INCREASING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
IN BRITISH NEW TOWN PLANNING

by

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This study is made up of an analysis of contributing factors and proposals for increasing public participation in the planning of British New Towns. Participation of the public in Britain has achieved vigorous comment and official endorsement by the Central Government. There is considerable activity in participation among planning authorities but most of it is limited to plan presentation. A comparison between social and political behavior in the United States and Britain points out differences which would make American participatory methods inappropriate for the British scene. Planners in Britain as the major advocates of participation, cite its necessity as a professional responsibility. Yet in New Towns, a large planning commitment in Britain, public participation is not always encouraged and where it exists, is often akin to public relations.

Public participation in New Towns is dependent on the attitudes and responsiveness of the Development Corporations. A serious participatory effort must include pre-participation activities sponsored by the Development Corporation. Techniques of consent and consultation appropriate to the New Town situation can be selected from a range of six alternatives.

In analyzing the planning process for the role of the participant, the master plan seems an inadequate forum for resident participation while local planning seems ideally suited. General recommendations about resident advisory panels are made for master planning along with some suggestions for organizational reforms. A more defined structure is suggested for community planning centering around the community planning council with neighborhood forums and advisory panels.
Resistance to acceptance of public participation would probably be high. The only real way to convince officials of its merits is to point out the necessity of designing environments on the basis of user wants. This involves a value reorientation which acknowledges that public participation may be costly and time consuming but that the benefits are worth the risk.

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INTRODUCTION

In large and complex societies, the foundations of democracy can become obscured by bureaucratization. Constraints and political behavior which become established as a result of bureaucratized systems can prove to be the most obstructive elements in real public participation. Yet the notion of public right to self-government is hardly foreign to democracies. Representative democracy as practiced in this country, in fact, is based on the concept of common governance. It fails to be accurately representative in practice as a result of a complex political process based on rewards and incentives and because of problems inherent in sheer size. Ironically, increasing the influence of the public constituency has become a difficult task.

Two related but distinct factors have emerged to explain discontent with the traditional practice of entrusting decision making to a few powerful individuals on behalf of many:

1. Dissatisfaction with implemented decisions has given rise to a challenge to the ability of decision makers and the system which nevertheless allows the same decision to be made repetitively.

2. A growing belief in the right to self-determination has evolved as a cultural value which emphasizes the rights of the individual in mass society.
The obvious generic response to these perceptions is some alternative form of decision-making which includes, as a significant component, the participation of appropriate constituencies. The attitude of advocates of public participation in decision-making could be summarized by the statement that "the correct law for a society is something to be discovered, rather than willed by public officials," and the best way to formulate goals is through interaction between the public and decision makers.\(^1\) Three rationales for the efficacy of participation are usually cited:

1. **Democratic right:** Stemming from the belief in the dignity of the individual, the democratic right argument runs that the results of a decision situation are not as important as the means which are used to arrive at those results. Advocates would argue that it is the inalienable right of each individual to participate in the making of decisions that affect him.

2. **Methodological efficacy:** Participation in decision-making is seen as the best way to ensure that the needs of society are provided for and thus, that participation of the public will yield the best results. Authoritarian and/or centralized decision-making neglects needs of the constituency,

particularly when the value systems and life styles of the decision-makers are far removed from those of the constituencies. The results of a participatory process, therefore, are qualitatively better since they are based on the perceptions of the people themselves.

3. Quality control: Combining the beliefs of the other two rationales, those advocating participation as a means of controlling the quality of decisions may recognize the necessities of representation and centralization of decision-making but they see an active participatory process as a necessary form of checks and balances. The emphasis here is less on the public initiating decisions but on approval and veto from their specialized knowledge base.

Participation is of vital concern and interest in planning since its very raison d'etre is the creation of a workable living environment. In addition to the technical considerations which have traditionally defined an environment as workable, the satisfaction of the users and the creation of a vital social context are now accepted as significant components. Public participation is instrumental in helping to achieve planning goals which center around the improvement of the quality of life. Planners are now realizing that they cannot do a useful job if they don't know
what people want and if they have no feedback that tells about success of their decisions. By turning to the users themselves for information, planners discover their decision-making is less arbitrary. Public involvement in the process is increasingly seen as necessary simply to help planners do their job better. The more goals like increasing choice in the environment are subscribed to, the more planners require sustained dialogue between research workers, planners and potential users. However, participation of the public in planning is an ideal which many planners would like to achieve, but like all ideals, it is difficult to know how to get from here to there.

This study is undertaken in the belief that while major governmental value reorientations are necessary to accord to the public actual self-determination, much can be done within existing frameworks toward this goal. Responsibility for increasing participation lies largely with the planning authority, the assumption being that participation can be effective when encouraged by the planner.  

The planner is still very much at the threshold of developing participation techniques. There is a good deal of experimenting to be done. The proposals made here

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2This does not imply that client-initiated methods are any less successful, possible or valuable; it only attempts to indicate that more can be done by the planning authority.
recommend modification of the existing planning process in British New Towns in the hope that the New Towns can set an example for other forms of new community development which can truly reflect the needs and wants of their populations.

It must be recognized that planning today has by no means been free of negative reaction to the prospect of public involvement. Arguments against increasing participation can be summarized as follows:

1. Encouraging public response is encouraging antagonism. It is self-defeating and a nuisance to be avoided in a smoothly functioning planning process.

2. The public cannot effectuate its desires since it is essentially without authority even in local domains.

3. The great majority of the public is simply incapable of making planning decisions. Expertise in the field is a necessary prerequisite to attempting to solve problems.

Rather than responding to each objection individually, this study will attempt to deal with these points by suggesting ways that public participation can work within a given context. Some questions the study will address are:

- What recourse does the planner have when he feels that by virtue of his training and familiarity with the techniques of planning that the decisions made by participants are not in their own best interests?
- Is there justification for a process which distinguishes two forms of decisions: those which can be made by the public and those which must be made by the planning authority?

- Can participation be employed to achieve a variety of objectives or is ultimate control by the users always the most desirable goal?

- Can the benefits of expediency and low cost in time and money be measured against social gains? Are they comparable values? Are there better ways of achieving the same social objectives?

- Is the planner obliged to encourage objections to his own work even when they may not be overtly expressed? Should he attempt to enlist interest in planning when the public seems disinterested or reluctant?
SECTION ONE:
THE PARTICIPATION SITUATION AT PRESENT

As in the United States, participation of the public in planning in Britain has received a great deal of attention in the past decade. While the practice of involvement of the public in formulating planning decisions is of a somewhat different nature in Britain, the principle is gaining wide acceptance as an alternative to traditional planning decision-making. The commissioning in 1968 of the Skeffington Committee "to consider...the best methods...of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans..."1 by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the Scottish Development Department, and the Welsh Office, gained official sanction and encouragement for participation in planning. The publication of the Committee's report, People and Planning, evoked a tremendous response, both positive and negative, and must be regarded as an important landmark in the evolution of the concept of participation in Britain.

The report is founded on two basic but implied assumptions: 1) that planners have assumed more power than anyone has a right to and 2) that formal democracy does not work. The committee did not state these assumptions clearly and argue them by comparison with other assumptions which are made

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frequently, but its recommendations affirm these points. The focus of the report is on techniques for participation and publicity which view the role of the public as exclusively advisory. A "cookbook" approach to implementation follows which perceives participation as a linear progression of activities which lead to the production of a plan. The major emphasis is the importance of publicity of planning proposals. The report tends to view publicity as the catalyst in increasing public participation and does not treat the issues of power, plurality or acceptance of the ideal of participation by planning authorities or the public. Although the report has no statutory powers, public and official awareness of the idea has been significantly increased and many experiments have been implemented on the local level with varying degrees of success.

The Response to Skeffington

Most of the participation experiences in Britain have dealt with presentation of already formulated plans to that part of the public which is directly affected, coupled with increased publication of planning activities and one- or two-time attempts to secure public response. This approach to participation is in accordance with the Skeffington recommendations, though the report urges authorities to prepare

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alternate plans for public approval. This response is a good indication of the definition of participation by planning authorities. To measure success, many officials document their participation experiments with photographs and statistics demonstrating the large numbers of people in attendance.

The prevalence of the large public meeting form of participation is probably attributable to the practice of holding public inquiries. Public presentations much like hearings which have been a legal obligation are now seen as public participation. This form of public scrutiny has been the subject of much criticism of late. Inquiries are increasingly seen as a "legalistic idea of equity for injured subjects under a paternalistic planning authority."

However, it is incomplete to attribute the prevalence of the inquiry form of participation solely to its legal origins. It is likely that many planners sympathetic to the notion of participation have only inquiries in their experience as a way to meet objections and work with the public: they use this technique as the only one they know. More innovative examples of participation do exist but there is a marked tendency to remain with the tried method.

Among the more progressive authorities, questionnaires have achieved wide popularity as a means of tapping public

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opinion: the standard of innovation is generally low.

To ignore negative reaction to the way in which participation is conducted, however, is to misrepresent the scene. While a clear majority of planning authorities endorses this approach in principle, notable criticisms exist with increasing frequency which consistently cite similar factors as primary objections. Those who support a more extensive form of participation of the public in planning with self-determination as its goal agree that Skeffington-type proposals:

- are unable to stimulate communication with and among the majority of the population not represented in middle class formal organizations such as Civic Societies,

- tend to gloss over issues due to lack of time and a wish to do so: results in a consequent misrepresentation of the plans particularly with respect to conflict situations,

- do not guarantee the participant the ability to effectuate his ideas.

On the other hand, some more conservative authorities respond to the call for increased participation of the public by asserting the mechanisms already exist for expression of opinion and increased participation is not necessary. It is true that on occasions such as the large public meeting, individuals are given the opportunity to say what they wish. In addition, the interested individual can inform himself, take his comments and grievances directly to his local M.P. or planning authority, or seek recognition through the newspapers. But this is a time-consuming and
tedious process with many flaws:

1. Individuals, not groups are the focus of these avenues of recourse and individuals acting alone have relatively little power.

2. Opinions must be expressed in the context which the planning authority chooses to offer. This may often be before large groups of peers and professionals, a situation in which few individuals can feel comfortable.

3. One or two three-hour exposures to a complex plan represented in graphic symbols unfamiliar to the non-professional or described in prose filled with jargon or new terms cannot begin to familiarize the ordinary man with planning concepts which will affect his life in sometimes major ways.

4. The various opportunities for participation which do exist involve a great deal of effort and determination that only a handful of people are willing or capable of exerting.

As a result, only the most confident, aggressive, and persevering of residents manages to become actively involved and he is hardly typical of his fellows. Once having made his point, he is in no way assured that anyone will listen, much less consider or act upon it.

Despite these objections, the present climate for public involvement in planning, however broadly and variously defined, must be considered generally receptive. If anything, public participation in planning currently enjoys much greater repute in Britain than in the U.S.\(^4\)

\(^4\)An interesting indication of the difference in timing of the professional interest in participation between the U.S. and Britain is that the entire April 1971 issue of the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* was devoted to participation while the *Journal of the American Institute of Planning* 's similar issue occurred in July 1969.
The Nature of Participation in Britain

Two major factors have influenced the course which participation has taken in Britain: the political structure, and the social context influencing attitudes and behavior of all actors in the planning process. These two factors have determined a form of participation which differs from that of the United States in several ways:

1. The political organization:

A paper comparing American and British forms of participation comments on the political influences:

The realities of American politics quite apart from the compulsory requirement, have forced the planner to pretend to participate. It is not idealism that is the basis for consultation, rather it is the recognition that failure to do so will result in strong and bitter and frequently successful opposition from deeply entrenched hostile groups.  

Wright cites Banfield and Wilson's reference to "assumed corruptability of each decision-making individual and institution" on the part of the American public. Contrasting this with the British political system, he notes that the problem of laxity on the part of local authorities does not exist, nor does a tradition of political participation through local organizations. Yet British planners are not free from accusations of injustice. The founder of the Local Government Reform Society feels many people "believe that the dice are loaded against them, an understandable

\[\text{5 Terry Wright, "How Real is Participation?" in Official Architecture and Planning, December, 1968, p. 1593.}\]

\[\text{6 Ibid.}\]
reaction when 75% of appeals against planning decisions fail and yet six out of seven compulsory purchase orders succeed. 7 Indifference to the public seems to be a more common feature of planning authorities than outright corruption.

Maurice Broady, a British social scientist, notes that the American political system as a whole is fractured and diffuse whereas Britain's is centralized and highly coordinated. 8 In response to this highly bureaucratized governmental form, many authors see a concentration on communication as the appropriate form of participation for British public in planning. In a society in which a higher percentage of ordinary individuals depend on the government for services and the influence of the government on the lives of its citizenry is perceived more directly, the British emphasis on presentation and explanation of proposals is more understandable, even if it is seen as an evasion of fundamental issues. Rather than a form of participation which transfers power from the government to the hands of the people as a response to inadequacies in the political system, the emphasis in Britain is to assure that individuals are treated well by a form of government that is generally accepted. The tendency to view resident

7 M.J.E. Ivory, "Planning Forum: Planning and the Public" in Town and Country Planning Journal
control as the only viable means of participation in planning is much less in Britain than in the U.S.

2. Political attitudes and behavior:

Attitudes toward government and authority among British citizens have considerable bearing upon the participatory milieu. British planning is currently heavily influenced by research and practice in America, and it is particularly important to note that methods of citizen involvement employed in the U.S. are not directly translatable to Britain.

Almond and Verba have done an interesting study on comparative political attitudes and behavior of residents of five nations. They cite historical reasons to explain some differences between British and American political competence. In Britain, the notion of the independent authority of government under law has continued to exist side by side with the notion of the political power of the people. Old authoritarian institutions and symbols have not been

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9Some of the question-response tabulations are of interest. When asked about things people were most proud of in their country, 85% of the Americans in the sample cited governmental or political institutions: only 46% of the British sample felt this way. In the U.S. more than 2/3 of the respondents said that they can influence both levels of government, national and local. In Britain, the figure is just over 50%. However, of those who responded positively to the previous question, 33% of the Americans and 18% of the British said that they had tried. Significantly, when asked what they would do to try to influence their local government, 56% of Americans said they would organize an informal group, arouse friends, or sign petitions while only 34% of British people felt this way.

replaced by democratization, but continue to co-exist with the new institutions."10 Almond and Verba further cite the existence of a revolutionary tradition in American politics as an important difference between the two countries. They contend that revolutionary experience has taught Americans that authority does not necessarily descend downward from the throne but is derived from below from the choices of the people.11

Roger Else, a member of the Social Development Staff of the Milton Keynes Development Corporation makes the useful distinction between traditionalists and non-traditionalists, on the basis of response to change. The traditionalist views a planning decision with distrust and fear but feels that since he can't do anything about it, he internalizes his fears into "neuroses against change that will be transposed into irrational fears about a host of other imponderables like vandalism, influxes of immigrants or future design plans."12 The non-traditionalist, on the other hand, will want to articulate his worries in an attempt at coming to terms with the new situation as it stands by changing it to suit himself."13 Else sees the non-traditionalists -- by far the larger proportion of the population, whose "education (and) everyday life, constantly

10 Ibid., p. 225.
11 Ibid., p. 224.
13 Ibid., p. 2.
affirms that they must accept what parents/teachers/foremen/managers tell them, that it would not be respectable perhaps, to do otherwise" -- as the group to whom planners interested in increasing participation should direct their efforts.\textsuperscript{14}

In summary, the civic posture of the British subject can be characterized by an unwillingness to enter into abrasive relations with authority, which is there to administer. Robin Guthrie, the Social Development Officer for Peterborough New Town has noted this attitude of public deference in his work in London. "Over and over again...we heard tirades of abuse against the planning authority which finished with the words 'But the council know best, don't they?"\textsuperscript{15} While this attitude is decreasing significantly, particularly in the labor arena, planning still does not enjoy much public participation. Rather than attempt to defend itself and weigh the merits of the demands of a variety of pressure groups as might be the case in the United States, a planning agency in Britain, seriously intent upon involving the public, might well be required to take much of the initiative.

\underline{Origins of Pressure for Increased Participation}

Although examples of activist groups exist, it is not sur-

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p.
\textsuperscript{15}Robin Guthrie, op. cit. p. 298.
prising, given the attitudinal orientation of the majority of the British public, that calls for increased participation in Britain have originated to a greater extent with planners themselves than from the public. Much of the impetus from planners has originated in ideological beliefs in the human right of expression and access to knowledge of one’s own fate when it is determined by others. From observation of events in America and a legacy of social responsibility in Britain, planners have come to regard the principles of participation as incontestable. Professionals are perhaps slightly more attuned to the general societal increase in awareness of individual rights and have been involved in the "movement" before the population at large in Britain.

As professionals, planners in Britain are also beginning to realize the role of participation in social development of communities. Recognizing its value as a technical means for identification and support of factional interests, Broady asserts that participation "can be seen to have important and positive part to play in the democratic social development of urban areas which a comprehensive planning policy would surely seek to foster: the vitality of a town depends on the activity of sectional interests."¹⁶ Thus, professional responsibility is another important reason why planners support participation.

¹⁶Broady, op. cit., p. 114.
Thus participation would seem to play a vital role in the development of new communities. New Towns in Britain represent a large proportion of the planning effort whether measured in terms of the staff and monetary resources associated with their development or in the number of people now living in the 27 New Towns in Scotland, England, and Wales. Yet the Skeffington Report failed to mention the applicability of its recommendations to New Towns. Although the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act required 'statements of publicity and opportunities for participation which were given by the planning authority when preparing the plans' no such requirement exists for New Towns.

Interest in participation in New Towns as expressed in the literature is almost non-existent. However this cannot be taken as a sign that participation itself is either unnecessary or non-existent in New Towns, or that the same forms which apply to other forms of development apply to New Towns as well.

The differences center on two features: 1) The dynamics of large scale change and 2) the implications of newness.

The profound effect the advent of the New Town has from the sheer magnitude of the undertaking cannot be comparable to redevelopment, for example. The development of a New Town is a matter of national interest: preparing for and

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17 *Town and Country Planning Act, 1968* (Chapter 72) (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office)
adapting to change wrought over a period of several years takes drastic accommodation at the local level. The ability to construct a functioning urban system "from scratch" eliminates many of the problems posed by the constraints of existing cities. Activities are not restrained by the necessity to devote extensive resources to corrective measures and the exhaustive involvement of and interaction with the public that would be necessary. However, the reliance on speculative prediction as a basis for development coupled with the extent of activities which must be undertaken simultaneously complicates public participation. Prototype solutions do not always exist to be examined for relevance to new situations. In a sense, everything is an experiment. In existing developments, interest group identification may be simple whereas in New Towns, interest groups must be created or encouraged to develop at a much more accelerated rate. New Town residents tend to be more homogeneous than a population of an existing city of comparable size. Potential behavior of New Town residents at least initially is based on the shared experience of having voluntarily relocated themselves, a decision of great magnitude for many families. The perceptions and expectations of residents in New Towns are likely to have much more in common than those of residents in existing towns.

The pressure for increasing developmental participation, or that which involves the public on a constructive rather
than a reactive basis is much less great in New Towns. Spontaneous expression of opinion before the fact of public release of the plans for a New Town is expecting a great deal of the public, so, the responsibility of initiating public involvement lies almost entirely with the Development Corporation.

New Town staffs have interpreted their role in public participation variously. With further research it would be possible, in fact, to rank the New Towns on a continuum of support and activity of participation ranging from "discourages public involvement" to actively and continuously stimulated participation of the public". Of course what the Development Corporations have done in participation is contingent upon their interpretation of the concept. A review of the recent participation activities of 10 Development Corporations\(^1\) indicates that the most popular interpretation is related to public relations. The prevailing form of Development Corporations participation activity is public meetings and exhibitions for both local and structure plans. It is certain that all Development Corporations have engaged in this practice to some extent. When asked about recent examples of participation activities, most of the respondents were quick to point out the lengths to which

\(^1\)A survey of 16 New Towns was conducted which asked five questions regarding participation (See Appendix A). Further references to Development Corporation activities are based on the responses to this survey.
they had gone to publicize their proposals and often demonstrated this by showing various brochures, fact sheets, and planning documents prepared for public consumption. While local newspapers are a common media for information transmission, articles or notices do not always appear on a regular basis. Like participation as conceptualized by other planning authorities in Great Britain, the emphasis is on enlightening the public rather than enlightening the planner.

The use of questionnaires and surveys to collect and evaluate public attitudes and opinion has become increasingly common in New Towns. Apart from the many problems associated with questionnaires, this practice still does not accord to the public the opportunity to participate first hand; public response is on the Development Corporations' terms. While the marked increase in the use of questionnaires might seem to indicate official acknowledgement of the public contribution, it is still largely a public relations exercise serving as an "answer" to both the challenge from academics and others outside the Development Corporation structure and the public cries of neglect. One Assistant Chief Architect recalled the response to a recent questionnaire about housing satisfaction: "We found out just what we were looking for: everyone loves the place. There were some minor objections to garden size and fencing, but
nothing we didn't already know about."19 One of the planning staff directly involved with a University-developed housing questionnaire for Cumbernauld, remembered some of the negative findings which weren't included in the published results: "They were small issues, but that's what those people felt most strongly about."20

British New Towns are developed and managed by public bodies. The Corporation is a public Corporation which, like others in England, is a hybrid organism combining characteristics of both governmental and private enterprise. New Town administrations do not suffer much from accusations of expansionism and opportunism as do private developers. But it is not necessarily true that public ownership changes all potentially negative development principles significantly. Democracy does not automatically accrue in publicly developed New Towns. One Social Development Officer talked about these implications for high level decision-making:

The merits/demerits of appointed Board members as opposed to elected representatives depends on whether one takes the view that a Development Corporation is more akin to a local authority or a property developing company. In my personal opinion, the role of the corporation is more easily

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19 Staff member, Irvine Development Corporation, Irvine New Town, Ayrshire, 1971 (Personal conversation)
20 Ex-staff member, Cumbernauld Development Corporation Cumbernauld New Town, 1971 (Personal conversation)
definable if it is equated with a property developing company in which case appointed members are appropriate.21

New Towns in practice do operate much like private corporations. While their initial reason for existence is in response to national growth and development policies, they seek to attract as much industry as possible (at least at first) and to minimize expenditure while striving to make a profit. Given this de facto form of development, it is perhaps even more urgent that governments which derive their resources publicly and whose raison d’etre is public service attempt to involve the public in development.

Feasibility of Participation in New Towns

If participation as described here as an alternative or supplement to that already in practice is such a good idea, why are only a handful of New Towns engaged in meaningful activities? Firstly, lack of attention to the relevance and applicability of participation to New Towns seems to stem from the implicit recognition that the perceived need for participation has arisen elsewhere as a reaction to already-implemented decisions and is not applicable to New Towns on that basis. Participation as a constructive technique for planning wholly new environments has not yet been acknowledged widely. The issues

are so complex and so large and have such far-reaching consequences planners may seriously question whether the public can help. Further, planners and public are both aware that a move to a New Town is a vast improvement over the previous living conditions for most of the new residents: The attitude that the new situation is, by contrast, incontestably good, seems to neutralize the need for increasing resident involvement. Finally, the development structure which is based on a rigid hierarchy of decision-making in which the General Manager is the final voice in all major decisions (to be discussed in Section 2), seriously questions the extent of self-determination the public can have in New Town Development.

Given this apparent dichotomy which, on one hand points out the necessity for Development Corporations to involve the public in planning and on the other cites the constraints and attitudes toward implementing the concept, is it reasonable to assume that participation of the public can work in New Towns? It must be made clear that many of the objections to participation are based on tested techniques which planners regard as participation (perhaps erroneously) and which don't seem to work. While there are acknowledged constraints on participation posed by the existing development structure there is considerable latitude for both interpretation and implementation as evidenced by the wide range of activities New Towns are currently undertaking.
As with all innovatory concepts, a few inroads must be made to prove viability to those who are unwilling to experiment. At least Washington and Milton Keynes New Towns have begun to establish precedents in the field, but in general attempts have been largely incremental. It is to Development Corporations such as these who are willing to depart from traditional methods to consider those based on belief in the concept of self-determination and a reorientation of general goals from exclusive economic consideration of economic priorities to include social innovation and achievement that the following proposals are directed.
SECTION TWO: 
SOME STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

In order to more fully understand the constraints, responsibilities and opportunities for participation which were touched on in Section One, a closer look must be taken at the structural variables of the New Town situation.

The New Town Act of 1946 defines a national program designed to create self-supporting, self-contained communities to accommodate the overspill of population, industry, and commerce from major urban centers. The national significance and inevitable complexity of the development of New Towns raises serious questions about public participation in decisions involving the formulation and implementation of management and investment. These decisions differ from those at the local level in magnitude and substance. While questions of public involvement in national policy are extremely important for students of participation, this study will focus only on participation in New Towns which have been designated. Therefore, attention will be devoted to planning undertaken by the Development Corporations.

Development Corporation Structure

The decision-making hierarchy of development is structurally alike in all New Towns. When a Town is designated by
the Department of the Environment (formerly the Ministry of Housing and Local Government), a Board is also appointed to consist of nine members including a chairman and deputy chairman, usually selected to represent "local interests". Typical of these appointments are ex-mayors, provosts, members of regional boards and others who have held or currently hold distinguished positions in the region. This group normally meets once a month to determine policy and to approve decisions. However, "little is found in the Planning Act or in the New Town Committee reports to suggest exactly what duties Board members should have or how the Board should function".¹

A General Manager is employed by the Board and is responsible to them for the functioning of the Corporation staff in conjunction with the Chief Officers, he advises the Board on policy decisions. Eric C. Freund, who has undertaken a study on the General Managers of British New Towns, describes the G.M. as "the person who is responsible for translating policy into action, who welds the professional executive team together and orchestrates their efforts to optimum effect."² Yet like the Board, no responsibilities or procedures are specifically designated to the General Manager. "The method and philosophy he adopts for running the Development Corporation is a function of

²Ibid., p. 81
his personality, that of his Chief Officers in the executive team and other special circumstances pertaining to the New Town. Yet the responsibility and power of the General Manager is extensive. He exercises his prerogative of making a final determination on the course which is to be followed, consults his Chief Officers, acting as arbitrator when agreement cannot be reached, and decides what weight is to be given to opinions advanced by members of the team that cannot be empirically proven. He also acts as external liaison representing the Development Corporation in dealings with various levels of government, prospective industrialists, visiting dignitaries, and in formal public meetings.

The Chief Officers, responsible, in turn to the General Manager, must be professionally qualified in their field. The usual complement includes the fields of Engineering, Finance, Administration, Architecture, Estates Surveying, Law, Public Relations, Quantity Surveying, and Town Planning and can include Social Development, Housing and others. How the General Manager, the Board and to a more limited extent, the Chief Officers view participation will determine the role of the public, the views of the staff often notwithstanding. While considerable unanimity prevails regarding presentation of the traditional professions -- architecture,

\[3\text{ Ibid.}\]
engineering, law, etc. -- in Chief Officer status, practices regarding social provision vary considerably. Thus areas such as Housing Management may enjoy relatively low impact in the decision making group of Chief Officers who advise the Board through the General Manager. This discretionary approach is particularly questionable when the educational background of British Planners and Architects is considered. Professor Rodwin's recognition of this factor is critical but not unfair:

At present the stock of intellectual capital of all town planners is meager. What exists is subject to rapid depreciation. Replenishment is long overdue. At the same time, British town planners have acquired almost all the tasks and legislative tools they sought. Their increased powers have brought them to grips with new, complex problems. But these problems and decisions go far beyond the technical. They are social, economic and political.

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4 It is perhaps significant to note that neither the Social Development Officer nor the Housing Manager is automatically accorded full Chief Officer status. In the words of one General Manager who does not believe that Social Development Officers are necessary: "There is a wide variety of practice between Development Corporations as to the manner in which they deal with the social aspects of the town. At one end of the scale, Development Corporations employ Social Development Officers who are expected to take an active and important part in the preparation of the Master Plan, design of housing and residential areas and indeed, even in the social aspects of industrial development and transport. Other Corporations believe that the technical departments themselves must have a strong social self-interest and that no separate officer is required to deal with the social aspects of technical design..." This statement appears in a pamphlet called "Careers in New Town Building" published in 1970 by the Ministry. Its author is the General Manager of Irvine New Town, a Development Corporation which does not have a Social Development Officer or planner specializing in social policy.
and the background of the town planners is extremely limited in these directions. They possess little knowledge of the social sciences. They have only modest understanding of or capacity to do research. 5

While Rodwin's comments were written in 1956, they are still relevant today for two reasons: one, the decision-makers were trained at the time this was written or before; and two, the improvement which has occurred in professional training since that time has not been sufficient to adequately prepare planners to deal with the social realities of New Towns. Most of the progress has been made in the fields of urban and regional economics, and some in decision-making. For the most part, New Town Development Corporation planning staffs think of the social aspects of planning in terms of trends arrived at from demographic data to be taken into consideration when the structure plan is being prepared and the provision of "social facilities" such as recreation centers and meeting halls.

Local Authorities in the area at the time of designation continue to function after the arrival of the Development Corporation. All Local Authorities have elected councils. It is important to note that in a New Town the Local Authority retains responsibility for the provision and management of the services they traditionally administer.

There is some overlap, and two government authorities having jurisdiction in the same area can be the source of much confusion among the residents, if not the authorities themselves.

Primary responsibilities of Developing Corporations are:

- to acquire, hold, manage and dispose of land and other property
- to carry out building and other operations
- to provide water, electricity, gas and sewerage and other services
- to carry on any business or undertaking in or for the purposes of the New Town

The first responsibility of the Development Corporation is planning: the Ministry requires the preparation of a Master or Structure Plan and states the principles for its development. Each Development Corporation determines its own plan, but it must include sections covering the following:

- a written statement describing the site
- a summary of the present population and proposed population statistics

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6 These include police, fire brigade, town planning, major roads, health and welfare clinics, etc., for counties and housing, sewerage, refuse collection and disposal, environmental health, community services, parks, swimming pools, cemeteries, crematoria, car parks, local town planning control and local roads and sometimes major roads for a non-county borough or an urban or rural district.

- a review of employment opportunities
- a description of housing, both existing and proposed
- a proposal of new industrial estates and the central commercial area as well as a review of the existing facilities
- a proposal for open space
- the proposed communications (transportation) network
- a program of development

Since no restrictions exist regarding what is not permissible in the Master Plan guidelines, theoretically there is scope for innovation. Control is in the form of final approval of the plan by the Ministry. Having obtained approval, development proceeds as outlined by the Structure Plan.

The Development Corporation as Participant

Largely composed of middle class professionals, Development Corporation staffs differ considerably from the people for whom they are planning and thereby face dilemmas common to most planners. In addition, the attitudes of the planning staff are often at variance with the administration. Since there is no common factor in qualification for General Manager, he is often a product of civil service or colonial administration but almost never of social science, architecture or planning - related disciplines. While it is not suggested that lack of training

in these fields is an automatic disqualification for what is effectively an executive position, the possibility of conflict which might result between the General Manager and his staff cannot be overlooked. Differences in outlook are also found between Chief Officers and the younger technical staff. It has been noted that the majority of the Chief Officers currently practicing entered their professions at a time when education in the social sciences was not part of a technical program. This fact of training plus the universally found dichotomy between younger staff and older staff creates a gulf within the ranks of the Development Corporation. It should not be expected of these younger planners that, in a situation where contrasts in income, race, and political power are less marked than in the United States, they display the missionary zeal of their American counterparts. There does, however, exist an ever-widening spread of awareness of international developments and a desire to include a greater measure of participation in the planning process.

The symbolic effect that the Development Corporation has in the designated area should not be overlooked. It is very common for Development Corporations to purchase a large structure -- usually an estate -- in the area. This can be justified on the grounds that readily available facilities large enough to house a staff of 150-300 rarely exist. What this means, however, is that the Dev-
elopment Corporation is usually located -- and associated with -- an extremely plush setting physically removed from urban centers and inaccessible by public transportation. This is reinforced by the influx of expensive cars and a whole set of people with different life-styles than commonly seen in small rural districts. Even in a large burgh or village of 10,000, the visual impact alone of the Development Corporation and its staff gives substance to an increasing conception of us and them.

Pre-participation Requirements

Any Development Corporation which seriously believes in the utility and benefit of public involvement is obliged (in its own interests) to administer several services to the potential constituency before it can actually implement strategies. Some so-called techniques of participation are clearly preparatory activities and should be recognized as such by both the planners who substitute these techniques for participation and by the critics who disclaim the concept of participation on an interpretation which confuses public involvement with other activities.

1. Information distribution:
Almost half of the Development Corporation Officials who responded to a question regarding "the most effective means of encouraging involvement of the public in the planning process" cited provision of information. Further, half of the Development Corporations indicating which department
is most closely concerned with liaison with the local public in relation to plans which affect them specified the information of public relations officer. This response is important in two ways: 1) it demonstrates the widespread interpretation of information provision as a form of participation and 2) it points out the importance of information distribution in New Towns.

All residents of a New Town should have the opportunity to thoroughly familiarize themselves with development plans and progress if they so desire. "The typical planning office is a storehouse of useful data collected at public expense for public ends and there seems no reason why it should not be disseminated at an early stage in the planning process." In addition to making data available, the Development Corporations should publish easy to understand summaries of planning proposals. Methods of communicating planning information have come under attack in Britain for their unintelligibility for the man on the street. "Considering the accent on participation in the 1968 Act and by Skeffington, it is ironical that the plans recommended in the new Development Plan Manual are extremely difficult for the layman to interpret." Wright has emphasized the importance of the mode

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of expression of information: he notes that for a constituency which is largely working class and formally educated only through some of secondary school, "the planning profession (must) cultivate the style of the Daily Mirror (similar to Boston's Record American) rather than the Guardian: the parish magazine rather than Official Architecture and Planning. The (dissemination of information) requires an appreciation of the complexity of present-day communication from the mass media down to interpersonal networks."

For Development Corporations, the content must not be restricted to plans for development but also should describe the structure of the Development Corporation, the responsibilities which lie with the local authorities and the appropriate organizations or departments to contact for further information.

Information provided will vary with resident groups. For example, the long time resident of a small village or burgh, the threat posed by the impending New Town is almost incomprehensible. Seen from their point of view, the injustice of New Town development can be intolerable and understandably difficult to bear. For these people, information about Development Corporation plans for their own futures is of critical importance in helping them to come to terms with drastic change. From the time of

designation, the flow of information from the Development Corporation to these residents must be frequent, accurate, comprehensive, and timely.

New residents are sometimes faced with serious problems of adjustment whose resolution seems even more remote in an unfamiliar and new environment. Information regarding available services and social activities as well as options for participating the their community development should be provided.

An important aspect of information distribution is the educative role the Development Corporation must play. Until formal education through schools includes planning studies in the curricula, the public will remain largely uninformed about planning. Obviously, the Development Corporation cannot undertake a massive planning education program for its constituency. But it must expect to play an informal role in education if its investment in participation is to be made good.

A further role that information distribution plays is in notifying the public of the participation procedures and specifying how individuals might become involved. These should include times, dates, and schedules, on a regular basis.

2. Community Analysis:

The Development Corporation must attempt to know the potential participants. First this involves assembling
a profile from detailed characteristics which are statistical and objective in nature. These details are not difficult to acquire, and is a standard approach which many Development Corporations are engaged in at present, though there is considerable tendency to overlook existing residents. A surprising number of Development Corporations lacked even the most basic information about residents.

A more challenging form of community analysis is also necessary. Non-statistical in nature, it attempts to ascertain perceived values, needs, and attitudes of community residents. Research and experimentation in this field is not overwhelming; but the most promising forms are based on the premise that often communities themselves aren't explicitly aware of "what they want" or the repercussions of their decisions. Voicing their interests without some form of help in self-awareness is not in anyone's best interests. The proposals of Ecologue⁹, the Cambridgeport experiment, for example have particular relevance for New Towns. Its originators see goals which directly coincide with those of social development. They include:

- strengthening of a sense of awareness through the realization of jointly shared values and interests
- awareness of a degree of commitment to similar goals both of life style and interest-based goals
- increasing communication within resident groups

Acquaintance with the community, preliminary to implementation of participation strategies, will provide an invaluable sense of affinity and affiliation networks as well as prevailing attitudes and interests.

3. **Assistance in Coping with Change**

Since planning purposefully and positively alters the state of an existing system, the larger the context, the more drastic are the implications. Roger Else of Milton Keynes sees participation in New Towns as a means of coming to terms with change. Since a big problem in New Towns is integrating the new residents with the existing, Else feels that encouraging protest about physical planning is a legitimate way of assisting residents in coping with change. This, he argues, might divert the aggressions of existing residents which might otherwise find expression in hostility against newcomers.

Instead of merely 'introducing the consultants', then, the function of the preliminary participation exercise must be to help people to come to terms with their fears. This might best be accomplished by a straightforward explanation of basic structures to date which should be attempted only after they have been finalised so that a firm statement can be given.

Information, as noted, and informal consultation between residents and social development workers will help clarify issues and suggest alternative actions which can be taken.

4. **Organization of groups**

The overlap between Social Development work and participation...
has already been referred to assertively. Without or-
ganization, implementation of most participation strate-
gies is virtually impossible. For New Towns, group organ-
ization will need to focus on the formation both of interest:
groups which would evolve in an established community over
a much longer period of time and groups which can be formed
on the basis of shared characteristics which can gain a
stronger voice through group unity and which are vital
sources of information in an active participatory program.
The objective of group formation should be twofold:
groups form organized constituencies which make contact
easier for the Development Corporation; they also help
to form the basis of a community.

Both organization of groups and assistance in coping
with change are reasonable projects for the Social Devel-
opment Officer. Robin Guthrie, a Social Development
Officer himself, sees their task in New Towns as replacing
hopelessness with hope, particularly for existing resi-
dents.\[11\]

**Technique Alternatives**

Participation of the public can exist in a variety of forms
depending on the potential use the Development Corporation

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sees for it. There are approximately six distinct, general techniques which have been identified by observers of past participation efforts in other planning situations. The list can only be approximate because there is considerable overlap among theoretists. Briefly, they are:

1. **Manipulation** - Interaction between planning authorities and the public is on terms set by the authorities to win public support for proposals. Manipulation is an illusory form of participation which busies "participants" with small issues while avoiding the larger, more important ones. Arnstein has called manipulation "a distortion of participation into a public relations sham." 12

2. **Therapy** - Authority assumes that residents complain because they have not been socialized enough to accept the values of the larger society. The implication is that the dissenting or objecting public may even be regarded as sick and in need of remedial treatment. Through instruction, authorities feel that over time, the public may be aroused to appreciate views of the powerful.

3. **Placation** - The planning authority makes token concessions to public demands: gains which might appear to be substantial are, in the end, token gestures. Co-optation of resident representatives into meaningless positions with persuasive titles but no legitimate power or function is an example. Arnstein notes that "the degree to which citizens are placated ... depends on two factors: the quality of technical assistance they have in articulating their priorities and the extent to which the community has been organized to press for those priorities." 13

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13 ibid, p. 220.
4. Consultation: The public is invited to offer opinions about an issue or proposal with the authorities' intention to give them full consideration and sufficient weight to allow decisions to be based upon them. Power to make decisions still rests with the planning authority, but in the ideal consultation situation, these decisions are subject to public influence.

5. Consent: Proposals formulated by planning authorities cannot be ratified unless approval is given by the residents on a representative or direct basis. Consent does not necessarily imply that the public is involved in any other way, but the best use of the consent technique requires that proposals are developed at least jointly by the public and authorities.

6. Control: Residents have managerial and implementational responsibilities with financial and human resources to back up decisions. If other authorities object to decisions, the public body in control is in a position to negotiate on an equal basis. In the past, control by citizens has often been gained through confrontation, usually over a specific issue. Control means autonomous power to exercise one's will over the opposition of others.

These techniques distinguish two ways in which the public can enter into the planning process -- either as actors or as subjects. This distinction becomes blurred and quite subtle in some circumstances. The techniques of placation, therapy, and manipulation regard the role of the public largely as subjects in a planning process which involves them in a predetermined manner. On the other hand, consent, consultation, and control techniques are employed in a process which depends on the public for outcomes. While aspects of the techniques which involve the public as subjects are not necessarily deceitful de-
spite the pejorative classification, the public is not given the right to initiate.

While some students of participation choose to organize the techniques on a continuum placing control as the most desirable outcome, we shall assert that the concept of good and bad techniques is dependent solely on the objectives sought by the participants and the Development Corporations. In this situation the following techniques seem appropriate to the situations:

Consultation:

Our review of the typical Development Corporation staff and particularly its decision-makers shows little congruence with the characteristics of the typical New Town resident. The particular contributions each resident group can make have been noted: i.e. each "specializes" in areas of knowledge by virtue of his own experience. Advisory techniques are concerned with tapping this information as an important basis for decision-making. These techniques, therefore, are based on a concept of residents themselves as a planning resource which must be called upon to formulate and achieve better planning goals. Resident/Development Corporation relationships can be expressed in a variety of ways. Residents can be seen as partners in the process of achieving goals. They can also be seen as advisors, called in for reference in special facets of the planning process. Residents
can also be seen in consultation techniques as assistants. Edmund Burke has noted that "probably one of the oldest and certainly one of the most prevalent reasons for citizen participation is the simple principle of voluntarism -- the recruitment of citizens to carry out tasks for an organization which does not have the staff to carry them out itself ..." The principles of voluntarism -- the reliance upon citizen volunteers to perform many essential agency functions -- can be translated into Development Corporations on both paid and unpaid bases. Residents can also act as independents who raise issues which do not surface in Development Corporation proposals.

**Consent:**

Employed in the belief that aspects of New Town development should not occur against the will or without the knowledge and approval of residents, consent techniques accord more power to the residents than consultation techniques. The objective of consent techniques is to assure that New Town residents are knowledgable about and approve of proposals before implementation. Approval mechanisms can vary but they must originate from the residents. Forms are representation (individuals deciding on behalf of residents), delegation (individuals decide as the residents have determined) and direct. Including already established community leaders qualifies as a consent technique if the individuals are truly representative of Edmund Burke, "Citizen Participation Strategies", AIPJ, Vol. 34, No. 5, September, 1968.
their constituencies and if they have equal weight as the others who share their position in matters of policy decision. The limitations of consent strategies are that approval can extend only as far as the Development Corporation wants it to and that residents may be asked to approve points they may know little about and cannot make informed judgments.

On Community Control

Whether or not control is seen as an aspect of participation and a goal which all forms of participation should achieve depends on the definition of participation. Community control is treated here as an issue separate from participation. Its potential role in New Community development is a fascinating study on its own with exciting implications. Unqualified and unrestricted community control in British New Towns, however, seems particularly difficult and inappropriate at this point in time, not because of inherent structural difficulties but because of the disinterest of residents in undertaking such responsibilities and lack of demand. Public calls for better decision-making in New Towns are demands for competence and accountability of the Development Corporation, rather than control. In general, the mood of residents is that if they could have at least some say in the development of their town, the results might be much more satisfactory.
All of the techniques mentioned here can be potentially misused by the Development Corporation and community control can be dangerous. The risks are high and no pat formula can be prescribed. Suggestions can be made here but success will ultimately depend on the attitudes of decision-making authorities who now have control of New Town Planning.

Involvement defined as "an awareness of policies through consultation" may be all that most people want: "it would be enough, in many cases, to overcome the stress and anxiety of being planned by powerful and anonymous people."\(^{15}\) Given the likely political behavior of most British subjects, and the complexity of New Town development, consent and consultation strategies are appropriate for New Town planning. Strategy recommendations will focus on these two techniques for two planning conditions.

SECTION THREE

METHODS OF INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN NEW TOWNS

Two fundamental forms of comprehensive planning are necessary in New Towns, one as a subset of the other: the master or structure plan and local plans. Local plans could be regarded as details of the structure plan, each of which must be approved separately by the Minister. They are usually conceived of on a community basis. While not overtly made, this distinction is an important one for New Towns. Participation strategies are contingent on the planning process adopted by individual Development Corporations and this will involve the relationship of structure plans to local plans.

Present planning processes are fairly consistent among New Towns and most of them, like the master plan itself, could not be characterized as innovative.

The planning process is typically seen as linear and is structured in a loose manner around a chronological development of first the structure plan and then local plans for residential communities and industrial estates. The publication of the master plan, almost without exception a grandiose document with lofty but generalized goals, is a major event in the development process. The plan is generally seen as static and completed with publication: any later changes are regarded as amendments. Two reasons for this are evident:
1. Planning itself is still seen as a task which is complete before the fact of physical implementation. 

2. There is a tendency to overlook that there is a public to whom planning can be addressed. The contribution of existing residents is regarded as understandably confined to objections and therefore can only be negative.

Because requirements are specified in terms of products and since decision-making except on large general issues is done by Development Corporations, duties can be interpreted with considerable latitude. Goals which implicitly guide development (maximization of profit, minimization of development staff:output ratio) are often at variance and sometimes contradictory to the explicit goals stated in the structure plan, and may be a more accurate rationale for Development Corporation actions than the plan.

While the comprehensive or unitary planning approach is essential in New Town development, the Development Corporation does have the option of deferring many decisions to the community level: a dramatic increase in public involvement could probably be achieved by concentrating more attention on local plans rather than relegating this aspect of the planning effort to a secondary position.

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1 An indication of this attitude is the inclination to dismiss the importance of the planning staff after production of the plan: occasionally the planning staff is even reduced.
A more incremental approach does not in fact represent a tremendous departure from current practice: the town is planned in detail on an incremental basis. The change advocated here is in the degree of centralization of planning decision-making and the role of the Development Corporation from master designer to co-ordinator. This means that some decisions traditionally made exclusively at the onset by the Development Corporation falling within the jurisdiction of the structure plan are left at least until the residents are identified and can play a role in planning on a local basis. The concept of infrastructure planning in which services and major transportation routes are planned initially with local planning on an infill basis is appropriate if the structural facilities allow enough flexibility.

Innovative efforts need to be made by the Development Corporation in increasing public involvement at the structure plan level: at the same time, however, local planning can become more important in the development of the town as a whole. Greatly increased participation at the community level could help to decrease the characterlessness for which many British New Towns have been criticized. The ultimate environment could be improved in several ways:

1. Individual communities would probably differ physically from each other by developing them
around a particular value or specific problem

2. Social programs could be adopted to suit the requirements of special groups who might benefit by spatial segregation. Special interests could generate new sub-communities and programs which have never been allowed to surface under traditional planning.

3. Communities could experiment with the same concepts in a variety of ways: open space, location of shopping facilities, and provision of health facilities are examples.

4. Rather than being regarded simply as a better place to live for those individuals who "qualify," New Towns could begin to generate an appeal for other segments of the population affecting a greater population mix.

Community planning by residents is likely to produce innovative designs. "Reliance on experts may be one reason why innovation seems to be notoriously absent from most ... (planning) reports."2 There is, after all, something to be said for the lack of preconceptions which the public has to offer. Structure planning, then, could act as a means by which community planning could be integrated on a continuing basis rather than as an initial prescription for the entire area. When the impetus for new community types is slow to occur within the community itself, the structure planning process could stimulate community action by proposing alternative forms of development. With this distinction between plan types in mind, two sets of strategies for public involvement can be developed: one for structure planning and one for

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local planning.

Part I: Public Participation in Structure Planning

Increasing public involvement in the development of the structure plan is a difficult problem. Of the two planning forms, structure planning is the least attractive to the public. Except for the geographical realities of the designated area, all of the plan development is abstract and intangible, concerned with long-range effects, considers a great variety of interests, and has broader implications for society as a whole. These characteristics, in fact, are just the opposite of those in which the non-professional public is interested and can contribute most. Geoffry Walker and Alan Rigby of Building Design Partnership talk about their experience with these problems in the Rhondda Valleys in Wales in preparing a study for the year 2001:

Meaningful participation may be difficult to achieve at structure plan level, as most people have a limited interest in general issues. There will always be a tendency to particularize the discussion because people are most concerned about the local impact of planning policies. They will draw their own conclusions about the effect locally, despite diagrammatic plans. Structure plan discussions will be used to raise local issues in order to have views made known at the earliest possible opportunity. 3

The New Town planner must be concerned with satisfying regional goals which gave rise to the designation of the New Town both for the present and future. The community

is interested in subsistence-level goals such as garbage collection, noise control, and pedestrian safety and has a natural interest in the immediate environment of the individual home-owner or tenant. They are understandably incognizant of trade-offs which are necessary to effectuate more widespread benefit. Their orientation is less toward causes than effects: and the remedies they seek are often temporary measures and not significant on a longer time scale. It is unreasonable to expect large numbers of typical residents to become interested in structure planning without adequate incentive. This is especially true of residents of the lower economic classes to whom a move to a New Town represents a significant upward step and who are particularly interested in their own welfare at this point in their lives.

Structure plan presentations are always characterized by a high proportion of questions and comments by the residents which relate to small-scale issues of neighborhood concern. Dismayed by non-dialogue, Development Corporations see "participation" as unworkable; and to the extent and in the manner in which they practice it, they are right. The result, as many see it, is that trouble is stirred up. One member of the public relations staff of East Kilbride, a particularly successful New Town, put it very succinctly: "We don't believe in participa-
tion here. It is just asking for trouble."^{4}

The Distribution of Decision-making

It is necessary for the Development Corporation to define its conception of public participation in decision-making terms. This will entail putting limits on the extent of influence of the public by outlining a decision-making hierarchy -- that set of interrelationships among decision-makers that stipulates the responsibility for final authority. This may seem contradictory to the notion of participation but any realistic appraisal of the strategy will acknowledge the insurmountable difficulties inherent in the interpretation of the best participation of the public as complete control of New Town development by the users. In fact, there are many deciders and the extent of their influence can vary. But the crucial question is the need to distinguish between decisions that can only be made by the Development Corporation and those which can be made by the public. Two general guidelines which are appropriate to this distinction are the number of people which will be affected, and the extent of disagreement among public decisions. These are not as simple as they may appear: the number of people directly affected is difficult to ascertain; "people" must refer to both present and future populations and "affect" can range from "intimately impli-

^{4} Dan Fleming, Public Relations Staff Member, East Kilbride Development Corporation (April, 1971).
cated" to "influenced". Public groups can make decisions for themselves only insofar as they can agree to do so. A third even less definable guideline is that of commonweal. If a large body of users convened, agreed and supported a course of action which in the opinion of the professionals would not be in their own best interests (e.g., unforeseen implications, irrevocable consequences, which may not be appropriate for future generations), the Development Corporation must be in the position to override the opinion of residents by virtue of their expertise and the large number of residents (present and future) that the decision might affect. Clearly, there is no single or easy answer to this problem and the goodness of the decision rests with the goodness of the decision-makers. But, by bearing in mind the guidelines of commonweal, and reconciliation of conflicting priorities for determining the limits of public influence, the Development Corporation is at least able to more rationally assess each situation.

Guthrie suggests that activities like structure planning can be "the occupation of a relatively sophisticated minority" -- by implication, self-selected -- which is not formed along class lines or by the distinction important in the Skeffington report -- between articulate minorities and interest groups and all others. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect extensive participation of f

5Guthrie, op. cit., p. 398.
the public in structure planning. "Decisions at this level must be seen to proceed rationally -- that is, they must be based upon sound objective data and projections, and produce a precise framework of essential structures and services. Unless they are experienced planners themselves, there is little opportunity for local individuals to influence these kinds of decisions."6 By concentrating the involvement of the public at the local plan level, it must be inferred that in the past, participation may have simply focused on the wrong aspect of planning.

The need for an alternative strategy stems from the fact that those enjoying currency now do not effectively deal with "the need to develop viable small groups analogous in at least some respects to the traditional community."7 Yet applying techniques conducive to establishing a sense of community in structure planning where the size of the area and the population is so large may make such efforts futile. Active participation in planning limited to the community level may not be such a heretical concept if it is honestly effected.

The Residents as a Resource

Residents constitute a group of consultants with special

7Carl Sussman, The New Communities Concept, Urban Systems Laboratory, 1970. (no page numbers)
contributions to make. Obviously there are many other participant groups in New Towns if participants are defined as users. Consideration will be limited here to residents to enable specific proposals to be made. In New Towns, residents can be expected to take a much greater interest in their environment -- particularly in their own house -- than in other forms of development in Great Britain. "The families who move to a New Community are often prepared and even quite willing to undertake changes which will result in their having a style of life which is somewhat different from their lives in the communities where they formerly lived." Indeed, that these families took the initiative to move at all -- presumably to upgrade their standard or style of living -- distinguishes them to some extent from the remainder of the society from which they came.

Resident groups can be broadly defined by their time of residence in the designated area. Five groups with distinct needs and/or contributions can be identified:

8Other groups such as management and staff of commercial or industrial concerns acting in their entrepreneurial capacities have an equally vital interest in the New Towns but are naturally concerned with different aspects than residents. The nature of their involvement on a business basis is more contractual or formal. The risk of unrepresentativeness is not so great in the business sector since commercial interests are both more generalizable and easier to identify.

yet-to-be-identified future residents, identified residents located elsewhere, new arrivals (up to the first year of residence), longer-term residents, and residents existing in the area at the time of designation. For each of these groups, both Corporation tenants and private homeowners should be considered separately since their needs and aspirations differ measurably. (This study is addressed to Corporation tenants only since the proportion is very high in comparison to homeowners, but the principles of participation can be extended literally to include homeowners' associations, etc.) As the New Town develops, a tremendous number of additional ways to identify residents by groups develops. While they do not exist in the initial stages of plan formulation, it is important that the Development Corporation reviews possible constituency groups at the onset so that their involvement can be anticipated.

The roles individual residents can play in participation will change with their evolving status in residence, with continuous movement in and out of interest groups, and with a change in planning requirements as the town develops. Roles can be identified which will remain more or less constant but the participants who will fill them will constantly changing. (The interests of teenagers, for example, will always need to be represented but the

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10 Local Authorities in New Town designated areas continue to construct housing under their own auspices throughout the period of New Town construction. These residents will probably identify with the nearest community and can be considered on that basis.
teenagers themselves will change). This presents the problem of continuity which is best dealt with by clearly defining the roles in terms of responsibilities, lines of communication, opportunities and constraints.

In a New Town, it is up to the Development Corporation to encourage the formation of groups, often by suggesting the basis of organization. Naturally, the Corporation will concentrate on generating mechanisms to which it can respond. The role of officials and staff will depend on the distribution of decision-making which the Development Corporation has determined: it is likely that they will be heavily represented in structure planning.

Advisory and consultation roles of the public in structure planning can be organized on three bases:

- by planning function (e.g. transportation, recreation, education housing, etc.)
- by special interests (e.g. new arrivals, men's clubs, the elderly)
- by geographic area (e.g. Town-wide, community, neighborhood)

These considerations make clear the inappropriateness of a chronological prescription of participation strategies on a linear basis. It is important to think of several strategies, simultaneously applied and interrelated. A planning process seen as re-iterative and dependent on feedback from ideas which proposed and/or implemented would suffer from a time-bounded and highly scheduled participation process. A framework rather than a step-
by-step set of instructions is appropriate. For structure planning, then, comments can be made with respect to advisory groups and organizational structure. For community or local planning, a tighter structure can be proposed.

Advisory Panels

Several types of panels should be constituted to act as consultants to Development Corporation planners from time to time in formulating the structure plan. In the pre-implementation phase of structure planning, participants would be drawn from the existing residents whose contribution could be expected to be information about use patterns, local values worth retaining, attitudes toward innovative facilities, etc. It is important that existing residents are included from the beginning so that they will learn about proposed changes. As the New Town begins to grow, Corporation tenants would represent their own interests. Panels of a number to be determined by the Development Corporation and depending on the exigencies of the situation, should not be selected by the Corporation, but be elected by members of already existing groups or newly constituted groups (based on characteristics rather than interests) called together by the Corporation for the purposes of advice. When the planning group is in need of resident's information, it can advertise a meeting to be called to elect participants. The process, and the function of the participants, must
be described well before the event of the actual meeting so that residents are aware of what is entailed. A full description should be available to every resident. To insure adequate representation, the Development Corporation can specify the types of residents that might fill the positions, allocating places on the basis of such characteristics as sex, age, etc. Participants should be paid for their services and have a relatively specific task set before them.

Advisory panels could provide information either from members' own experience or be responsible for gathering from information other residents, thus acting as planning aides. Panels would have the advantage of the small group as a basis for intensive exploration of the subject at hand while at the same time representing a wider population group. The disadvantage of panels is that they would not be able to function on a continuing basis. However, the inability to extract information which is even in content and quality and therefore consistent in usefulness from non-professionals over long periods of time would justify issue-specific use of panels.

1. **Special issue study panels:**

During the planning process, issues will arise about which the Development Corporation has little information with which to proceed to develop plans. Examples are provision for pedestrians in specific areas, mode of
transport preference, leisure time activity preferences across age groups. The Development Corporation will have the option of dispatching a team of their own staff or outside individuals hired especially for the occasion such as students, or they can use community residents who could do the same work, cost the same or less, and provide additional, not-necessarily-quantitative data as well. Sometimes the former option will be better -- usually for the sake of expedience -- but the Development Corporation should consider the use of residents themselves for such occasions. In addition to advising on the construction of surveys, for example, residents could help administer them and be in a better position to receive "off-the-record" comments and assess moods and real attitudes which could lead to important design decisions. Occasions might arise when the Development Corporation wanted to explore a proposal and its implications informally with the residents. Innovations in the delivery of services, for example, would require this kind of exploration in order to predict use.

2. Special facility study panels:

There is a breed of plan which is not a community plan and not part of the structure plan. Local in spatial context but Town-wide in impact, these are plans for elements of the New Town such as the Town Centre, or special complexes such as recreation centres or govern-
ment complexes. These facilities are specified in broad terms in the structure plan but require similar professional planning time commitments as community plans. Probably more detailed planning and architectural expertise is required, but aspects of the development of such facilities, such as shopping patterns should be referred to the residents. Similar to special issue study panels, special facility panels would be concerned with both the collection and provision of data.

Special non-physically-oriented programs that the Development Corporation might consider instituting would also require consultation with residents. Projects such as a new arrivals program could benefit immensely from the involvement of residents who have once experienced the problems of the new arrival.

3. Interest-group panels

Non-issue-oriented, interest group panels would be required on general levels of structure planning. Such groups would be made up of residents with similar characteristics and shared needs: panels of teenagers, mothers of pre-school children, and night shift workers might be examples.

The need for calling on these groups may not necessarily be obvious since their expertise is not directly facility
related. Approaching provision for New Town residents by consulting them about their needs first is an innovative method for most New Towns where formulas for facility provision are usually the basis of design decisions. By presenting general areas for consideration on a topic basis (such as providing choice in house-types, or recreational pursuits), the planner widens the realm of possible solutions. Thinking of problems in terms of causes and issues in terms of attributes can save money and time lost in what are essentially experimental solutions.

Involving groups which are already constituted to consider issues of the environment (such as amenity societies) or social provision (such as councils of social service) is important because of their specialized and sometimes technical knowledge.

4. Community Council Representative Panel
Once the communities become established, representatives of their own planning groups can be called together by the Development Corporation on matters which would affect the entire town for purposes of information distribution or to solicit information about community attitudes toward Development Corporation proposals. In any event, the panel made up of an elected member from each community planning council, would be the main vehicle for dissemination of information on planning
decisions to the various constituencies. Meetings should occur at established intervals to permit accurate and continual discourse. In this way, the community planning council would be kept appraised of the larger objectives of planning for the community as a whole.

While the community planning councils would be contacting the Development Corporation through other channels for purposes of acquiring funding or approval, the representative panels would provide the opportunity for members to exchange ideas among themselves.

3. Monitoring panels

After sections of the structure plan have been implemented, the Development Corporation could employ residents in a role analogous to consumer testing. Monitoring panels would work with the policy group and technical staff to develop effective indicators of performance. The monitoring staff would be responsible for collecting data to measure against the goals which the Development Corporation formulated in the initial phases of the structure plan.

After residents move into the New Town, they often discover deficiencies not always evident in the architects' plans. No one is in a better position to report these findings to the authorities than the people using them on a day to day basis. Monitoring panels would enable
residents to meet with Development Corporation officials on an informal but "legitimate" basis to report their discoveries. For these residents, the objective would be to repair deficiencies they find. For the Development Corporation, it would be to gather data for use in decision-making for future communities. The outcome of such interactions would satisfy both parties.

The staff would also be charged with evaluating the data along with the technical staff of the Development Corporation. Like the special issue and special interest panels, the monitoring panel would be advertised and members would be recommended on the basis of cross-representation of demographic characteristics and geographic spread.

6. Supported Lobby Groups

When users are consulted, the issues are stated in such a way as to predetermine the product and participation of the public can become a means of access to a self-fulfilled prophecy. The dangers inherent in this approach are those which accrue with categorization and labeling: the issue is presented as cut and dried -- distinct from the system of which it is a part. By even naming an issue, it can come to be seen in terms of what individuals perceive as that name and not necessarily in terms of the characteristics it manifests. This is particularly true for problem situations. Labelling
them may distort the essential set of conditions forcing
them to be understood as something they are not. The
planner must be careful to avoid implying a solution in
raising an issue.

To guard against pre-determination of outcomes and pre-
judiced results, the Development Corporation could in
addition to soliciting the attitudes of interest groups
advertise its willingness to lend staff and resources
to any group who felt it had a legitimate objection or
additional point to make about the development of the
structure plan. The purpose of lending temporary aid
to these groups is to assist them in presenting their
case without having to resort to costly external ad-
vocates. The obvious drawback to this arrangement is
that there would be a reluctance on the part of the
residents to enlist the aid of the organization to
which they were objecting.

Because of the conflict of interests inherent in the
process of encouraging protest against Development
Corporation proposals, the lobby groups may well have
to be organized and supported by an outside agency
with no planning powers unless the Development Corpor-
ation-sponsored lobby aide has a General Manager "strong
enough to protect him and (a Development Corporation)
masochistic enough to enjoy conflict of this kind and
to accept responsibility for it."\(^{11}\) The conflicts which would arise from this role would be obvious to the participant as well. The questionable allegiance of the Development Corporation lobby-aide could increase any sense of partisanship perceived by the community.

The only rebuttal to an argument against Development Corporation support is to assert that an attempt can be made toward objectivity and that the public deserved support for their opinions. Residents in any event should have recourse to known channels in inevitable cases of disagreement. Lobby groups could be concerned with formulating alternative policy or simply raising objections.

**Suggestions for organizational restructuring**

An often overlooked point in structuring participation of the public in planning is that the principles and rights of participation must be extended to the Development Corporation staff as well: the centralized decision-making that currently characterizes New Town planning is no more evident that in the Development Corporation itself. The rigid hierarchy of decision-making allows for practically no skips in the chain of command. (This comparison to the military is by no means

\(^{11}\)Guthrie, *op. cit.*, p. 398.*
inappropriate for some Development Corporations.)
The structuring of participation of the public must also democratize Development Corporation staff structure at the same time.

Two major ways in which this could be done are to de-emphasize the power of the General Manager and to assure that the Board plays a more active role in policy formulation. The role of the General Manager could change emphasis as the seat of decision-making if the Board were involved more closely in the day-to-day business of the Development Corporation. The power he now has in decision-making could be shared among the Chief Officers and the G.M. They would form the policy group and would rely on the Board for passing on the most important issues.

In a complex process like New Town Development, there is great need for a co-ordinator and administrator of the individuals involved in the process. The General Manager must retain this aspect of his position and perhaps with decreased direct decision-making responsibility, he could devote more time to this difficult and important task. This new emphasis would require great skill in moderating the opinions of the several experts and steering the group toward conclusions and recommendations at the appropriate times. He would also act as the link between the central government, the Board, and the policy makers in the Development Corporation.

Mechanisms such as requiring at least half-time com-
Commitment with commensurate salaries should be developed to assure that the Board would play a much larger role in policy development. At the present, the Board is fed issues which need approval on their once-a-month day long visit to the Corporation and serve a rubber-stamp function. As a consequence they are likely out of touch with the mechanics of New Town Planning and are inevitably presented with a distorted view of any situation.

Two final points which on the surface appear to be small ones: if the Development Corporation expects to achieve a successful relationship with the public which can produce results for planning purposes, the staff will have to expect to work during hours other than the remainder of the Development Corporation. This means that most meetings with the residents must be held at night. The administrative structure of the Development Corporation should provide for this deviation from the normal working hours, rather than requiring that the planning staff involved with public participation work overtime. The latter arrangement implies that participation is totally extraneous and that it is up to the individual to determine whether or not he wants to work with the public as part of his role in the Development Corporation.

The other thing the Development Corporation can do is actively encourage its staff to live in the houses that it builds. In this way the staff has a stake in the development of the community. The first community will
have a large proportion of the Corporation staff as residents who can act, through the structure suggested for community planning, as a test case and model for participatory planning. They can help in the valuable process of establishing a precedent by which other communities can be developed.

These proposals do not invalidate the continued attempt of the Development Corporation to present its decisions to the public in general. To the contrary, they would help to make such procedures more valuable by acquainting the residents with the mechanics of planning and the decision processes before presentation. Only in this way does the presentation process begin to make sense.

Relationship of proposals to existing local authorities

It has been noted that the local authority retains jurisdiction over the provision of many social facilities including education. As Lee Shostak has pointed out, in order for real innovation to occur, the social plan must "take an interest in guiding the development of two types of institutions that most New Town social planners have placed in the realm of 'untouchables' -- government and economic institutions." If the influence of the resident is to be comprehensive, ways of increasing participation in the local government structure must also be advocated by the Development Corporation. The
suggestions made here for resident/corporation interaction could and should be extended to local government. While this is a separate issue needing analysis and development of proposals for political participation, it demands attention in consideration of increasing participation in all aspects of New Town planning.

Part II: Public Participation in Community Planning

We have noted that perhaps the most important way in which the Development Corporation could increase participation of the public in planning is to decentralize planning decision-making and plan formulation to the local level. This has both physical and procedural implications.

Physical decentralization

The most contact typical New Town residents have with Development Corporations is that they pay rent and rates bills at the Development Corporation offices. As discussed earlier, the us/them distinction is greatly due to the physical separation and symbolism associated with the Corporation. Perhaps the single most effective technique the Corporation could employ would be to locate near the residents and to be accessible to them in more ways than proximity. Since one location can never be near all residents, this implies several locations in resident precincts.
Washington New Town has very successfully implemented its Social Development program through site social development offices which occupy the first house completed in a new community. They move later to a complex in the local center including recreation and meeting facilities. In this way, the on-site social development staff member is literally part of the community and not only is ready to help when problems arise, but has a real sense of community attitudes, fears, and aspirations. The on-site social development staff member is installed as a permanent feature of the community and therefore maintains a continuing association with its residents. This program has direct applicability to community planning: in fact, a planner or small planning team could locate in the same complex as the social development personnel in a form of "little Development Corporation" where many of the findings made by both types of professionals could be shared. There are ample reasons for the planning, social development, architecture and public relations departments of Development Corporations to be in close contact with the public while the reasons for decentralizing the administration, estates, engineering, quantity surveying and finance departments by community and retaining a core for structure planning would require a superior inter-communication system and joint meetings would certainly be necessary. On the whole, however, the
benefits of proximity to the residents would justify taking
the risks of professional separation.

Procedural decentralization

The major benefit of planning on the community level
is that it can make use of the small group as an alter-
native to the public meeting. This medium of exchange
is much better suited to groups of individuals who may
be reluctant to engage in participation as they know
it to be but are sympathetic to the idea. With the struc-
ture planning done by the Development Corporation as a
given, the community has a clear sense of the parameters
within which they can work, aiding their ability to con-
ceptualize considerably.

The following recommendations for procedural decentral-
ization place the responsibility for planning communities
in the hands of the residents if they desire it, but
provide the option for professional planning but on
a local basis. Thus, informal communication between
planner and resident can still be achieved.

1. Community Planning Councils

Prior to implementation, and immediately following a Dev-
velopment Corporation decision to initiate work on a com-
munity, a team of planning staff should be selected to
be responsible for the planning of that community.
Among their duties would be the identification of future
residents who are living elsewhere but with whom they would begin to work. (Initially the future residents would have been assigned to the community but as a range of communities develops, a degree of choice would be available.) As soon as application for a house in the New Town is received (if there are enough places available) the future residents should be contacted to establish the community they are to live in through a familiarization through the literature and site visits organized for that purpose.

One of the most important implications the concept of community planning has for the existing process of structure planning is the requirement that future residents are identified at least a year prior to their arrival in the Town. This is not difficult to implement within the current practice of housing allocations. In many cases, residents are placed on waiting lists for year long periods or more at present, but are not allocated a house until one is available. The actual process of relocation, then, is expected to take place in a very short time. Assignment of residents to houses is often contingent upon securing a job in the designated area. Interaction between the Development Corporation, prospective employers, and prospective employees is necessary to effectuate the important two-way match. This may imply that the Development Corporation maintains
a pool of available workers from which the employers can draw rather than relying on the contract to be initiated and negotiated by employers and employees prior to Development Corporation consideration of eligibility for residence. In any event, there is usually a lag between securing a job and beginning work large enough to allow the potential residents to become involved in planning. The proposals suggested here, then require that applicants be allocated a place in the community as soon as the community is designated an active priority.

Pre-implementation activities of the community planning council will differ markedly from those occurring after the community is substantially housed. Before detailed planning begins, the future residents should be introduced to those concepts and constraints determined as boundaries for the development of the community in the structure plan. These meetings should best take place in the major city from which most of the residents are drawn (the overspill city, if any). Advantages of this technique are:

1. The community residents begin to know each other and to develop a sense of common purpose

2. By studying aspirations for New Town living in another location, some of the problems of adaptation are decreased. Future residents can respond more freely and without impressions of what is possible and not possible learned through direct experience.

3. Right from the beginning the residents are
aware of their stake in the development of the community. Resident participation in the refinements of their community such as placement of footpaths, location of football pitches, etc., does not fully give them an opportunity to influence their environment in a meaningful way.

Much stimulus is likely to be needed to encourage residents to contribute in the beginning; the Development Corporation would expect this. Much of the planning staff's work in the first months is likely to be taken up by organization of resident groups. As the groups of residents become larger, there will be a need to introduce some form of resident representation. The most likely basis is by neighborhood. After the point of fission, each sub-community would send delegates to the community planning council from neighborhood forums. These should be drawn from the residents who met with the group from early stages.

Once the council is defined, it would meet regularly with the Development Corporation planning staff in residence in the community branch for a period of about a year, reporting back to its constituency -- the neighborhood forums -- and bringing from them opinions, attitudes and needs to the council. The members (as many as there are neighborhoods) would be hired -- some on a part-time some on a full-time basis depending on their employment situations elsewhere.

While the resident planners would prepare programs and
help to define alternatives through reviewing options with the residents, the actual mechanics of participation would be carried out by the community planning council members. They would be responsible for eliciting continued interaction of their fellow community members and for gathering data which is needed by planners in the development of the community plan. For example, one of the ways community planning councils can assemble data might be through what David Donnison has called a "community survey." The crux of this technique makes use of the strong points of the questionnaire form of data collection. Donnison suggests that a community group should formulate "some of the questions to be asked of a deliberately random selection of people and the results should be published in the community. The residents could then decide which results they feel represent the community's interests best and present them to the Development Corporation. Community-developed surveys would have the advantage of allowing the potential respondent to gauge where popular support lies so that he would not be totally in the dark when responding to the questionnaire on an individual basis -- often a factor which distorts response.

As the community is built, and all houses are occupied for three months or so, the professional planning staff

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can be reduced to one plus clerical assistant. This arrangement should continue until the community planning council acknowledges that they can deal with the central Development Corporation on further matters. This period of time would vary but in the end, the community planning council would function autonomously in its relationship to the Development Corporation.

Community plan development as practiced at present, involves the full attention of a planning sub-staff for a year or more. Therefore, the greatest difference would then be in their location, and their autonomy on smaller issues. It seems likely that a specific intensive assignment -- planning x community -- would inspire a greater commitment to the work of the individual planner; he, too, would have a stake in its outcome, particularly if he lived in that community in addition to working there.

Aside from the obvious benefit of increased interaction among the community residents, the community planning council, like the structure plan, would allow a forum for arbitration and reconciliation assuring that the ultimate plan does not become merely a sum of the local parts. The community planning council would have many parallels to the Development Corporation in the role of the latter in structure planning. The major responsibility
of the community planning council is to formulate policy but it differs from the Development Corporation in that it is directly accountable to its constituency and cannot proceed without approval of the residents. "British people appear not to be a race of 'joiners', but if community councils were given a proper place in the machinery of planning, there would soon be some good reason to organize themselves." A great deal of responsibility would be vested in the council members and the planning staff from the Development Corporation must be chosen carefully for its ability to work with these individuals. In the end, the success or failure of the effort will depend largely on their activity. Innovation in community planning will almost necessarily depend on them and their ability to draw residents out in their thinking about the community.

2. Neighborhood forums

Neighborhood forums through direct involvement, would attempt to arrive at consensus on issues put to them by the community planning council. They would communicate to that body through an elected representative. The forums would be voluntary and completely open and since residents would be dispersed in the pre-implementation phase, meetings would probably be infrequent. After they move to the New Town, the residents will be able

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13Grove, op. cit. p. 216.
to relate more tangibly to planning. The representative to the community planning council would be responsible for co-ordinating the meetings and would guide the proceedings toward positions on the issues raised by the former group. He would attempt to interest resident groups who turned out less frequently than others and at all times, seek adequate representation. He would also be responsible for suggesting members for panels which would be analogous to the advisory groups in structure planning for the Development Corporation: special interest, special study, and monitoring panels. These groups would have the same responsibilities as their counterparts advising the Development Corporation. They would, however, be on a voluntary basis and open to the entire community.

3. *Existing resident council*

In order to insure that the interests of those residents who were already living in the area at the time of designation are considered equally, an existing resident council should be elected whose members represent each village or burgh in the designated area and include representatives of rural districts. The existing resident council would have the same relationship to the Development Corporation that each community planning group does. A considerable amount of the planners' time in New Town development is spent on improving and altering existing areas to accommodate the growth which will take
place around it. The existing resident council, would therefore, not be simply a token gesture toward including the native population, but a valuable working group.

4. Direct Approval Forums

The technique of public presentation of plans is a necessary function of the community planning councils since approval of their proposals is necessary for implementation. Proposals should be presented to public, open meetings where ratification would be called for after discussion. The method of presentation should have the following characteristics, however, and in these ways differ from the plan presentation as currently practiced:

1. Presentation should be in both large and small groups so that residents who otherwise would be silenced by large groups would be willing to voice their opinions.

2. Presentations should occur not just at the end of plan formulation, but at several decision points along the way.

3. Presentations should occur in various locations throughout the designated area well-publicized in advance.

4. Advance publication should review the topics to be discussed and highlight the major decision points.

5. The resident members of the appropriate policy and advisory groups should conduct the presentations with Development Corporation professional staff in attendance for technical support.

6. Ratification would be required.
Implementing the Concepts

The weaknesses of many participation programs in existing New Towns can be traced partly to the lack of organization of the participants and their consequent inability to speak with either a powerful or a necessarily united voice. Two sets of actions must accompany participation programs in order to insure a better prospect of success:

1. The four pre-participation activities mentioned in Section Two -- information distribution, assistance in coping with change, community analysis, and organization of groups -- must be carried out.

2. The mechanisms for public participation must be obvious and the public should have some indication that their efforts will be rewarded by action. One way in which this can begin to be accomplished is by legally guaranteeing the right and necessity of the public contribution. Since "planning officers can legitimately take the minimum view of their responsibilities, by relying on the letter of the Act," participation needs to be required by statute for New Towns as it is for local planning in the 1968 Town and Country Planning Act. This should state that approval would not be given to proposals unless sufficient evidence of public contribution to the development of proposals is received. This might involve a form of investiga-

14 B. R. Marsh, "Relationship of Community Organizations to Local, Regional and National Planning Agencies in Town Expansion Areas" (Paper delivered at seminar in Public Participation in Planning, London School of Economics, April, 1971)
tion by the Ministry by directly calling upon residents themselves to signify their own participation. Even with a legal guarantee, however, informal evidence that the Development Corporation is committed to a productive interchange with residents is necessary. The mechanisms which create a potential level of participation must be made to insure a high effective level. This means soliciting information on residents' terms, actively encouraging (rather than permitting) discussion and comment, and proof through example.

The proposals recommended here are applicable to New Towns being planned from the point of designation. Ideally, in order to create a vital participation ambiance, participation should start from the beginning. However, this is not sufficient reason for limiting the application of proposals to towns which have not yet begun to be developed. The community planning proposals could easily be put into effect with the initiation of new communities in existing New Towns. Even limited participation in New Towns means sufficient allocation of resources in staff time and money. There would be a need for a "community liaison" staff member or department. His or her primary responsibility would be to see that the community participation groups are initiated and that the residents are engaged in interchange on a continuing basis.
SECTION FOUR

EVALUATION

This study does not pretend that these recommendations are presented thoroughly enough to launch into implementation straightaway. They are made as theoretical proposals which seem a reasonable way to increase participation of residents in planning under the present circumstances of New Town development in Britain. Details of staffing, salaries, and other financial allocations, locations, timing and specific responsibilities for each technique need to be worked out. But it is possible to evaluate the ideas in principle. To do this, a number of possible criticisms can be anticipated and discussed, the proposals can be evaluated in terms of the reception they are likely to receive and the contributions that could be made to New Town planning can be reviewed.

Possible criticisms

1. Over-complication: The nature of planning is complicated. But if attempts are made to organize the process by components, complexity can be dealt with. Simplifying a complex process runs the risk of distorting the problems and misrepresenting the variables. By specifying participation groups and their relationship to each other and to central authorities, and by emphasizing the description of the various authorities and their responsibilities as part of
a comprehensive program of information distribution, these proposals recognize complexity but help to make it more understandable. Information and clear description is the best way of acquainting those interested with the functioning of the machine and the relationship of the parts to the whole.

Simple structures have often been achieved for the sake of efficiency and ease but at the expense of thoroughness and to some extent, decentralization. This is nowhere more evident than in the decision-making structure of Development Corporations that exist today. Decentralization almost necessarily means complication; this should be accepted as a product of increasing participation.

The red tape an interested individual has to wade through under the present system to get an answer to his question is much more complicated than a structure with local access run by decision-makers who are familiar to the individual on an other-than-authority basis such as the community planning council suggested here. In this case, adding another layer of planning authority does not complicate the process because that layer has some authority to effectuate.

2. Increased Conflict
Not only are there ever-present tangible conflicts in the development of urban structures -- the most notable being between the fixed and mobile elements that make up cities --
but among the perceived needs of citizen groups. The incidence of conflicting perceptions necessarily increases with participation. These proposals attempt to identify plurality of opinion in two main ways: one is by encouraging the development of communities based on differing principles and thereby providing a choice in environment. The other is adequate and equal representation among a variety of groups on community planning councils. Both of these measures, however require that conflicts are resolved before the decisions are reached which will provide for choice. That is, though there may be agreement about a principle like vehicular/pedestrian segregation, how this is to be accomplished may be the source of disagreement. The opportunity of implementing methods of conflict resolution is presented by the establishment of community planning councils. Conflict resolution can be aimed at residents themselves, rather than being undertaken by an outside authority.

Tackling the problem of resolution of conflicting values or priorities has received much attention in the recent past. Planning games which demonstrate trade-offs by the use of issuing limited capital resources to players who are forced to make decisions are an example. (A British version of games for evaluating community preferences is the "Community Priority Evaluator" designed by Social and Community Planning Research in London and tested in the Borough of Brent). More techniques will be developed as the need continues to be felt. The community level is a reasonable point of application rather than the regional or structure plan level. Their biggest virtue seems to be as an aid to majority rule which is one of the greatest dilemmas of democracy, particularly in areas where situation variables may not be widely appreciated. Whatever technique is used by communities, the point to stress is that the responsibility for resolution should lie with the community.
It has been pointed out that "the traditional pluralist position with regard to values is that since the government does not dominate the affairs of the citizens but simply provides an arena for their competition, individuals have substantial freedom to pursue those values which they choose. However, such a position avoids the question of which values are in the interest of society but not necessarily in the interest of any significant segment of the community."\(^2\) The Development Corporation would retain the right to review and veto in the interests according to the framework outlined in the previous section. By emphasizing the development of individual community plans, the Development Corporation can begin to come to grips with this dichotomy.

The eliciting of conflicts in planning priorities should be seen as a positive aspect of these proposals for participation. Sigel feels that the lack of politicization in planning decisions has led to a bland situation in which conflict, "the essence of political decision-making" is almost completely absent.\(^3\) Advocating increased politicization, another writer notes the "British talent for avoiding head-on collisions between rival ideas ..."


(which leads to) disguising and suppression of a good many value judgments which ought to be determined by genuine political debate."

While the planning positions suggested merely lack the force of electoral motivation in the larger political arena, the same principles could be operative if enough prestige were attached to the individual representative positions. That is, in order to maintain his position on the policy committees, an individual would have to win gains for his community while reconciling its views with the needs of other sub-groups. This would have the advantages of lively debate and the disadvantages of forsaking longer-range issues for the short-term, easily recognizable -- the same benefits and risks that characterize any electoral situation. The difference here is that the material to be dealt with largely concerns the day-to-day, shorter range issues and the risks of politicization are less great. In short, participation will not reduce public criticism. It may vary will change in quality and become better informed.

3. Delay

There is no question that participation causes delay. But this can be minimized by adequately advising consultative groups of deadlines which must be met, al-
lowing them to structure their activities. Often, time
allotments for participation are too extreme: either the
members of the community are expected to summarize them-
selves, react and express alternatives all in one sitting,
or they are given as much time as it takes to arrive at
decisions and the issue drags on interminably, often
past the time of optimum effectiveness. Community groups
should not get undue special privileges: by setting up
constraints of time and cost, the community would more
likely be aware of their roles as consultants on a serious
basis.

Graeme Shankland rightly argues that planners "must also
expect changes of policy when people really see what
they're in for and make a fuss -- for the simple reason
that until a motorway route is really pinned down or one
can examine the model or drawings,"(residents may not
yet fully understand the implications) "This is very
trying for architects and clients and often the fault
lies much further up the line of policy making. Time and
effort spent in anticipating such reversals would be time
saved."

The community planning councils suggested here
could anticipate adverse reactions at a late date by
employing planners as technical translators of community
ideas from the start. But a contingency fund for late
revisions must be anticipated.

Graeme Shankland, "What Kind of Plans" Town and
Country Planning Association National Conference, Oct. 1969,
p.
4. Obscurity

There are two aspects of obscurity which have relevance for the proposals made here: one, is that the public, over-suffused with a proliferation of plans they cannot understand, become confused and then alienated because no one takes the trouble to explain the plans. Hopefully this problem would have been obviated by early involvement of the residents and assistance on a continuing basis by an on-site planner. But another form of obscurity threatens with the extensiveness of public participation such as those suggested here. The public may simply be inundated with opportunities and responsibilities for determining their own environment that they simply lose interest. This is particularly risky in Britain where the public expects a well-run and efficient system to provide a place to live, medical attention and other services. Attempts to minimize these risks are in paying some residents for their services as participants and making it clear that the fate of the community can depend on the contribution of the residents, but at the same time involving professional planners who would be able to carry responsibility of the plan when public action waned.

5. Excessive Expenditure

Attempts can and should be made to minimize expenditure in both money and time but participation will always cost more in the short run than traditional forms of planning.
In the long run, it may be argued that public participation in planning will actually save money by doing things right the first time. Actual data to prove this is difficult to find, but evidence of changes and revisions of plans after implementation does exist that suggests that long-term financial benefits are a quantitative justification for participation. A program as fully committed to resident involvement as that suggested here obviously means considerable financial outlay. The central government, therefore, is the body responsible for supporting participation through resource allocation. The Department of the Environment appears to be willing to spend and experiment for better results. The development of Milton Keynes, for example, is a more costly venture than any other New Town, and the staff is considerably larger. But more significantly, innovative programs such as monitoring and evaluation and PPBS have been approved and funded and are now being implemented. The New Towns are in a position to experiment with programs on a relatively self-contained basis and provide excellent testing ground.

All forms of public participation short of resident control have in common the risks of tokenism and ineffectuality if they are not taken seriously enough. By creating a situation in which the development of planning proposals depends on public participation, the importance and urgency of the public contribution becomes obvious to planner and participant alike. It must be recognized that most of the
objections cited here are applicable to all proposals for participation. The entire concept is characterized by these doubts since its basis is not the same value system which gave rise to more traditional forms of planning.

**Resistance to proposals**

The issues which can be anticipated in implementing these proposals are those which arise with all attempts at innovation of new concepts in existing contexts. These are the related problems of anticipating and overcoming resistance to change by convincing the appropriate authorities.

**Anticipating change:**

Some attempt must be made to predict the likelihood of implementation of these proposals as one facet of evaluating their merit. An accurate estimate of the resistance will enable the planner to "clarify the alternatives available for achieving maximum results from his investment of planning resources. He should put himself in a position to predict rather than analyze the situation in which he finds himself.

If an organization is functioning satisfactorily, innovative proposals threaten attachments to old ways, introduce the uncertainties of new practices and may disrupt the balance which has been achieved. Britain has been notorious for its New Town Development Program (itself once an innovation) and has among its older towns, some of the most
successful New Communities in the world. The concepts of public participation are particularly difficult to assimilate into a process which has survived successfully without it for many years. It is not difficult to appreciate the reluctance New Town administrators would have to public "interference" in an already extremely complex situation. They would legitimately question the expertise of the public and, based on their own experience, the ability of the public to conceptualize problems in New Town development. These are thoroughly legitimate objections. In addition, public participation is not an easy concept to grasp: intrinsically, it does not cohere in an organized manner. "One can draw any conclusions he wishes about citizen participation; few absolutes adhere to the concept." It is plagued by dilemmas for which no solution is evident. Problems center on difficulties associated with applying a humanistic and sometimes personal philosophy to what has been perceived by decision-makers in the past and present as a technical problem. Thus, it can be anticipated that the decision-makers might have considerable resistance to public involvement in New Town Planning.

Overcoming Resistance:

Unfeasibility of acceptance may be reduced by matching the kinds of influence to which a policy faction is re-

sponsive and the resources for influence possessed by the planner." Following the Morris and Binstock approach to overcoming resistance, the planner can count as his resources a sense of moral obligation, rational persuasion, and maintenance of image. While the call for participation can originate from a variety of sources, we have already noted that in Britain, pressure is likely to come from the planners themselves. So, for the purposes of illustration, we can concentrate on the planning staff of the Development Corporation as the proponents of participation and the group which must do the convincing. The task of overcoming any resistance the, is dependent on the planning staff exerting influence over those in authority to implement such proposals. In a New Town situation, these authorities consist of the Board and the General Manager.  

It must be recognized at the onset that arguments for participation in planning are basically moral arguments. It is certainly possible (as almost all New Town experience to date has shown) to plan and develop New Towns without ever interacting with the public except as they are the


The staff cannot have influence on the Ministry, though their sanction and support must be gained for the effectiveness of the proposals. The General Manager or the Board would deal with them directly, so the staff's immediate targets are these two authorities.
the objects of the plan. This will theoretically continue to be so. Attempts to convince officials of the value and efficacy of participation as a means of plan development must concentrate on the morality of designing environments according to the needs of users. However, it is important to deal with the questions with which the decision-makers will be confronted rather than assuming an ideological stance which uses as its main justification the "rightness" of the concept.

The evaluation of a participation strategy by criteria evolved from a centralized/traditional decision-making system is bound to yield low ratings if it does not achieve at least the same outcomes as the alternative. So, in order to prove the efficacy of participation for traditional planners, at least one of three things must be shown to be true:

1. That participation is more effective than alternative forms of decision-making in achieving traditional objectives.
2. That the criteria used for evaluation of the effectiveness of participation are inappropriate and alternatives should be substituted.
3. That the objectives are flase or limited and they must be changed or expanded.

The most direct approach to proving that an idea that is good in theory can also be good in practice is to show that it can produce better results while working within the same system. An evolutionary change of objectives is a long process depending on changing societal values and requirements. Since this reorientation of values
is precisely what has brought about the call for increased participation, it is possible to suggest a dichotomous basis for evaluation in which qualitative assessment is critical.

That plans are developed is not enough; the quality or appropriateness of the plans must now be disputed. There are other objectives in addition to traditional ones, that should guide New Town development. Participation of the public as a means of arriving at planning decision, then becomes relevant.

Traditional objectives can be thought of as product oriented. They concentrate on the development of a New Town in which the functional requirements such as the flow of goods are satisfied. They do not concentrate on the quality of life for the residents. An additional set of objectives must be considered in New Town development which flow from production. Process objectives can be thought of as the social benefits which derive from participation such as an increased sense of community or an increased level of hope of effectuating change on the part of the man on the street. The planner can appeal to the General Manager and the Board on the basis of moral obligation to the residents, through rational persuasion that planning objectives should be reoriented.

Both the G. M. and the Board will be sensitive to developments in other New Towns if only as a matter of "keeping up."
They are "also desirous of gaining recognition from members of (their) own organization and from others in (their) field." Perhaps the strongest point in favor of implementation for General Managers insensitive to personal persuaded by moral obligation and rational argument is the need for the image of the New Town to be seen as progressive and democratic. This image is important in the short run for attracting superior staff and in the long run for the development of a New Town which will accommodate future demands and which will not become obsolete too fast. The day is upon us where New Town staff will choose their places of employment on the basis of the objectives which guide the development and the quality of the output. This is a fact that the General Manager who is "especially interested in the maintenance and enhancement of the organization in a smooth and efficient performance cannot afford to overlook.

Of course, the other source of potential disagreement and active objection to current Development Corporation practices is the residents themselves. In a society which is becoming increasingly attuned to the rights of individuals in relation to their government, organizations must democratize their procedure as a means of forstalling future unrest which may lead to expenditure. Looked at this way, participation can be seen as an investment in the future. Resources must be managed so as to keep direc-

7 Morris and Binstock, op. cit., p. 107-8
tors, staff, contributors, and consumers relatively satisfied.

Contributions of Public Participation to New Town Planning

In summary, the best argument for implementation of a set of proposals is to assess it in terms of present experience. The proposals suggested here compare favorably to most participation techniques currently in use with any frequency in both procedural and substantive ways:

1. **Accessibility:** In the proposals suggested here, the majority of opportunities for participation is on a local basis about local issues. Not only is accessibility increased on the basis of physical proximity, but ease of entry is significantly increased to the point that any resident can enter into the participatory process. The neighborhood forums are completely open and on a sufficiently intimate level as not to be discouraging. The time it would take for any resident to avail himself of the mechanics of the process is little and does not involve great sacrifice of other facets of personal life since meetings would be held at night. Local planning officials would be available for consultation and information at the location of the community during all working hours. Representatives to the community planning councils (many of whose meetings would be open to the public) would be neighbors of the resident-participants.

2. **Suitability:** The format of the ways in which residents can join in the process of planning for their community is on an informal yet structured basis. Using the small group as the primary medium for interaction, the residents are not faced with significant departures from their already-established life-styles in order that they contribute to the process. Groups are formed on the basis of affiliation, affinity and shared characteristics. By constructing participation processes so that it offers other benefits like
the ability to come together with one's neighbors, yet has a specific set of points it must consider, planning on a community basis offers the opportunity for those groups such as the elderly or young mothers who are ordinarily house-bound the opportunity to contribute. Consideration is given to the non-professional who may not have had the opportunity or necessity to learn about planning issues by including an extensive information campaign and by organizing participation on a continuing basis, creating the opportunity for formal discussion and consideration of issues after they have been raised. Both the issues and the participants are given exposure time so that the situation does not suffer from lack of development or refinement.

3. Credibility: The fact that neighbors are elected to community planning councils, that neighborhood panels are administered by the community leaders, and the knowledge that residents are not only allowed to voice their opinions but requested to do so contribute to credibility of the structure. Unfortunately, it must be added that paid positions as advisors probably also has quite a bit to do with degree of credibility. Involvement solicited from the time he expresses interest in the New Town, especially if the resident is sought out, signifies to him that the opportunity which is being offered to him is not necessarily another attempt to seem democratic.

4. Representativeness: The most important consideration in assessing representativeness is that there is a level -- the neighborhood forums -- on which direct democracy is practiced and representation is not necessary. Since representatives are elected at each level and since they act as delegates to the community planning councils, the neighborhood forums can be assured that the agreed-upon position will be represented to the extent that any delegated system of representation is accurate. The basis upon which groups are formed reduces the risk of overlooking interests. Further, the function of lobby groups is to bring to light those interest which are not
anticipated by the Development Corporation. Continuity also works in favor of representativeness since more time for consideration of community issues allows for the expression of a greater diversity of interests.

5. **Thoroughness:**

Some planning authorities have acceded to the fact that residents are more interested in local issues by creating the opportunity to participate in such functions as naming of streets. The practices such as these are to the benefit of no one, since the Development Corporation learns nothing about the resident needs, and the resident does not learn anything about the planning process or proposals. After the individuals who took part in the naming, are no longer in residence in the town, the "contribution of the public" is remote and meaningless, if it wasn't before. By calling on the public to conceptualize their needs and wants before plans are formulate, as they are finalized, and after they have been implemented, the public contribution has some relation to the actual development of a community. The resident/participant finds that his role in the planning process is predictably and organizable into a larger framework. This allows him to present his case better and to understand the implications his point of view would have for the rest of the community and town.

6. **Continuity:**

Establishing on-going mechanisms for public involvement regardless of issue provides several advantages:

1. Needs which are not obvious to the development staff are able to emerge in the course of informal exchange.

2. When the developer does have specific goals accomplish, the disadvantages of assembling a client group new to the scene (e.g. unfamiliarity with the structure of the organization, skepticism about the sincerity of the developer, lack of knowledge of the relevant information or misinformation) which otherwise can retard progress do not loom so large.

3. The functioning of the town can be monitored consistently to identify disparities between design intent and implementation.

4. Channels of communication can become
4. Channels of communication can become established and individuals from both the development staff and the client group can be identified as contacts.

Various quantitative methods of measuring the success of participation have been advanced in practice and in the literature. These include ratios comparing the number of people present with the total number of residents in a given area for a given occasion, or figures comparing the number actually contributing with the number present. These suggestions focus on the process and are not performance criteria. Another suggestion has been that the absence of objection signifies a successful participatory process. This idea begins to get at results by implying that objections might be raised only if the public were not involved in the formulation process.

It seems, however, that the best measure of success in participation is not to be found by an analysis of the process but by an evaluation of the product by indicators of user satisfaction. We can say that a process seems to be appropriate, beneficial, optimal, etc., but in the end, the assessment of the communities by their residents is the best indication of the success. It is important to concentrate on increasing the means of access of residents to the participatory process but in the end, it is quality of the contribution that must be increased.

If one factor is to be emphasized more than any other in assuring the effectiveness of these proposals, it must be
that the Development Corporation attempting such programs must be fully and seriously committed to the value of the public contribution. This is particularly important in initial attempts at increasing participation since the Development Corporation will probably have to prod the public for response and encourage exchange when none seems to be forthcoming. There is no way to guarantee the quality of the participation program by outlining proposals such as these. Even if they were statutory, experience has shown that they would be widely interpreted. Planners must respect the participation they invite but whether or not they do is up to individuals.

In Britain, as in the United States and elsewhere, there is a decreasing confidence in an approach to planning in which "authorities" speak for the people. This attitude is especially prevalent among younger planners and it will be interesting to see how it has evolved when decision making roles come to be held by individuals of this persuasion. It is important to note that these and other proposals for increasing participation are made in the initial phase of a growing social attitude. The concepts which have been put forward here can be regarded as interim measures from which more pervasive and sophisticated forms of participation will undoubtedly evolve.
APPENDIX A: Questions sent to the following Development Corporations: (* denotes response received)

* Corby 
  East Kilbride
* Cumbernauld 
  Glenrothes
* Irvine 
  Livingston
* Milton Keynes 
  Peterborough
* Peterlee
* Redditch 
  Runcorn
  Skelmersdale
* Telford
* Washington
* Warrington
* Northampton
All questions refer to

1. In the past few years, has the New Town undertaken any activities involving either existing residents in the Designated Area, new residents in Corporation housing, or prospective residents that you would describe as public participation? If so, please explain them briefly.

2. Has the Development Corporation initiated activity in examples of any of the following:
   - Regular newspaper commentary
   - Organisation of community action groups
   - Small public meetings (20 or fewer people)
   - Large public meetings
   - Mobilising community protest against planning proposals
   - Individual discussion with area residents
   - Tours of New Town for area residents
   - Publication of explanatory literature specifically for residents of the Designated Area
   - Calling for a vote (or similar decision indicator) on plan alternatives
   - Provision of information about New Town to schools in the area

3. Who (which Development Corporation Department) is most closely concerned with liaison with the local public in relation to development plans which will affect them?

4. What is the attitude of the Development Corporation toward involvement of the public in the evolution of the New Town? Does the Development Corporation have a relatively specific policy toward participation of the public in the development and implementation of plans? Explicit or implicit?
5. In your experience, what do you regard as the most effective means of encouraging involvement of the public in planning issues? (Please include those activities which seek to inform, to solicit opinion, and attitude, and to incorporate opinion into the development process in your consideration)

If you care to comment on any of the following issues, I would be most grateful for a response:

- Problems peculiar to New Towns in the area of public participation

- The efficacy of participation of the public in the New Town situation

- The problems or benefits which exist in the structure or orientation of Development Corporations with respect to public participation

I would be most grateful if you could send along any samples of materials which it is practical to send by post which you have used in the process of involving the public in the development of the New Town (e.g. brochures, leaflets, position papers, reports, surveys, etc.)

This questionnaire was completed by ________________________

(Position) ________________________
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