to be the primary benefit of participation in the RDP. A very positive account is cited below:

\* "Agencies are thinking more collaboratively. They are becoming more aware of what other agencies are doing. It has increased the frequency of informal contact. People are contributing ideas, which often other agencies are better suited to develop. In short the signs are that we may see all the benefits of 'networking', including sharing the satisfaction of progress made."

In terms of this improved awareness, it is CoSIRA (prior to its merger with the Commission) and the Rural Community Councils who appear to have benefited most. Prior to the RDP the local authority officers were largely unaware of their existence, or at the very least uncertain of their role within the rural areas. Through the RDP they have been able to develop a higher profile (as the Commission's agents they are relied upon to interpret its actions!) and consequently are able to participate in rural development in a manner previously unattained.

While there may be a greater awareness of each other's activities, this does not appear to be translating into greatly improved coordination between agencies, nor indeed within them! Looking firstly at the coordination of local policies and programmes, there is little of significance to report. As noted earlier, the RDP

is inevitably based largely on existing approaches and the level of activity related to the RDP is small in relation to an organisation's total programmes. Thus any changes are likely to be the result of a gradual awareness of rural problems rather than a sudden radical change of policy to reflect RDA designation. Having said this, there have been some instances where RDA designation has been reflected positively in several local authority policy decisions; the Education Department for example which, following representation from the RDP Committee, reviewed its criteria for assessing the future of small schools, and in so doing retained a village school previously threatened with closure. Similarly, there is the case of the District Council which included in its housing programme a scheme within its RDA that would not otherwise have been considered. Conversely there are the cases where coordination has clearly not been achieved. Another Education Authority, despite opposition, closed the RDA's only comprehensive school, and an Estates Department of a County Council felt the financial gains to be made in selling a derelict building came before securing its use for workshops and a trading centre in a joint RDP venture.

The attitude with which the majority of organisations have approached the RDP has frustrated the Commission's hopes of improving local coordination. The motive behind local authority participation was discussed earlier, yet it is useful to refresh one's memory with the following quotation:

\* "Most authorities are involved in the RDP for selfish reasons. They want money for their district."

This attitude also holds true for other agencies expressing an interest in the RDP.

\* "People and organisations are trying to get involved in the RDP because of the money, probably due to their own source of funding being cut back."

It is clearly difficult, when resources are limited and when all organisations are chasing the same funds, for one agency to agree that priorities lie elsewhere, with either another organisation or in the case of a local authority in another district. Self-interest is inevitably placed before that of coordinative effort. Moreover, the attitude with which organisations approach the RDP taints any

opportunities for coordination when they do arise. The RDP may have increased their awareness of each other's work but, it was suggested, do they really need to know?

\* "I would suggest that, so far, the main result of increased contact between agencies has been to increase their workload by involving them in areas in which they previously had little interest."

Thus the overwhelming problem facing the Development Commission is how to rid the RDP of the image it acquired from the very start, that of being nothing more than an annual bid to share up the diminishing finances of local authorities and others.

Where coordination has occurred, as in the joint funding of schemes, it has been as a result of the recognition of shared problems or objectives and the benefits of collaborative action. Although not necessarily brought about by the RDP (many organisations have a history of joint financing schemes, the Tourist Boards and local authorities for example) this does demonstrate the primary characteristic that governs inter-organisational relationships, and may also be the key to understanding the future success or failure of the RDP. In general, agency interaction will only occur following the recognition of the mutual benefits of so doing. The RDP may provide a forum for coordination, but unless the 'benefits' of joint working are clearly evident, there is no assurance that coordination will take place.

#### **IV.2 The Peak Park IRD Project: Coming to Terms with Integration**

The Integrated Rural Development project (IRD project) of the Peak District National Park ran from 1981 to 1988 and formed part of an EEC research programme into integrated rural development (see Chapter II). Based in selected areas of the Peak District and involving an impressive cross-section of central government departments/agencies and local organisations, its primary objective was to see whether alternative systems of public support could be devised that would reconcile the often competing economic, social and

environmental interests in the countryside. This was a major departure from the sectoral grant aid system operating in 1981, and with few exceptions still operating today, where addressing the needs within the confines of one sector can often be at the expense of others (Countryside Review Committee 1976; Lowe *et al.* 1986).

The value of the IRD project in the context of the author's research is three-fold: first, it remains one of the only attempts in Britain, albeit within the confines of the project area, to encourage the integration of nationally determined policies and systems of grant aid; second, it conferred upon the participating agencies the need to consider national policies within a local context; third, it provides a useful contrast to the Rural Development Programme, with its local agency bias, discussed earlier.

The report, A Tale of Two Villages published by the Peak Park Joint Planning Board in 1984 provides a useful overview of the philosophy surrounding the IRD project and the nature of the rural development activity undertaken during the first three years of its operation. Not wishing to repeat that already well documented, these aspects of the Project are presented in brief here. There then follows a detailed examination of the author's own research. This looks, from an organisational viewpoint, at the implications of translating Integrated Rural Development, the concept, into IRD, the process.

#### **IV.2a Introduction to the Peak Park: Its Geography and Administration**

The Peak District, designated a National Park in 1951(9), lies at the southern end of the Pennine range of hills surrounded by the industrial areas of Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire and the Manchester conurbation (see figure 5). It has a population of 38,000 and supports a predominantly agricultural economy with some mining and quarrying activity. As with other upland regions it is characterised by poor soils, harsh climate and a

short growing season. Job opportunities are limited and the area is experiencing depopulation. These problems have led to over 90 percent of the Peak Park being designated a Less Favoured Area under EEC Directive 75/268.

In common with the rest of the country, administration of the Park is shared between an array of public organisations each with responsibility for a specific rural function. For planning purposes the whole area is the responsibility of the park authority, the Peak Park Joint Planning Board(10). For other purposes six county councils, nine district councils, one hundred parish councils, three water authorities, ten district health authorities, four regional Tourist Boards, two district offices of the Forestry Commission and three regional offices of the Ministry of Agriculture have parts of their area within the Park. Add to these the voluntary and non-statutory organisations whose views and actions must also be taken into account, and finally the national policies emanating from central government and the national agencies, and the administrative quagmire is complete.

It is the responsibility of the Peak Park Joint Planning Board (PPJPB) to harmonise and coordinate the diverse array of organisational interests and policies in order to further the National Park objectives of:

- (i) protecting and enhancing the landscape of the Park
- (ii) making provision for appropriate opportunities for outdoor recreation
- (iii) maintaining established farming uses and the general social and economic well being of the local community

(see PPJPB, 1978: 1)

The Peak Board achieves this coordination through informal and formal means. There are a number of well established working parties relating to specific Park issues (eg. land management, tourism) which operate on a voluntary basis and there are the statutory instruments of the Peak District National Park Structure Plan(11) and the National Park Plan. The Structure Plan, as with the more usual county-based plans, is concerned with the broad policies and proposals of land use, housing, mineral working etc. and to a lesser extent, the social and economic needs of the local communities. The national Park Plan on the other

hand is concerned with the more detailed policies and proposals relating to the conservation of the Park's character and the provision of recreation opportunities. The Peak Board sees one of the main purposes of this plan as, "providing a common framework within which all the agencies and individuals concerned can work together to achieve the purposes of National Park designation" (PPJPB, 1978: 1).

This particular combination of plans, which between them cover planning issues, socio-economic needs, landscape conservation and recreation, provide, it has been said, one of the most comprehensive approaches to the management of any area to date (Bennell, 1978). Thus, it could be argued, it also represents a significant step towards the 'total approach' to countryside matters advocated by the Countryside Review Committee (1977a) and Select Com. on the European Communities (House of Lords) 1979-80 (HL129). However, whilst the potential for such an approach exists there are many instances where it remains unrealised: nationally administered policies do not necessarily coincide with local Park objectives. An example is provided by MAFF, which until changes in its grant schemes in December 1985, actively encouraged post and wire fencing in the Peak District(12), an action that was quite contrary to the need to conserve the traditional appearance of the Peak Park with its stone walled field boundaries. Indeed, it was the difficulties encountered in trying to reconcile disparate organisational objectives that provided the main impetus for the IRD project (PPJPB, 1984: 9).

#### **IV.2b The Integrated Rural Development Project**

##### Administration and Finance

The IRD project commenced in the autumn of 1981 with the award of a research contract from the EEC. The Peak Board, who had been instrumental in securing the contract, invited representatives of the Rural Land Management Executive Group (who had supported the application) and other organisations

operating in the Peak District to act as a steering group for the project. At the outset nine organisations were involved. These were:

Peak Park Joint Planning Board

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (Land and Water Service Division and Agricultural Advisory Development Service).

Forestry Commission

Nature Conservancy Council

National Farmers' Union

Country Landowners Association and Timber Growers Assoc.

Derbyshire Rural Community Council

Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (Cheshire & Derbyshire Offices)

Development Commission

In 1985 the English Tourist Board, East Midlands Tourist Board and Countryside Commission also joined the project.

The Project Steering Group's primary function was one of overseeing the running of the project and providing the necessary authorisation for project expenditure and implementation. Work on individual aspects of the project was consequently organised through the existing Peak Park working groups. An officer of the Peak Board acted as Project Leader with responsibility for general project administration and coordination. This function later became the responsibility of a specially appointed Project Officer employed by the project.

Finance for the project was provided by the EEC, who offered a 50 per cent recovery of costs up to £33,725, and by subsidiary research grants offered by four government agencies. This gave a total project fund of £58,725 for the first three years of operation, made up as follows:

European Commission £33,725

Ministry of Agriculture £6,500

Development Commission £10,000

Nature Conservancy Council £2,000

Dept. of the Environment £6,500

(PPJPB, 1984: 11)

In 1984 the EEC's commitment to the project came to an end. The participating organisations however, agreed to continue to fund the project for a second three year phase, commencing early in 1985. Project contributions of existing agencies

were increased and the Countryside Commission and English Tourist Board, newly co-opted members, also agreed to contribute to project costs now amounting to £76,000 per annum. These costs were shared on the basis of the following annual contributions:

Ministry of Agriculture £6,000  
Development Commission £10,000  
Nature Conservancy Council £5,000  
Dept. of the Environment £10,000  
Countryside Commission £30,000

(pers. comm., 1986)

In addition, all participating agencies contributed staff time and office resources to the project.

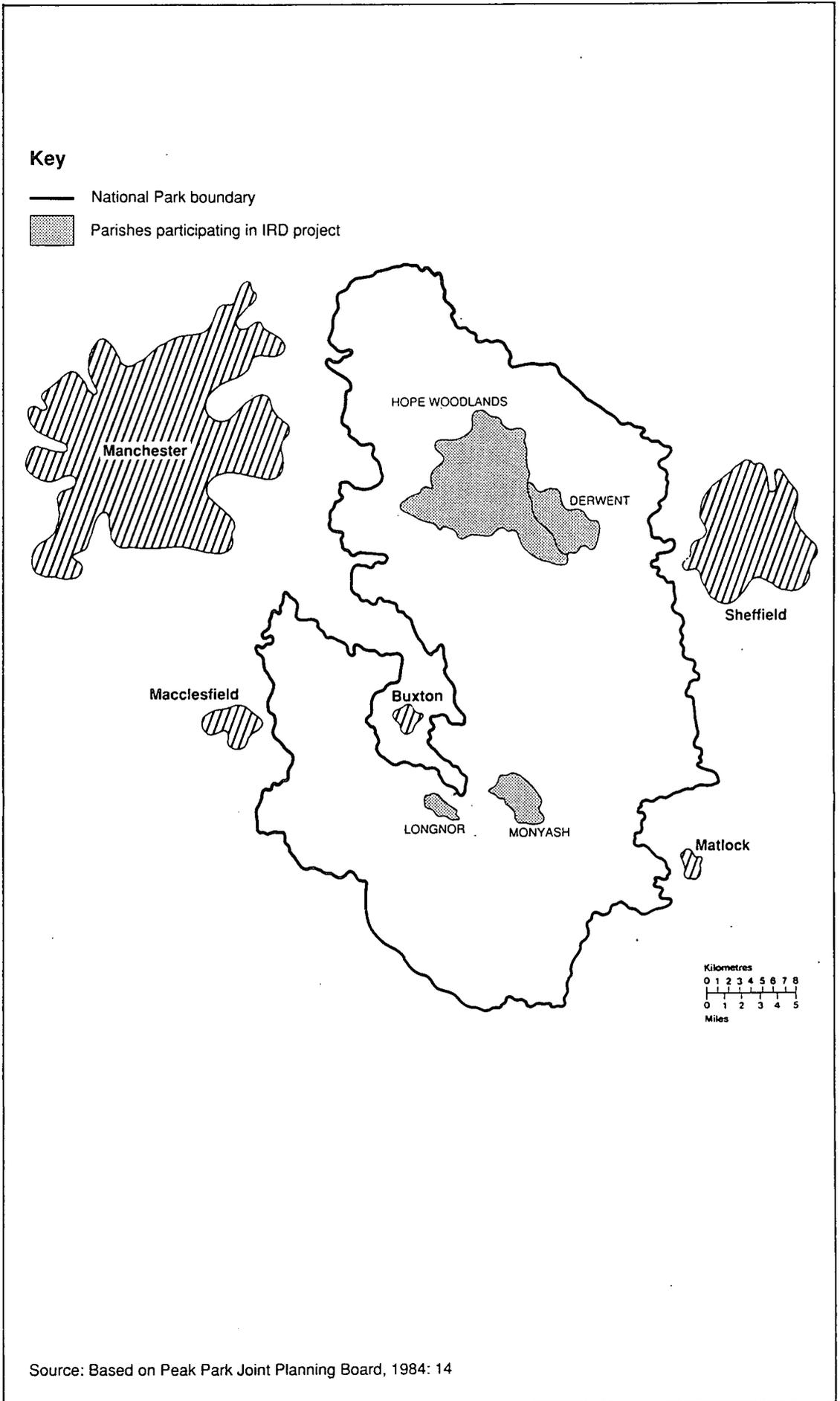
### The Project Areas

Three areas in the Peak Park were selected to take part in the IRD project. These were chosen on the basis of being typical of different parts of the National Park (PPJPB, 1984: 1). Their location within the Park is shown in figure 5, a brief description of each is given below.

**Longnor Parish** is located in the south-west of the Park in North-East Staffordshire within an area of high conservation value. Traditionally, agriculture, quarrying and textiles formed the mainstays of local employment, but with growing mechanisation job opportunities have become increasingly limited. This has resulted in a loss of population and local services to nearby towns. In an attempt to counter this trend there has, in recent years, been some diversification into tourism and light industry. The parish population stands at 375, living in 145 households. 15 of these households are registered as farm holdings (predominately dairying), but of these 10 are classified as part time farms.

**Monyash Parish** falls within the county boundary of Derbyshire and is typical of many parishes in the limestone area in the south east of the Park. With good quality grassland dairy farming predominates and the area has a well preserved

Figure 5 The Peak District National Park IRD study areas



'historic landscape' of old, small walled fields. As with Longnor, job opportunities are limited and the parish has lost population continuously for most of this century. The population stands at 271, in 97 households and includes some newcomers who work in the nearby urban centres. 25 of the households are registered as farms although half of these are classed as part-time holdings.

The IRD project was extended to the **Derwent and Hope Woodlands Parishes** in the north of the Park, in 1985. This area of high plateaux and deep valleys is characterised by semi-natural moorland with some improved grasslands. The dispersed population is heavily dependent on sheep farming, grouse moor management and water supply management. The moors are deteriorating due to overstocking but many of the moorland valleys have potential for farm improvement and afforestation.

### Approach to Integrated Rural Development

At the start of the project a working definition of IRD was proposed. This stated:

"IRD can be defined as the promotion and implementation of a package of policies defined to reflect the function of a particular rural area in relation to national priorities. This package of policies is designed to ensure the minimum of conflict between different interests and the maximum of involvement by local people. Policy packages are therefore designed which reflect the particular combinations of priorities, problems and opportunities in individual areas. It follows therefore that individual policies for the same area should so far as possible be mutually reinforcing. It also follows that European and national policies should be broad enough to be capable of detailed interpretation and a variety of methods of implementation to meet the different circumstances in different areas."

(PPJPB, 1981b, notes: 3)

This definition was subsequently refined into three principles:

- a. Individuality - the actions/policies of public agencies should reflect the unique needs and potential of an individual area.
- b. Involvement - local communities should be consulted and encouraged to participate in determining their own future.

c. Interdependence - the various functions of rural areas, social, economic and environmental, cannot be seen in isolation, and action to further one interest should not cause disadvantages to another. Indeed wherever possible it should create a positive benefit.

(see PPJPB, 1984: 12)

The IRD project aimed to develop a programme of action related to the concept of Integrated Rural Development that would bring these three principles together, but at the same time would, as far as possible, reflect the traditional methods of supporting rural areas. For this reason the research project centered around a system of grant aid, the Trial Alternative Grant Scheme (TAG).

The TAG scheme offered financial assistance along the lines of existing schemes from MAFF, the Rural Development Commission, English Tourist Board etc., but often with slightly higher rates of assistance<sup>(13)</sup> and relaxed eligibility conditions, particularly those relating to scale of the project and level of investment<sup>(14)</sup>. Where the scheme differed markedly however, was in its requirement that any project put forward should wherever possible be designed to benefit more than one interest and of course no scheme would be considered if its implementation would be detrimental to others. In certain instances this latter requirement meant farmers wishing to use TAG funds had to forgo certain elements of existing MAFF grant schemes because of the conflict with conservation objectives. This said, participation in the TAG project was voluntary and it ran alongside existing grant schemes. This had the advantage of greater flexibility, enabling projects put forward for TAG assistance to receive funding from an existing conventional grant scheme if appropriate.

For convenience, the TAG scheme was broken down into three sections. The **business development** component was intended to stimulate new business ventures, either diversification of existing business or the launch of a new one, and to encourage the conversion of buildings into premises suitable for business enterprises. Under the **community schemes** section, grants were available to help establish an activity or project that would benefit the community. Special encouragement was given to schemes that would also provide some benefit to

tourists. The **land and management** element of TAG was more precise than the other sections as it incorporated similar features to the grant schemes operated by MAFF. The objective here was not simply to encourage new activities, but to see if a better mix of conventional farm improvement and environmental conservation could be encouraged. In accordance with the project's concept of 'Individuality', the TAG scheme varied slightly between the three trial areas to take account of local needs and characteristics. In all areas however, the initiative for devising schemes and organising their implementation rested with the communities concerned. Public agencies gave advice and helped in certain projects, but as with existing schemes, only at the specific request of those concerned.

#### **IV.2c Integrated Rural Development: Aspirations and Reality**

This section examines the lessons to be learnt from the Peak Park IRD project: its successes and failures and the implications for similar work undertaken in the future. For convenience it is broken into two parts. Part (A) summarises the development achieved on the ground and acts as a useful precursor to the main body of research presented in Part (B) which examines the organisational perspective of integrated rural development - the ease with which this development was achieved.

##### (A) Achievements on the ground

The effectiveness of any rural development scheme must ultimately be judged in terms of its primary task, that of revitalising a declining area. Certainly in this respect the IRD project appears to have met with some success. Positive improvements in the social and economic fabric of the project areas are clearly evident and most have been welcomed by the communities concerned(15). As at October 1987, £99,922 of project funds had been allocated through the Trial Alternative Grant scheme (PPJPB, Oct. 1987). Development activity undertaken within each of the three elements of TAG is summarised below.

**Business Development:** As a result of TAG funding six new businesses started up, eight existing local businesses were retained and a further three relocated to the area. This activity created 45 additional jobs and safeguarded 13 existing ones. Support for tourist projects provided 18 new bedspaces and upgraded a further 12. In the majority of cases the use of old, unused or neglected buildings for the business developments served to contribute to the conservation objectives of the project.

**Community Projects:** In all, about 25 different community initiatives were assisted. These varied from very small schemes, for example the formation of a play group, to major development schemes such as the provision of a new village hall in Monyash. In terms of meeting dual objectives, many of the community schemes also served as tourist attractions or helped to improve the general environment.

**Farming and Land Management:** Within the Parishes of Monyash and Lognor (at the time of writing figures are not available for Hope Woodlands), approximately half the farms participated in the TAG scheme. To encourage farming practices that contributed to conservation objectives the scheme offered management grants to farmers at a slightly higher rate than the statutory Hill and Livestock Compensatory Allowance provided by MAFF. As a result of these grants new woodland was planted, traditional field boundaries maintained and flower rich fields preserved. Environmentally the scheme was of great significance. It served to demonstrate that it is feasible for farm practices to be developed which contribute to both food production and conservation and that farmers will participate in a grant scheme designed to fulfil both objectives.

While the IRD project has met with considerable success in terms of developing a system of public support based on the concept of integrated rural development, (ie. one that meets several different objectives) its cost effectiveness is more difficult to quantify. Part of the difficulty lies in attempting

to ascertain the hidden costs of staff time and administration borne by the participating agencies. What is clear is that the level of investment, both in terms of funding and officer commitment, was substantial given the size of the project. This begs the question, is the scheme repeatable?

The preferential high rates of grant aid(13) and degree of staff commitment from all agencies concerned could not be replicated with ease and certainly not as part of a nationally administered integrated grant scheme. A further problem relates to the source of funding for such a scheme. Agencies may be willing to fund an experimental project, but their benevolence is unlikely to extend to the regular funding of a grant scheme not wholly relating to their own objectives and remit (see later). In terms of officer activity on the ground, it is also doubtful whether the scheme would have met with the same degree of success had staff input, estimated at one full time field worker for the duration of the project, been at a level generally afforded to a rural area of this size. For comparison, Rural Community Councils employ one rural development officer per county to fulfil a similar role to that of the IRD project officer. Despite these limitations the IRD project has been valuable in demonstrating that grant schemes can be multi-sectoral. Indeed it has been suggested that certain agricultural/environmental elements of the project were incorporated into MAFF's own Agricultural Improvement Scheme introduced in 1985. In addition, the IRD project provides a unique opportunity to assess the broader administrative and organisational implications of integrated rural development. These are considered in Part B.

#### B: The organisational perspective

The decision to participate in the Peak Park IRD project had clear implications for the organisations concerned. It made demands upon their resources in terms of funding and staffing and required their commitment to common administrative structures and objectives. Below we examine how the organisations and their staff coped with these demands. The findings are based

upon detailed interviews with key personnel of the participating organisations and from written evidence. They represent the reactions, aspirations and observations of those involved in the IRD Project Steering Group and provide a clear picture of the opportunities and the constraints organisations encounter when attempting to work together. To protect the anonymity of those interviewed, quotes appearing in the text are not attributed but are indicated by an asterix.

### Role of the individual

The Peak Park has a tradition of inter-agency cooperation and collaboration and consequently a number of individuals participating in the scheme had worked together on previous occasions. This was important on three counts: first, past experiences of joint working enabled those involved to direct their sympathies and energies towards the project from the outset; second, established working relationships enabled a frank exchange of views which meant problems and difficulties encountered were more easily resolved; third, individuals had the necessary confidence to use their discretion when interpreting organisational policies in order to accommodate, as far as possible, the needs of the study.

In addition to these acquired skills, it also became apparent during the course of the research that the personality of those involved was another factor influencing effective joint working. Two individuals were identified by participants as the leading protagonists and it was widely felt that without their presence and vision the scheme would not have progressed. This said their relationship was at times far from amicable. Their strong personalities and organisational differences (one from MAFF, the other from the Peak Board) led to what one colleague described as, "a stormy relationship with some wonderful battles". However, such was their commitment to the success of the project that differences which could easily have jeopardised the scheme were overcome. As we shall see in the following sections it is frequently the skills, perceptions and aspirations of the individuals participating which determine the success or otherwise of joint working. Poor resolve, inexperience, 'blinkered' thinking,

adherence to conventional wisdom or unquestioning loyalty to 'the way things are always done' are not, it appears, conducive to integrated development.

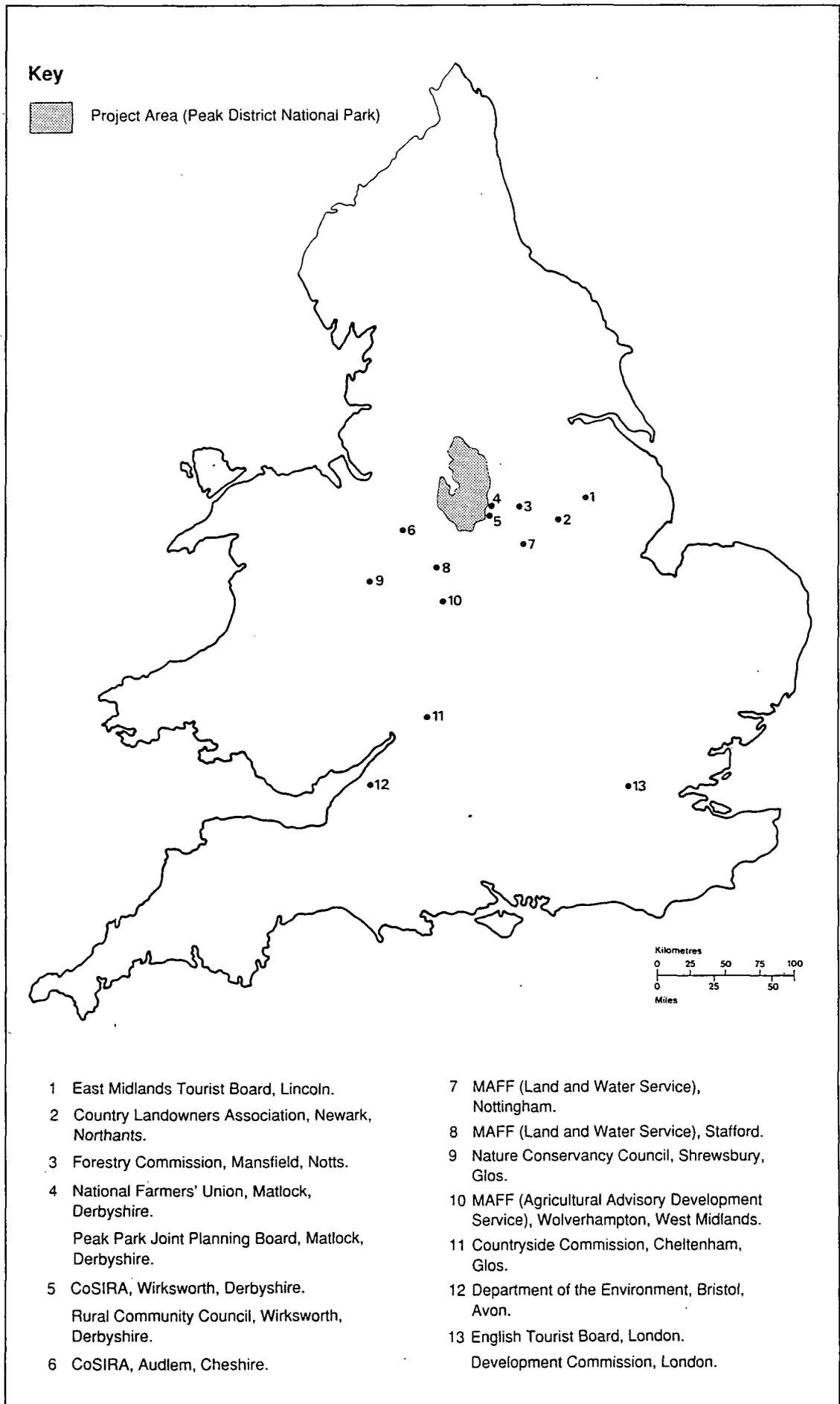
### IRD: Broadening organisational horizons

Integrated development by its very nature involves consideration of a range of issues across the development spectrum. Many of the participating organisations had experience of joint working within specific sectors but the requirement to think beyond these and embrace the broader issues of rural development posed a new challenge. Above all, it demanded a flexibility of approach and a willingness, on the part of those involved, to relax the functional boundaries in which they traditionally operated:

\* "I have to remind myself I'm a member of the IRD steering committee as well as a representative of the Nature Conservancy Council and that its just as important to comment on the merits of a village hall extension as say the conservation of flower-rich fields."

The ease with which this was achieved depended not so much on the organisation concerned but on the individual representing that organisation. It is after all a state of mind that is sought, rather than radical changes in policy or direction. The adage, 'where there's the will, there's a way' applies nicely in this instance. As one would expect 'will' varied considerably between individuals. Two factors came into play: an understanding of, and empathy towards, integrated rural development and a commitment to the development of the specific rural areas concerned. In most cases evidence of both was greatest amongst those officers who had direct experience of working in the Peak Park. They had the necessary local knowledge to enable them to contribute at ease on a range of development issues, and given the tradition of agency collaboration in the Park, were also more responsive to the need to cooperate with others. Clearly however, a number of organisational representatives involved were not familiar with the area, nor were they familiar with working at such a local level. The location of the organisation's participating in the IRD project is shown in figure 6. This graphically illustrates the problems involved in implementing local policy coordination initiatives when the relevant organisations are frequently located a considerable distance from the area in

**Figure 6 Location of Organisations involved in the Peak Park IRD Project**



question, with similarly distant policies. With regard to the Peak Park project, individuals who were unable to adapt to the unfamiliar demands and ethos of participation in a local integrated development initiative were in danger of judging the scheme purely in terms of their own organisational objectives. Thus one officer from a national agency commented,

\* "Given the time spent on discussing activity marginal to my own, I feel I cannot justify my presence at Project Steering Group meetings."

In addition to broadening one's own organisational horizons, effective joint working also relied upon an understanding and appreciation of the organisational structures by which others were bound. The greatest contrast lay between locally based organisations who possessed the flexibility to respond to the needs of the study and the national agencies bound by established national procedures and cumbersome administrative machinery. Problems therefore arose when officers from local agencies perceived the demands made upon their national counterparts in terms of their own organisational structures. An officer from MAFF summarised the problems he faced,

\* "When officers of the Peak Board talk to me they think they're talking to Michael Jopling." (Minister for Agriculture 1983-1987)

The lack of understanding of the roles of individuals and unreasonable expectations about their ability to effect changes resulted in considerable frustration and friction between the officers concerned.

### Agencies in partnership?

Integrated rural development can only work if there is effective collaboration between different agencies. This, as those participating in the IRD project discovered, is both a strength and a weakness. It is a strength in that different agencies bring together different perspectives to the development process and avoid any one interest assuming a too dominant role. It is a weakness however, in that at times it may not be possible to marry these different perspectives together; and if it is, it requires a great deal of time, persuasive argument, compromise and commitment on the part of those involved.

The coming together of 11 independent agencies to form the Project Steering Group brought together almost as many diverse and contrasting views on the nature of the project itself. Some participants favoured elements of desk top research, others entirely field work; some preferred a large project area, others, individual parishes; some suggested additional agencies should be involved, others disagreed. There were also diverse views on the grant scheme - the structure of the individual elements, levels of funding and eligibility criteria. Divisions such as these are to be expected and may not necessarily be divisive, they can for example provide a basis for group discussion and learning about the problems and possible alternative solutions. Certainly the TAG scheme emerged a better scheme through debate, and on the whole participants felt the sharing of organisational perceptions and experiences to be worthwhile. In other instances however, (size of project area and specific details of the agricultural grant scheme) differences of opinion could not be resolved to the satisfaction of all participants. This led to disagreement and polarisation within the Project Steering Group and while the professionalism and commitment of members ensured this did not hamper the running of the project, there remained a degree of dissatisfaction and a general antagonism towards those who, it was felt, had "got their own way".

It has been said that one of the methods agencies adopt to deal with such problems is to avoid them (Noad and King, 1977: 11). This was true of the Project Steering Group and where possible potentially contentious issues were evaded. One issue which escaped proper discussion despite its importance was that of formulating clear project parameters and development objectives:

\* "It's all very hazy, generally policies and objectives are created as we agree to fund a project."

\* "We tend to make it up as we go along."

Almost half of the participating officers expressed concern and a degree of frustration at the lack of clear objectives, as one retorted,

\* "The goal posts keep moving and so unfortunately does the shape of the ball."

The reasons given to account for this failing were two-fold: first historical, the overall objectives of the project had been set by the Peak Board as part of the submission for EEC funding and were not reconsidered with the convening of the Project Steering Group; second, participants were keen, wherever possible, to maintain the Group's status quo:

\* "It would be better if objectives were in existence but whether as a group of organisations we could all agree on these is a different matter."

It is disappointing that opportunities to explore this process were not pursued. However this decision does in itself enable conclusions to be drawn as to the reluctance of organisations to actively strive to reach common ground.

The lack of clear direction felt by a number of the agencies involved led to the Peak Park reinforcing its role as the lead agency in the project. The commitment of its staff ensured the project's early impetus was sustained and demonstrated the value of one agency assuming overall responsibility for the management of a consortium of agencies. However, this was not without its problems. Several agencies felt they were "steam rolled" into making decisions, another felt its involvement was limited to, "handing over money for the Board to administer", and another described the members of the Project Steering Group as "puppets" with the Peak Board "pulling the strings". Indeed all participating organisations, while acknowledging the indispensable work of the officers of the Peak Board, felt the project was engineered primarily "for the glory of the Peak Board". This is an interesting point, for as we will discover in the following section, the majority of agencies participating were also doing so for the perceived kudos it would bring. True 'partnership' was unfortunately little in evidence.

#### Coming to terms with integration?

The structure of the IRD project and its emphasis on the funding and administration of the Trial Alternative Grant scheme, which augmented rather than replaced existing agency operations, enabled the majority of agencies to support the project without jeopardising their own organisational integrity. Quite clearly this factor, together with the experimental nature of the project (no

binding long term commitment) greatly facilitated agency participation. Quite simply they had nothing to lose. They did however, have something to gain. Officers questioned about the motives behind participation all saw agency involvement in terms of the 'benefits' it brought; "prestige" and "credibility" were most often cited. Participation was to all intent and purpose a public relations exercise, as one officer explained, "It's good to be seen to be doing something."

Involvement was carefully managed by the agencies concerned to ensure outward appearances conveyed a commitment to integration whilst behind the scenes perseyty was maintained. To this end assurances were sought by at least one of the participating national agencies, that funds they provided for the project would be used specifically for grant aiding schemes appropriate to their development sector. In addition, project funds tended to be sourced from an agency's research budget. This by its very nature had fewer conditions governing its use than mainstream funds and gave, particularly to the national organisations, the flexibility they required to support the project without the need to adjust policies or procedures. Indeed, barring fairly minor administrative changes (regarding the processing of grant forms) on the part of MAFF's regional office, the organisational operations of all participants remained intact.

MAFF's involvement in the project is worthy of further consideration. It proved to be the exception to that described above and its experiences highlight some of the problems central government departments and national agencies can encounter when attempting to accommodate local needs within well established national procedures. The key problem confronting the Ministry was that certain elements of its national capital grant scheme and subsidy scheme, (in particular those relating to farm improvements and stocking practices) were out of line with the broader agricultural/conservation objectives of the IRD project. It was initially anticipated that within the project area MAFF grants would be reallocated to fund part of the TAG scheme. This however was found to be unworkable given the statutory nature of the schemes whereby MAFF is bound to pay the grants 'as of right' and 'on demand' (pers. comm.). Contracted

negotiations and considerable tension on both sides ensued but there was little room for manoeuvre or compromise. Indeed MAFF became so embroiled in attempting to clarify what it and the IRD project could and could not do that it suggested the project be limited to a desk exercise. More seriously, an internal inquiry was instituted as to the feasibility of the Ministry withdrawing from the project. In the event it was considered that this would create too many 'difficulties' (remember the importance of image) and the IRD project progressed with funding from MAFF's research budget and its own grant scheme, with contradictory measures intact, operating in parallel to the Trial Alternative Grant scheme.

MAFF's inability to 'integrate' local needs and national policies is unlikely to be a unique phenomenon. Indeed it is suggested that had any of the national agencies been required to adapt their operations to those of the project, the outcome, given their similar legislative and administrative structures, would have been largely the same. Such conclusions raise the question as to the ease with which any IRD initiative can involve national agencies. In the same vein, the viability of an integrated grant scheme must also be thrown into question. While it is evident that such a scheme can encourage multi-sectoral development the organisational problems regarding its funding and administration just glimpsed at here, are likely to be thrown into sharp relief were attempts made to introduce a scheme run along similar lines on a non-experimental or more widespread basis.

### **IV.3 The Staffordshire Moorlands Project: An Example of Local Cooperation**

The Staffordshire Moorlands Project, like the Peak Park IRD project discussed above, involves a group of government agencies and local authorities. However, unlike its more ambitious neighbour this is not an 'integrated' scheme. The project has no funds for grant aid or devolved grant-making powers, nor is there a requirement for participating agencies to adapt their policies or grant support

systems according to local need. It is quite simply a local liaison initiative, with the aim of increasing cooperation and collaboration between agencies operating in the Moorlands area. That these organisations have been able to work together, amicably and effectively, since the project's inception in 1976 merits discussion here.

### **IV.3a Background**

The Staffordshire Moorlands form the south western area of the Peak District National Park and include the Parish of Lognor which participated in the Peak Park IRD project. As with Lognor, the area is characterised by small hill and upland farms on variable but generally poor soils with high rainfall and long cold winters. Employment opportunities are limited and consequently the area suffers from depopulation(16).

It was the growing concern over depopulation that led Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and the Peak Park Joint Planning Board to meet with other organisations in the latter half of 1976 to formulate a comprehensive rural development plan for the area. Those collaborating included the Agricultural Development Advisory Service (ADAS) of MAFF, Community Council of Staffordshire, CoSIRA, Development Commission, Heart of England Tourist Board, National Farmers Union and various parish councils. The North East Staffordshire Action Plan (Staffordshire CC et al., 1977) that resulted from this consultation was approved by the Development Commission in 1977.

The overall objective of the Action Plan was to stimulate employment opportunities and provide social facilities to check the serious depopulation of the area. At the time the document was quite unique in that it embraced proposals covering six usually quite distinct areas of rural development:

- Industry - erect 75,000 square feet of factory floor space in small units
- provide a technical and advisory service to businesses
- Housing - ensure adequate housing for local need - investigate feasibility of Rural Housing Association
- guarantee housing for key workers for new industries
- Transport - revise public transport schedules
- evaluate alternative methods of public transport
- Tourism - promote area to attract staying visitors
- encourage the development of farm tourism
- Agriculture - intensify the information and advisory effort
- investigate the feasibility of an upland management scheme
- Community - evaluate existing community facilities and activities and encourage new developments which are likely to generate local spirit

(Dart, 1981: 35a)

For each sector, agencies with overall or shared responsibility for implementing the proposals were identified. This Action Plan has been rolled forward every five years or so and now forms the basis of the annual Rural Development Programme (RDP) submission for the North East Staffordshire Rural Development Area.

#### **IV.3b The North East Staffordshire Working Party**

The day to day implementation of the initial Action Plan and subsequent Rural Development Programmes is coordinated by the North East Staffordshire Working Party (NESTWOP). This is comprised of representatives (normally officers working in the area) from ADAS, Community Council of Staffordshire,

CoSIRA (now the Rural Development Commission Business Service), Rural Development Commission, Heart of England Tourist Board, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and the Peak Board. NESTWOP has no executive powers and each member is responsible to his own organisation. Consequently the execution of projects is largely a matter of trust, relying on participating agencies' commitment to the overall objectives of the Staffordshire Moorlands Project. Where joint schemes are to be implemented, sub committees are formed to enable the details of the scheme to be agreed and put into action.

In the early years of NESTWOP, the meetings of the full working party tended to be infrequent and informal and were seen primarily as opportunities to review the evolving situation and discuss anticipated projects. More recently, the rigours of preparing and implementing the RDP has demanded a more formalised structure with bi-monthly meetings. The general philosophy of the working party however, remains the same. Discussions, while wide ranging, focus on matters of common interest and where objectives are shared. The working party is not seen as a suitable arena in which to attempt to resolve any conflicts of organisational policy that may arise. Every item detailed on the initial Action Plan has been tackled as part of the ongoing programme to attempt to halt the decline of the Staffordshire Moorlands area. A review of the first three years operation is given in a report prepared by the ADAS socio-economic adviser, Roy Dart (Nov 1981). Details of more recent initiatives can be found in the annual RDP submissions prepared by Staffordshire County Council. A summary of the key activities of each agency is presented below.

The Ministry of Agriculture's contribution has involved an intensification of the normal work of ADAS through the work of its socio-economic advisors. The approach has been to identify the problems of farm families and provide or develop solutions to help them. The solutions vary from technical developments to overcome agricultural constraints such as poor drainage, to those involving a diversification of activity, farm tourism for example. Initiatives have included

the introduction of a quarterly information bulletin sent to all farmers in the area, the setting up a labour sharing cooperative to provide agricultural relief services and the encouragement of farm tourism enterprises with the formation of a new marketing body, Peak Moorlands Farm Holidays.

The Community Council of Staffordshire has worked with local communities to improve their village facilities, some for example have bought redundant village schools for community use. The Community Council has also developed a network of voluntary information advisers living within the Moorlands to assist in disseminating information to local people and has run courses for parish council officials to encourage greater activity and involvement in determining the future of the area. In north East Staffordshire the Community Council employed a project officer for a six month period to produce an independent report of social needs in the area.

CoSIRA, using Development Commission funds, has built a number of small advance factories and workshops in the project area. In addition, its advisory and credit service is seen as a stimulus to the development of small industries. Tourism has also proved to be a valuable means of employment diversification in the area and the three local authorities together with the Heart of England Tourist Board have pooled their resources to 'pump prime' the holiday industry and promote the attractions of the area. The Peak Board and ADAS have also contributed to this initiative through encouraging local farms to provide tourist accommodation. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's activities have extended beyond tourism to include building factory units, encouraging rural housing developments (in partnership with the Peak Board), reviewing transport services and ensuring provision of live theatre, arts and other entertainment facilities for the rural communities.

### IV.3c NESTWOP: The Secret of Success

There is little doubt that NESTWOP, while modest in intent, has facilitated the implementation of a broad based development programme for the Staffordshire Moorlands. Its early success led its participants to propose:

"As a result of the experience gained and the initiatives taken, it is considered that the informal working party approach allows a good balance to be achieved between local initiatives and formal policies."

(Staffordshire CC, 1980: 10)

NESTWOP's structure has since been replicated in the RDP Working Party and Strategy Committee structures established in response to the Rural Development Commission's RDP initiative. Interestingly, as we discovered earlier (see Part IV.1), these have as yet failed to live up to NESTWOP's example and the Commission's aspirations of achieving comprehensive rural development. This poses the question why is NESTWOP able to succeed while others flounder? The answer appears to lie in the simple explanation proffered by one NESTWOP member:

\* "NESTWOP's success is due to the right people being in the right place at the right time....."

This sentiment was echoed by all those officers interviewed:

\* "NESTWOP has been successful because the people involved have been very genuine about the project - personality has been very important."

\* "We shared common ideas and motives. Basically for successful coordination your heart has to be in the right place so that you do things for the right reasons."

The enthusiasm and commitment described above is clearly evident when talking to members of the working party. This has ensured from the early stages that individual projects are followed through by the officers responsible. In many cases activities pursued are integral to the normal functions of the organisation, but where this has not been the case officer commitment has been such that they have been prepared to go beyond their normal remit in order to achieve a worthwhile aim:

\* "Sometimes one needs to break the rules to ensure coordination."

\* "NESTWOP has meant my involvement in certain activities not strictly my concern. However, I find there is relative freedom providing I stick broadly within the national guidelines and I've had no complaints from the management."

This open display of commitment has in turn led to a mutual trust between participants, particularly longstanding members, as one explained:

\* "An individual's word has become his bond - we know he will do his best to succeed."

It is evident that the degree of trust between working party members has also helped to nurture a greater understanding and appreciation of the organisational constraints within which their colleagues operate:

\* "Originally agriculture and planning were at loggerheads but now we can understand each other's position. This has led to a much better working relationship."

This point is particularly relevant to a working group like NESTWOP, where the intention is to liaise and work within existing policies rather than rework them, as one officer stressed:

\* "It's necessary to be complimentary rather than competitive."

Undoubtedly this requirement has also been aided by the working parties' concentration on objectives common to all organisations and their stated aims of dealing with items of development rather than retrenchment.

The preceding discussion highlights the obvious strengths of NESTWOP, but it is also important to highlight its weaknesses. Ironically, its key strength is also its greatest weakness. The original working party members are enthusiastic and dedicated, but the group is vulnerable to personnel changes. This has become increasingly evident in recent years and several officers have expressed concern that as some members have changed so the working party has lost its sense of purpose and its informality. To be fair this is also partly due to the group taking on responsibility for administration of the RDP, and there is now talk of attempting to 'graft' informality back into the RDP structure. At times however, the informal working has itself caused problems. The problem most often cited,

prior to the RDP, was the lack of direction at meetings and the concern that NESTWOP may become little more than a 'talking shop'. Looking to the longer term, rural development initiatives, whether formalised as in the Development Commission's RDP's or more loosely structured, as in the initial Staffordshire Moorlands Project, must ultimately depend upon resolving conflicts as well as achieving mutual objectives. This obviously limits the scope of NESTWOP, although as the Peak Park IRD Project has shown, such issues are perhaps best tackled at a different level and in a different arena.

#### **IV.4 Synopsis: Experiences Compared**

In this chapter, three joint agency rural development schemes have been examined from the perspective of the organisations/individuals concerned. This final section serves to consolidate these experiences and in so doing to identify the common characteristics of joint working. These in turn enable preliminary conclusions to be drawn regarding the nature of inter-organisational relationships and more specifically the implications for the future of integrated rural development.

All three schemes are based on the premise that agency collaboration/coordination is a desirable means by which to achieve effective and comprehensive rural development. Their administration and implementation are however very different. The Rural Development Programme relies on formal structures, the preparation of strategy documents and annual work programmes, coupled with financial inducement, to achieve a degree of coordination between the participating agencies. The Peak Park IRD project on the other hand, sought to achieve coordinated development primarily through the joint funding and administration of a unified grant incentive scheme. The Staffordshire Moorlands project is the least formal of the three schemes, relying on local liaison and agency good-will to achieve mutually agreed development objectives. Despite differences in approach, considerable similarities exist in terms of organisational

behaviour and characteristics observed. These are considered below.

In the first instance it is apparent that organisational motivations behind participation in the schemes serve to determine the quality of interaction. Interestingly, in both the RDP and Peak Park IRD project, reasons for participation have little to do with what one is led to believe are the benefits of coordination (preventing duplication of services, avoiding policy conflicts, sharing resources etc.), but considerably more to do with fulfilling organisational operating goals and objectives or furthering organisational ambitions; the acquisitions of power and the quest for status and prestige. Only in the Staffordshire Moorlands Project does there seem to be a genuine desire among participants to cooperate with others. Correspondingly, it is this project which has met with the greatest success in terms of joint working. The Peak Park IRD project, while serving a useful purpose in demonstrating that multi-sectoral public support measures can work to avoid conflict and actually meet several diverse development objectives, failed to secure a similar unity of purpose among the organisations concerned with its funding. The RDPs, with their heralded 'framework for coordination' have, in all but a minority of cases, become little more than a shopping list for Commission Funds.

Of the three initiatives, the Staffordshire Moorlands Project is the most modest in terms of its operating procedures and one must question if these too have a bearing on determining the outcome of joint working. It is certainly evident from the Peak Park IRD project, that the requirement to coordinate with others makes considerable demands upon the organisations concerned. Demands which they not only seek to avoid, but which frequently they are unable to meet. Organisations it seems, preciously guard their own functions, their own responsibilities and their own objectives, over and above all other considerations, however logical, at least to the observer, these other considerations may seem. Thus in the Peak Park scheme several organisations, despite the multi-sectoral emphasis of the project, sought to manage project funds to ensure that the

returns (in terms of appropriate sectoral development) equalled their investment (finance and officer time). Similarly another (MAFF) struggled and failed to introduce local flexibility into inflexible national measures.

On the basis of this experience it is perhaps little wonder that the RDPs have been unable to encourage agency coordination. It has been suggested that coordination cannot be expected given the present level of incentives and that more funds would equal more coordination (Rural Viewpoint, 1986). Conversely, the author would argue that given the realities of inter-organisational behaviour, more funding would not improve coordination, but merely encourage a longer shopping list! It is evident that organisations faced with the prospect of inter-agency coordination seek to manage the situation to ensure maximum "rewards" accrue at minimum "costs". Thus if organisations can continue to receive funding for projects (ie the rewards) without the need to relinquish any of their normal operations or autonomy (the costs), they will obviously continue to do so. Likewise in the Peak Park IRD scheme, the projects entire operations (as with funding) were carefully managed by participating agencies to ensure the status quo of members was preserved. Unfortunately, it would appear that the quest to protect organisational integrity is frequently at the expense of inter-agency coordination, with its wider benefits to the area concerned.

By contrast to the RDPs and Peak Park IRD Scheme, the Staffordshire Moorlands Project has focused on inter-agency cooperation and liaison as distinct from coordination. This approach, which respects each organisation's operations and seeks merely to pursue mutually common objectives, where they exist, has considerably fewer perceived 'costs' and consequently greater 'benefits' than the more ambitious coordinative efforts. It is therefore more likely to receive the necessary commitment from the organisations concerned. True, it cannot resolve areas of policy conflict, but on the basis of present experience it would appear that coordination is unlikely to succeed here either.

A final factor, which cannot be overlooked, is the role played by an organisation's officers/representatives in agency interaction. All three initiatives have demonstrated that, policy issues aside, it is the individual who determines the success or otherwise of joint working. As we have seen, agency interaction brings together individuals with different organisational perspectives, different priorities and different values. It is up to the individuals concerned to seek common ground on which to go forward. Put simply, a failure to recognise the opportunities that may exist, or a lack of understanding or appreciation of another's organisational cultures and operations, will serve to limit joint working. On the other hand, individuals who are receptive to new ventures, perceptive to the constraints under which others may work and above all, committed to achieving the objectives set, will play a valuable role in effecting successful agency interaction.

The experiences of inter-agency working recounted here do not bode well for future coordinative efforts, whether integrated rural development or in some other guise. These findings however, should not cause us to abandon the possibility of IRD prematurely. Instead we must seek to discover what lies behind the processes observed; to identify with certainty the parameters governing agency interaction and more specifically inter-organisational coordination. It is only then that we will be able to determine with confidence, the future course of IRD. This we leave for consideration in the following chapter.

## Notes

(1) In selecting RDAs the Development Commission have regard to six criteria set by the Government in March 1982. These were announced by the then Minister for Government and Environmental Services, the Rt. Hon. Tom King, MP.

They are as follows:

"(i) Unemployment is above the average for Great Britain, account being taken of changes in recent years.

- (ii) There is an inadequate or unsatisfactory range of employment opportunities.
- (iii) Population decline or sparsity of population is having an adverse effect.
- (iv) There is a net outward migration of people of working age.
- (v) The age structure of the population is biased towards elderly people.
- (vi) Access to services and facilities is poor. "

It is not necessary for all criteria to be satisfied but it was envisaged that most RDAs would meet the first criterion and one or more of the remainder. They can also be selected where a combination of any of the criteria indicates a concentration of problems. In addition two general rules are included in the selection procedure: the first, that towns with a population in excess of 10,000 should be excluded from RDAs: the second that there should be a minimum size for an RDA. Several indications of minimum size are used but in general an RDA should be no smaller than an average sized rural district, or 25 to 30 parishes. See: Development Commission, June 1984 The Designation of Rural Development Areas.

(2) These are, Northumberland, Durham, Cumbria, Cleveland, North Yorkshire, Lancashire, Humberside, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester, Norfolk, Suffolk, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, East Sussex, Kent, Isle of Wight, Cornwall and Scillies, Devon, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Dorset.

(3) Under the Miscellaneous Financial Provision Act, 1983, Section 1 and Schedules 1 & 3, the Development Commission became a grant-in-aid body with executive powers. This became effective from the 1st. April 1984. The duty placed on it by Parliament is: " The Development Commission shall keep under review and advise the Secretary of State upon all matters relating to the economic and social development of rural areas in England and may carry out and assist others to carry out measures likely to further such developments."

(4) For further information on project funding see, Development Commission (July 1985) Rural Development Programmes. Further guidance from the Development Commission, Appendices C & D; and RDP Guidelines Circular issued on the 25th. September 1986 which replaces appendices D1 & D5-D8 of the above document, relating to tourism and community development and rural services.

(5) Association of District Councils, 31st. October 1985, unpublished survey of the Rural Development Programme.

(6) Kent and East Sussex RDAs prepare a joint RDP submission, hence the twenty-eight RDAs are effectively reduced to twenty-seven.

(7) Incentives available relate to encouraging manufacturing and service projects in Assisted Areas which will create or safeguard employment. Project Grants, based on the capital costs of a project and on the number of jobs created or

maintained and Training Grants, based on training costs associated with the project, are available in all Assisted Areas (Development and Intermediate). In addition, Regional Development Grants, towards the assets and jobs provided as part of approved projects, are available in the Development Areas. These amount to 15 per cent of eligible capital expenditure £3,000 for each job created whichever is the higher. See Department of Trade and Industry (1985) Investment Support for Business. London: DTI.

(8) The Commission's formal response to this request was included in its 1984-85 Annual Report (p.5), and read, "We shall continue to look for ways by which European Community finance might be made available to assist our programme and would expect to look to the Government for support in this." The Association of County Councils also raised the issue with the Department of Environment. In their reply the DoE stated that it could legitimately be argued that such areas were nationally aided areas and, in principle, eligible. At some point in the future Ministers might want to make the point in Brussels. They did not think however that now was the time, for tactical reasons. (Department of Environment response reported in the Minutes of the 'Rural Problems and Needs' Sub Committee of the Association of District Councils, 18th. July 1984: 260).

(9) Tourism and Recreation Research Unit, (August 1981); Dower, J. (1945); National Parks Committee (1947); National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949; Dept. of the Environment (1973) Circular 63/73; National Park Policies Review Committee (1974).

(10) The Peak Park Joint Planning Board differs from other national park authorities in that it has its own staff (all others are administered on a part time basis by officers of the county councils) and carries out a full range of town and country planning duties - normally the responsibility of the local authorities. For more information on the structure of national park authorities see Dept. of the Environment (1973) op. cit.

(11) The Peak District National Park is unique in this respect. No other national park authority has responsibility for the preparation of a Structure Plan and no other Structure Plan cuts across county boundaries to relate solely to a national park.

(12) Under MAFF's revised Agriculture Improvement Scheme introduced in 1985 grants of 60 per cent are available for traditional walling and of 30 per cent for walling or fencing using non-traditional materials. These rates refer to Less Favoured Areas.

(13) For example: tourism projects received a grant of 50 per cent, compared with the English Tourist Board's normal rate of 25 per cent; community schemes receiving grants from other sources received an additional 50 per cent grant to cover part of the costs borne by the village; and rates for agricultural improvement and management grants were decided on an individual basis but

generally offered some financial advantage over MAFF grants.

(14) Many of the conventional grant schemes had eligibility conditions that effectively precluded small scale projects. Elements of MAFF's grant schemes, for example, were not available to part time farmers. Similarly, to qualify for English Tourist Board grants required a minimum investment of £5,000, a sum inappropriate for many small village tourism projects.

(15) An assessment of local community reaction to the IRD project was not undertaken at the request of the Peak Board, who were concerned that participating villages were becoming a 'honey pot' for researchers. Information on community involvement is contained in the official report, PPJPB (1984) A Tale of Two Villages. To paraphrase the report, the majority of residents supported the project, although there was some concern at the pace of development and growth in tourism.

(16) A full assessment of the socio-economic situation in the Staffordshire Moorlands can be found in Staffordshire County Council (1983). North East Staffordshire Rural Development Area Designation. Response to the Development Commission.

## CHAPTER V

### INTER-ORGANISATIONAL COORDINATION: A MODEL OF THE DYNAMICS

In the preceding chapter three rural development initiatives, demonstrating varying degrees of organisational integration/coordination were examined and general conclusions drawn as to their success or otherwise in fulfilling their stated objectives. This chapter, drawing upon complementary studies of inter-organisational decision making, seeks to proffer explanations for that observed and in so doing, to formulate a conceptual model of the dynamics of inter-organisational coordination. This will highlight the antecedents for coordination and the factors that subsequently come into play to facilitate or inhibit successful joint working: a necessary precursor to that ultimate goal, integrated rural development.

#### V.1 Coordination Defined

As we saw in chapter II the term 'coordination' is widely used in the context of rural administration and more specifically as the means by which integrated rural development can be realised. As with any word drafted from common usage to one of technical status there is a danger of a lack of consistency in its use and its definition. It is therefore important here to develop and present a definition that is consistent with the context in which it is used and consequently capable of being evaluated as to its implications. The dictionary definition provides a useful starting point:

Coordination: "the action of arranging; or condition of being arranged or combined, in due order or proper relation...harmonious combination of agents or functions towards the production of a result"

(Oxford English Dictionary, 1989).

Building upon this, several writers have advanced specific definitions relating to organisational coordination. Warren et al. suggest coordination should be regarded as:

"a structure or process of concerted decision making or action wherein the decisions or action of two or more organisations are made simultaneously in part or in whole with some deliberate degree of adjustment to each other."

(Warren et al., 1974: 69)

A similar definition, again focusing on organisational decision making is advanced by Mulford and Rogers:

"Integrated coordination is the process whereby two or more organisations create and/or use existing decision rules that have been established to deal collectively with their shared task environment."

(Mulford and Rogers, 1982: 12)

Two simpler definitions have also been proposed which make greater reference to the general dictionary definition. Aiken et al. describe coordination as the:

"articulation of elements....so that comprehensiveness of, compatibility among and cooperation among elements are maximised."

(Aiken et al., 1975: 9)

Hall and associates quite simply state:

"Coordination is the extent to which organisations attempt to ensure that their activities take into account those of other organisations."

(Hall et al., 1977: 459)

In terms of a readily accessible definition which reflects the generality of use afforded to 'coordination' in the various critiques on England's rural administrative system (see Chapter II), that proposed by Hall et al. appears to be the most appropriate. However, this said, Hall's definition fails to consider the actual processes involved in achieving coordination. Such an over-simplification does not dispose itself well to organisational and administrative reality. It is therefore useful to consolidate the elements contained in the four definitions above and conclude that the process of inter-organisational coordination implies:-

(i) the recognition of a shared concern/environment;

(ii) the presence of rules (set by a third party or by the participants) to encourage or manage coordination;

(iii) the need for joint decisions and actions;

(iv) a degree of 'give and take' on the part of those concerned;

(v) the need to adjust or modify individual organisational objectives in order to ensure compatibility with those of others;

(vi) the potential loss of organisational autonomy.

Adding a human facet to this equation, one may also propose that the process of inter-organisational coordination further demands the presence of skilled and committed individuals.

## V.2 Why Coordinate?

Accepting that the demands coordination places upon an organisation's operations are not inconsequential, it is obvious that such a measure will not be taken without good reason. The implication of this truism is that the quality of coordination will invariably be linked to the motives that have brought it about. Taking this a step further, one may assume that coordination undertaken voluntarily is more likely to be successful than that imposed. If this supposition is indeed correct it follows that the success of integrated rural development is dependent upon the nature of the coordinative effort. One fundamental question emerges: how does one encourage rather than enforce inter-organisational coordination?

### V.2a The concept of exchange

The dominant theoretical perspective on inter-organisational relations, which

extends to the more specific process of coordination, is the exchange theory formulated by Levine and White (1961). This states that exchange is voluntary and will be initiated only when an organisation needs to do so in order to fulfil its organisational 'goals' or objectives and where mutual benefits (normally in the form of resources, monetary, staff or service based) accrue to the parties concerned. This concept, derived from research on coordination strategies of community health and welfare agencies, has proved to be applicable across the organisational spectrum and consequently remains the basis for further enquiry and continual refinement.

An important new dimension to the exchange concept has been advanced by Silverman (1970), Warren (1972) and Leach (1980) who argue that organisational 'interests' as opposed to organisational goals provide a more useful framework for explaining inter-agency behaviour. The distinction between these two elements is an important one. Goals are the publicly stated aims and objectives of an organisation, whereas interests are defined as, "those implicit unstated aims which reflect the common interests of its members in terms of career prospects; status and power." (Leach, 1980: 288). These organisational interests may be applicable to the organisation in its entirety or there may be various organisational subsets, representing the interests of individual departments. Whether organisational or departmental, Leach suggests that the most fundamental 'interest' is that of survival. Indeed, there is considerable evidence to suggest that this is the prime factor motivating inter-agency coordination (see Burton, 1982). Thus an agency threatened with loss of autonomy, resources, power or responsibility, will freely and voluntarily search for other organisations that can help it reduce the threat. Conversely, there may be other instances where an organisation perceives that its survival is actually threatened by coordination with others and seeks to evade joint action (see later).

In situations where the quest for survival is not an issue, organisations and departments within organisations have a general interest in protecting, and where opportunities arise, expanding their existing functions and resources. In

addition to these primary interests, Leach suggests a number of additional interests are also commonly pursued, notably maximisation of autonomy and development of a favourable public image. As the reader will recall, prestige and public image were the primary reasons given for organisational involvement in the Peak Park Integrated Rural Development Project. These primary and secondary interests along with organisational goals come into play at two levels of inter-organisational relations. They govern whether or not coordination is undertaken and subsequently influence, as we shall discover later, how that coordination is managed. In some instances, as in the Rural Development Commission's Rural Development Programme (RDP) initiative, goals and interests may interact together. Thus the need to fulfil predetermined organisational objectives, through funding for local development projects, has proved to be the primary incentive for local agency involvement; whereas the Rural Development Commission's motives are more closely akin to those of organisational interest, seizing an opportunity to expand its role and subsequently its power base. Given the recent jostling for the rural portfolio at central government level this is hardly a surprising move.

A further dimension to the exchange model is provided by Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) who state that interaction will only occur when the 'rewards' of doing so exceed the perceived 'costs'. Propensity to exchange, they suggest, will therefore increase as the benefits increase. Moreover, such benefits must accrue to all parties concerned in the coordinative process. If mutual gains do not exist or if a gain to one organisation means a loss to another, co-ordination will simply not occur. This pattern of behaviour was clearly evident in the case studies presented earlier. Witness the concern of RDP participants over the 'costs' of organisational time versus the 'benefits' of project funding, and the problems faced by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food (MAFF) in the IRD project when the benefits of 'prestige' became increasingly outweighed by the 'costs' of adapting organisational policy.

As a final point, it is worth noting that research by Hall *et al.* (1977) indicates that inter-organisational coordination occurs in both situations of consensus and conflict, assuming of course that the usual conditions governing interaction are fulfilled (i.e. where mutual benefits accrue to the parties concerned). Stewart (1980) has similarly suggested that clear situations of either conflict or consensus are likely to lead to interaction, primarily because they are visible. They relate to issues and problems which both organisations are aware they have to handle and they recognise the shared area of concern. It is possible of course that potential joint interactions are not perceived. This is most likely to occur when an organisation fails to consider the full affect of its activities and the degree to which they impinge on others, or where no formal obligations to liaise exist. These factors are considered in detail in section V.3.

### **V.2b Mandated relationships**

Levine and White's exchange model is primarily concerned with explaining the process of voluntary organisational interaction, however many interorganisational relationships, particularly in the public sector, are obligatory. For example, county councils, as planning authorities, are legally required to liaise with their district counterparts over structure and local plans, development control and vice versa. Since few legal mandates prescribe the total scope of coordination(1), the factors influencing the willingness with which the organisations involved comply with the requirement to coordinate are of relevance here.

There are two schools of thought, both of which focus on the costs versus rewards analogy described above. Moore and Leach (1979) suggest that as the 'benefits' (ie. the desirability) of interaction have already been determined and identified by Parliament, the decision makers of each organisation will be mainly concerned with the 'costs' of coordination. Conversely, Hall *et al.* (1977) argue that as the legal mandate has already defined the roles of the interacting organisations (where costs are normally perceived to lie), the positive evaluations, ie. the 'benefits' are more important. The author supports the view of Moore and Leach, for as we shall discover later, in the majority of cases

organisations are more concerned with minimising the costs of coordination than reaping its benefits. Moreover, Parliament's perception of 'benefits' may not necessarily concur with those of the organisations concerned.

### **V.3 The Determinants of Coordination**

In addition to the cost/benefit perspective discussed above, other factors also come into play to facilitate or constrain the decision to coordinate and indeed the coordinative activity itself. Broadly speaking two sets of inter-related variables can be identified. The first are best described as contextual or structural. These relate to organisational characteristics such as size, functions, internal hierarchies and administrative arrangements and to the external, or environmental conditions, which impinge upon an organisation's operations. These structural variables in turn influence the attitudes and values held by agency personnel. These are referred to as the perceptual variables of interagency relations.

#### **V.3a Contextual variables**

No two organisations are the same. Each has its own concerns and its own pattern of operations. Consequently, the potential for structural and functional differences between organisations is considerable. Some organisations have broad functional responsibilities, others are single purpose, some operate nationally, some regionally and some at a county or district level. An organisation may be politically controlled, or it may not; it may have its own source of income or rely on government funding. Organisations may be centralised or decentralised, have one unit of administration or several.

From looking at patterns of inter-agency coordination in the previous chapter, it is evident that the extent and nature of structural differences between concerned organisations play a key role in determining the ease or otherwise of collaboration. Mandated relationships apart, one of the most common factors

facilitating coordination is that of organisational interdependence, a situation exemplified by local government with its two tier system of county and district councils. Organisational inter-dependency can take one of a number of different forms. These have been classified by Moore and Leach using local government as a model and are as follows:

"1. Dependence upon common, and usually limited resources; e.g. personnel, finance, supplies, customers.

2. Hierarchical dependence; where one party acts as the agent of the other or operates delegated powers...

3. Functional inter-dependencies; where two organisations are involved in various ways with carrying out similar or interrelated functions. Three types of functional interdependence can be identified:

a) Pooled - where both parties provide similar services in a supplementary, but not competitive manner

b) Sequential - for example as between a supplier and purchaser.

c) Reciprocal - where both parties have to interact intensively to provide a service, produce goods or reach a decision...."

(Moore and Leach, 1979: 276)

There are areas of imperfection in these definitions, nevertheless they provide a useful synopsis of the administrative structures conducive to organisational coordination. In all the situations described above, coordination can frequently be a desirable goal, whether it be to eliminate duplication, rationalise services, pool resources or share information. It should be remembered that the decision to coordinate will ultimately be influenced by the perceived benefits and costs of interaction discussed above. This will depend upon the relative degrees of interdependence between the agencies concerned and the balance of power. The latter of course determines the share of benefits and costs each participant receives. It should be noted that there will be situations where coordination is not possible because a gain to one organisation will mean a loss to another.

In addition to organisational interdependence, the decision to coordinate is made much easier if, as with the North East Staffordshire Working Party (NESTWOP), concerned organisations are based in the same vicinity. This

allows informal working relationships to be established between personnel without the obligations formalised coordination brings. Such interaction enables the identification of shared areas of concern and possible crossmatches between objectives and resources. It also facilitates the recognition of benefits to be gained from coordinative action. Moreover, where potential coordination is based within a specific area, this can provide local organisations with the necessary point of reference, a shared common ground, upon which to build a collaborative relationship. As we shall discover later, this is particularly important if functional responsibilities are not common to both.

An interesting concept regarding inter-organisational relationships is advanced by Leach (1980), who suggests that the ability of an organisation to enter into a relationship is dependent upon its 'organisational energy'. This is defined as the number of personnel an organisation has operating at its boundary and capable of interaction with those of other organisations. Thus there will be a tendency for larger organisations to have more 'organisational energy' and therefore manage more inter-organisational relationships than small organisations. Although this concept was originally developed to explain conflictual relationships it is equally applicable to coordinative ventures which similarly place considerable demands on staff time. It is certainly a situation the author observed among small organisations in the course of this research.

There is however, another side to this argument. While larger organisations may have the potential for greater coordinative activity, their very size and complexity may limit its effectiveness. Not least, large organisations with several administrative tiers frequently suffer from their own internal communication problems which can make it difficult to sustain a viable inter-organisational network. Besides communication problems, key decision-makers in large organisations are generally distant either geographically or administratively from the actual coordination process. Consequently, attempts at coordination can involve poor administrative support and large quantities of red tape. The same can also be said of highly centralised organisations. The

Rural Development Commission's attempt to manage local coordination initiatives through its centralised decision-making machinery is a good example of the difficulties that can ensue. The criticisms levelled at the Commission by its local Rural Development Programme partners have been documented earlier; suffice it to say here that the bureaucracy encountered has led to calls from a number of local RDP groups for decision-making to be, "...decentralised to a level at which detailed knowledge of the relative merits (of projects) is readily available." (pers. comm. April 1986). A call which, as from this year, appears to have been answered, with the Commission's new regional offices coming on-stream. The frustrations felt by RDP participants are also indicative of the problems that can result from structural differences between organisations.

Whether structural differences relate to administrative arrangements, funding mechanisms, budgetary cycles or policy areas, all will tend to act as disincentives to coordination. There are two main reasons for this. First, it is difficult to coordinate activity if organisational systems are out of step with each other. The RDPs, for example, have been hindered by the different budgetary cycles of local authorities and the Rural Development Commission. Similar problems can arise in attempting to reconcile the grant aid systems of different organisations. This problem was highlighted in respect of MAFF who, because of the statutory nature of grants, was unable to afford the flexibility of scheme funding demanded of it in the Peak Park IRD project. The RDPs have encountered similar problems:

"There was some difficulty incorporating programmes of agencies like the Countryside Commission and the Sports Council whose grants are responsible to opportunity and decided on a different set of criteria."

(Hurr, 1985: 16)

A further structural problem relates to the differences in organisational assumptions (Stewart, 1980: 259) that invariably exist between any two agencies. Organisational assumptions are formed by personnel on the basis of experience of their own organisation: its policies, decision making, methods of operation etc. Consequently, the greater the variations in structural arrangements between organisations, the greater the differences in organisational assumptions between

those responsible for inter-agency coordination. This situation can be further exacerbated if organisational differences also coincide with professional differences, for example, a local authority planner liaising with a health authority social worker. In a situation of this type there is no common ground on which to build a relationship: both organisations have very different structures and policy concerns and both professions, different values and different attitudes. The more marked the differences in organisational assumptions, the more difficult inter-organisational coordination is likely to become.

Beyond the organisational level, one also finds that external environmental factors play a role in determining coordination. Benson *et al.* (1973) showed how volatility within the political economy generates environmental uncertainty and turbulence for organisations, motivating them towards initiating coordination activities. An unstable or turbulent operating environment can arise for several reasons. It may be that the environment of the organisation is changing so rapidly that it becomes difficult or impossible for it to scan it effectively and respond appropriately to any changes. Alternatively, it may be that the problems that an organisation is attempting to deal with are complex and ill-defined, or that the role of the organisation or the effects of services it provides are uncertain. The quest for coordination, as a result of environmental uncertainty, has been attributed to MAFF, which in the early 1980s experienced consistent criticism of its disregard for wider rural policies. In discussing the reasons for MAFF's sudden desire to coordinate, one representative from a Countryside Agency retorted,

"MAFF needs to coordinate. It is very aware that given the current climate, its power base could ebb away if it isn't seen to be cooperating with others."  
(pers. comm. April 1984)

The preceding discussion has highlighted some of the factors that come into play to facilitate or hinder inter-organisational coordination. It has not, however, offered any explanation as to why broadly comparable organisations respond differently in apparently similar situations, and why some succeed in inter-agency

coordination and others do not. In our search for satisfactory answers to these questions we must look to the role of individuals as determinants of inter-organisational coordination.

### **V.3b Perceptual variables**

Despite the bureaucracy associated with most organisations, there remains considerable scope for individuals to influence, within the context of the organisational structures set, the nature and quality of inter-agency coordination. The key players are obviously those holding the boundary positions, ie., those most likely to enter into relationships with individuals from other organisations. It is their responsibility to identify areas of potential joint interest and where appropriate to initiate coordinative action.

Depending on prevailing organisational policies, boundary personnel may have a certain amount of discretion as to whether to initiate coordination or to withdraw from the situation. In the course of this decision making, an individual's own personal concerns will be considered alongside the more conventional organisational concerns. Individuals may, for example, perceive that coordination provides the opportunity to further their own interests and ambitions, the likelihood of promotion etc. (this motive, perhaps unfairly, was attributed to certain individuals in the Peak Park IRD project). Conversely, coordination with its joint decisions and multiple accountability, may be seen as a threat to an individual's standing, the fear of "being taken over and losing privileges" (pers. comm. July 1986). Consideration will also be given to the ease of relating to those from other organisations; do they share the same organisational assumptions and professional values which will assist in communication? The more an individual is aware of organisational or professional disparity between themselves and those from another agency, so the likelihood of coordination is reduced:

"Probably first amongst disincentives to collaboration is the notion of different perspectives of the groups involved."

(pers. comm. July, 1986)

The same respondent also suggested:

"A further disincentive to full-blooded cooperation is the suspicion that this introduces another barrier to progress; a self-imposed obligation to go out to consultation with people who one does not actually need to talk to before proceeding."

(pers. comm. July, 1986)

Where individuals representing organisations of very different persuasions do come together, the differences in perceptions of problems, solutions and methods of working cannot only be very striking but it may also frustrate the coordinative effort. Using Peak Park IRD project as a point of reference, four key problem areas can be identified: first, there is the presence of different interests and attitudes between professional groups, often resulting in friction and rivalry; second, the lack of understanding of the roles of individuals and the interests they represent; third, the lack of understanding and appreciation of the internal operations and cultures of other organisations, and fourth, because of two and three above, the unreasonable expectations of the ability of others to effect changes within their organisations.

It is evident that the skills required to manage inter-organisational coordination in a sensitive and selective manner are considerable(2). Primarily, individuals working across organisational boundaries must be flexible and receptive to change. They should not be entrenched within a single corporate ideology nor immersed in a single cultural framework, whether professional or institutional. It is important that they are able to appreciate the cultural setting in which their counterpart on the other side of the organisational boundary operates, and where coordination also cuts across functional boundaries, to remain receptive to activities that may be outside their usual field of concern. In addition, individuals must have the confidence, the ability and a certain degree of autonomy, to be able to reconcile or overcome potential conflicts between the demands of coordination on the one hand and those of their organisation on the other.

The probability of successful joint working is also greatly enhanced when individuals of the respective organisations share a common commitment to the overall aims of the coordinative venture and are able to agree upon the problems, issues and solutions and to identify the opportunities that exist through joint action. While this may appear to be stating the obvious, it is suggested that this situation is far from common. Indeed, of the three case studies detailed in the preceding chapter, only one of the three, the North East Staffordshire Officers Working Party, was able to fulfil these requirements.

The role of individuals in the inter-organisational coordination process cannot be too strongly emphasised. While the contextual or structural factors of organisations provide the framework in which coordinative activity must be conducted, it is ultimately the attitudes and skills of the individual which will determine the way in which the opportunities are realised. This was certainly the belief of those interviewed during the course of the author's research and the quotation below is representative of the views expressed:

"The personal contact cannot be under-rated. The best system in the world will simply break down if the participants don't get on or commitment is lacking."  
(pers. comm. April, 1986)

#### **V.4 Coordination Versus Status Quo**

From the analysis presented so far it is evident that coordination is undertaken in order to further organisational goals and interests. It follows therefore, that organisations will seek to manage any coordinative action to ensure the desired outcome is realised and that in the process their integrity in terms of goals and interests is preserved: ie maximum 'rewards' with minimum 'costs'. The tendency for organisations to fight to remain the same, described as 'dynamic conservatism' by Schon (1971) is, as we discovered in the preceding chapter, very much in evidence throughout the coordination process. Moreover, certain common concerns relating to the maintenance of status quo are readily identifiable. The author suggests that these apply to both voluntary and mandated coordination, although in the latter the self-preservation instinct may be more intense.

At the most fundamental level an organisation is always committed to protecting and maintaining its domain; the right to operate in specific geographical and functional areas with access to the necessary resources. Organisations therefore, do not wish to weaken their position by sharing their domain with others, nor indeed do they wish to share their resources with others. They seek instead to retain their supremacy, autonomy and exclusivity. A telling example is provided by an officer of the Rural Development Commission, who when asked about the role of MAFF in countryside affairs, retorted:

"The Ministry's limit is the farm gate. It wanted to extend its role, but we pushed it firmly back and shut the gate tight."

(pers. comm. April, 1986)

A further example of the importance organisations attach to protecting existing functions is provided by Leach:

"One of the most striking features of county - district relationships since reorganisation has been the development of 'county-boroughitis', a term coined to describe the way in which these (district) authorities have proved particularly uncooperative and antagonistic in their dealings with related counties. This phenomenon is directly attributable to the resentment felt by such authorities...over the loss of valued functions such as education, social services and highways to the new county authorities."

(Leach, 1980: 291)

While an organisation is seeking to preserve its domain it also works to protect its independence or autonomy: it wishes to govern rather than be governed. The line between autonomy and power is a subtle one. The more an organisation is able to control other agencies with which it interacts (ie. the more powerful it is), the more it is able to set the terms of interaction and the less vulnerable it becomes to the interest furthering behaviour of other agencies ie. the greater autonomy it can display. Benson (1975) has identified a variety of effects that inter-organisational power can bring to bear upon inter-organisational relationships. A powerful agency, can for example, defend its flow of resources (monetary and authority), protect existing, and claim new domains, resist the advance of less powerful agencies and block the creation of competitors. Its power lies in the control of resources, including the flow of resources to other

agencies. It will exert this control in a number of ways. It may impose constraints on new agencies, relating to their operation and accountability, or force them to accept its terms in negotiations to settle joint programmes or disputes. Thus power permits one agency to reach across agency boundaries and determine policies and practices in weaker organisations. Failure or refusal of the weaker organisation to accede to the demands of the stronger can, according to Benson, have serious repercussions for the resource procurement of the weaker one. Such use of power is amply illustrated in the current Government's hold over local authorities.

The desire to maintain organisational status quo is according to Schon (1971) and Ranson *et al.* (1980) rooted firmly in the employees need for stability and predictability of employment and task. Any disruption to the internal order of the organisation will threaten to some extent those employees in areas directly affected by the change. These individuals will have been allocated, and over time created, their own task domains, authority and communication networks. Change may demand organisational restructuring and consequently any threat to organisational stability will engender staff resistance:

"People talk of coordinating and occasionally come together, but when it comes to the nitty gritty they have their own corner to protect and have to justify their own positions."

(pers. comm. April, 1985)

Assuming overall stability is not at stake, individuals will continue to act to ensure any joint activities are in the best interest of the organisation concerned. They view problems and opportunities from a relatively entrenched organisational position and remain committed to fulfilling their organisation's established objectives and programmes over and above any new coordinative venture, unless of course it helps to further organisational ambitions. This organisational loyalty can cause considerable difficulties for individuals who may find that organisational policies are pulling in one direction and the demands emanating from coordination in another. This situation can be further exacerbated if the implications of coordination extend beyond the concerned officer's or department's responsibilities to others within the organisation. Such

a problem confronted a County Council Planning Department participating in the RDP, who was told of a proposed rural school closure by its Education Department, (a move contrary to the overall RDP objectives but in accordance with the Council's education policy). The officer concerned explained the situation he faced:

"It's all a question of allegiance, and my allegiance must be to the County Council. The Planning Department cannot be seen to be chairing a body (the RDP officers Working Party) which is contesting another Council Department"  
(pers. comm. April, 1985)

A further stumbling block in the quest for coordination concerns the supply and maintenance of adequate resources, primarily money, with which to fund an organisation's activities. Finance is characteristically in short supply and organisations are frequently unable or unwilling to divert funds from core programmes to fringe activities, particularly if benefits to the organisation concerned do not appear to merit the investment required. Obviously no hard and fast rule can be devised. In some instances, (eg. the Rural Development Programmes) it is the attraction of joint finance for a particular scheme which leads to coordination. In other situations however, as in the Peak Park IRD project, demands for joint funding can place considerable pressure on an organisation's basic instinct of protecting and pursuing its own interests, hence the English Tourist Board's request for assurances that its contribution would be used exclusively for tourism projects. Even in the RDPs, organisational reality has had to be accepted:

"The Rural Development Programme brings together and tries to relate individual activities of different agencies but obviously it cannot integrate them to one programme, since the executive responsibility and the freedom to defer their expenditure remains with each agency."

(Hurr, 1985: 17)

The assumption that organisations need to have access to and control over money and authority led Benson *et al.* (1973) to suggest that organisations, in pursuit of an adequate supply of these resources, follow a number of operational decision criteria or rules which govern inter-agency relations. While the starting

point is somewhat more restrictive than that used here, the conditions identified are very similar to the author's own observations and are summarised in the following quotation:

"A. The fulfilment of program requirements.

The organisation is orientated to the order and effectiveness in its established programs...agency officials are reluctant to undertake tasks or to tolerate practices of other agencies which interfere with the fulfilment of present programmes. And they will exert pressure upon other agencies to cease practices disruptive of program requirements.

B. The maintenance of a clear domain of high social importance.

...administrators are orientated to the maintenance of clear-cut, uncluttered claim that includes a set of important activities. Such a domain is characterised by one or more of the following attributes:

i) exclusiveness...ii) autonomy...iii) dominance...

C. The maintenance of orderly, reliable patterns of resource flow.

...organisations are orientated to see that the support network operates in a predictable, dependable way that permits the agency to anticipate an adequate and certain flow of services.

D. The extended application and defence of an agency's paradigm

...organisation participants are committed to their agency's way of doing things and to its own definitions of problems and tasks and its own techniques of intervention. Organisations which use or espouse other approaches are seen as irresponsible or immoral. And, efforts are made to ensure that the 'proper' definitions and techniques are adopted.

(Benson et al., 1973: 112-3)

The presence of this undercurrent of self-interest during the coordination process means there is a danger that coordination may be compromised in favour of preserving organisational status quo. The failure of organisations participating in the Peak Park IRD project to formulate common development objectives is such an example. By evading the issue they were able to minimise the potential constraints under which they had to operate and in so doing avoided having to make any organisational compromise for the sake of coordination or the project. This phenomenon is not peculiar to the IRD

project, but is observed regularly in inter-organisational decision making. Skelcher (1982) describes a similar situation in his study of the updating of the West Midlands Regional Strategy, and Walton points out:

"In the inter-agency decision making meetings which I have observed I have been struck by the amount of behaviour that is not directed toward either problem solving or bargaining over their respective preferences regarding the substantive issues which divide them, but rather is devoted to defeating the inter-agency process and making the outcome as ambiguous or innocuous as possible."

(Walton, 1972: 108)

The desire to preserve organisational integrity can also manifest itself in other ways during agency interaction, which are similarly destructive. Thus one respondent observed:

"There seems to be a natural reticence on the part of organisations to 'bear their soul' to other groups - I do not know if this characteristic is particularly British or whether it is to be found worldwide. This reluctance to share information and ideas about a particular project or area is detrimental to the idea of joint planning and integrated development."

(pers. comm. July, 1986)

It is suggested that the processes described above are particularly common in mandated situations, although as the IRD project demonstrates, not confined to them. With respect to mandated coordination Halpert (1982) likens the problem to a 'Catch 22'. If the organisation coordinates it is very possible it may lose its autonomy and witness havoc to its internal structure and processes. If it doesn't however, it will not survive because of its dependence on society for legitimacy. Thus agencies as Walton describes, seek to minimise their mutual dependency by ensuring the parameters are set as broad as is feasible. Leach (1980) suggests that the efforts made by district councils to keep county structure plans as general as possible and to challenge any attempts at the inclusion of 'unnecessary' detail may clearly be seen as attempts to retain as much freedom as can be permitted within the bounds of the statutory planning framework. County councils on the other hand see an improved structure plan as a powerful tool for bringing recalcitrant district councils into line. Aldrich's (1975) study of social service organisations in the United States similarly found that mandated

interactions tend to be unbalanced in favour of one organisation, and again associated with lower levels of coordination than those relationships entered into voluntarily. The difficulties engendered in achieving genuine coordination, whether voluntary or mandatory led one research team examining the coordination of public investment programmes in England to conclude that:

"Authorities should be highly selective in attempting to introduce formal machinery of inter-agency working, concentrating on limited and tangible tasks which would not be seen as too threatening to the primary responsibilities of the agencies concerned..."

(Friend, 1980: 267)

## **V.5 Coordinating Strategies**

The range of strategies available for joint action and joint decision making has been well-documented by Thompson (1967), Lindblom (1965), Warren (1967) and Mulford and Rogers (1982). Broadly speaking, three categories can be identified: standardised, alliance and mutual adjustment. These vary primarily in terms of the balance achieved between individual organisational interests and those of collective responsibility. Standardised or corporate strategies are, as the name suggests, the most formal and restrictive of the three types of strategy employed and are characterised by a simple administrative structure and central control. This control is usually achieved through the use of regulations which constrain the actions of each agency into paths consistent with those taken by others in the relationship. The emphasis is on the pursuit of collective goals which means that inter-agency decisions must become part of the programme of each member organisation. In some instances an organisation may be requested to change its structure and programmes to make them more consistent with the overall strategy. Standardised strategies are commonly found within intra-organisational systems, local government for example. The Peak Park IRD Project was, in some respects, run along similar lines.

Alliance strategies represent efforts to coordinate autonomous organisations without the authority of a formal hierarchy. The types of alliance strategies are very wide, encompassing everything between mutual adjustment and corporate strategies. In general the emphasis is on establishing, through negotiation, policies and procedures that guide participating agencies. There will be collective goals but individual agency goals are also represented. In alliance strategies control will lie either with a central administrative unit or with member organisations. The Rural Development Commission's RDP initiative provides an excellently conceived example of an alliance strategy.

Coordination by mutual adjustment is the least formal of the strategies. Authority remains with each agency and the primary concern of participants is the achievement of their own goals. Consequently there are few shared goals towards which the member agencies work and where they do emerge, they are apt to be only temporary. Coordination therefore occurs by negotiation and bargaining between member agencies who sub-optimize their own goals and objectives to achieve solutions. Thus the group's actions are the result of 'give and take' with autonomy preserved and original interests and goals compromised as little as possible. The workings of NESTWOP could be described as coordination by mutual adjustment.

The type of strategy employed can vary over time. In some instances organisations may wish to move from an informal arrangement to one which formalises the details of their relationship (Moore and Leach, 1979). Conversely, informality may supersede the formal machinery of inter-agency working if it no longer appears to be fulfilling a useful purpose (Friend, 1980), or where sufficient trust has built up between those concerned. This said, it is suggested that given an organisation's preoccupation with the preservation of its domain, autonomy, resources, policies etc. it will, wherever possible, seek to manage coordination through mutual adjustment. In addition to the IRD project described earlier, an excellent case study is provided by Friend, Power and Yewlett (1974) who document the decision making processes of three agencies

(Birmingham City Council, Worcestershire County Council and Droitwich District Council) while working jointly on the town expansion scheme in Droitwich.

## **V.6 The Dynamics of Inter-organisational Coordination:**

### **A Synopsis and Model**

In the preceding sections we have explored the processes relating to inter-organisational coordination. We have identified the organisational motivations behind coordination, the organisational structures which serve to facilitate or inhibit coordinative action and the mechanisms by which it is managed. From this body of work it is possible to develop a prescriptive model of inter-organisational coordination. This must be sufficiently broad as to be applicable across the organisational spectrum and sufficiently practical in its approach to be of value not only to the organisational theorist but also to the practitioner.

In developing a model of inter-organisational coordination, four common characteristics can be identified:

- (i) An organisation's behaviour is governed by the need to protect and where opportunities arise, to sustain itself and to further its own goals and interests.
- (ii) The basis for coordination is exchange: organisations will enter into coordination only when the 'rewards' of doing so exceed the 'costs'. 'Rewards' serve to further an organisation's goals and interests, whereas 'costs' are perceived as those which hinder or threaten their fulfilment.
- (iii) Structural and perceptual differences between organisations act as barriers to effective coordination.
- (iv) The individual is an important element in the coordinative process.

Developing these points a stage further it is also evident that:

(v) Coordination is perceived as a threat to an organisation's status quo. Organisations will therefore, seek to manage coordination to ensure their integrity is compromised as little as possible.

(vi) In some instances the strategies employed to preserve organisational integrity may negate the very purpose of the coordinative action.

(vii) The role of the individual is the most unpredictable element in inter-organisational relations.

It follows therefore, that for inter-organisational coordination to be successful it will invariably:

(a) be undertaken voluntarily;

(b) have clear organisational benefits accruable to all parties concerned;

(c) involve organisations and individuals of similar cultures;

(d) pose little threat to organisational integrity;

(e) have the commitment of skilled individuals.

From this perspective it is clear that inter-organisational coordination cannot be readily assured through encouragement or chastisement, nor can it be successfully enforced through the imposition of controls or conditions. Thus we may conclude: organisations will only enter into genuine coordination with others when it suits them, and then only in line with their own interests and according to their own terms. Accepting that the concept of IRD is founded on the very premise that organisations will coordinate, these findings highlight the

greatest strategic problem facing its successful implementation: how does one overcome such organisational prejudice? There is no satisfactory answer.

### Notes

(1) See for example, the Government guidelines regarding coordination between county and district councils: DoE, (Dec. 1972) Circular 131/72; DoE (1973) Circular 74/73.

(2) The term 'reticulist' was coined by Power (1971) to identify those individuals operating at the boundary of organisations who possess the necessary authority and skills to manage the system within which they operate in a creative manner in order to satisfy the demands of inter-agency working.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLAND UNREALISED AND UNREALISTIC**

The purpose of this thesis has been to gain an understanding of the dynamics of England's rural administrative system at a time of growing pressure for better coordination/integration of its disparate and distinct parts. Much of the author's enquiry has centred upon the study of inter-organisational relationships. The aim has been identify the key parameters which may be used to explain the organisational behaviour observed and to assess the potential for greater inter-agency coordination and integration in the future. This chapter serves as a commentary on the observations and preliminary conclusions presented in preceding chapters and from these develops the final research conclusions and recommendations. These reflect on the present institutional structures that constitute rural administration in England and consider, within this context, whether integrated rural development is a viable development approach.

#### **VI.1 The three 'C's of IRD: Context, Concepts and Connotations**

Current interest in integrated rural development (IRD) should be seen primarily as a reaction against the shortcomings engendered in existing institutional structures. It has been argued, by academics and practitioners alike, that given the multitude of different agencies engaged in some aspect or other of rural affairs, many with objectives of dubious compatibility, greater emphasis must be placed on ensuring adequate arrangements for coordination exist between them. The fundamental issue is one of administrative reform, albeit modest, which will serve to alleviate some of the current, yet given the breadth of rural

development, inevitable problems of fragmented administration. Thus new or modified structures are required which will counteract the compartmentalised, sectoral divides of organisational responsibilities (see fig. 2) and resolve strategic policy conflicts prior to their implementation. Moreover, they must address the problems inherent in an administrative system dominated by vertical communication structures emanating from the centre, with few established intercepting horizontal linkages between institutions operating within the same administrative tier (see fig. 3).

The concept of IRD has offered a convenient and appealing solution to these perceived problems. Defined as: a process whereby individual and sectoral policies are coordinated to form a comprehensive rural development strategy which takes account of the social, economic and environmental needs of rural areas and where necessary reconciles conflicting interests, it promises much. In terms of its implementation however, an aspect frequently overlooked by its protagonists, it also demands much. To fulfil IRD objectives requires:

- (i) a multi-sectoral and consequently a multi-organisational approach to development;
- (ii) the creation of organisational objectives and policies which are mutually supportive;
- (iii) the coordination of all policies which impact upon rural areas, into a consistent rural development strategy;
- (iv) the setting up of institutional linkages between and within the different policy levels to facilitate communication between agencies which normally work independently.

Beyond these modifications to the overall administrative framework, IRD makes considerable impositions on organisational operating and decision-making

traditions. Primarily it demands that organisations will, wherever necessary, forsake their own aspirations and objectives in favour of those of the broader IRD strategy. This assumes a willingness on the part of the organisations concerned to abide by the rules. They must recognise the value of joint decisions and actions, accept the need for 'give and take' with respect to policy initiatives and be prepared to compromise their individual autonomy as and when required. To summarise, IRD's success ultimately pivots on the unpredictable process of inter-organisational coordination: the extent to which organisations attempt to ensure that their activities take into account and harmonise with those of others.

## **VI.2 IRD: A Feasible Approach?**

It is apparent, from the discussion above, that the successful implementation of IRD, its translation from populist ideology to applied methodology, ultimately pivots on the issue of administrative feasibility. First, there is the ease with which the machinery necessary for policy integration can be accommodated into existing administrative structures. Second, there is the degree to which organisations within these structures respond to pressures to coordinate their activities. Third, there is the question of the quality of interaction and inter-personal networking between the individuals of the organisations concerned. On the basis of the author's research it is evident that the outcomes of these considerations cannot be predicted with any certainty. In terms of such considerations becoming preconditions for IRD, it may also be concluded that their fulfilment cannot be assumed.

### **VI.2a Implementation**

It must be recognised that integrated rural development is a concept of administration markedly different from that which currently exists. New

administrative systems and measures, however desirable they may appear, cannot be more radical or ambitious than the present institutional and political context allows. In this section we examine the coordinative measures necessary to facilitate IRD and question their effectiveness were they to be introduced.

To date, the Government's and European Parliament's only concession to mounting pressure for a more coherent rural development approach would appear to be the modest extension of agriculture's rural development role. The revamping of the Common Agricultural Policy in 1985 included a strengthening of socio-structural measures, particularly with regard to Less Favoured Areas and the provision of funds to support agricultural practices in designated Environmentally Sensitive Areas. At a national level, 1986 saw the late amendment to the Agricultural Act of that year, requiring Agricultural Ministers to take on legal conservation duties and have regard to the economic and social interests of rural areas. The author would argue that both sets of measures have more to do with alleviating the inevitable repercussions of over-production than concern with integrated rural development. Whatever the motives behind their introduction, they have never-the-less served to mitigate the more obvious and immediate problems of conflicting rural interests, that of agriculture and conservation, and in so doing taken some of the heat out of the IRD debate.

Ironically, these measures have also served to cloud one of the key administrative issues surrounding IRD, the belief that agricultural policy can deputise as a rural development policy. As we learnt in Chapter III agriculture's ability to fulfil its new found social and economic responsibilities is poor, both in respect of its diminishing role as rural employer and its weak multiplier in terms of benefits to the wider rural community. While some elements of agricultural policies may show a greater propensity for integration with the policies of other sectors, conservation being the most obvious, central government's preoccupation with agriculture and consequently its domination of the funds available, continue to work against the creation and pursuit of broader rural development objectives. Indeed, in direct contrast to agriculture, the

future of other sectors of the rural economy, those which have a greater potential to ensure the continued viability of the countryside, are left largely to the mercy of market forces.

It is worth making two further points here: first, the presence of a strong agricultural lobby (see Donaldson *et al.*, 1972) and the need to satisfy national objectives, means that the domination of the agricultural sector in rural affairs is unlikely to lessen in the foreseeable future; second, while MAFF's new-found disposition towards rural interests may mark a slight change in direction, it should not be misconstrued as a change in heart. Ultimately agricultural policy is in pursuit of agricultural objectives and should the situation of over-production change, agricultural attitudes and policies will undoubtedly follow suit.

This latter point raises an important question concerning the practicalities of policy integration. How does one determine the relative importance between the primary objectives of sectoral policies and those which relate to IRD? More specifically, can any amount of coordination solve what in many cases are essentially competing claims for the same resources? The most one can hope for is to find solutions closer to the optimum; yet this raises another question, what is the optimum? Who is to judge whether the balance between different rural interests is fair? This may of course be all rather academic for it is assuming that organisations actually respond to the demands to sub-optimize their own goals and objectives in order to comply with those of a broader strategy. This as we have discovered, is something that should never be taken for granted.

A favoured means of regulating and policing policies with regard to rural areas is through the establishment of a single super-government department or a Ministry of Rural Affairs, endowed with the necessary powers to coordinate the policies of the various agencies concerned and ensure the most effective use of rural funds. This does however have its problems, not least is the very real possibility that the introduction of a new authority, although intended to improve coordination in some directions, may actually create new boundaries of

responsibility and consequently introduce additional problems of coordination in others. Another problem concerns the considerable resentment and conflict it will undoubtedly face from other organisations who view its existence as threatening their own sources of funding and operations. It is also evident from the experience of the Department of Environment (DoE), established in 1970 with the aim of ensuring functional coordination between the three previously separate policy areas of housing and local government, public building and works and transport, that internalising coordination responsibilities does not make coordination any easier. Indeed, the gradual down-grading of the departments' internal coordinative mechanisms and the split of functions in 1976, with the establishment of the Department of Transport, points to the difficulties the Department of Environment has faced in attempting to strike a balance between the demands of different sectors within its remit(1).

Whether one advocates a Ministry of Rural Affairs or argues for the coordinative function to fall upon an existing organisation with an enhanced role, one should also be mindful of the inability of the DoE's Directorate of Rural Affairs to fulfil its present inter-departmental coordinating function, albeit with limited resources and powers. Likewise, the experiences of the Rural Development Commission in its attempts to secure agreed national policies with regard to Rural Development Areas, point to the difficulties of obtaining effective central policy coordination across functional boundaries. The fundamental problem is how one persuades organisations who for the most part operate in pursuit of clear sectoral objectives, with rural considerations very much in second place, if they are considerations at all, that coordination in pursuit of rural development holds immeasurable benefits for them. There appears to be no satisfactory solution. Moreover, it is a spurious notion that national organisations pursuing national policies should display an allegiance to rural areas over and above their primary objectives, purely on the grounds that their policies impact upon them. Such a suggestion would require not only changing the means by which policies are implemented, but also a review of the policies themselves. This, as we shall discover later, is not a feasible option. On

this basis one would be justified in questioning the potential effectiveness of additional national coordinative mechanisms were they to be introduced. Indeed, one could ask if it is ever realistic to advocate coordination at a national level when the system of self-contained departments and agencies with their respective sectoral responsibilities is so strongly developed. Certainly this study has shown that the amount of policy detail which can actively be coordinated at the centre is limited and that any requirement for coordination is likely to be met with only token compliance from the organisations concerned.

Accepting that measures to encourage inter-sectoral coordination are not appropriate at the level of central government, one must look to the local level, where policies are ultimately applied. Here, organisations, despite a continuing sectoral bias, are more likely to share common interests. Benefits of joint working are consequently more immediate and joint funding(2) may be an appropriate incentive for inter-agency coordination. This said, the Rural Development Commission's Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) foundered on this very premise, with their heralded framework for coordination becoming little more than a shopping list for the Commission's funds. It is also clear that the statutory provisions for local coordination have been consistently eroded over the last two decades. The fragmentation of local service provision, the demise of the county structure plan and the increasing centralisation of public policy making have all taken their toll. Moreover, it is apparent that where arrangements for coordination do exist, coordination itself does not come easily. Consequently inter-authority relations in many areas remain strained with the potential for productive collaboration largely unrealised.

Recent stirrings in the Department of Environment point to a new strengthening of local government's coordinative role, replacing the outdated county structure plans with 'Statements of County Planning Policies'. These are intended to provide a strategic view of county-wide development concerns, while mandatory District Development plans fulfil the statutory land use function. Should they be introduced, their effectiveness in terms of wide policy coordination remains to

be seen. They remain ostensibly planning documents and consequently their powers are limited to development control. Moreover, on the basis of past experiences, and as the Rural Development Commission's RDPs continue to illustrate, it is obvious that the provision of a framework for coordination does not mean coordination will happen of its own accord. Organisations need to be shown that joint working is in their interest. It could be argued that the statutory nature of the county statements will be incentive enough, but an appreciation of inter-organisational behaviour leads the author to question such a premise: all evidence points to organisations working to counter the effects of such a requirement.

The potential for county statements to fulfil the more specific needs of rural areas must also be questioned. The statements are specifically 'county', not 'rural' documents, and given the urban bias of most local authorities since reorganisation(3) there is a danger that these will be designed within an urban context. Certainly were IRD to be pursued, a rural strategy would need to be clearly defined within each document. However in this respect, the omission of key policy areas from their remit, agriculture being a prime example, must weaken their role considerably. On a final note, it must always be remembered that local coordination can only be as good as centrally determined policies will allow. No amount of local coordination, however well intentioned, can overcome discordant policies emanating from above.

## **VI.2b Inter-organisational coordination**

The preceding discussion has focused on the feasibility of establishing administrative structures to facilitate inter-organisational coordination, yet on the basis of the author's research it is evident that however accommodating these organisational and administrative structures may appear, coordination can never be assured. Indeed, in the case studies observed, participating organisations, contrary to expectations, actively sought to avoid the need to

coordinate with others. The use of avoidance strategies, or at the very least strategies to limit the effects of interaction, are commonplace, whether coordination be voluntary or mandatory, although in the latter they will probably be more vigorously pursued. In either case, the problem is that one is unable to determine the calibre of the coordinative effort, yet by this hinges the success (or otherwise) of IRD.

Why is avoidance the preferred alternative in inter-organisational coordination? Consider these four factors. First, while coordination appears a deceptively simple organisational process, (policies should harmonize, rather than conflict, organisations should work towards a common purpose), it runs contrary to all established patterns of organisational behaviour and traditions. Coordination infers a loss of power. It makes demands upon an organisation's autonomy, domain, resources and its interests and objectives; indeed, all that an organisation strives to protect. A second reason why coordination is not courted, is that it increases the visibility of an organisation's actions and consequently its vulnerability to attack and criticism. Given an organisation's quest to survive, there are understandable fears that such criticisms may weaken its standing and its future existence may be called into question. Third, compared with unilateral operations, inter-organisational coordination takes considerably more time. There is the attendance of joint meetings, which given different geographical locations of organisations, can involve substantial travelling; there is the likelihood of protracted negotiations to satisfy diverse interests, and the inevitable additional bureaucracy as one organisation's procedures become super-imposed upon another's. To make matters worse, the outcome of all this effort cannot be comfortably predicted beforehand. Finally, and at the heart of the coordinative process, is the undisputable fact that coordination will only occur if organisations recognise a collective pay-off as a result of their interaction. Frequently coordination fails to possess symmetrical gains for the organisations concerned, or a gain to one means a loss to another. In either case, coordination is not a viable option.

In the face of these inhibiting factors it is evident, that regardless of the structures in place to facilitate coordination, organisations will need considerable convincing that their best interests can be served by coordinated action. This is a considerable challenge. Not least because while the potential for coordination between agencies may exist, whether it be to share information, prevent duplication of services, joint fund a scheme or combine complementary programmes, there are few or no costs associated with a failure to do so. (How otherwise do organisations survive!). In most situations failure to coordinate will involve little more than a loss of opportunity. Conversely, as we have seen above, organisations have considerably more to lose by coordinating. This dichotomy leaves the author to question the basis on which the concept of IRD was founded. It was certainly not on an understanding of the realities of organisational behaviour.

### **VI.2c The need for legislation**

It is the author's belief, that given the unpredictability of inter-organisational coordination, the only effective means of ensuring consistent and coherent integrated rural development policies lies in additional legislative provision. This must provide for a more comprehensive approach to rural affairs and in so doing remove the need for active coordination. Three options exist: to create a broad national rural policy statement or strategy by which organisations can review their policies and actions; to require organisations to "have regard" to interests outside their normal remit or to extend their remits to include other interests.

With regard to the first option, it is questionable whether what would amount to a substantial review of national policies and priorities, given the number of organisations involved, could be justified purely on the grounds of achieving integrated rural development. There does not appear to be any reason why rural areas should be a special case over and above the hundred and one other

concerns that could also claim to merit special attention. Certainly the attitude prevails within central government that rural policies should be the preserve of local authorities who can take account of local circumstances. Although, as stated earlier local policies can have little bearing on those originating from the centre.

Practical experience of the second option also gives little cause for optimism. Section II of The 1968 Countryside Act placed an obligation on every Minister and department to "have regard to the desirability of conserving the countryside", yet MAFF continued to pursue its sectoral policies completely at odds with this requirement. The situation may have changed in recent years but as discussed earlier, this has little to do with a new-found rural conscience. On this basis one may comfortably predict that were such a requirement made it would receive little more than lip-service from the majority of organisations concerned.

Extending organisational responsibilities would appear to be a more politically adept approach to achieving balanced rural development and certainly organisations remain keen to extend their remit and with it their power base. It must be appreciated however that extending an organisation's remit does not necessarily imply a more balanced and coordinated rural development strategy. It may just add a further complexion to an already complicated arena of shared and overlapping functions. It should also be noted that the one attempt to broaden organisational interests with regard to rural development was unsuccessful. The Sandford Amendment to the 1981 Countryside and Wildlife Act which called for a more balanced, reconciliatory and comprehensive approach to rural affairs, failed to gain support on the grounds that the Government was opposed to diluting a sectoral policy with wider considerations(4).

This desire to retain sectoral policies is not unique to the Conservative Government of the day. Minay (1979) in his work on regional and development

agencies confirms the author's belief that governments in general tend to favour an administrative system where individual agencies have the freedom to operate independently and in their own fields of concern. From the government's point of view this arrangement has a number of benefits. It avoids inter-departmental and inter-agency bickering over the relative merits of individual policies, it prevents arguments over the appropriate use of resources and it saves time: organisations can get on in pursuit of their own objectives without worrying about fitting in with others. Above all, it preserves the status quo for everyone concerned: Ministers are advised by civil servants, these as we have seen do not wish to concede their institution's domain or autonomy, Ministers likewise, do not wish to lose favour with their civil servants. Thus, while contrary arguments concerning the duplication of services, wasteful expenditure, unnecessary competition between agencies and the potential for conflict between different policy areas, can and have been advanced in favour of an integrated multi-sectoral approach to rural development, the prospect of any firm action from government appears remote.

Accepting that legislative changes are unlikely, at least in the short and medium term, and that inter-organisational coordination, upon which IRD must otherwise depend for its successful implementation, is an unpredictable and consequently inappropriate process on which to progress the concept further, we may conclude that integrated rural development does not represent a viable development option. There will of course be some instances where, despite such adversity, the conditions required for successful coordination identified in the preceding chapter (the right organisations, the right benefits and the right people) come together. However, in the grand scheme of rural administration these alone do not constitute a future for the concept of integrated rural development.

### VI.3 Inter-organisational Cooperation

Recognising that integrated rural development is not an appropriate administrative mechanism with which to counter the existing fragmentation of rural responsibility, but that given the breadth of rural development, it will remain the shared preserve of a substantial number of agencies for the foreseeable future, one must look to alternative approaches of inter-organisational working. These must take into account organisational behaviour and in so doing offer a greater potential for joint practical action. The complexity of inter-organisational relationships leads the author to suggest that the mechanisms most likely to be successful will invariably be the most modest, and in organisational terms the least demanding. Thus it is argued that any successful venture will centre upon the essentially informal process of ad hoc voluntary liaison projects at the local level. These will not necessarily be widespread, nor will they be particularly earth-shattering with regard to national concerns. However, with respect to the locale in which they operate they can be an effective means of preventing an overlap of services and in some cases facilitate joint funding for schemes.

Several initiatives of this nature have been established, and in contrast with the frustrations and failures which have dogged the more ambitious attempts at inter-organisational coordination, they have met with considerable success. These have ranged in scope from the broad, inter-sectoral approach of the Staffordshire Moorlands Project (described in Chapter IV) and the East Fellside & Alston Moor Project in Cumbria (Eden District Council, 1985) both of which have sought to promote socio-economic regeneration in the areas concerned, to the Tourism Development Action Plans of the English Tourist Board which bring together organisations and their resources in pursuit of shared sectoral objectives. The common element in all these approaches has been the emphasis on cooperation rather than coordination.

The distinction between coordination and cooperation is an important one, yet it is frequently overlooked. Schermerhorn, who has attempted to identify the processes that distinguish cooperation from other inter-organisational processes defines cooperation as, "deliberate relations between otherwise autonomous organisations for the joint accomplishment of individual operating goals". (Schermerhorn, 1975: 847). This definition has practical as well as conceptual implications. Primarily cooperation enables the fulfilment of an organisation's objectives without their erosion or modification during the process of interaction. Put another way, cooperation respects the fundamental instincts of organisations. It enables them to interact to further their respective interests without fear of jeopardising their integrity. To this end, policy implementation remains the responsibility of each organisation. This enables the cooperative relationship to be informal and involve junior or field personnel, with correspondingly few demands made upon organisational resources. Returning briefly to the theory of exchange, cooperation is able to offer considerable benefits to the organisations concerned at little cost. This contrasts sharply with the cost versus benefits equation of inter-organisational coordination. Consequently, in terms of organisational behaviour and the nature of inter-organisational relationships, organisational cooperation is a more appropriate mechanism through which to achieve joint working than that of coordination.

It must be accepted however, that in terms of achieving a more comprehensive approach to rural development, cooperation does have its shortcomings. It is limited to areas of policy consent and consequently can have little impact on reconciling areas of conflict. Its emphasis on furthering joint interests also implies a bias towards intra-selectoral schemes rather than a broader multi-sectoral approach. Moreover, it must be accepted that cooperation, in common with all inter-organisational processes, is dependent on voluntary action. To advocate cooperation does not mean it will necessarily happen. Its implementation is still reliant upon overcoming the traditional organisational values of self sufficiency, the virtue of standing alone. Such doctrine, long taught, does not yield easily, even to sound reasoning. Thus inter-organisational

cooperation will only be pursued if there is a willingness to change and a recognition of joint benefits beyond immediate institutional concerns. Finally, in common with other inter-agency processes, successful cooperation will largely be a result of the personal qualities of the organisational representatives concerned.

These limitations apart, cooperation continues to offer the greatest potential in terms of encouraging fruitful agency-interaction. However modest in intent and outcome this proposal may seem, one must recognise the conditions governing organisational behaviour together with the wider political and institutional context and work within the parameters set rather than in opposition to them. This is after all the very principle upon which IRD has foundered.

#### **VI.4 Concluding Thoughts**

This thesis has examined the internal dynamics of England's rural administrative system. It has revealed, through selected case studies, the insular nature of organisational operations and the innate conservatism that seeks to exclude change and limit interaction with others. Above all, it has shown that the parameters governing these relationships work to prohibit effective inter-organisational coordination, to the extent that calls to improve coordinative structures between organisations are, however well-intentioned, naive. In this context it is evident that the concept of integrated rural development, which assumes that organisations will coordinate rather than compete, will remain little more than a pipe dream. Its failure to take account of contemporary organisational processes renders it an inappropriate and ineffectual mechanism through which to counter the entrenched sectoral trends of current rural administration.

While it is easy to pinpoint the faults inherent in the current administrative system and in those initiatives which seek to rectify these, viable alternatives

remain elusive. Bridging the gulf between the optimistic idealism of those propounding the virtues of integrated rural development and that of organisational realism is a challenging task and one that will occupy practitioners and academics for some time to come.

## Notes

(1) The problems of achieving policy coordination within the DoE are well documented in Painter (1980).

(2) Current Treasury rules appear to undermine the scope for central government departments and agencies to joint fund specific items and projects. Certainly this is the ruling under which MAFF operates, see Select Com. on European Communities (House of Lords) Session 1982-83 (HL30). Socio-Structural Policy 2nd. Report: p. 27.

(3) The reorganisation of local government in 1972 resulted in the merger of most of the former rural district councils with former urban district or borough councils. Only about 12 of the present district councils in England and Wales are former rural district councils. The result of this is that the majority of local government offices tend to be located in the more densely populated urban areas and consequently there can be a danger that rural policies have an urban bias (see Assoc. of District Councils, 1988).

(4) See Hansard (Lords) 12 March, 1981, Cols. 480-3; Hansard 27 April, 1981, Col. 533; Standing Committee 'D', 9 June, 1981, Cols. 509-11. In the event MAFF, whom the amendment most concerned did find its remit extended, but as discussed this was primarily to offset the problems of a restrictive agricultural market rather than to encourage balanced rural development.

## APPENDIX I: Organisations consulted

### Individual organisations/representatives interviewed

Council for Small Industries in Rural Areas (Cheshire; Darlington; Derbyshire Offices)

Country Landowners' Association (Nottinghamshire)

Countryside Commission

Derbyshire County Council (Planning Department)

Derbyshire District Council (Planning Department)

Derbyshire Rural Community Council

Department of the Environment (Countryside Division; Directorate of Rural Affairs)

Department of Trade and Industry (North Eastern Regional Office)

Development Commission (RDP Liaison Branch; Research; Rural Areas Enterprise Priorities Branch)

Durham City Council (Planning Department)

Durham County Council (Education; Engineers; Planning Departments)

Durham Rural Community Council

Easington District Council (Planning Department)

East Midlands Tourist Board

English Estates (Staffordshire; Thornaby Offices)

English Tourist Board

Forestry Commission (Sherwood Forest District)

High Peak Borough Council

Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food:

ADAS(Agricultural Advisory Officer, Newcastle; Divisional Surveyor, Newcastle and Nottingham; Land and Water Service, Staffordshire; Socio-economic Advisor, Staffordshire)  
Environment and Conservation Policy Division  
Rural Structures and Grant Division

National Farmers' Union (Derbyshire Branch)

Nature Conservancy Council

Peak Park Joint Planning Board (NESTWOP Liaison Officer;  
IRD Project Officer; Project Leader)

Sedgefield District Council (Planning Department)

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (Planning  
Department)

Staffordshire County Council (Planning Department)

Staffordshire Rural Community Council

Teesdale District Council (Planning Department)

Wear Valley District Council (Planning Department)

West Derbyshire District Council (Planning Department)

National Rural Development Programme survey

Responses received from:

Cambridgeshire

Cheshire

Cleveland

Cornwall

Cumbria

Devon

Dorset

East Sussex/Kent

Gloucestershire

Hereford and Worcester

Humberside

Kent

Lancashire

Norfolk

Northumberland

Nottinghamshire

Shropshire

Suffolk

### Supplementary questionnaire

Responses received from:

Countryside Commission (Northern Regional Office)

Darlington Health Authority

Durham County Council (Library Service)

Durham Health Authority

The Housing Corporation (North East Region)

Manpower Services Division (Employment and Enterprise  
Group, County Durham)

North Derbyshire Health Authority

Northern Consortium of Housing Authorities

Northern Counties Housing Association

Northumbria Water Authority

Severn Trent Water

Sports Council (Northern Region)

Trent Regional Health Authority

## APPENDIX II: Sample interview sheet

### MASTER INTERVIEW SHEET

#### Organisational Structure

- internal administrative structures/hierarchy
- administrative procedures
- degree and methods of internal coordination
- finance
- accountability
- autonomy

#### Organisational Operations

- organisational responsibilities/functions
- administrative region
- key objectives and policies
- financial priorities

#### Contextual Setting

- key development issues facing organisation
- effectiveness of current policies
- interaction with other organisations:
  - shared areas of concern
  - policy interaction
  - nature of interaction (voluntary/statutory, harmonious/conflictual etc.)
  - officer's relationships with representatives of other organisations

#### Inter-organisational Relationships (generally and with specific reference to research project)

- main incentives for collaboration
- main disincentives/barriers to collaboration
- approach to interaction
- merits of coordination
- limitations of coordination
- administrative/operational problems (internal and external)
- own role in coordination process and role of others

APPENDIX II: Sample questionnaire survey

ORGANISATIONAL COORDINATION

Name of organisation:

Completed by:

1.(a) Please list the organisations with whom you have regular contact.

(b) Please list the inter-organisational working groups, consultative committees etc. with whom your organisation is involved. Include name of group, function, frequency of meetings and organisations represented.

2. Please give examples of joint policies/schemes and indicate joint finance where applicable.

3. What are the main incentives to collaborate with others?

4. What are the main disincentives/barriers to coordination, how could these be overcome?

5. Are you aware of the Integrated Rural Development project that is operating in selected areas of the Peak Park?

YES/NO

If YES:

(a) To what extent have you been involved or consulted?

(b) How has the project affected or contributed to organisational policies and actions?

6. Are you aware of the Rural Development Programmes that have been drawn up for the Rural Development Area which covers parts of Derbyshire and Staffordshire?

YES/NO

If YES:

(a) To what extent have you been involved or consulted?

(b) How has the designation of the Rural Development Area affected organisational policies and actions?

7. Please add any comments which you feel may be relevant to the understanding of local agency relationships.

Any existing documentation (eg. policy statements, liaison statements) held by your organisation that could augment the information supplied above would be appreciated.

THANKYOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY SHEET

Please return to: Jan Davison, Dept. of Geography, University of Durham, Science Laboratories, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE.

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