

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Sustainability, the Voluntary Sector and Local Governance in East  
Yorkshire

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD  
in the University of Hull

by

Andrew Paul Kythreotis (BA, BSc, MSc)

June 2009

## **Abstract**

This dissertation examines the role played by Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups in contributing to the governance of sustainable development. The research involves an intensive case study of VCS groups in Hull and East Riding, East Yorkshire, focusing upon Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) and Service Delivery Mechanisms (SDMs) such as Compacts. Drawing on approaches to governmentality and scalar politics, it investigates the VCS-state governance relationship, tensions around local sustainability governance, and the scalar political processes by which VCS groups promote sustainable development. Research methods are based on secondary data sources and semi-structured interviews.

The study seeks an integration of approaches to ‘governmentality’, communicative action, partnership, power, networks and scales. It finds that state-regulated spaces of governance in the form of LSPs offer VCS groups limited recourse in which to promote their own particular discourses surrounding sustainable development. This is because VCS membership of such spaces is led by local government, who favour public service delivery and socio-economic discourses over environmental ones. As such, certain VCS groups only have regulated freedom and limited support in such spaces. VCS groups find it difficult to align their developmental aims with the objectives of local state-regulated governance spaces. This is exemplified through a tension between autonomy and capacity building within the VCS, with the state continually encroaching upon the legitimacy of an autonomous VCS, free from state interference. On one hand, some VCS groups seek to deliver particular sustainability objectives and win favour with local government by adapting to the public service delivery modus operandi of a ‘congested state’. Through strategically aligning themselves with state-influenced

networks of sustainability governance, these groups forfeit some of their independence surrounding sustainability objectives.

On the other hand, other VCS groups form external, non-state controlled governance networks. In this process, they engage with higher scales of state territoriality and governance, particularly the region, to pursue their own independent sustainability objectives at the local level. Conversely, the regional state scale serves as a buffer, whereby central government can regulate 'at distance' how VCS groups promote sustainability. These findings contribute new insights into the ways in which local spaces of sustainability governance are produced and contested within wider state modernisation and rescaling processes.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my PhD supervisors, Dr. Sally Eden, Prof. Andrew Jonas and Prof. David Gibbs, for their continued academic support throughout this research. Special thanks go to Dr. Sally Eden who kept me on the straight and narrow, and Prof. Andrew Jonas who encouraged me to develop my interest in scale (in between us playing football). I would also like to thank the Department of Geography at the University of Hull and its staff for giving me the opportunity and financial support to conduct this research. Thanks to all the departmental secretaries, past and present, especially those who supplied me with milk for my tea!

I would like to say a big thank you to my immediate family (for the first of my many PhDs!). Muttley, Pixie and Rog: words cannot express how much I have valued your continual love and support throughout my life's education. I hope I have made you proud. Thank you also to Chris, Sindeh Mindeh and Na for your support whilst I have been here in Hull. I especially thank Sindeh Mindeh for her sustenance – curries, biskwits and all. To Na for her eye pops and bases for balls...

Finally, thank you Shookey for everything you are and everything you have made me. You have always supported me without prejudice in everything I do, but also challenged me in so many ways. I hope you continue being you. I also thank my friends Moop-A, Wombloos and Blank-A, wherever you are.

## List of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of contents</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of tables</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>List of figures</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of maps</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of appendices</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>List of abbreviations and acronyms</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Overview of research and context	1
1.2 Main research questions	3
1.3 Structure of thesis	5
<b>Chapter 2: Sustainable development as concept and policy</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1 Introduction	7
2.2 Sustainable development as concept	7
2.3 Sustainable development as policy	10
2.3.1 Global sustainability policy	10
2.3.2 National sustainability policy	17
2.3.3 Local sustainability policy	33
2.4 Conclusion	43

<b>Chapter 3: The Voluntary and Community Sector</b>	<b>44</b>
3.1 Introduction	44
3.2 The VCS – definitions and roles	44
3.3 The VCS – trends, facts and figures	53
3.3.1 National	53
3.3.2 Yorkshire and Humber	57
3.4 The VCS and the state in partnership	62
3.5 The VCS and sustainable development	71
3.6 Conclusion	77
<b>Chapter 4: Theorising sustainability governance and VCS networks</b>	<b>78</b>
4.1 Introduction	78
4.2 Sustainability governance as project and process	80
4.3 State rescaling and sustainability governance	90
4.4 Local and regional sustainability governance as state steering	94
4.4.1 State steering	96
4.5 Contesting sustainability governance: citizenship and voluntary group networks	99
4.5.1 Social capital	106
4.6 Sustainability governance as ‘scalar politics’	109
4.7 Conclusion	113

<b>Chapter 5: Methodology</b>	<b>116</b>
5.1 Introduction	116
5.2 Study areas: Hull and the East Riding	117
5.2.1 LSPs and LBPs in the study areas	121
5.3 Sampling methods, snowballing and selection criteria	123
5.3.1 Snowballing	123
5.3.2 Interview group selection	127
5.3.3 Obtaining interviewees	131
5.4 Semi-structured interviews: rationale and practice	133
5.4.1 Interview preparation	135
5.4.2 Interview issues and implications	137
5.5 Secondary data sources	143
5.5.1 Secondary data	143
5.6 Analysing interviews and secondary data source corroboration	145
5.6.1 Analysing interviews	145
5.6.2 Secondary data source corroboration	148
5.7 Conclusion	148
<b>Chapter 6: Local sustainability governance in principle: reviewing documentation</b>	<b>150</b>
6.1 Introduction	150
6.2 LSPs, Community Strategies, Local Biodiversity Action Plans and service delivery as multi-scalar policy tools	153
6.3 Hull's LSP, Community Strategy and Local Biodiversity Action Plan	159
6.3.1 Hulls first LSP and Community Strategy, 2002	160
6.3.2 Hulls second LSP and Community Strategy, 2006-11	171

6.3.3 Subsequent changes to Hulls LSP and Community Strategies	178
6.3.4 Hulls Local Biodiversity Action Plan	181
6.4 East Riding's LSP, Community Strategies and Local Biodiversity Action Plan	183
6.4.1 East Riding's first LSP and Community Strategy, 2001	185
6.4.2 East Riding's revised Community Strategy, 2003	196
6.4.3 East Riding's second LSP and Community Strategy, 2006-16	198
6.4.4 Subsequent changes to East Riding's LSP and Community Strategies	205
6.4.5 East Riding's Local Biodiversity Action Plan	210
6.5 Comparing Hull and East Riding's Community Strategies: interim conclusions	212
6.6 Comparing Hull and East Riding's LBAPs: interim conclusions	214
6.7 The VCS and service delivery under New Labour: the specific case of Compacts	215
6.7.1 National policy on VCS and service delivery	216
6.7.2 Sub-national policy on VCS and service delivery	222
6.7.3 Evaluating the influence of VCS service delivery mechanisms on sustainability governance	224
6.8 Conclusion	225



<b>Chapter 7: Local sustainability governance in practice: the VCS experience</b>	<b>226</b>
7.1 Introduction	226
7.2 Structures, membership and VCS selection processes	227
7.2.1 Consequences of selection	235
7.2.2 Motivating and empowering VCS groups	242
7.3 How green are the Hull and East Riding LSPs?	247
7.4 Support and resourcing for local VCS groups in the ‘congested state’	260
7.5 Conclusion	268
<b>Chapter 8: VCS autonomy and networks in the sustainability governance project</b>	<b>271</b>
8.1 Introduction	271
8.2 VCS autonomy and spaces of sustainability governance	272
8.2.1 The Hull Community Network story	273
8.2.2 Delimiting VCS discourses of sustainability? The service delivery – capacity building tension	278
8.3 VCS adaptation to sustainable development through governance networks	293
8.3.1 Non-state controlled networks	294
8.3.2 State-influenced networks	300
8.3.3 Adapting to state policy shifts – deconstructing VCS-state ‘partnership’ working	305
8.4 Conclusion	315

<b>Chapter 9: The scalar politics of sustainable development</b>	<b>316</b>
9.1 Introduction	316
9.2 The local scale and sustainable development	316
9.3 The scalar politics of sustainable development	326
9.3.1 The role of the region in scalar sustainability politics	335
9.4 Scale jumping and negotiating sustainable development across space – VCS experiences	350
9.5 VCS sustainability governance and the scale debate	361
9.6 Conclusion	363
<b>Chapter 10: Conclusion</b>	<b>366</b>
10.1 Introduction	366
10.2 Addressing research questions	367
10.3 Implications for policy	377
10.4 Implications for future research	380
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>382</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>458</b>

## List of tables

Table 3.1: Number of general charities by total income (£), 1995-2004	54
Table 3.2: Total income by size of organisation, 2002/03 and 2003/04 (£million)	55
Table 3.3: UK employment by sector 1995-2004 (headcount, thousands)	56
Table 3.4: Estimated number of VCSs in Yorkshire and Humber region	58
Table 3.5: Number of persons in paid employment in VCSs in the region	59
Table 3.6: The economic contribution of volunteering	60
Table 3.7: The economic contribution of the sector to the regional economy	61
Table 4.1: Levels and dimensions of governance processes	85
Table 4.2: The features of networks and partnerships	87
Table 5.1: Comparison table showing geographical and socio-economic characteristics of study areas	119
Table 5.2: List of interview respondents	126
Table 6.1: National and local policy evolution with regard to LSPs, LBPs and VCS service delivery	153-4
Table 6.2: Most important priorities for the future of Leeds as determined by the consultation process	156
Table 6.3: Summary of ‘environmental’ issues mentioned through public consultation	192

## **List of figures**

Figure 6.1: Operational structure of Hull's Cityvision LSP	161
Figure 6.2: Structure of the One Hull LSP, 2006	174
Figure 6.3: One Hull LSP Governance Structure, 2007	179
Figure 6.4: One Hull LSP Governance Structure, 2008	180
Figure 6.5: East Riding LSP Structure, 2006	199
Figure 6.6: East Riding LSP Governance Structure, 2006	205
Figure 6.7: Sustainable Communities Action Group Structure	206

## **List of maps**

Map 5.1: Study area locations	118
Map 5.2: Kingston-upon-Hull council wards	118

## **List of appendices**

Appendix 1: Introductory letter/email to approach sample groups	458
Appendix 2: Research brief	459
Appendix 3: Generic topic guide for interviewee	460

## **List of abbreviations and acronyms**

AC Audit Commission

BARS Biodiversity Action Reporting System

BE Bransholme Enterprises

BME Black and Minority Ethnic

BTCV British Trust of Conservation Volunteers

CEN Community Empowerment Network

CHEF City of Hull Environment Forum

CLP Central Local Partnership

CPA Comprehensive Performance Assessment

CPRE Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

CS Community Strategy

CVS Council for Voluntary Services

DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government

DEFRA Department of Environment, Foods and Rural Affairs

DETR Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

DOC Developing Our Communities

EAC Every Action Counts

ER East Riding

ERNCLG East Riding Nature Conservation Liaison Group

ERVAS East Riding Voluntary Action Service

ERY East Riding of Yorkshire

ERYC East Riding of Yorkshire Council

EU European Union

FCEAG Flamborough Community and Environment Action Group

FoE Friends of the Earth

GDT Goodwin Development Trust

GDP Gross Domestic Product

GOYH Government Office of Yorkshire and Humber

HAP Habitat Action Plan

HCC Hull City Council

HCN Hull Community Network

HEROS Hull and East Riding Options

HMS Humber Management Scheme

HMSO Her Majesties Stationary Office

HNHCA Hornsea and North Holderness Community Association

HOCS Home Office Citizenship Survey

HVCG Humber Valley Conservation Group

HWRCC Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council

IDeA Improvement and Development Agency

LA21 Local Agenda 21

LAA Local Area Agreement

LBAP Local Biodiversity Action Plan

LBP Local Biodiversity Partnership

LDA Local Development Agency

LDF Local Development Framework

LGA Local Government Association

LGMB Local Government Management Board

LSP Local Strategic Partnership

MAA Multi Area Agreement

NCVO National Council for Voluntary Organisations

NE Natural England

NETG Natural Environment Task Group

NGO Non-governmental Organisation

NNRS National Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy

NR New Regionalism

NRU Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

ODPM Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

RA Regional Assembly

RDA Regional Development Agency

RSDF Regional Sustainable Development Framework

SAP Species Action Plan

SD Sustainable Development

SDC Sustainable Development Commission

SDM Service Delivery Mechanism

SHCS South Holderness Countryside Society

SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited)

SNETG Sustainable Natural Environment Task Group

SSCF Safer and Stronger Communities Fund

SSSI Site of Special Scientific Interest

TNC Transnational Corporation

UN United Nations

UNCED United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

UNCHE United Nations Conference on the Human Environment

UNGASS United Nations General Assembly Special Session

VCS Voluntary and Community Sector

WCED World Commission on Environment and Development

WSSD World Summit on Sustainable Development

WTO World Trade Organisation

YF Yorkshire Forward

YHA Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

YHREF Yorkshire and Humber Regional Environment Forum

YWT Yorkshire Wildlife Trust



## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Overview of Research and Context**

Since their accession to government in 1997, New Labour has actively promoted a joined-up modernising policy agenda (see Cabinet Office, 1999) which has emphasised strategic integration, partnership and engagement between the state and its citizens in the delivery of public services. Enshrined within this citizen-centric policy ethos is the state imperative of utilising non-state stakeholders at various spatial levels, especially at the sub-national policy level, to make government more responsive to the needs of its citizens and communities.

One policy that has continued to develop significance at the sub-national level is sustainable development. More specifically, at the local authority level, sustainability policy discourse has manifested itself through initiatives like the now defunct Local Agenda 21 (LA 21), and currently, Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). The latter two initiatives are supposed to represent a governance space by which local government works in conjunction with a variety of non-state stakeholders like the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to identify and tackle a variety of social, environmental and economic issues in order to ensure a healthier quality of life is enjoyed by communities.

VCS groups are supposed to play an active role within LBPs and LSPs because of their knowledge and experience of local communities and their ability to responsively deliver sustainable development issues ‘on the ground’. Their active engagement in such local governance spaces is just one way in which New Labour is attempting to instil a ‘joined-up’ policy stance that involves VCS contribution to local governance issues.

There has also been an increased emphasis by New Labour in utilising the VCS in public service delivery. How this relationship effects the way in which sustainability is governed for at the local level is also examined.

Drawing on the wider academic debates surrounding governance, 'governmentality', partnership working and communication, power and the rescaling of sustainability policy as a local governance issue, this thesis will examine, evaluate and compare how VCS groups engage with the state through local governance spaces, particularly LSPs, in Hull and the East Riding, in the promotion of local sustainable development. In addition to this, it will also examine how the VCS service delivery ethos of the state has had an effect upon how sustainable development is enacted as a local governance issue.

This involves characterising the roles and relationships between multi-scalar government, local state-regulated governance spaces, VCS umbrella bodies and local, regional and national VCS groups in facilitating such 'active' governance. In order to achieve this, motivations, networks and the relationships between multi-scalar government, VCS umbrella bodies and the VCS groups need to be analysed in order to see whether state policy imperatives that promote non-state engagement in local governance of sustainable development and VCS involvement in service delivery are in tension.

## **1.2 Main research questions**

There are four main research questions this thesis aims to address:

### **1. How do the state and the VCS seek to incorporate sustainable development into local governance spaces?**

This thesis will take a state-centric approach in addressing the envisaged role of local government in delivering initiatives that incorporate sustainable development and VCS participation into local governance spaces. It will examine the roles played by the local authority and the VCS specifically in developing and delivering LSPs and LBPs.

### **2. How is this process of addressing sustainable development through local governance experienced and perceived by the VCS?**

The thesis will assess the degree (if any) to which national, regional and local VCS groups ‘actively engage’ within these governance spaces in order to promote sustainable development. It will also involve assessing how local government perceive and promote governance, using LSPs as an example (chapter 7). These questions are closely aligned with theoretical debates concerning government, governance, ‘governmentality’, partnerships, communication, networks and (re)scaling.

### **3. What are the major issues faced by the state and VCS groups in ensuring sustainable development principles are incorporated at the local level, either within state-regulated governance spaces or external to these?**

This will evaluate whether VCS groups are given enough support and incentive to promote their various activities by local government within local governance spaces like LSPs and LBPs. This will also involve analysing how current initiatives are developed in each study area, looking at the political, social and economic (service delivery)

obstacles faced by the state and VCS groups in particular. It will also evaluate whether VCS groups have to work outside of these state-regulated spaces, through networked governance, to ensure that their own particular ideas on local sustainable development is occurring (chapter 8).

**4. How is sustainable development scaled as a local governance issue, particularly in the experience of the VCS and the local state?**

This question focuses on whether sustainability is being rescaled as a local governance issue through VCS involvement in state-led governance spaces. Assessment of this will involve questioning representatives and key stakeholders from VCS organisations/groups and seeing how they operate, function and promote sustainable development issues through their involvement with their respective LSP and LBP and whether they engage outside of ‘the local’ scale, across regional and national territorial scales, inasmuch as the governance of sustainable development is contested as a scalar politics (chapter 9).

### **1.3 Structure of thesis**

In order to answer the above research questions, this thesis will firstly introduce the concept of sustainable development and its related policy at global, national and local scales (chapter 2). Chapter 3 then examines the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), paying particular attention to the multiple ways in which the sector has been defined, national and regional sector trends, the VCS-state relationship and why the sector may be a fruitful lens in which to study how sustainable development is positioned at the local level. Chapter 4 then brings sustainable development and the VCS together by theorising sustainability governance and VCS networks, focussing on the governance-government debate, the concepts of state-rescaling and state steering ('governmentality'), citizenship and collective networks and sustainable development being enacted through a scalar politics. Chapter 5 will cover the methodology I applied in this research, examining LSPs and LBPs in the study areas, my sampling and selection criteria, interview rationale and practice, secondary data sources and how the interviews were analysed and corroborated with the secondary data sources.

Chapter 6 will analyse secondary data sources related to LSPs (Community Strategies/Plans) and LBPs (Local Biodiversity Action Plans), examining how sustainable development and the VCS are represented in such documentation and related institutional arrangements with the state, especially local authorities in Hull and the East Riding. Chapter 7 will empirically examine whether the rhetoric seen in state sustainability policy documentation matches how VCS groups experience local sustainability governance, with particular reference to VCS membership in Hull's and East Riding's LSPs (chapter 7). Chapter 8 will examine how the environmental and social pillars of sustainable development are in tension with state economic objectives like using the VCS in public service delivery and how VCS groups react to this policy

precedent both collectively, in networks, and in their own right. Chapter 9 then examines VCS promotion of sustainable development specifically through the lens of a 'scalar politics'. Chapter 10 provides then summarises the findings of this thesis in relation to the research questions, offering some general conclusions on the contribution of this thesis to both the academic literature and policy interventions. It also assesses the implications for future research in terms of understanding the relationship between the state and the VCS in the context of sustainable development.

## **Chapter 2: Sustainable development as concept and policy**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the concept of sustainable development and the evolution of related global, UK national and UK local policy over the past few decades or so. The first section (2.2) briefly discusses the multiple contested ways in which sustainable development has been conceptually defined, and attempts to relate this fuzziness to the aims of this research. Section 2.3 then introduces global, national and local policies related to the term giving the reader a picture of sustainable development's political and social gravitas to date.

### **2.2 Sustainable development as concept**

There are multiple definitions of the term sustainable development. Eden (2000) claimed that this is the “only thing about sustainability that academics seem to agree upon” (p.111). The most famous definition originated from the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) (1987) who defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p.43). This definition sought to appease economic, political and environmental considerations whilst ensuring present and future (inter- and intra-generational equity) poverty concerns in society were dealt with. Lele (1991) described this definition as a ‘metafix’ that united “everybody from the profit-minded industrialist and risk-minimising subsistence farmer to the equity-seeking social worker, the pollution-concerned or wildlife-loving First Worlder, the growth-maximising policy maker, the goal-oriented bureaucrat and, therefore, the vote-counting politician” (Lele, 1991, p.613). As such, the ability of the term ‘sustainable development’ to provide a convenient ‘metafix’ for whoever uses the

term only confirms its fuzziness (Markusen, 1999, 2003). As Adam (2005) claims, “it offers a verbal flourish, but arguably, at its core, lies a theoretical black hole” (p.288).

For the purposes of this research, I define sustainable development using Elkington’s (1997) triple bottom line approach that takes into account the social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable development. Elkington believed that there was no alternative to the free market economy as a way of dealing with other social and environmental issues and that private sector businesses who seized the opportunity in linking these pillars would gain the competitive edge. As such the pillars are interdependent, yet also in tension with one another. This definition is further appropriated because Elkington (1998) also stresses the importance of partnerships and stakeholder relationships with other sectors, especially NGOs in achieving sustainability. The social, environmental and economic tensions between the VCS and the state are a focal point which this research hopes to unpack.

Other commentators have attempted to reformulate the concept of sustainable development into ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ interpretations (see Pearce *et al.*, 1989; Turner, 1993, Gibbs *et al.*, 1996; O’Riordan, 1996; and Williams and Millington, 2004). Turner (1993) attempted to devise a spectrum of sustainable development which measured and defined versions from very weak sustainability which are more sympathetic to the economy, whereby everything is substitutable, to very strong sustainability, which assume that current economic functions should not to be allowed to deplete the environment. This research will examine this assertion more closely at the local level with regard to LSPs and LBPs in the UK. Likewise, other research has shown how economic progress supersedes socio-environmental issues in state-regulated arenas like



local authorities (Gibbs *et al.*, 1996, 1998), LSPs (Lucas and Fuller, 2005), LBPs (Evans, 2007) and planning (Brook, 2005; Counsell and Haughton, 2006).

Tensions between state and non-state stakeholders are further exacerbated by the various messages emerging from multi-scalar policy realms. At the global level, the reality of sustainable development will only be ever realised if there are “unprecedented levels of global co-operation, among very unequal nations... for many of these policies to work effectively” (Pezzey, 1992, p.321). Other research has cited examples whereby creative sustainable development practices were successfully implemented by multiple stakeholders because of the term’s inherent ambiguity permitting, what Evans and Jones (2008) called ‘shared territory’.

But as sustainable development is a highly contentious term and can just about mean whatever the user intends (Lele, 1991; Williers, 1994; Pezzoli, 1997; Eden, 2000; Adams, 2005; Evans and Jones, 2008; Jordan, 2008), many stakeholders can become confused with how to apply it in real world terms. The intention of WCED’s 1987 definition of sustainable development was to initially forge political common ground amongst state and non-state stakeholders on the global stage (Lele, 1991). It was hoped that a consensus would translate down to the national and sub-national territorial scales of society. The next section examines this transition more closely, focussing on how non-state participation practices in sustainable development have been represented globally, nationally (UK) and sub-nationally (UK). This is especially significant for this thesis because of the importance of scale in defining, designing and implementing sustainability. Other research has attempted to consider the role to be played by ecological modernisation in providing a ‘metafix’ for sustainable development, in a multi-scalar context (Mol, 1992; Hajer, 1995; Harvey, 1996; Jackson and Roberts,

1997; Gibbs, 2000; Barry and Paterson, 2004). There is a need, therefore, to consider the scales of sustainable development policy at the global, national and sub-national levels as these policy levels influence the way in which VCS groups understand and promote sustainable development.

## **2.3 Sustainable development as policy**

### **2.3.1 Global sustainability policy**

This section will briefly discuss the background of global policy discourse to place national and sub-national sustainability policies in context. This will involve discussion of the major international conferences and policies related to sustainable development and how non-state participation features in such policy.

The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm marked a watershed in global environmental politics. Arising out of a background that questioned the need to curtail resource depleting industrial activity and the increase in global population<sup>1</sup>, eminent figures in the sustainability debate like Maurice Strong (who was chosen to head the Stockholm proceedings), emphasised the immediate need to combat such environmental and societal problems on a global platform for the first time. Equally significant in the context of this research, parallel NGO conferences were organised: the Environment Forum, the People's Forum and Dai Dong. The Environment Forum was accredited by the UN and as such could lobby Stockholm delegates whereas the remaining NGOs took a more radical stance against the conference (Haas *et al.*, 1994, p.9). Thus, it can be argued that Stockholm had marked a precedent in how conferences were conducted, whereby the role of non-state

---

<sup>1</sup> I refer to Ehrlich's (1968) 'Population Bomb' and the 'Limits to Growth' report (Meadows *et al.*, 1972).

participation within political processes *per se* became more apparent and politicians had to 'listen' to their voters.

However, the Stockholm Declaration was non-binding (Elliot, 1998, p.12), thus leaving implementation to the discretion of nation-states (Palmer, 1992). Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration, probably the most widely quoted (Haas *et al.*, 1994, p.9), legitimised the continuation of sovereign states to carry on 'as they were', "to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies" (UNEP, 1972, principle 21).

After the Stockholm Conference, the UN interest in sustainability issues subsided. Then came the World Commission on Environment and Development by the UN in 1983. Named after its chairperson, the Brundtland Commission's report, 'Our Common Future' (WCED, 1987) conceived the definition of sustainable development that has been universally used by the various echelons of global society (see section 2.2) in which sustainable development was dominated by issues of the environment and population growth.

By the late 1980s, such issues had continued significance, leading to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 (UNCED). The 'Rio Earth Summit' had the dual focus of alleviating global environmental degradation and ensuring human development. This was to be done by global and national efforts (Elliot, 1994, p.17), and with the involvement of 'the local' and 'the citizen'. Successes of the conference included the signing of the Rio Declaration (27 Principles guiding environmental and developmental action), The Framework Convention on Climate

Change, Conventions on Biological Diversity and combating Desertification, Forest Principles and Agenda 21.

Agenda 21 was the conference action plan that “set out various objectives to be achieved by local authorities at the international, national, regional and local scales” (Gibbs, 2002, pp.51-4). As the outcome of Rio most relevant to this thesis, this section provides more details about the Agenda 21 document. The preamble states there is a global consensus for the need to integrate environmental and human development issues. Such issues would be facilitated through the efforts of all levels of governments (international to local) and civil society (public participation and NGOs). There is also an emphasis on helping the economies of underdeveloped nations. The overarching major point is that of a global partnership in instilling such a change (UNSD, 1992, preamble). The first section deals with the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, focusing on the relationship between the different levels of governance, poverty, consumption patterns, demographic patterns, human health, sustainable human settlements and how environment and development decision-making is to be integrated (ibid, 2.1-8.54). The next section looks at the conservation and management of resources for development, focusing on the physical and biological environment and the associated problems like deforestation, desertification, maintaining biodiversity and waste/pollution issues (ibid, 9.1-22.9).

The third section, most relevant to this research, concentrates on strengthening the role of ‘social groups’ as “critical to the effective implementation of the objectives, policies and mechanisms agreed to by governments in all programme areas of Agenda 21” (ibid, 23.1). This section stresses the need for public participation in decision-making and real social partnership, forwarding separate chapters on the role to be played by: women;

children; indigenous communities; NGOs; Local Authorities; trade unions; business and industry; science and technology; and farmers (ibid, 24.1-32.14). NGOs are described as ‘partners for sustainable development’ in the chapter title, with emphasis on “the independent roles, responsibilities and special capacities of each” (ibid, 27.2). Both the UN system and Government should initiate a process which involves such organisations. Also called upon to help with this implementation process are Local Authorities, with their capacity as “the level of governance closest to the people, they play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development” (ibid, 28.1). Thus, the LA 21 process was born:- “by 1996, most local authorities in each country should have undertaken a consultative process with their populations and achieved a consensus on a local Agenda 21 for the community” (ibid, 28.2). Mehra (1997) highlighted how this process marked the formal involvement of local authorities within the sustainability debate (Mehra, 1997, p.33) and the development of LA 21 will be discussed further in the next section of this thesis.

Agenda 21’s fourth section focuses on the means of implementation through financial resources, environmentally-sound technology, science for sustainable development and the legal and institutional mechanisms. There is also a chapter devoted to education and public awareness – and an emphasis on how education (a key remit of NGOs) is an important tool in embedding sustainable development issues within all areas of society (UNSD, 1992, 36.5).

Hence, Agenda 21 highlighted the integral role of local actions, whether through agencies of governance and/or social groups, in promoting sustainable development as a guiding principle in achieving the various summit objectives (Garner, 1993, pp.117ff; Lafferty, 1996, p.193; O’Riordan, 2000, pp.41ff). However, some commentators argue

that the Agenda 21 process created more problems than it solved. Chatterjee and Finger (1994) emphasised how sustainable development aid (a key part of Agenda 21) would not solve any of today's global environment and development problems (Chatterjee and Finger, 1994, p.59). Mehrer (1997) summarises three major critiques of Agenda 21. Firstly, it had a Southern focus, whereby the North had the primary responsibility to change their development model and remove obstacles to sustainability in the South. Secondly, a change had occurred in national economic sovereignty whereby the internationalisation of financial markets diminished the capacity of governments to manage their economies. Thirdly, there was the (internationally unregulated) economic power of transnational corporations (TNCs). These were a formidable obstacle; the lack of control and democratic accountability was not addressed in Agenda 21 (Mehra, 1997, pp.31-2). The process of Agenda 21 also emphasised an ecological modernisation approach (Gibbs, 2002, p.54). It could be argued that this approach ensured the continued dominance of the North over the South and the rule of 'soft law'.

Yet one thing is certain, the Rio process placed a framework of sustainable development firmly in the nexus of international and more importantly, national political strategies. It also strengthened the principles of participation and partnership whereby diverse constituencies were brought together to find potential solutions to global problems in an integrative and holistic manner (Mehra, 1997, p.31).

The Global Forum epitomised this new holistic approach to tackling sustainable development. It has been described as the most "visible expression of the multitude of NGOs concerned with the environment" (Blowers, 1993, p.778). This parallel conference was made up of over 18,000 participants from a variety of NGOs. These groups also had extensive involvement in the UNCED negotiations (Haas *et al.*, 1992,

p.29). Furthermore, the Global Forum served three major functions that NGO involvement at the summit did not; firstly, it establish networks between multi-national NGOs; secondly, it provided an international platform for organisations that were previously ignored and starved of resources; and lastly, it established a set of follow up measures (ibid, pp.30-31). It could be argued that the Global Forum marked the beginning of greater public participation within sustainable development processes, as Rio “should be judged not by its immediate outcomes but by the processes it set in motion” (Holmburg 1992, quoted in Elliot, 1998, p.25), such as LA 21 initiatives.

The processes set in motion by Rio have since had a somewhat bumpy ride. Five years after Rio, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) in New York was criticised for its lack of preparation (Jordan and Voisey, 1998, pp.94-95; Osborn and Bigg, 1998, p.3; O’Riordan, 2000, pp.44-45). Whilst the delegates agreed that there was no reason to alter programmes like Agenda 21, the logistics of implementing such programmes demonstrated that there was “a gulf between rhetoric and reality” (Osborn and Bigg, 1998, p.3). The UNGASS also reiterated the pre-existing tensions between national self-interests, rather than capitalising on the gains made in Rio five years earlier. An example of this is China’s and the G77 of developing countries mistrust of industrialised countries reneging on agreements at Rio.

Tackling global problems on a global political stage can be successful to a certain extent (as Rio proved). However, as Jordan and Voisey asserted, “big conferences like UNGASS do not solve complex environmental problems. At best they raise awareness and maintain momentum” (Jordan and Voisey, 1998, p.97). The only plus to come out of UNGASS was the reiteration of Agenda 21 as the framework in which sustainable development could be successfully executed. In terms of progress made by NGOs in

helping promote LA 21, their reference is somewhat fleeting, “The major groups have demonstrated what can be achieved by taking committed action, sharing resources and building consensus, reflecting grass-roots concern and involvement... non-governmental organizations...have increased public awareness and discussion of the relations between environment and development in all countries” (UN 1997, para.12).

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg had high hopes after New York’s ‘minus five’ but no real binding political agreements were reached and “many felt let down by how little concrete action was achieved on the policy level by heads of state” (Seyfang, 2003, p.227). WSSD proceedings thus reinforced the subordination of international environmental law to international trade law (Pallemaerts, 2003 pp.10-11) with economic issues dominating over environmental and social issues.

Yet some commentators assert that ‘mega-conferences’ should be an integral part of solving the sustainability issue producing “...wider and longer term positive outcomes – particularly the widening of involvement by ordinary people and the broadened governance this represents (Seyfang, 2003, p.227). Yet whilst international mega conferences post-Rio have been successful in providing a platform for both government and non-governmental groups to update on ‘progress made’, they have offered nothing new by way of providing local groups with the resources and tools to implement sustainable development. Arguably, it had taken the global political community 20 years (1972-1992) to realise that any successful transition to sustainable development needed to be complemented by national/local forces (Blowers, 1993). The next section considers how sustainable development has been addressed at national scales.



### **2.3.2 National sustainability policy**

This section will chart the evolution of UK national policy on sustainable development post-Rio up to the present day to place regional and local VCS activity in context. Under the Conservative government of the 1980s and 1990s, it has been argued that UK environmental policy took a back seat to a neo-liberal ideology which focused mainly on economic policy objectives (Dryzek *et al.*, 2002, p.677; Haughton and Counsell, 2004, p.139). It has been argued that the Conservative government was reluctant to include pressure groups and NGOs within all policy processes (Connelly and Smith, 1999, p.295) and was relatively uncommitted to specific actions regarding the global environment (Redclift, 1995, p.283), although it has been asserted that the Thatcher government did ‘signal’ an environmental momentum (Gray, 1995, p.1). However, by the time of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, the attitude of the UK government was changing. A powerful global sustainability rhetoric advocated a nationally and locally-led policy approach to tackling environmental problems and sustainable development. The international mega-conference promoted “a clear action plan for sustainability that governments could take home and put into practice at the national and local level” (Seyfang, 2003, p.226).

After the summit in Rio, the UK Conservative Government was quick off the mark in trying to establish sustainability and environmental protection as key national policy initiatives (Munton, 1997, pp.151-155; Sharp, 1998, pp.49ff). The publishing of the government’s White Paper, ‘Sustainable Development: The UK Strategy’ (1994) established a nationwide policy framework for tackling environmental and human development issues at the national and local level. The White Paper called for the establishment of a Government Panel on Sustainable Development who would “advise the Government on strategic issues” (DoE, 1994, p.235) and a UK Round Table on

Sustainable Development to facilitate “discussion on major issues of sustainable development between people who approach them from different positions and who have different responsibilities” (ibid, p.235). In terms of greater public participation, it also proposed to “stimulate a Citizens Environment Initiative” (ibid, p.236). These initiatives tied in with the assertion that collective action was needed because the environment is shared (ibid, p.7). Therefore, specific actions needed to be taken into account including decisions based on best science: where there is uncertainty precautionary action may be necessary, ecological impacts must be considered and the ‘polluter pays’ principle should be applied (ibid, p.7).

However, a weakness of the White Paper was the potential for economic considerations to outweigh ecological ones (ibid, p.7). Munton (1997) also claims the paper emphasised market measures over regulation (p.153), with the environment being subordinate to the economy, although the strategy document argued that these two pillars were not in conflict (DoE, 1994, pp.7ff, 105). Jordan and O’Riordan (1995) argue that the White Paper’s approach is “discernable in the formulations of the precautionary principle... may be necessary in situations where there are significant risks... but this is alloyed with a strong emphasis on the balancing notion of ‘proportionality’ of action” (Jordan and O’Riordan, 1995, p.71).

In the context of this research, the document devoted an entire section to voluntary groups, arguing that they provide “a very wide range of opportunities for the public to contribute, at local level and national, towards environmental protection and sustainable development” (DoE, 1994, p.204) and that voluntary groups should be involved in policy development and practical opportunities through greater integration under the banner of sustainability (ibid, p.204). Going further, the white paper emphasised that the

government was championing the ‘voluntary cause’ at the international level – “the UK successfully pressed for NGOs to be given enhanced participation along the lines followed at Rio, going beyond the existing rules...” (ibid, p.206). However, whilst the paper does emphasise a role to be played by voluntary groups and individuals (ibid, p.207ff), this role is subordinated to another level, with the assertion that central government still holds a key (primary) role in implementing sustainable development through setting a market-led policy framework (ibid, p.16). Hence, this shows how sustainable development has been reduced from an environmental to an economic definition.

The White Paper also emphasised the need to push forward the Local Agenda 21 initiative, although this was not mandatory (Environment Resources and Information Centre, 2001, p.4). The initiative was to be adopted by all local authorities by 1996 (DoE, 1994, p.200). However, this push was to be in partnership with central government, “both central and local government acknowledge the importance of working in partnership to help identify priorities for action... (ibid, p.200). Thus, whilst the White Paper reaffirmed the role to be played by local government in promoting sustainable development, some of the policy rhetoric (see chapter 29 of the White Paper, for example) exhibited overriding tenets of central control.

Hence, the contradictory rhetoric in the White Paper creates the potential for tension between the roles of local and central government when implementing sustainable development. Bäckstrand *et al.* (1996) highlighted such tensions within the context of implementing sustainable development. This includes the way sustainable development challenges traditional views of the economy and how established interests within organisations resist sustainable development’s changing nature. They also highlight

how environmental issues are “state-centric” and “subjected to sectorisation” (Bäckstrand *et al.*, 1996, p.210). These issues conflict with the ‘borderless’ nature of sustainable development (ibid, p.210). The white paper also exhibits such contradictory rhetoric, on one hand it emphasises the need for integration by many stakeholders, on the other it defines clear roles to be played by central and local governments. This dichotomy is compounded by the fact that no clear objectives and targets were set in achieving sustainability (Voisey and O’Riordan, 1997, p.33).

The election of Labour in 1997 saw an ideological shift in government whereby Tony Blair’s ‘Third Way’ envisaged a modernised social democracy, promoting the individual citizen and a strong civil society through increased responsibilities and partnership whilst increasing “economic credibility and international competitiveness” (Hay, 2001, p.243). This was to be facilitated through the processes of government decentralisation, deregulation and ‘joined-up’ government (Cabinet Office, 1999, introduction). Environmental policy was not overlooked in this ideological shift. As the 1997 Labour Party Manifesto claimed, “there are policies designed to combine environmental sustainability with economic and social progress. They extend from commitments at local level to give communities enhanced control over their environments, to initiatives at international level to ensure that all countries are contributing to the protection of the environment” (Labour Party Manifesto, 1997). Thus, New Labour’s devolution programme has been specifically linked to the environment (Gibbs, 2002, p.77). In the context of sustainable development, examples included the way the Welsh Assembly had a statutory duty to promote sustainable development and in England, the development of Regional Development Agencies who also had similar sustainability policy remits (ibid, pp.77-78).

New Labour's devolution programme can be seen in their first major sustainable development national policy document, the 1999 strategy, 'A Better Quality of Life' (DETR, 1999a). The 1999 strategy saw devolution playing an integral role in the government's agenda for sustainable development. The government believed that devolution would bring the people together and give devolved administrations the chance to adopt local policies that reflected their respective institutions (DETR, 1999a, 2.4). However, the government made clear that tax and international policy would remain within their remit (ibid, 2.4) whilst emphasising the need to establish links with the newly devolved administrations (ibid, 2.5).

This document's approach to sustainable development differed from its 1994 predecessor, placing more emphasis on the equal weighting of the three pillars of sustainable development through integration of four objectives:

- “Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
  - Effective protection of the environment
  - Prudent use of natural resources
  - Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment”
- (DETR, 1999a, para.1.2)

This emphasis on social progress ties in neatly with New Labour's Third Way, including all of society within the process of sustainable development. An example of how the 1999 strategy has evolved from the 1994 strategy is highlighted in chapter 2, which read: “a new approach is needed, which emphasises the social dimension of sustainable development alongside economic issues, the environment and resource use” (ibid, 2.3). Examples of how the social pillar has been accentuated is the inclusion of

the role to be played by women in sustainable development policy (ibid, 5.6), and the importance of preparing for an ageing population (ibid, 5.21), whereas the 1994 document had no mention of such roles.

Even though the document rhetoric emphasises parity between “economic, social and environmental capital” (ibid, 4.2), some commentators have still highlighted how the environmental aspect was still subordinate to the economic. Haughton and Counsell (2004) claimed the document possessed “a weak definition of sustainable development, involving a shift from looking at sustainable development in terms of environmental limits to one more focused on managing growth” (Haughton and Counsell, 2004, p.141).

Another important aspect of the 1999 strategy was the use of sustainability indicators. The 1999 ‘Quality of Life Counts’ report (DTER, 1999b) gives baseline data for fifteen headline sustainable development indicators supporting the 1999 ‘Better Quality of Life’ strategy. Sustainability indicators were introduced by the Conservative government in 1996 (DTER, 1999a, para.3.3), the Labour government chose to build on these and include ones which reflected social issues (ibid, 3.3). There was also an emphasis on joining up the indicators (ibid, 3.8). These would link the economic, social and environmental pillars, although there was still an emphasis on the ‘win – win’ stance and research has shown the limitations of sustainability indicators (Briassoulis, 2001; Rydin *et al.*, 2003).

The 1999 strategy also advocated a ‘Sustainable Communities’ approach, with chapter seven defining how regional and local economies will be strengthened through meeting people’s social needs. This stance, rather than focusing on single issues like the

economy, society or the environment, emphasised the need for regional sustainability appraisals (DTER, 1999a, para.7.84) which encompassed all three pillars of sustainability on (supposed) equal weighting. The role of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were key in establishing such sustainability appraisals, and represents how national sustainable development policy, moreover, economic sustainability policy, had been devolved to the regions (ibid, 7.6, 7.18).

Such sustainability appraisals had to be regionally distinctive, although they had to be based on the four national objectives in the 1999 strategy (Haughton and Counsell, 2004, p.141; Counsell and Haughton, 2006, p.5). This ‘pro’ regional stance was to pay close attention to issues of social exclusion and urban regeneration whilst simultaneously “strengthening regional and local economies” (DETR, 1999a, para.7). However, the strategy is quick to emphasise the integration needed between local government and people, regional organisations, voluntary bodies and the business sector (ibid, 7.3, 7.4, 7.92-7.99 respectively) in order to push forward the agenda on sustainable development.

The 1999 strategy also incorporated the role of Local Agenda 21 within chapter seven, ‘Building Sustainable Communities’ (ibid, 7.79ff). Again, in a similar vein to the 1994 strategy, local decisions were still tied in with national policies through the development of “a core menu of indicators which local authorities could use. These would be closely linked to the headline indicators and the indicators to be used in national reporting” (ibid, 7.79). The 1999 strategy also linked LA 21 initiatives with Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs). These RSDFs were non-statutory (ibid, 7.83), giving greater autonomy to regions to ‘self-police’ (Haughton and Counsell, 2004, p.141). Yet such devolvement also highlighted the potential for tensions between

central and local government to arise when attempting to promote a robust sustainable development strategy (ibid, p.141).

In their 2004 report on the government's progress on tackling sustainable development since 1999, the Sustainable Development Commission's report title, 'Shows Promise. But must try harder' (SDC, 2004), epitomised how influential non-government agencies viewed national policy progress. The SDC highlighted twenty challenges the government needed to focus upon in order to improve. The main critique of the report focused on how sustainability policy should be centrally "driven by a fundamental overarching commitment to sustainability at all levels and in all parts of government" (SDC, 2004, p.4). The rhetoric of the report emphasised strong action-led verbs and sentences: "galvanise all our institutions" (ibid, p.4) and "vigorous and well-directed communications and engagement strategy" (ibid, p.4). This showed that although the 1999 strategy and its 2001 review update were well-intentioned, they lacked the necessary urgency through collective action, which is arguably needed in order to facilitate sustainable development.

One important aspect of the report was how the fourth objective of the economy should be reformulated, using a 'green GDP' (ironically adopted from China, a country with a history of confrontation with developed countries of the 'north' at international policy level) that includes social and environmental well-being instead of the normally 'economic favouring' GDP measurement (ibid, p.17). The report also emphasised the importance of more regulation within the free market to promote and stimulate sustainable development (ibid, p.17).



An important section in the context of this PhD research is the emphasis on central and local government partnership in pushing sustainable development forward. The following quote highlights the omission of voluntary and community group's role in facilitating sustainable development, "work with the Audit Commission, the Local Government Association, the Improvement and Development Agency and the various Government departments covering central-local partnerships, to ensure that strategic regulation and corporate performance assessments meet the principles and practices of sustainable development" (ibid, p.25). Surely within a chapter on the role of the local there should be incorporation of such voluntary groups, after all, the report does highlight 'equity' as a missing principle (ibid, p.19). Whilst the report does highlight "other organisations" (ibid, p.25), this can be construed as ambiguous. Thus, there is a need to highlight both the role played by and the importance of (if any) community and voluntary groups in implementing sustainability.

Subsequently, the 2005 UK sustainable development strategy, 'Securing the Future' (DEFRA, 2005a) was published in conjunction with a UK shared framework, 'One Future – Different Paths' (DEFRA, 2005b) which focused on the shared challenges and goals to achieving sustainable development between the devolved administrations (the UK Government Strategy, the Welsh Assembly Action Plan, Scottish Executive Agency and the Northern Ireland Strategy). The 2005 strategy was quick to highlight the weaknesses of the preceding 1999 strategy, utilising the criticisms made by the Sustainable Development Commission's 2004 report.

The 2005 strategy focused on five interlinking guiding principles: Living within Environmental Limits; Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society; Achieving a Sustainable Economy; Promoting Good Governance; and Using Sound Science

Responsibly (DEFRA, 2005a, p.16). These five principles would work in conjunction with four priority themes: Sustainable Consumption and Production; Climate Change and Energy; Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement; and Sustainable Communities (ibid, p.17).

The 2005 strategy was written in a different style to the preceding 1999 strategy. There were seven chapters in all. The first chapter, 'A new strategy', focused on what was different about the strategy, emphasising an integrated vision of five principles (ibid, p.16) and four agreed priorities for shared action across the UK (ibid, p.17). It also highlighted the introduction of a new set of high level headline indicators which identified priority areas within the UK (ibid, p.21). There was also a greater emphasis on international and EU action, with more page space devoted to it than the 1999 strategy (although the 1999 strategy does emphasise the importance of EU and international sustainable development policy).

The second chapter, 'Helping people make better choices' represented a marked change from the 1999 strategy by immediately identifying the role to be played by all people in promoting sustainable development. Whereas the 1999 strategy was very much government objective-led from the documents onset, the 2005 current strategy focused heavily on changing people's behaviour as a starting point to achieving sustainable development. This would be done by engaging all societal sectors, with the government leading or coaxing by example. This change represented a more subtle, yet 'hands on' approach by the government in contrast to the 1999 strategy, which conveyed a more centrally-led tone.

The third chapter, 'One planet economy: sustainable consumption and production' epitomised how sustainable development was still framed within an international policy lexicon. The national economy was placed firmly in an international context in this chapter, largely due to the commitments agreed upon at the WSSD in 2002 (ibid, p.43). The new buzz words for the economy (inherited from the WSSD) were now 'sustainable consumption and production'. This is shown through the greater use of environment-focused rhetoric within the chapter. There was also greater emphasises on the partnership role to be played between the national government and the EU/global entities.

Chapters 4 and 5 were explicitly devoted to the environment: the global nature of the problems associated with achieving sustainable development, tackling climate change within the UN framework (ibid, p.75-76) and UK Climate Change Programme (ibid, p.78ff); developing proposals to save more energy through the International Energy Strategy, 2004 (ibid, p.77-78) and managing natural resources.

The government approach to tackling the environment was to be built upon three foundations: developing the evidence base, integrating policy and tackling degraded resources and environmental inequalities (ibid, p.98). This approach was more environmentally specific than the 1999 strategy. Whilst the 1999 strategy provided only a brief outline of all environmental concerns in chapter eight (DETR, 1999a), the 2005 strategy was more comprehensive, focusing on global initiatives, national frameworks and community-based actions through 'enabling', 'engaging', 'exemplifying' and 'encouraging' (DEFRA, 2005a, p.113). In addition, environmental indicators were to be used more in the measurement of progress than the preceding 1999 strategy did (ibid, p.114).

However, it is important to mention the emphasis on ‘integration’ in the 2005 strategy. Whilst integrative tensions within the 1999 strategy have been well-documented, the 2005 strategy tended to disregard such critiques, with no emphasis on how policies were to be ‘joined-up’ and by whom (SDC, 2004, p.11; SDC, 2005, p.30; Haughton *et al.*, 2006, pp.8ff). Haughton *et al.* (2006) suggested that the failure to tackle the problems associated with integration could be attributed to the reorganisation of central government departments in 2001, whereby each department had differing views on what sustainable development meant (*ibid.*, p.8).

With the reorganisation of government internal departments after the 2001 General Election, the ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) was given the remit for ensuring the creation of ‘Sustainable Communities’. This reorganisation represented an important shift in the way sustainable development was being prioritised within national policy. Chapter six of the 2005 strategy focused on creating Sustainable Communities in the context of ‘local to global’. Hence, whilst the embedding of sustainable development within national policy frameworks had begun, the role of the local and global within the process was starting to be deemed intrinsic to its overall success.

The 2005 strategy aimed to promote Sustainable Communities on different levels (DEFRA, 2005a, p.120). For the local level, the Sustainable Communities agenda involved making local communities more socially cohesive, environmentally sensitive and well-managed with greater community participation initiatives, increasing individual quality of life (*ibid.*, p.121). Whilst the Sustainable Communities agenda claims to lay focus on the three pillars of sustainable development, much of the rhetoric in this chapter was skewed towards promoting the social pillar of sustainability, with an emphasis on creating healthy people and homes through urban regeneration. The

mechanism for much of this social change at local level was to be facilitated by “community engagement” (ibid, p.126ff) through two initiatives, ‘Together we can’ and ‘local:vision’ (ibid, p.126). However, the development of a Neighbourhood Charter only ‘encourage[d]’ local councils to facilitate change, rather than making the process statutory (ibid, p.127). There was also a contradictory element concerning the territorial level on which social change would be initiated. Whilst preceding pages emphasised the need for change to be facilitated through “community engagement” (ibid, p.126), an emphasis on ‘Shared Priorities’ between local and central government was also promoted (ibid, p.129ff). This approach tended to conflate the issue of stakeholder roles in implementing sustainable development, the potential effect being the creation of friction between different levels of government and civil organisations.

The national policy context was also skewed towards the social pillar. Part three of the chapter focused on the Social Exclusion Unit’s report, ‘Breaking the Cycle’ (ODPM, 2004c). This report examined national government policy since 1997, focusing on “five specific key drivers of social exclusion that need[ed] to be tackled: worklessness, homelessness, low educational attainment, health inequalities and crime” (DEFRA, 2005a, p.137). To ameliorate these drivers of social exclusion, the strategy aimed to improve and mainstream public services (ibid, p.138).

Significantly for this thesis, the 2005 strategy acknowledged that regional delivery was an important change since the 1999 strategy (ibid, p.157) as strengthening regional delivery through devolving responsibility has been a key strand of not only sustainable development policy but New Labour’s overall political ideology. The government understood that meeting national policy targets would mean giving regions more

autonomy in ensuring sustainable development was delivered on the ground as all regions were fundamentally different.

This was to be done by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), whose remit was to ensure increased regional economic development was mainstreamed with sustainable development (ibid, p.157). Regional Assemblies (RAs) remit was to “scrutinise the work of their RDA and have been appointed as the regional planning body with a duty to prepare the statutory Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)” (ibid, p.157). They were also an important link in how sustainable development was to be integrated between government and other regional stakeholders through regional strategies and Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks (RSDFs). The government are quick to highlight the need for RSDFs to have a shared vision for the region, objectives, priorities and targets for advancing sustainable development, action plans showing each stakeholders responsibilities, indicators relevant to the region and arrangements for monitoring and review (ibid, p.159). Another important role within the region is that played by Government Offices (GOs). These represented central government at the regional level, ensuring the ‘joining-up’ of sustainable development national policy within the regions.

The local scale is also significant for this thesis and for the 2005 strategy: “local authorities and their partners, through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), are pivotal to delivering sustainable communities” (ibid, p.160). Hence, national government, in conjunction with the Local Government Association, (LGA), the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), the Audit Commission (AC) and other stakeholders through the Central Local Partnership (CLP), has produced an action plan to ensure delivery at the local level which was to be reviewed annually (ibid, p.161). This action plan established the following: better communication channels between central and

local government; a Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) to recognise and reward community action towards sustainable development; the development of toolkits to improve LSPs; development of a joint central-local government commitment between the government, LGA and IDeA which allowed greater freedom and flexibility in the approach taken at local level; an academy to promote generic and Sustainable Communities skills; development of a 'How To' programme that promoted cleaner, safer, greener communities; the IDeA would also produce a Sustainable Communities Leadership Academy module to develop local leadership; and widen training schemes offered to local government (ibid, pp.161-2).

Previously, progress against the national strategy had been drawn up through government reports. This 2005 strategy widened the role of independent scrutiny by giving the SDC watchdog powers (ibid, p.165). This marked an important stage in the implementation process as it opened up the accountability issue through parliamentary channels (ibid, p.165). It established "a set of 68 indicators, consisting of the 20 UK Framework Indicators and a further 48 indicators with which to monitor progress" (ibid, p.167). This streamlining focused on the key priorities established within the 2005 strategy, incorporating the comments made by the 'Taking it on' consultation.

Critiques of the 2005 UK strategy have focused on how the word 'sustainable' has become part of the 'rhetorical apparatus' in devolution policy. Thus we see sustainable development and its integration imperative as a political tool, rather than as an end goal (Haughton *et al.*, 2006, p.3). This has provided "a 'feel good' way of implying environmental concern without necessarily committing very much towards it... to allow 'business as usual' whilst implying more radical change than is actually involved" (ibid, p.20). Rydin *et al.* (2003) had previously asserted the contestability of sustainable

development as a policy goal when used in a highly politicized situation involving conflict between key actors within the context of the local (p.559).

Another aspect of 2005 UK policy rhetoric placed great emphasis on adhering to international sustainable development policy whilst simultaneously ‘farming’ out much responsibility to the regional and local levels, as this thesis later examines. In this sense, the rhetoric of the 2005 UK strategy indicated a dampening of central government responsibility in implementing the practicalities of achieving sustainable development, choosing just to co-ordinate the effort centrally. It could be argued that whilst devolution of power has occurred, decentralisation of governance towards the regions has been limited. In referring to regional planning, an important dimension in sustainable development, Counsell and Haughton (2006) emphasise how the 2005 strategy moved “away from the objective-led approach, albeit not disregarding it... planning... was ultimately left to central government to arbitrate on difficult decisions” (Counsell and Haughton, 2006, p.5).

This criticism is indicative of an overarching weakness in New Labour’s policy on sustainable development. The emphasis on international ties in the 1999 and 2005 strategies – an important strand of the ‘Third Way’ – diverts attention from the devolving aspect of national policy. This is especially the case in the 2005 strategy with its stronger emphasis on the international dimension (DEFRA, 2005a, p.6). Simultaneously (and paradoxically), the 1999 and moreover, the 2005 UK strategy, reiterated the significance of regions and the local in facilitating sustainable development. This dichotomy results in a potential friction in how UK national policy ‘prioritises’ the various scalar levels of governance. Thus, whilst it is apparent that devolving of power is integral to New Labour’s national sustainable development



policy, it can be argued that this devolving process is heavily influenced by international politics and global governance discourse.

### **2.3.3 Local sustainability policy**

This section will highlight the evolution of local sustainability policy since the 1980s. It will briefly discuss the marginalised role local policy initiatives had in the UK under the Conservative governments of the 1980s and early 1990s and how local policy processes gathered significantly greater momentum during the 1990s, with local impetus generated by the UNCED at Rio in 1992 and especially Local Agenda 21.

Typical 'New Right' Conservative policies of the 1980s saw local authorities being controlled centrally (Carter and Darlow, 1997, p.48) as 'central government localism' (Martin and Townroe, 1992, p.21). Policy instruments used by central government included resource constraint and compulsory competitive tendering (Freeman *et al.*, 2001, p.61). Whilst it can be argued that curtailing central government financial assistance resulted in local authorities not having the resources to initiate change on the ground, it prompted local governments to look for alternative ways to fill the policy vacuum. It did this through partnership with the private and voluntary sectors (Martin and Townroe, 1992, p.22) and with the political support of the European Union (EU) by way of increased economic funding (Morphet, 1998, p.138). In relation to the private sector, these policies ensured increased economic efficiency and promoted place based (local) competitiveness rather than one which was welfare-based (Stewart, 1994, p.143). The lack of central government finance to local authorities (which was essentially replaced and exceeded by European funding) also helped facilitate the growth of local voluntary groups who supported the community in a variety of social, economic and environmental ways (Martin and Townroe, 1992, p.22).

Under the Conservative government of John Major during the 1990s, Thatcher's legacy was taken forward somewhat (Young, 1994, p.94), with more emphasis being put upon the citizen, with fiscal incentives that promoted multi-agency partnerships and unitary authorities (Newman *et al.*, 2001, p.61). However, centralisation of power was still an ongoing process (Stewart, 1994, p.135; Hart *et al.*, 1995, p.430; Carter and Darlow, 1997, p.48). As Carter and Darlow (1997) claimed, "throughout the 1980s and 1990s, there has been a process of increasing centralisation of power, through the mushrooming of the number of quangos and qualgos, and the introduction of 'New Right' principles into the local government arena... local government has been transformed, in terms of service delivery and performance, and in how it relates to its electorate" (p.48). Hence, whilst local government during the 1980s and early 1990s was subordinated as an agent that merely administered policy change as influenced by national policy imperatives (Connelly and Smith, 1999), such central control actually stimulated local change through new found responsiveness and creativeness in local government modes of thinking (Carter and Darlow, 1997, p.48).

Changes to this situation in the 1990s were prompted by UNCED. Although described as "an exercise in the rhetoric of national governments" (Voisey *et al.*, 1996, p.34), the conference did deliver Agenda 21. This gave 'the local' a more specific and direct involvement in sustainability issues than ever before. As a result, the 1990s saw "a shift in emphasis from local government and the environment to one of local governance and sustainability, implying a broadening of component issues" (Parker and Selman, 1999, p.18). Thus, in the UK, Local Agenda 21 provided local authorities and communities the political context in which to promote sustainable development in this new found mode of 'local' thinking (Freeman *et al.*, 2001, p.65). Gibbs (2002) emphasised three principles of sustainable urban management: co-operation and partnership; urban

management; and policy integration – and that “these principles are very much about achieving a shift in governance structures and patterns such that sustainability objectives are incorporated into existing local governance structures and there is an increase in democratic participation” (p.91). Co-operation and partnership refers to the involvement of a variety of stakeholders in pushing sustainable development forward. For example, Jackson and Roberts (1997) claimed the significance of involving communities in developing local action plans for sustainability in ‘green’ local authorities. Whilst policy integration (Gibbs, 2002, talks of vertical and horizontal policy implementation) can represent the amalgamation of civil society and government in promoting sustainability principles through initiatives like Agenda 21.

To reiterate, the main function of Agenda 21 was to provide local authorities with a vehicle to instil sustainability principles at the local level as this “was where so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots”. It was also “the level of governance closest to the people [and] plays a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable development” (UN, 1992, 28.1). Hence, whilst the local level was best placed to spearhead sustainability initiatives like Agenda 21, its lack of legitimacy as international law – Agenda 21 was only a political declaration (Parsons *et al.*, 1992, p.14) – makes its promotion as government policy extremely fragmented and diverse. In the UK, local authorities were supposed to have their own LA 21 initiative in place by 1996 (UN, 1992, 28.2a). The following examines the way in which the LA 21 process was implemented in various UK localities and the role played by LA 21 community participation initiatives.

The Local Government Management Board (LGMB) was responsible for co-ordinating the overall LA 21 initiative; their general remit was to represent the views of local

government by providing information and training to various stakeholders involved in LA 21, as well as producing an explicit, non-prescriptive framework which established a minimal baseline of competence for each local authority (Voisey *et al.*, 1996, p.44). But Local Agenda 21's implementation was to be specifically tailored by each local authority (Voisey *et al.*, 1996, p.44; Carter and Darlow, 1997, p.48; Jackson and Roberts, 1997, p.621). However, a broad consensual framework for each local authority included:

- the involvement of all sectors of society;
- a commitment to the process throughout the local authority;
- an environmental strategy for the local authority;
- an environmental management scheme for the local authority;
- a state of the environment report;
- the collection of data on environmental indicators and the setting of targets;
- and a continuous review of the whole process (Voisey *et al.*, 1996, p.44)

As mentioned previously, Local Authorities remit for Agenda 21 was to include greater public participation in promoting sustainable development. Many case studies studying the role of public participation have been documented. The classic work of Arnstein (1969) on citizen participation looked at the role of power and how democracy is invoked within a system or program. To explain this, she proposed a ladder of citizen participation whereby eight rungs of a closed program are defined and graded, starting with non-participation (bottom of ladder – manipulation and therapy), degrees of tokenism (middle of ladder – informing, consultation and placation) and degrees of citizen power (top – partnership, delegated power and citizen control) (Arnstein, 1969, p.217). Such notions of participation focus on a closed system, whereas in the context of

LA 21 initiatives, many commentators assert that public participation needed to be heterogeneous and spread across various policy processes (Carter and Darlow, 1997; Chatterton and Style, 2001; Darlow and Newby, 1997; Jonas *et al.*, 2004; Percy and Hands, 1999; Scott, 1999; Sharp, 2002). Some of these case studies will now be discussed with regard to how public participation and weak interpretations of sustainable development have been prevalent at the local level.

There are several studies of LA 21 in different UK localities. Carter and Darlow (1997) highlighted how the LA 21 process in Leicester embraced the wider community through a public consultation phase which involved partnership and co-ordination from three organisations: Leicester City Council, Environ (a local environmental charity) and Leicester Promotions (an arms-length city promotion agency). Three elements were incorporated within this public consultation phase: firstly a short leaflet questionnaire was sent to each household in the city, a further longer questionnaire that ascertained more detailed information and views on Leicester, and finally a series of meetings were held between the eight target groups. This group stage involved participants 'visioning' what the city would be like in the future and how they would change things. In addition, the process was given the political weight needed for it to be taken seriously by the local authority's decision-makers (Carter and Darlow, 1997, p.48).

Although it was heralded as an overall success, the initiative showed that "partnerships do not achieve results as a matter of course" and that "commitment, resources and the right set of people and circumstances are all needed" for such an initiative to work (Darlow and Newby, 1997, p.78). For example, attendance to the meetings was limited and self-selecting (*ibid*, p.79). Thus, Darlow and Newby (1997) concluded that overall success would only come about if such initiatives develop organically and are tuned to

specific needs and circumstances – the emphasis should be on quality partnerships rather than any partnership (ibid, p.80).

Sharp (2002) looked at LA 21 participation as part of the wider policy process, rather than looking at a closed system and the type of democracy it invoked (as emphasised in Arnstein's 1969 seminal paper). She argued that this approach enables one to examine the impact as well as extent of dialogue opportunities within the LA 21 process (Sharp, 2002, p.9). Sharp's work was based on a case study of a unitary authority in the south-east of England (ibid, p.11). The authority first established five project teams each made up of a leader (a senior council official) and representatives from each of three voluntary groups (the local Friends of the Earth group, the local Civic Society and the local Chamber of Commerce). Their remit was to develop policy over a 3 year period in a number of environmental policy areas. To help them do this, questionnaires were sent out to households in the district to gauge public opinion; workshops were set up by volunteer presenters from local environmental groups to draw out public ideas and to allow the public to comment on the draft LA 21 document (ibid, p.12).

The outcomes of this process did produce tensions, namely between the council's corporate review of environmental policy as progressive development versus environmental policy that sought to retain the *status quo* (ibid, pp.12-13, emphasis in original). It was also deemed that the participation workshops had some effect on environmental policy but this was limited to what was discussed in the workshops and the rapid brainstorming process which went with it (ibid, p.17). However, this process showed how public visibility (through local press coverage) increased the initiatives profile amongst elected members of the council (ibid, p.17). This led to a switch in the

council's attitude to the objective of environmental policy, that it should mobilise activity in the district as well as changing the council's actions (ibid, p.18).

Thus, this study showed that process of managing participation avoided the potential for explicit conflict with the public. New dialogues were opened up, more so with the progressive participants of the project teams rather than the wider public (through the questionnaire/workshops). More importantly, it changed the councils approach to implementing environmental policy "from council action to facilitating action by the public" (ibid, p.19).

Scott (1999) compared LA 21 processes in two unitary authorities, Ceredigion and Powys County Councils, in rural Wales. He found that in Powys County Council, the LA 21 process embraced the principles of inclusivity and sought out public help through questionnaires and targeted focus groups. Whilst Ceredigion encountered a variety of problems like how to educate and inform people and encourage active participation, how to address the environmental imbalance in membership and how to address inclusivity in participatory processes (Scott, 1999, p.415). Yet the case study highlighted serious flaws within the LA 21 process. For example, how the LA 21 process is not taken seriously enough by both authorities; this is exemplified with the LA 21 officer positions being junior in grade. Furthermore, he asserts that the only significant outputs of the LA 21 processes in both councils are "rhetoric and spin" (ibid, p.416) with no evidence of the each authority devolving power and "still widespread mistrust and suspicion of community-led, bottom-up initiatives" (ibid, p.418). Like Darlow and Newby, Scott emphasises that LA 21 is "more than a consultative process" (ibid, p.418) and that "securing people's understanding of a concept or idea is an essential and time-consuming first step towards meaningful participation" (ibid, p.419).

Chatterton and Style (2001) studied local policy networks in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. They found that local policy networks defined and implemented sustainable development in a variety of ways which lead to a number of tensions within this process. They found that established policy networks, like local government, regulatory bodies, NGOs and the business sector, played a dominant role in defining sustainable development policy to the detriment of other groups like the third sector, voluntary and community groups and radical groups (Chatterton and Style, 2001, pp.440-441). For example, the setting up of the *Sustaine* initiative, a 10-member board comprised of dominant established policy network groups, reinforced sustainable development alongside competitiveness issues and thus focused on weak interpretations of sustainability, rather than strong interpretations which would be more sensitive to local needs (ibid, p.445).

Chatterton and Style (2001) highlighted current tensions in local sustainable development processes. These included the need to define sustainable development in its own ethical terms rather than in economic (and conversely, realising sustainable development is not merely about the environment), the lack of clarity in definitions of sustainable development, the lack of civic participation and the ambiguity of which governance structures are tasked with implementing sustainable development (ibid, pp.446-449). They concluded how “localities are awash with individuals and organisations pioneering new understandings of the relationship between economy, environment and society, but these rarely get taken up by the established policy process” (ibid, p.450). This shows how the three pillars of sustainability are in fact in tension, contra central government intentions surrounding the practical promotion of sustainable development at the local level.



Jonas *et al.* (2004) have used the concept of local state strategic selectivity to show how the practice of Agenda 21 implementation has dragged behind the rhetoric. Using evidence from three localities, they showed how “local environmental strategies are not only linked to changing national priorities, but also reflect economic, environmental and political challenges impacting upon local decision making” (ibid, p.151). The state uses or positions local environmental issues as extra economic conditions rather than being integral to state ecological modernisation which resulted in spatial variation in local environmental policy. Their findings question whether ‘the local’ is the key player in implementing sustainable development (Agenda 21) policy, pointing to how state steering still influences local policy. However, the authors do concede that “local policy and politics matter”, namely because of the way Agenda 21 gave local councils the opportunity to ‘internationalise’ their policy (ibid, p.165). Their findings also suggest that weaker interpretations of sustainability, those which put the economic agenda at the heart of local governance and government processes rather than socio-environmental issues, are more prevalent at the local level.

These case studies show that whilst there was a general consensus of support for LA 21 as a framework that could potentially promote sustainable development at the local level, public participation within the structure of such frameworks remained selective. Moreover, they also showed how a general antipathy by the state existed in related LA 21 governance structures towards public involvement within local sustainable development political processes. LA 21 implementation by local authorities remained uneven up until the late nineties (for example see Scott, 1999; Blowers and Young, 2000). Therefore, the states intention for LA 21 as a spatially strategic and governance engaging policy tool which could ameliorate the environmental – social – economic tension was not realised. Instead, LA 21 processes became marginal and fragile within

local authorities (Wilks and Hall, 1994; Jonas *et al.* 2004; Batty, 2001), with non-state stakeholders lacking confidence in the LA 21 process (see Selman and Parker, 1999). Hence, the embedding of a distinctive governance politics of sustainable development – one which could equally temper economic, social and environment concerns – into local policy processes remained elusive.

To counter this, central government pre-empted the Community Strategy as a replacement for LA 21. As the central government guidance for Community Strategies read: “councils that have developed Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) strategies in line with the Government’s guidance should have gone a long way towards developing effective partnership working, a long-term vision for the area and the necessary implementation mechanisms – as well as having staff with potentially relevant skills and experience” (DETR, 1999c, section 18). Whilst it was the duty of the local authority to produce the Community Strategy, it was the LSP who “should provide a voluntary framework for local co-operation” (DETR, 1999, section 26), with sustainable development being approached “by promoting and improving the economic, social *and* environmental well-being of their communities” (*ibid*, section 14, emphasis in original). LSPs were therefore positioned by the state as a local governance space in which local non-state stakeholders could re-engage in promoting all three pillars of sustainable development in unison. In light of this, chapter 6 examines LSPs more closely (more so than LBPs), specifically how the environmental, social and economic pillars of sustainable development post- LA 21 have been represented through subsequent LSP-related policy documentation like Sustainable Community Strategies. It will also be interesting to examine how non-state (VCS) participation features in the promotion of locally state-led sustainability governance structures like LSPs and LBPs.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how problematic it is to succinctly define sustainable development (section 2.2). Multiple definitions of the term will inevitably have consequences for the way in which particular VCS groups approach the concept at the local level. The literature in this chapter (section 2.3.3) about how sustainable development has been promoted at the local level suggests that ‘weak’ interpretations of sustainability and a skew towards the economic pillar of sustainability are dominant in local pluralist governance arrangements. This research will therefore focus predominantly on the environmental and social pillars of sustainable development at the local level of governance, pillars which have perhaps often been secondary to economics, yet are closer to the agendas of many VCS groups.

In addition, how such multi-scalar policy rhetoric attempts to manifest itself in practical sustainability governance terms at the local level remains elusive given the overriding trajectory of international and national policies which privilege economic progress above environmental and social equity. This pre-empts a deep seated ambiguity in amalgamating the two terms of ‘sustainable development’ and ‘governance’ – “which if used too loosely may inhibit rather than facilitate cumulative research” (Jordan, 2008, p.18). The next chapter will briefly introduce the notion of a governance stakeholder sector, the VCS, paying particular attention to the problems associated with defining the sector, its autonomy and its relationship with the state in implementing sustainable development.

## **Chapter 3: The Voluntary and Community Sector**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the role and functions of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) within contemporary society focusing on its relationship with the state, and how this relationship influences the way the sector promotes sustainable development. Section 3.2 discusses the various definitions and roles of the VCS emphasising the problems in identifying a single, all encompassing definition of the sector. Section 3.3 introduces national and regional statistics on the VCS. This provides an ideal context to illuminate firstly, the importance of the VCS-state relationship in contemporary UK society; and secondly, the ability of VCS groups to develop capacity within the sector in their own right. Section 3.4 discusses how the VCS have become increasingly linked to the UK state under New Labour, briefly examining the nature of this relationship at the national and local levels<sup>1</sup> and what this means in terms of VCS autonomy and state power. Section 3.5 then goes on to briefly discuss why the VCS may be a suitable research lens to examine how sustainable development is promoted. It cites in particular how the multi-functional nature of the VCS complements the rhetoric, principles and ethos of sustainable development.

### **3.2 The VCS – definitions and roles.**

There is no single appropriate definition or role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) that can be uniquely applied in all circumstances (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.66). This is because the sector is so diverse and heterogeneous – “a loose and baggy monster” (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, pp.66ff; Craig *et al.*, 2005a, p.21). It includes a variety of organisations and groups ranging from large-scale international charities to

---

<sup>1</sup> The VCS-state relationship at national and local level is explored in greater detail in section 6.7.

small community groups. Furthermore, the term ‘voluntary sector’ is interchangeable with other terms like ‘civil society’, ‘the charity sector’ or the ‘third sector’ (Jochum *et al.*, 2005, p.5). The ‘looseness’ of such terms only adds to the continuing debate concerning the sector’s definition and role, which Bebbington and Riddell (1997) describe as “a notoriously slippery concept” (p.108).

A starting point for considering the VCS in the UK is the Wolfenden Committee (1978), which was commissioned to look at the future of voluntary organisations in the UK. This report highlighted the problem in deciding what definition to give the words ‘voluntary organisation’. It claimed “a bewildering variety of activities falls within the untidy boundaries of the words as commonly used... the spectrum extends, for instance from the National Council of Voluntary Service, through multifarious well-known national bodies which are members of it... through regional or local branches or units of them, to small groups brought together in a town or village for particular and sometime short-lived purposes” (Wolfenden, 1978, p.11). The report also omits churches, universities, trade unions and political parties within its definition, reviewing “voluntary organisations dealing with the personal social services and what is generally known as the ‘environment’ (ibid, p.12). The report also highlights the voluntary movement as a “living thing... new organisations are formed to meet newly-discerned needs... others die... there is nothing static about the scene” (ibid, p.13).

Therefore, given the ephemeral nature of voluntarism, it is arguably impossible to define the sector generically. Yet it is possible to identify broad functions and commonalities within the sector. Kendall and Knapp (1995, pp.66ff), citing the work of Brenton (1985) and others in the field, categorise five functions of the voluntary sector. Firstly, the ‘service-providing function’, which refers to organisations that offer a

service to someone by way of information, advice or support. Secondly, the ‘mutual-aid function’, which focuses on self-help around a common need or interest. Thirdly, the ‘pressure-group function’ which refers to policy advocacy and campaigning for societal and/or policy change by pressurising decision-makers. Fourthly, there is ‘individual advocacy’, which “involves presenting a case on behalf of individuals to receive goods and services so there is some overlap with the information providers” (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.68). Lastly, they talk of a resource and co-ordinating function which involves blending service provision with other voluntary organisations by acting as a central repository of expertise. The National Council for Voluntary Services (NCVO) is an example of such a group. These functions suggest that the VCS (through wider definitional terms), potentially has an intrinsic role in the development of society.

In an online article, Edwards (2005) goes some way to substantiate this developmental role of the VCS. He attempts to define civil society using three schools of thought: firstly, civil society as ‘associational life’, whereby voluntary associations offer opportunities to society by “act[ing] as gene carriers of the good society”; secondly, civil society as ‘good society’, whereby voluntary associations “guard against the tendency to privilege one part of society over the others on ideological grounds”; and lastly, civil society as the ‘public sphere’, whereby “civil society becomes the arena for argument and deliberation”.

Other work suggests that the major ‘commonalities’ of organisations within the third sector are that they are “neither profit-oriented businesses nor governmental agencies or bureaucracies (Anheier and Seibel, 1990, p.7). In terms of non-profit organisations, their functionality and existence does depend on raising capital, yet this is used to produce an overall objective or service rather than financially satisfying shareholders or

directors. Yet non-profit organisations have also been subject to distinctions through the way they are controlled and how they are resourced (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.68). The distinctions cited here are important within the context of this research. Using the work of Chanan (1991), Kendall and Knapp (1995) distinguish between three types of organisations. Firstly, ‘professional non-profit organisations’ which provide a professional service and have fully paid members of staff at national and local level, whereby the national office run the local offices and raise funds for local work. Then there are ‘voluntary service organisations’ which have professionally managed headquarters with autonomous local groups who use volunteers and raise their own finance as the headquarters federated members. Then finally, there are independent local community groups which are self-supporting with no higher authority to report to – these groups are largely dependent on the resource of unpaid volunteer labour (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.68-71). However, the context of this research emphasises the way in which the VCS has become more tied into state practices, for example through the delivery of public services. This suggests that these ‘commonalities’ are not robust enough to be incorporated into a generic definition of the VCS. One could argue that it is the incoherence of the VCS that is its main commonality.

Emphasising the incoherence of the VCS, Craig *et al.* (2005a) utilise an all-encompassing, temporal definition: “the voluntary and community sectors include service-providing, advocacy, capacity building and campaigning organisations together with the infrastructure (“umbrella”) and specialist organisations required to support them... characterised by an emphasis on not-for-profit/charitable activity, include organisations with and without paid workers, with and without volunteers, and increasing numbers of organisations of service users and carers. The boundaries between voluntary and community sectors are diffuse...” (p.21). This definition seems

more appropriate in the context of this research for two reasons. Firstly, because of its emphasis on the ‘diffuse’ nature of the VCS. This is important because when thinking about what defines the VCS, maybe it would be more appropriate to think about how the VCS compares (or interacts) with other societal sectors, like the public<sup>2</sup> and private sectors over time. A synergistic definition of the VCS is dependent upon particular societal contexts, contingency and temporality. For example, which political party is in power at the time. Osborne (2002) shows how the UK VCS was viewed differently by respective Conservative and New Labour governments. Whilst the Conservative administration saw the VCS as potential public service deliverers in a competitive market, New Labour went beyond the neo-liberal service delivery aspect by viewing VCS contribution to society as part of a democratising modernising governance agenda that promotes social inclusion and sustainable development discourses (Osborne, 2002, pp.469-470). The service delivery function of the VCS is the second reason why the definition by Craig *et al.* (2005a) is more appropriate for this research. But this is also a matter of contention. On one hand, such services benefit society as a whole; on the other hand, the state benefits because the VCS is releasing government from certain institutional responsibilities. The nuanced motivations for using the VCS by different state administrations forwarded by Osborne (2002) suggest the importance of scrutinising how governments define the VCS.

The UK government concisely define the VCS as organisations that “are non-governmental; are ‘value-driven’ – that is, that are primarily motivated by the desire to further social, environmental or cultural objectives rather than to make a profit *per se*; and principally reinvest surpluses to further their social, environmental or cultural objectives” (HM Treasury, 2005, p.7). The sector “includes all organisations that would

---

<sup>2</sup> The VCSs relationship with the state is explored in greater detail in section 3.4.



define themselves as, voluntary and community organisations, charities, social enterprises, mutuals or co-operatives” (ibid, p.7).

In referring to the sector’s wider developmental aims, the government envisage the VCS as making “a large and essential contribution to the economic and social life of the United Kingdom. It plays a key role in: building ‘social capital’, both by promoting self-organised community and collective action and by encouraging volunteering and active citizenship; providing services to the public and to particular groups in the community, thereby meeting social and individual needs; advocacy on behalf of communities and the individuals they serve and represent, for example through campaigning and lobbying activities or formal representation in decision-making fora; contributing expertise and experience to policy formulation, through dialogue with local and central government and other public bodies; providing employment and income, thereby contributing to overall economic output; and delivering public and publicly-funded services” (HM Treasury, 2005, pp.7-8).

This definition is rather problematic in light of how the UK government under New Labour have proffered paradoxical functions of the sector. On one hand, they cite the importance of the sector in building social capital through self-organisation and collective action. This suggests that that the VCS functions separately to the state. Yet on the other hand, the government see another function of the VCS as delivering ‘public and publicly-funded services’. In working with government so closely, some commentators have been critical of the VCS inasmuch as it has been described as evolving into an apparatus of the ‘shadow state’ (Wolch, 1989; Trudeau, 2008). This is why it is of academic interest to scrutinise the governance experiences of VCS groups

embarking upon (sustainable) developmental work that requires social capital within and across the sector as well as support from the state.

Whilst the preceding governmental definition of the VCS alludes to some of the problems inherent within succinctly defining the roles and functions of the sector, the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisation) interestingly allude to the crux of the definition problem. On their website (NCVO, 2006a), they claim “third sector organisations tend to be defined by what they are not: neither public nor private. This makes it very difficult to forge an identity that is recognisable to the sector itself, let alone to Government or to the public”. The NCVO does recognise the need for “developing a positive definition” of the sector or “of the space between public and private in which it operates”. A way forward, they suggest, “might be to focus on what third sector organisations stand for, rather than what they do”. Hence, they suggest a number of principles and values that are shared across the sector. These include:

- “**Independence**: embodying people’s right to associate and organise to help themselves and others, independently of the state.
  
- **Social justice**: making a difference and promoting lasting social, environmental and economic change, for example through: different ways of doing business; campaigning in the community or in the workplace; giving people a voice.
  
- **Diversity, dignity and respect**: recognising and celebrating diversity and viewing this as a strength, both in relation to society and to the sector; promoting social inclusion and equality of opportunity by reaching out to and engaging with the most disadvantaged and excluded communities.

- **Participation and empowerment:** enabling people to participate in their community and places of work, to give them a greater say in the decisions that affect their lives, collectively and individually, and greater control over their local economy.
- **Collective wealth creation and social entrepreneurship:** using surpluses to further social objectives; investing in human and social capital.
- **Responsiveness:** providing quality goods and services (including support and advocacy) in response to people’s needs.
- **Accountability:** achieving our mission; being transparent and accountable to our users, members and/or beneficiaries.
- **Sustainability:** working towards sustainable economic and community development, for example through economic regeneration; developing people’s skills and capacities; and building social capital within and between communities” (NCVO, 2006a, bold in original).

The richness and variety of definitions and roles forwarded by a variety of government, non-government and academic sources in this section not highlights the VCS’s fluid and chameleon-like nature. As such, the Third Sector European Policy Network (TSEPN) assertion that “there is no single ‘correct’ definition [of the VCS] in Europe” (TSEPN, 2006) exemplifies the problems associated with engaging in research on the VCS. On one hand, the VCS is celebrated in some quarters because of its ability to remain independent from the state and the market and be empowered (Jessop, 2002; TSEPN,

2006). On the other hand, the current modernisation policy agenda of New Labour suggests that the UK state is keen to formally increase its ties with the VCS. LSP and VCS service delivery state policy is particularly explicit about promoting a closer relationship with the VCS (see chapter 6). Yet how this relationship plays out in practical terms may be quite different to the policy rhetoric.

Therefore, this begs the question of whether the VCS can realistically be independent of the state or whether the co-option talked about by, for example, Taylor *et al.* (2002) is a practical reality. The state actively courting VCS contribution to public service delivery and sustainable development through such policies would seem to suggest that the VCS-state relationship would be based around the state being the principal benefactor. For example, the state is able to relinquish particular institutional responsibilities conveniently, whilst simultaneously being able to take the political high ground by claiming that it has actively facilitated innovative governance pathways in which the electorate, as represented through non-state actors like the VCS, are able to secure greater involvement in their own future through having a stake in any future state policy direction.

Yet from a VCS perspective, the practical repercussions of this type of relationship may seemingly be based upon the state encroaching ever more upon the *raison d'être* of the VCS (Wolch, 1989; Taylor *et al.*, 2002; Trudeau, 2008). This has drastic consequences for the VCS. This is because the sector is defined through its autonomy from the state. It therefore loses its ability to criticise state agendas, policy and practice over sustainability for instance. Greater dependence on state support through funding for example, would result in the voluntary sector losing its legitimacy. Losing autonomy and legitimacy will result in the fragmentation of the sector, with larger groups forming

greater ties with the state and surviving through being able to meet state organisational requirements, whilst smaller community groups struggle to get funding and compete with larger VCS groups. At the local level, this will have an adverse affect on democratic pluralism where, ideally, ‘governance’ interventions are practically manifested. Therefore, empirically examining the practical experiences of the VCS through policy arrangements like LSPs (chapter 7) and service delivery (chapter 8) will shed light on the true (detrimental) nature of this relationship, especially with regard to how the VCS are able to practically contribute to local sustainable development. However, the next section will examine VCS trends, facts and figures in a national and regional context in order to highlight the VCS-state relationship and how capacity is built within the VCS.

### **3.3 The VCS – trends, facts and figures.**

This section will examine the various trends, facts and figures related to the VCS nationally and regionally (Yorkshire and the Humber) in the UK. National statistics provide a complete picture of VCS activities across the country and able us to see whether the study area of Yorkshire and the Humber is typical or atypical of such national trends.

#### **3.3.1 National**

The NCVO UK Voluntary Sector Almanac (2006) provides figures specifically for “‘general charities’ (which excludes, amongst others, housing associations and independent schools), provides a recognisable map of the sector” using key statistics from 2003/04 (NCVO, 2006b, p.3). In 2003/4 this sector had an operating expenditure of £24.9 billion, total assets of £66.8 billion and a paid workforce of at least 608,000 (NCVO, 2006b, p.3). The sector had an income of £26.3 billion and derived 38% of its

income from statutory sources (see table 3.3). In 2005-6, the sector's total income was £31 billion and Government funding had increased to £10.5 billion, accounting for 33.9% of total income (NCVO, 2008, p.1). This shows how government plays an integral role in helping fund the VCS and brings into question the extent to which the state can potentially encroach upon the VCS (Wolch, 1989; Trudeau, 2008), threaten its autonomy (Fisher, 2002) and influence how the sector delivers services to the public through contracts (Kramer, 2002; Salamon, 2002).

There has been a trend of continued expansion of the sector (general charities) from 98,000 in 1991 to 169,000 in 2004, with a net increase of over 28,000 organisations since 2000 (see table 3.1), although the number of charities then decreased slightly to 164,195 in 2005/6 (NCVO, 2008, p.1). Small charities continued to grow in number as did large charities (NCVO, 2006b, p.4):

<i>Number of general charities 1995-2004 by total income (£)</i>					
Year	Under £100,000 total income	£100,000 - £1 million total income	£1 million - £10 million total income	over £10 million total income	All total income
1995	109,384	10,164	1,331	121	121,000
2000	126,219	12,838	1,701	206	140,964
2004	146,963	19,064	2,930	290	169,249

Source: NCVO/GuideStar UK; SCVO; NICVA

**Table 3.1: Number of general charities by total income (£), 1995-2004 (NCVO, 2006b, p.4)**

The total income was as follows:

<i>Total income by size of organisation, 2002/03 and 2003/04 (£million)</i>						
Year	under £10,000 total income	£10,000 - £100,000 total income	£100,000 - £1 million total income	£1 million - £10 million total income	over £10 million total income	All total income
02/03	290.8	1,845.2	5,541.1	7,656.4	9,939.2	25,272.7
03/04	298.2	1,736.6	5,882.8	8,171.7	10,233.2	26,322.6

**Table 3.2: Total income by size of organisation, 2002/03 and 2003/04 (£million)  
(NCVO, 2006b, p.4)**

Also, the sector's income continued to be concentrated in a small number of larger organisations (income of over £10million) with 0.2% of the total amount of general charities in the UK receiving 38.9% of total income in 2003-4. This is in contrast to the smallest charities (income less than £10k), with 56.5% of the total amount of general charities in the UK receiving only 1.1% of total income in 2003-4 (NCVO, 2006b, p.6). Social enterprise activities and statutory income sources drive the sector's economy (ibid, p.8). The sources of VCS income are 1% from the private sector, 10% from the voluntary sector, 15% internal, 35% from individuals and 38% from the public sector.

Size plays an important role in how a VCS group is funded. It is clear that smaller grass roots groups working at the community level possesses different characteristics to their larger NGO counterparts. In this research I have interviewed representatives from global NGOs like Friends of the Earth, larger UK VCS groups that receive high amounts of state funding like Groundwork UK or British Trust of Conservation Volunteers, regional rural community councils and smaller locally-based environmental and conservation community groups like Flamborough Community and Environmental Action Group or South Holderness Countryside Society.

As such, the growth in large charities (table 3.1) coupled with income being concentrated in a smaller number of larger organisations may suggest that the government is funding larger VCS groups to deliver public services. Conversely, because the number of small charities is also increasing (table 3.1), this may suggest that the sector is still able to maintain its autonomy and social capital function given the greater number of smaller community-based groups being established. This research will therefore examine the paradox of service delivery and social capital development within the VCS (see chapter 8).

In terms of employment, the voluntary sector increased by 8.2% between 1995 and 2004:

<i>UK employment by sector 1995-2004 (headcount, thousands)</i>			
Sector	1995	2000	2004
Private	19,095	20,711	20,270
Public	6,042	6,246	6,842
Voluntary	478	563	608
<b>Total</b>	25,616	27,520	27,720

Source: Labour Force Survey. Base: All people aged 16 and over

**Table 3.3: UK employment by sector 1995-2004 (headcount, thousands)  
(NCVO, 2006b, p.9)**

With formal volunteering underpinning the sector, the 2003 Home Office Citizenship Survey (HOCS) estimated that 42% of the adult population of England and Wales have formally volunteered at least once in the last 12 months, 62% have informally volunteered, 38% undertook ‘civic participation’ and only 4% of the adult population undertook employer-supported volunteering (NCVO, 2006b, p.9).



The high amount of civic participation and informal volunteering may suggest that New Labour's 'new localism' policy approach may be paying off somewhat. However, because these sets of statistics are derived from a government source (HOCS), one has to be cautious. It has been estimated that 1.1 million full-time UK workers would be needed to replace formal volunteers, at a cost of approximately £25.4 billion. These formal volunteers' main remit is to raise money (ibid, p.10). This highlights the importance of the VCS to government because decreases in such formal volunteers could result in the government having to subsidise the replacement of informal volunteers *and* their potential income lost. The income raised is almost accounted for by current expenditure (ibid, p.11).

Total current expenditure of the sector was 67% on charitable activities, 15% on grants, 10% on fundraising costs and 7% on management and administration. This shows that 67% of their spend is directly on doing things/being productive, rather than managing themselves or giving money to other people.

### **3.3.2 Yorkshire and Humber**

Turning now to the regional scale of Yorkshire and the Humber, it has been suggested that there are an estimated 25-30,000 VCS organisations in the region; although it has been indicated the figure could be as high as 80,000 or around 1 in every 600 people (Lewis, 2001, p.15). The following tables depict the number of VCS organisations in the region (table 3.4), the number of paid employees in the sector in the region (table 3.5), the economic contribution of volunteering to the region (table 3.6) and the economic contribution of the sector to the regional economy (table 3.7). These statistics have been extrapolated from various studies, and are thus subject to methodological problems, sector definitions and the extent to which national accounting categories

accurately portray the sector's real contribution to the economy and to broader social goals (ibid, p.19).

Study	Number of VCSs identified	Estimated VCSs/1000 pop.	Extrapolated to YH region	Comments
<b>NCVO UK Almanac 2000</b>	136,000		13,600	Based on general charities definition; YH region pop. approx. 5 million
<b>NW region NCVO NW Almanac 2000</b>	Over 10,000		Over 7,500	NW region pop. 6.89 million (1997)
<b>NE region (VONNE) 2000</b>	40,000		80,000 (1)	NE region pop. 2.6 million (1) Extrapolation based on pop.
<b>SE region (RAISE) 2000</b>	28,000 (1)		20,000	(1) compared to 25,000 registered charities, and 32,000 using 'rule of thumb' of four per 1000 pop.
<b>Humber 1999</b>	1700	2 approx.	10,000	'Serious underestimate'
		5	25,000	Based on Humberside study
		10	50,000	urban/rural area estimates
		7.5	37,500	Based on
<b>North Yorks/York 2000</b>	3000	4	20,000	'Substantial underestimate'
<b>LOVAS Huddersfield 1997</b>		9.7	48,500	Excluding religious organisations, schools and statutory projects
<b>Calderdale 2000</b>	1000	5	25,000	

**Table 3.4: Estimated number of VCSs in Yorkshire and Humber region (adapted from Lewis, 2001, p. 15)**

The estimation of around 1700 VCS groups in the Humber region seems too low given that the Humber region includes all North and North East Lincolnshire, East Riding and Hull, although this estimate was in 1999. A secondary data source from Hull Community Network alone estimated that they have at least 390 member groups (HCN, 2007, p.14). However, the co-ordinator of HCN alluded to as many as 750 groups existed on their database in interview (July 2006). This highlights the difficulties in establishing the amount of VCS groups at the local level, let alone regional and national.

It has been estimated that the number of paid employees in the VCS in the region is around 45-92,000, excluding voluntary activity (ibid, p.16). Table 3.5 below summarises the number of persons in paid employment in VCS groups in the YH region using figures from other regions.

Study	Total no. of staff	No. of FT staff	No. of PT staff	Extrapolated to YH region	Comments
<b>NCVO UK Almanac 2000</b>	48,500			48,500 (2)	(1) 'general charities (skewed upwards by 'London effect?'); (2) extrapolation based on population
<b>Birmingham Uni. 1997/JRF 1995</b>	455,000 (2)	390,000 fte (2)		66,800 (1) 38,000 (2)	(1) 4% 'full time paid jobs' (regional FT employment, 1.67m, RIF) (2) '1 in 60 all paid jobs' using narrow definition of the sector
<b>NW region NCVO NW Almanac 2000</b>	30,000	10,000 (1)	20,000 (1)		(1) no FT/PT figs. available; uses same FT/PT proportion as N. Yorks. figs. Extrapolation based on population
<b>NE region (VONNE) 2000</b>	23,200 (1)			92,000 (2)	(1) FTEs; '4% workforce involved' (2) based on 4% regional workforce
<b>Humber 1999</b>	Over 7500			46,000	No FTE figs available; extrapolation as % sub-regional workforce (2%; 400k, 1997 figures)
<b>North Yorks/York 2000</b>	12,000	4000	8000	45,000	No FTE figs available; extrapolated figures based on PT staff working 'half-time', i.e. equiv. To 4000 FTE
<b>Calderdale 2000</b>	3000 (1)	1000 (2000 fte) (2)	2000	92,000 (3)	(1) 'almost 4% of workforce'[1.34%-5.9%]; total jobs 79,5000 (1998); (2) based on PT=50% FT; (3) based on 4% of region's workforce

**Table 3.5: Number of persons in paid employment in VCSs in the region (adapted from Lewis, 2001, p.16)**

The economic contribution of volunteering to the region is difficult to quantify because it is provided free. However, volunteering does contribute to the region, both socially and economically (ibid, p.17). Table 3.6 below summarises the economic contribution to the region using figures extrapolated from other regions.

Study	Total no. of volunteers per year	Total hours per year	Total hours per month	'Value'	Extrapolated to YH region	Comments
<b>NCVO UK Almanac 2000</b>	3 million				300,000 people	Based on 'general charities' definition
<b>Sussex University/JRF 1995</b>					£1.9 billion contribution to economy	Estimated £25 billion to national economy; approx. 8m serve on management committees or as trustees
<b>BCS</b>	22 million				2.2 million people	
<b>NW region NCVO NW Almanac 2000</b>	n/a					
<b>NE region (VONNE) 2000</b>	143,000		29m (1)	£307 million (2)		(1) Estimated equivalent to 15,000 FTEs; (2) based on regional average non-manual wage
<b>Humber 1999</b>	20,000 (1)		160,000	£9.6 million (2)	Approx. 100,000 people; £48 million (2)	(1) figure is lower than RF 'bullet point' data; (2) Contribution based on £5 per hour
<b>North Yorks/York 2000</b>	50,000 (1)	1.2 million (2)	100,000		330,000 people	Equivalent to approx. 1/15 of population
<b>Calderdale 2000</b>	n/a (1)	1 million	83,000	Over £6 million	Over 1 million people	(1) assuming hours distributed over same % of population as other areas, equiv. To ca2 X RF data (i.e. 900k)

**Table 3.6: The economic contribution of volunteering (adapted from Lewis, 2001, p.17)**

Table 3.7 below suggests that the economic contribution to the regional economy is from 0.95% – 2.5% of the regional GDP. This equates to a sector contribution of from just under £0.5 billion to around £1.3 billion (ibid, p.18).

Study	Income/ expenditure (£m)	%GDP	Value in £m	Extrapolated to YH (£)	Comments
<b>NCVO UK Almanac 2000</b>	14,200 (1) 13,400 (5)	0.67 (2) 0.72 (3) 1.89 (4)	4,500 (2) 5,200 (3) 12,800 (4)	1.01 billion (5)	(1) income; (2) excludes volunteer time; (3) based on 'added value' and excludes volunteer time; (4) includes £7.9m volunteer time; (5) based on expenditure
<b>NW region NCVO NW Almanac 2000</b>	987 (1)	0.4 (2) 0.6 (3)			(1) approximately 6% national sector income; (2) '£318 million to regional economy'; no volunteer time; (3) 'added value', £475 million to regional economy; no volunteer time
<b>NE region (VONNE) 2000</b>		3.8		1.96 billion	
<b>Humber 1999</b>	86 (1)	0.95 (2)		490,000	(1) 'total income'; (2) based on income; (3) % of regional GDP
<b>North Yorks/York 2000</b>	109 (1)	1 – 2.5		515, 000 (2) 1.29 million (3)	(1) 'revenue income' (2) 1% GDP (3) 2.5% GDP
<b>Calderdale 2000</b>		n/a (1)			Local data is based on NUTS, not Las. (Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield)

**Table 3.7: The economic contribution of the sector to the regional economy  
(adapted from Lewis, 2001, p.18)**

To summarise, these regional statistics although a decade old, show the socio-economic importance of the VCS in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The 2008 UK Civil Society Almanac reports that Yorkshire and the Humber (alongside the South West) has experienced strongest growth in income, reflecting diversity of experiences across the

UK and the importance of tailoring initiatives to local conditions (NCVO, 2008, p.6). Such vibrancy and diversity suggests that VCS groups in Hull and East Riding are engaging in partnership with the local state and with other VCS groups. As such, this research aims to test this suggestion empirically with regard to how VCS groups work with the state (through state regulated governance spaces like LSPs and LBPs) and form VCS networks with each other. The next section concentrates on examining the relationship between the VCS and the state more closely.

### **3.4 The VCS and the state in partnership**

This section will briefly look at the relationship between the VCS and the state within society. To do this, it is important to “situate the developments that are happening in the third sector in the context of broader societal changes” (Deakin, 2001, p.37). This essentially means that an analysis of the VCS as a single entity is not enough. In line with my earlier assertion that any definition of the VCS is contextual and temporal (see section 3.2), it is appropriate to examine what relationship the VCS has with the national and local state. However, one must also consider wider global forces as international policy plays an intrinsic role in shaping third sector governance nationally and locally (Fisher, 1997; Brown *et al.*, 2000). Therefore to fully appreciate the third sector’s contribution to and role within society, one must examine the VCS in the context of global, national and local scales, as these are integral to how the VCS functions.

The role of civil society has previously been likened as an extension ladder of the state (Deakin, 2001, p.36) or as “ladles in the global soup kitchen” (Edwards, 2000, p.10). Yet this is far from the reality. Globalisation has opened up an array of social, political

and economic opportunities for civil society to have varying degrees of influence upon, and this has had a profound effect on wider society within the last few decades.

VCS organisations are now enjoying greater involvement in issues that would have been previously thought of as governmental responsibility. Fisher (1997) argues that many commentators are focusing on analysing the “role of voluntary associations in building vibrant civil societies and their impact on the relationship between society and the state... the impact of NGO coalitions and networks on international politics and their role in the formation of an international civil society... and are reconsidering the relationship of NGOs to social movements and their ability to both empower people and contribute to alternative discourses of development and democratization” (Fisher, 1997, pp.440-1). This would suggest that the VCS are in a much more powerful position to influence spatial policy. In the UK context, greater VCS involvement with the state has been expressed most overtly in the development of the Compact between the state and the VCS (Home Office, 1998) and the ‘new localism’ agenda (Stoker, 2002), which has attempted to enhance and modernise local democracy (Pratchett, 2004) by actively encouraging non-state groups to get involved in the governance of their locality.

Paradoxically, the emphasis of the ‘new localism’ has been attributed to “*supralocal* transformations” like globalisation (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p.341, emphasis in original). Brown *et al.* (2000) have highlighted how globalisation has attacked and undermined previous institutional arrangements that have provided the individual with collective response to their circumstances, and as a result of this “globalisation is affecting the demand for and the supply of governance”. Such changes have “contributed to a shifting balance in the roles of the state, the market and civil society” (Brown *et al.*, 2000, pp.273-4). The latter apparently now enjoy a more influential role

within contemporary society. This is supported by the statistics given in section 3.3 which show the meteoric rise of VCS activity in the UK over the past decade or so.

This rise is happening on a global scale. Edwards (2000) attributes the rise of NGOs to three reasons: firstly, ideas on international development have moved away from the ‘Washington Consensus’<sup>3</sup>; secondly, involving NGOs is cost-effective public relations; and lastly, non-state actors have a crucial role to play in global governance (Edwards, 2000, pp.10-12). Thus, whilst civil society has influenced governance issues, it has functioned as part of a system of checks and balances on the periphery of formal governing remits. As Edwards (2000) claims, “it is important to remind ourselves that the role of civil society – and especially NGOs – is to fill in the spaces of healthy democracy and not to substitute for government” (ibid, p.15). Amin *et al.* (2002) also emphasise that for the third sector to realise their potential means resisting pressures to conform to “the image of the mainstream” (Amin *et al.*, 2002, p.210). Arguably, such perspectives have had an effect on promoting more pluralistic forms of governance, but the ‘new localism’ agenda in the UK may suggest that VCS groups have hard and fast choices to make if they want to join the state in their legacy bound modernisation policy imperative *or* just simply be part of an autonomous sector.

Whilst it has been asserted that the role of the VCS has evolved from “leviathan to chameleon” (Deakin, 2001, p.37) in governance issues, this has inevitably resulted in greater interaction with the state. Whilst it has been argued that countries vary considerably in the extent to which civil society organisations and groups are active in national governance and policy issues (Brown *et al.*, 2000, p.279), the UK government

---

<sup>3</sup> The ‘Washington Consensus’ was first used by Williamson (1989) to describe ten economic policy prescriptions which constituted a reform package promoted by monetary institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and the US Treasury Department. The term is now widely used in reference to neo-liberalism, more specifically the free market (see Rodrik, 2006).



(especially since New Labour's accession to government in 1997) has on the whole, purportedly welcomed VCS involvement in governance issues as part of an overall discourse that promotes horizontal 'joined-up' government. New localism aside, the state has attempted to attribute the VCS a significant role in the delivery of public services, the 1998 Compact representing a pre-cursor to this vision. As Paul Boateng, the lead Minister for the 2004 VCS Review claimed, "voluntary and community organisations, social enterprises and the wider third sector are already playing an important role in the delivery of public services but have, I believe, the potential to contribute even more to the pursuit of our ambitious goals for public services" (HM Treasury, 2005, p.5).

The government acknowledge that the third sector can contribute to public services when "government failures exist and neither the state nor the market can respond and deliver in an equitable or efficient manner" (ibid, p.3). The third sector can therefore provide the following benefits:

- "a strong focus on the needs of service users;
- knowledge and expertise to meet complex personal needs and tackle difficult social issues;
- an ability to be flexible and offer joined-up service delivery;
- the capacity to build user's trust; and
- the experience and independence to innovate" (ibid, p.3).

Whilst acknowledging many positive attributes the VCS can bring to public service delivery mechanisms through 'added value' (see Bolton, 2003), the government also emphasise how the VCS is integral to involving local people in community ownership

and building social capital (ibid, p.4). These are important aspects within the sustainable development ethos, and part of this research will scrutinise and test the assertion that the government's VCS-welcoming attitude goes beyond them using the sector as a cheap and convenient social and economic workforce which is easily manipulated through mere rhetoric and artificial praise. It could be argued that the development of a compact at the national level of government has given the VCS consistent and stable funding policies so they can deliver services, whilst simultaneously giving the sector greater 'legitimacy', especially at local government level (Taylor, 2003, pp.432-3). As such the relationship between local government and local VCS groups plays an intrinsic role in the success of the national compact strategy, (HM Treasury, 2005, p.9).

Central government has acknowledged the need to strengthen local partnerships in the delivery of public services (HM Treasury, 2005, p.5). This is largely because the VCS provide a better platform of engagement than other sectors (private and public) because of their 'participatory' aspect in involving local communities (ibid, p.38). This central government policy shift has been 'scaled down' to delivery at the local level, especially local government, which has reshaped and redefined itself as a result (Daly and Davis, 2002, p.97). The need for reshaping has been attributed to a number of reasons, including the "perceived loss of confidence in democratic structures and ideals in recent years" and the unresponsiveness of local government (ibid, p.98). Thus, democracy is now being legitimised through participatory democratic techniques rather than representative democratic structures (ibid, p.99). Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) and service delivery mechanisms (SDMs) like compacts have been positioned as examples of such structures or initiatives. In theory, these provide an ideal governance entry point for VCS groups to work in partnership with the state.

Morison (2000) asserts that the government desires such a partnership with civil society through the development of initiatives like compacts (although, one could argue that the incoming New Labour government had in 1997 inherited a situation whereby there was no choice but to form such a partnership). However, 'partnership' between the state and the VCS could be subject to an overriding tension. The VCS may be caught between fulfilling the politically soft new localism agenda of participatory community governance and the hardened contractual nature of delivering public services. As Fyfe (2005) asserts: "If third sector organisations are to conform to the localised vision in national policy discourse by being essentially neighbourhood-based, grassroots groups, they are unlikely to be able to contribute to service delivery in the way that the government hopes" (Fyfe, 2005, p.552).

However one views the VCS-state partnership issue, the role of the VCS has been given greater prominence in governance issues. This is shown in research conducted by Taylor *et al.* (2002) which showed that the non-profit sector often initiated compacts in order to get on "a more equal footing with local authorities" (Taylor *et al.*, 2002, p.7) and get due recognition from the state, although as a junior partner (Taylor, 2003, p.433). This suggests that the VCS are consciously entering into a relationship with the state whereby both realise which sector holds the majority of power.

As such, some commentators focus on whether partnership is actually a good thing. Wilkinson and Craig (2002) assert that "it should not be presumed that partnership working is a universal good" (p.2) and that important questions concerning the role of partners in the local governance arena and the tensions these illustrate need to be explored (*ibid*, p.2). Furthermore, grassroots groups and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups do not see the compact as being relevant to them, seeing the initiative as

only relevant to funded organisations and this only perpetuates the problem of under-resourced (but socially important) voluntary groups (Plowden, 2003).

Many commentators have also attempted to address how partnerships should work. Plowden (2003) cites recommendations surrounding how the compacts are communicated, monitored and enforced (p.426ff). He concludes that for the compact to work, it needs to be viewed as a “tool used by both sides” (government and the VCS) rather than an “external rule book” (ibid, p.430-1). Wilkinson (2004), referring to how the VCS campaign for older people, argues that a clearer balance is needed between VCS groups and the government around the notion of ‘creative tension’ – this refers to the establishment of “distinctive roles and legitimacy of different partners, and of how representative and participatory democracy relate to each other, so that the strengths of each can be fully realised” (Wilkinson, 2004, p.351). This in turn will give voluntary organisations “the right to campaign whilst simultaneously engaging in meaningful policy debate, without fear or favour” (ibid, p.351).

This section has examined the VCS relationship with the UK state at national and local levels, specifically examining whether such a partnership could be fruitful. Thus far I have concentrated on the issue of how this relationship may be more convenient for the state inasmuch as it would hold the majority of power. However, some commentators have questioned the ever more powerful role that NGOs play within society. For example Fisher (1997) highlights the potentially dualistic nature of NGOs. On one hand, he questions whether they are separate from politics and government – that NGOs are “vehicles for challenges to and transformations of relationships of power... in particular, are seen as engaged in a struggle for ideological autonomy from the state, political parties and the development apparatus” (Fisher, 1997, p. 445). On the other

hand, he questions whether they are becoming more politicised, “becoming the new ‘technical’ solutions to development problems, ‘solutions’ that can be promoted by international development agencies in situations in which the state is seen an inhibitor” (ibid, p.445). He concludes by claiming “these perceptions of NGOs are tied up with contested notions of what it means to do good” (ibid, p.446). Similarly, Edwards and Hulme (1998) also question the functions of NGOs. Pointing to how such organisations are financed, they claim that some NGOs and grass roots organisations are ‘too close for comfort’ – and that official sources of funding (which are often government sourced), threatens their accountability and legitimacy as a “counterweight to state power” (Edwards and Hulme, 1998, p.7).

Hence, because so much literature purports a tension between NGOs presupposed theoretical function – to act as a counterweight to state power – and how they actually function in reality (Fisher, 1997; Edwards & Hulme, 1998; Yamin, 2001), one should question whether it is legitimate to talk of NGOs ‘doing’ governance because some are more closely aligned with government (Wolch, 1989) rather than governance in the partnership sense. The “rise and rise of NGOs” talked about by Edwards and Hulme (1998, p.7) points to the development of a potentially dangerous chasm between the larger NGOs (which have significant influence on global governance issues like sustainable development) and the smaller voluntary groups who do the majority of invaluable, grass roots work at the local level, which is arguably the most important arena for sustainable development. In an ideal world it is important that *all* VCS groups have a role in governance issues as UK government policy implies, but given the nature of government this is unlikely. The overarching policy of the New Labour government suggests that the VCS can engage in local policy initiatives and simultaneously deliver public services. Whether the VCS satisfies these two government aims whilst

maintaining a degree of autonomy remains a moot point which this research aims to address by questioning whether such smaller local voluntary groups, in their pursuit of sustainable development initiatives, have been marginalised and merely have a paper role for public relations purposes, rather than political empowerment within pluralist local democratic systems. Much of the literature has suggested that successful VCS involvement with the state is intrinsically paradoxical because such groups would have to give up a certain degree of autonomy if wanting to work with the state. Indeed, Dahrendorf (2001) claimed that VCS reliance on the state through funding was incompatible with independence. So by implication, giving up autonomy may predicate the disempowerment of the VCS in a generic sense. However, some (larger) VCS groups may not see this as the case.

Empowerment can also be measured in terms of what (potential) influence a VCS group can exercise in its locality. Therefore some groups may welcome (and benefit from) the state co-opting them into local democratic processes like LSPs. Viewing co-option of the VCS by the state in negative terms may represent an oversimplification of the VCS-state relationship. My empirical analysis will examine whether the increased emphasis by the state in utilising the VCS in service delivery has affected particular VCS groups' ability to build capacity and increase social capital. Closer alignment with the state (through increased state funding or greater involvement in local democratic spaces like LSPs for example) may on the face of it, actually increase a voluntary group's ability to build capacity with other groups and share ideas on sustainable development across public and voluntary sectors. In reality however, co-option of the VCS by the state would make for an unequal relationship as some research has already suggested (Taylor *et al.*, 2002), with the state having more influence over the VCS than vice versa. Greater co-option of the VCS by the state would only disadvantage voluntary contributions and

capacity building within the sector surrounding more innovative ideas of sustainable development, reinforcing local state socio-economic agendas of sustainability, rather than agendas that are more environmentally-focused. State co-option therefore, runs the risks of VCS groups having to change their own agendas and purposes in order to align with the state and therefore to lose or diminish its autonomy in promoting its own objectives. In line with this, the next section focuses on why the VCS are important in relation to the promotion of sustainable development.

### **3.5 The VCS and sustainable development**

This section will briefly discuss why the VCS may be a suitable research lens to examine how sustainable development is promoted. As in previous sections, it is important to note that the term VCS will be used interchangeably with other terms like civil society, NGOs and the third sector.

The VCS can play an important role in contributing to sustainable development (Fisher, 1997, p.440). It can be argued the sector plays a more significant role than other sectors, for example, the business sector. This is because a basic tenet or goal of the VCS is to contribute to the greater good of society as a whole, rather than please a director or shareholder through fiscal gains. Members of the VCS are seen as citizens not customers or taxpayers. Therefore, it is more closely aligned with the policy rhetoric that supports sustainable development – meeting the needs of the present while not compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and the continual improvement of the environmental, social and economic conditions within society. Thus, one could argue that the VCS provides an appropriate, even necessary platform from which to push sustainability ideas and initiatives forward into the ‘psyche’ of society. Long and Arnold (1995) claim that “voluntary initiatives and the

particular segment of these that we call ‘partnerships’ represent a promising and imaginative approach to solving many of the priority setting, equity and efficiency problems that society identifies when it builds a strategy based on sustainable development principles” (p.28).

But the VCS is also very heterogeneous. Doyle and McEachern (1998) claim NGOs vary on the basis of the following determining factors:

- “their geopolitical origins;
- their political ideology;
- their size;
- the level of political focus;
- their funding sources;
- what they provide (what tasks they actually perform)
- their internal politics/structure; and
- their relationship to the state” (ibid, p.87)

Size, funding and their relationship to the state are dealt with in section 3.3 and 3.4 respectively. Here I consider their environmental ideology. Doyle and McEachern (1998, pp.84-87) distinguish between pluralist and post-modern NGOs, depending on their ideology to do with power. Pluralist NGOs are pressure groups in a society where power is diffused; the state is treated as neutral (ibid, p.84). Examples of such NGOs include Groundwork UK or British Trust for Conservation Volunteers. Post-modern NGOs see the world as more fragmented and in crisis and have far more “direct, creative and transformative powers” (ibid, p.87). Examples of such NGOs are



Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, although even within this category, most approaches will vary.

Political ideologies can range from 'reformist' to 'radical'. Reformist groups like to work with the state through more conventional channels, whilst radical groups actively challenge the state using more confrontational methods. Examples of reformist groups include Groundwork UK, BTCV or CPRE whilst examples of radical groups include Earth First! which has a radical deep ecology, Greenpeace, which has a radical political ecology or FoE which has a radical political/social ecology (ibid, p.88). Whilst section 2.2 shows the differences between weaker and stronger interpretations of sustainable development, variations in political ideologies amongst such voluntary groups show how problematic it is to implement any hard and fast rules concerning classifying the VCS: groups are multi-functional.

Bass *et al.* (1995, p.85) summarised the multi-functional nature of NGOs in helping implement sustainable development through Local Agenda 21. These included:

- mobilising the public, or certain groups;
- detailed field knowledge of social and environmental conditions;
- delivery of services: disaster relief, education, health;
- encouraging appropriate community organisation and capacity building;
- research, policy analysis and advice;
- facilitation and improvement of social and political processes;
- mediation and reconciliation of conflict;
- awareness-raising and communications;
- watch-dog, warning and monitoring;

- advocacy and challenging the status quo; promoting alternatives; and
- training in, and use of, participatory approaches

Likewise, Yamin (2001, pp.153-161) also conveyed a multi-functional role of NGOs as:

- agenda setters;
- conscience keepers;
- partners;
- experts;
- lobbyists; and
- enforcers

The multi-functional nature of VCS organisations highlights how they can complement the work of government and other sectors. Yet it is important to note that whilst a variety of NGOs offer a range of services that promotes sustainable development, they do not act as one group. Not all voluntary organisations do all of the above functions – their functions are wholly reliant on their group typology. Bass *et al.* (1995) highlights their diversity by categorising types of NGOs in respect to sustainable development. These types determine what type of strategy the NGO will try to employ when pushing for change:

- interest-based NGOs, e.g. natural history societies and professional associations;
- concern-based NGOs, e.g. environmental and animal welfare campaigning and advocacy groups; and
- solution-based NGOs, e.g. education and rural development groups (Bass *et al.*, 1995, p.86).

Yet how is the third sector in a position to do this? Firstly, third sector organisations are specifically tuned to deal with particular issues or problems. For example, it is more convenient for a wildlife group made up of local residents to monitor a particular species in the area in which they reside rather than it being left to local government. The wildlife group is in a position to solve the problem efficiently because they are attuned to their particular environment. In this sense, VCS membership of governance spaces like LBPs allows information to be processed and communicated to other higher levels like that of local and regional government, who can provide other important tools like financial resources and policies to protect a particular species or habitat. Thus, Uphoff (1992) asserts a ‘nested’ conception of action units where “members of households belong to groups, communities, localities, subdistricts in an ascending hierarchy and with diminishing interest and intensity. By a system of indirect representation, household needs and ideas can be communicated at higher levels, and decisions at those levels can be conveyed to households and individuals on whom implementation depends” (Uphoff, 1992, p.11). Thus, smaller VCS groups can provide the necessary local information from which bigger organisations within the voluntary, public and private sectors can develop a strategy and prioritise a plan of action. In theory, smaller VCS groups act as a partner to other institutions in developing sustainability initiatives. More importantly, they provide the catalyst for change to occur from the ‘bottom-up’. This tends to normalise ‘the local’ as the most important territorial scale for such working by VCS groups<sup>4</sup>.

In addition to the ability to operate at the local and neighbourhood level, the third sector also incorporates organisations that can powerfully lobby at the national, supra-national

---

<sup>4</sup> The problems associated with how ‘the local’ scale is normalised as the most important scale are discussed in chapters 4 and 9.

and international levels like governments and supporting institutions like the WTO (World Trade Organisation). Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth are examples of third sector organisations that actively pursue environmental governance and sustainable development issues. However, it is important to note that the nature of lobbying certain institutions would inevitably involve ‘trade-offs’ in some areas – and it has been argued that this runs counter to the idea of sustainable development (Bass *et al.*, 1995, p.87). Thus, the third sector’s diversity represents its main strength. The ‘chameleon’ like nature of the VCS as expressed by Deakin (2001) gives it that extra impetus and ability to deliver sustainable development initiatives. Government institutions are heavily politicised and bureaucratic, and whilst it can be argued that some of the bigger VCSs also suffer from this, many smaller groups are able to adapt quickly to the type of change needed in delivering sustainability. Thus, the VCS is in a unique position, with the ability to link government and local communities whilst providing greater insight and innovation in promoting governance issues (those that often conflict with government and capitalist interests) like sustainable development.

Christie and Warburton (2001) focus on the need to strengthen civil society through greater democratisation at local, national and global scales. This involves restoring the “vitality of local governance and to experiment with new mechanisms for participatory democracy” like “citizens juries and citizens commissions to debate environmental risks” (Christie and Warburton, 2001, p.153). They point to how downward devolution to the local level is important in renewing connections between citizens and politics, but upward devolution to supranational and global governance also provides greater accountability and democratic legitimacy. This is particularly important for sustainable development to occur, as its success depends on “representative democracy that is trusted and vibrant” (*ibid*, p.153). With governance being a buzz word for New Labour,

one would expect that the ‘new localism’ agenda would have particular governance pathways whereby the VCS could enjoy greater involvement via participatory and representative forms of democracy in decisions surrounding sustainable development. Such pathways could be widely acknowledged as forming under the more general term ‘sustainability governance’. The theory underpinning this concept is explored in greater detail in the next chapter, with a specific emphasis on how VCS groups contest and even produce governance networks, how the state reacts to such collective contestation and how sustainability is socially constructed by VCS groups around a scalar politics.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has introduced the VCS and discussed the problems involved in defining it. In addition, statistics on the VCS have highlighted the sector’s importance in terms of their ability to work with other voluntary groups and the state in the promotion of sustainable development. In particular, the chapter concentrated on examining the VCS-state relationship at national and local levels. It questions whether this relationship has certain consequences for the VCS in terms of their autonomy, proposing that the distribution of power within the VCS-state partnership could be unequal. However, it also suggests that this relationship could provide the VCS with more impetus to influence policy processes, especially at the local level. This is especially the case for sustainable development policy, whose discourses emphasise the improvement of society and the environment. Such discourses complement a philanthropic VCS inasmuch as we can theoretically posit the term ‘sustainability governance’. The next chapter explores this term conceptually.

## Chapter 4: Theorising sustainability governance and VCS networks

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter will begin by introducing the notion of governance and how it has emerged as a key theoretical framework to explain how non-state actors, more specifically, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups have an increased role in sustainability governance processes. With respect to understanding the role of VCS groups in sustainability governance, the chapter focuses on three broad conceptual issues. First, it considers how such groups produce and contest governance, including the degree to which they organically contribute to ‘doing’ sustainability from the ‘bottom-up’ by way of project and process. Second, it considers the ways in which the state produces and contests governance; examining the degree to which the state steers the VCS to enable the provision of certain institutional services that has an effect on the way sustainable development is positioned at the level of the local state. Thirdly, it considers how sustainability governance at the level of the local state is socially constructed around and through individual citizenship and collective action.

To anticipate some of the main conclusions of the chapter, governance as a concept has been the subject of much theorisation *a priori* by human geographers, sociologists and political scientists. Whilst this has encouraged some important developments in terms of the retheorisation of state – citizen and economy-environment relations<sup>1</sup>, there is an ongoing need for more grounded empirical research on new forms of sustainability governance. This research will focus upon investigating and accounting for the activities of VCS groups in the Yorkshire and Humber region, seeing how such groups organise, promote and govern *for* sustainability. Instead of thinking in terms of sustainability as a

---

<sup>1</sup> Thereby challenging an ‘economic determination’ orthodoxy in governance research.

dimension of economic or even social governance, it will consider the extent to which sustainability is enacted and produced as a governance project in its own right. This in turn allows us to consider where sustainability governance comes into conflict with, or in turn shapes, other governance agendas undertaken on the part of the state, business and other organisations at the local, regional and national scales, respectively and together. This will involve evaluating the extent to which VCS groups interact with the state in the local, regional and national context such that sustainability governance projects can be said to construct, and be constructed around, a ‘scalar politics’. By ‘scalar politics’ I mean the negotiation of sustainability issues between stakeholder groups across and within distinct political territorial scales.

In light of the UK government’s current sustainability policy framework, there appears to be the assumption that VCS organisations are being repositioned as key stakeholders in helping to deliver sustainability at the local scale (Fyfe, 2005; Jessop, 2002a; Whitehead, 2003). This state-influenced ‘neo-communitarian’ (Fyfe, 2005) agenda focuses on the revival of ‘the local’ or the ‘urban centre’ as the key site whereby sustainability issues like social cohesion and the environment can be effectively tackled (Gibbs and Jonas, 2000, 2001; Fyfe, 2005; Bulkeley, 2005; Evans *et al.*, 2006). Examples of such sustainability governance spaces include Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and more generally, in the way government has actively attempted to involve the VCS in service delivery. This research will see how VCS groups strategically organise themselves at the local level – externally, within and around formal governance spaces – in order to play a role in delivering sustainable development. Section 4.2 reviews the overall development of and general aspects of the governance literature which contextualises this thesis, paying particular attention to the ‘bottom-up’ approach that such groups adopt in sustainability

governance through the lens of local networks. It also considers how the post-political condition and pragmatism fits in with developing an understanding of how VCS groups promote sustainable development, both within LSPs and external to such spaces. Section 4.3 examines how these ‘local organisational frameworks’ are manifested and played out at other territorial scales like the regional and the national. Section 4.4 will examine the notion of state steering in relation to sustainability governance introducing literature based around Foucault’s ([1978] 1991) ‘governmentality’. Section 4.5 scrutinises how sustainability governance is contested in terms of citizenship and collective action, particularly through the theoretical lens of Habermas’s notion of communicative action theory and the concept of social capital. Section 4.6 will then go on to examine how sustainability governance is constructed around a ‘scalar politics’.

#### **4.2 Sustainability governance networks as project and process**

The concept of ‘governance’ has enjoyed a great deal of academic attention within human geography over the last two decades. Theoretical debates have attempted to analyse and interpret shifts from ‘government’ – described by Stoker (1998) as “the formal institutions of the state” (p.17) – to ‘governance’ which Painter (2003) describes as the “process of governing” (p.361). Implicit within this shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ is a realignment of the relationship between the citizen and the state, which will be discussed later in this chapter (2.5). In this section, I consider how and under what conditions sustainability has become a governance project in its own right, and what sorts of processes have been involved.

Theoretically defining and pinning down the term ‘governance’ has increasingly been discussed and debated within the literature (Rhodes, 1997; Jessop, 1998; Morison, 2000; Kooiman, 2003; Painter, 2003). For example, Rhodes has described the term as



“arbitrary” (Rhodes, 1997, p.53). Given the ‘fuzzy’ nature of the concept (see Markusen, 1999), it is important to begin by contextualizing its usage in this research. For the purposes of the present research I use the term governance to refer to the conditions whereby the nation-state has relinquished and/or bestowed certain institutional responsibilities to non-state actors especially insofar as these actors represent citizens and collective organisations in civil society (Rhodes, 1997; Painter, 2003). These organisations include VCS groups. This definition enables me to suggest that there are certain governance processes which are negotiated between a variety of state and non-state stakeholders.

The governance literature in human geography has largely concentrated on understanding new geographies of economic development (Hirst, 2000), including identifying and explaining new territorial forms of competition associated with neo-liberalisation of the state (Amin, 1999; Cochrane, 1998; Jessop, 1994, 1995, 1998, 2002a; Jones, 2001; Jones and MacLeod, 1999, 2004; MacLeod, 2001; Peck and Tickell, 1994; Scott, 1998; Storper, 1997; Swyngedouw, 1992, 1997). Yet related to this is growing interest in the relationship between economic governance and sustainability. The context for this interest can be traced to a wider discourse that started to pay more attention to the ‘morality’<sup>2</sup> perspective and its subsequent repackaging to accommodate market-based sustainability solutions post-Rio. Yet the incorporation of the environment into otherwise primarily economic explanations of governance have tended to promulgate weaker interpretations of sustainability, rather than the more radical, stronger interpretations (Gibbs, 2002; Chatterton, 2002; see section 2.2 for definitions of weak and strong sustainability). Other authors writing on economic governance have attempted to amalgamate potentially conflicting societal issues like ‘competition and

---

<sup>2</sup> By this I mean the increase of citizen/societal action over environmental pollution issues through litigation measures borne out of work like ‘Limits to Growth’ (Meadows *et al.*, 1972).

collaboration’, ‘flexible labour markets and good employers’ and ‘sustainability’ and ‘economic development’ into what they deem a ‘new centrism’ (Geddes and Newman, 1999, pp.16ff). Pike (2004) describes this ‘new centrism’ as an amalgamation that “seeks to move beyond state-centred interventionism and market-oriented liberalism as alternative forms of coordination and organisation” (p.2142). Therefore, successfully interrogating such an assertion would involve analysis of the local ‘governance’ spaces in which sustainability is contested by VCS groups.

Pierre and Peters (2000) characterise governance in terms of ‘structure’ and ‘process’ (pp.14ff). Governance by ‘structure’ essentially refers to the political and economic institutions that are in place that address governance issues and therefore, direct society. Examples include ‘governance as (vertical) hierarchies’, ‘governance as markets’, ‘governance as networks’ and ‘governance as communities’ (pp.14-21). Pierre and Peters suggest that much of the governance literature now dismisses hierarchy as a model of governance because post-Fordism has brought a greater “emphasis on smaller scales, flexibility, diversification, informal exchange rather than formal control, and ‘sharing power’ between state and market” (p.15) and therefore “may no longer reflect power relations in society” (p.16).

Therefore, this research will touch on some of the other structural arrangements in the hope that they can provide a useful platform to explain the complex VCS-state interactions that may go on towards the governance of sustainable development. For example, it will see how ‘governance as networks’ formed around sustainable development issues challenge, resist or reinforce state power and subsequent sustainability policy processes. Pierre and Peters (2000) suggest that “policy networks comprise a variety of actors – state institutions, organised interests and so on – in a

policy sector. Networks vary considerably with regard to their degree of cohesion, ranging from coherent policy communities to single-issue (or issue specific) coalitions” (pp.19-20). Whilst there is growing attention to the different governance institutions and the spaces these occupy, there has been relatively little work on how governance for sustainability is contested through networks. Pierre and Peters’s (2000) category of ‘governance as communities’ suggests that new forms of governance might have coalesced around not just particular social projects but also the particular spaces in which these projects unfold (pp.21ff). However, precisely how sustainability projects are positioned in relation to these new spatial modalities of governance is perhaps less well understood. Moreover, there has been comparatively little work on the social construction of governance for sustainability through networked collective action on the part of VCS organisations.

In light of this, academic literature related to network forms of governance in the context of western societies (Lowndes *et al.*, 1997; Rhodes, 1997; Hirst, 2000; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Coaffee and Healey, 2003; Kooiman, 2003) offers a useful starting point in explaining how the social construction of governance may form around VCS network collective action. Rhodes (1997) situates the importance of networks thus, “policy networks matter: they are not another example of the otiose social science jargon. All governments confront a vast array of interests. Aggregation of those interests is a functional necessity. Intermediation is a fact of everyday life in government” (p.9). He continues by forwarding six reasons as to why networks are important:

- They limit participation in the policy process
- They define the roles of actors

- They decide which issues will be included and excluded from the policy agenda
- Through the rules of the game, they shape the behaviour of actors
- They privilege certain interests, not only by according them access but also by favouring their preferred policy outcomes
- They substitute private government for public accountability (ibid, pp.9-10)

He then goes onto explain “how policy networks are a tool for exploring how power is exercised in modern Britain and who benefits from this exercise” (ibid, p.10). In terms of this research, using governance spaces like LSPs may be an ideal lens from which to scrutinise how VCS-state networks have positioned sustainability discourse inasmuch as they may reveal something about how particular spaces have the propensity to (re)articulate power, both hierarchically and heterarchically, through modes of actor interdependency. Indeed, network theory explanations for the existence of networks can be attributed to what Kooiman (2003) describes “as a rule of functional interdependent nature: needs for resources, combating environmental uncertainties, strategic considerations... are mainly of horizontal nature, although minor hierarchical elements can also develop in networks...” (p.104). This also suggests that sustainable development as a local project can unfold in other networked spaces external to formal state governance spaces like LSPs, thus extending its scope for greater success. As Kooiman (2003) confirms, “approaches to networks that explicitly conceptualise them as modes of governance, expressing ‘new’ government-society interaction merit special attention” (p.105).

Coaffee and Healey (2003) present a robust way of scrutinising the levels and dimensions of governance processes. They organise these processes into three levels, which include specific episodes (actors, arenas and ambiances), governance processes

(networks, coalitions, stakeholder selection, discourses and practices) and governance cultures (accepted modes of governance, embedded cultural values and formal/informal structures to police such discourses). They argue that transformations in urban governance capacity need to penetrate all three of these processes in order to effect mainstream changes rather than just “incorporate new ideas and practices in ways which neutralise threats to established practices and the various power relations embedded in them” (p.1983).

Levels and dimensions of governance processes	
Level	Dimension
Specific episodes	<i>Actors</i> : key players—positions, roles, strategies and interests <i>Arenas</i> : institutional sites <i>Ambiences (interactive practices)</i> : communicative repertoires
Governance processes and ‘mobilisation of bias’	<i>Networks and coalitions</i> <i>Stakeholder selection processes</i> <i>Discourses</i> : framing issues, problems, solutions, interests, etc. <i>Practices</i> : routines and repertoires for acting
Governance cultures	<i>Range of accepted modes of governance</i> <i>Range of embedded cultural values</i> <i>Formal and informal structures for policing discourses and practices</i>

**Table 4.1: Levels and dimensions of governance processes (from Coaffee and Healey, 2003, p.1983)**

In the case of this research, the ‘actors’ are VCS groups, the ‘arenas’ are governance spaces like LSPs which have been identified as a space of sustainability governance (Scott, 1999; DETR, 2001; Williams, 2002; Lucas and Fuller, 2005; Fisher and Sarkar, 2006). Using table 2.1 as a precursor to the empirical chapters in this research, chapter 7 will look at how selection and membership processes and embedded cultures can influence the structural arrangement of the arena (governance space), as this has an effect on how discourses of sustainability are positioned within such spaces. Chapter 8

will scrutinise governance processes by looking at how networks and coalitions form around sustainability, externally and within and around the governance space in question. In addition to this, governance cultures will also be covered by these empirical chapters, particularly the experiences of VCS groups fitting into ‘accepted modes of governance’ and ‘embedded cultural values’ of these arenas.

Coaffee and Healey (2003) also point to the importance of networks and coalitions as governance processes. On the face of it, Coaffee and Healey have positioned networks as having an active role in relation to the governance arena. They forward two criteria for networks and coalitions:

- Connections made to residents in many situations
- Connections made to significant ‘mainstream’ arenas and networks (p.1984)

However, it is necessary for this research to scrutinise the role played by VCS groups and their networks outside of the ‘mainstream’ which is construed to be the more formal spaces. This is because sustainable development is still being actively promoted and contested at the local level, but without direct or explicit involvement from the governance arena.

The work of Lowndes *et al.* (1997) may be useful in analysing the nature of sustainability outside of formal governance spaces. Looking at the role of networks and partnerships in urban regeneration, their work distinguished between networks and partnerships (see table 4.2 overleaf). Partnerships are characterised as more formal, clear and organisational. Networks on the other hand, “are not formally constituted entities and therefore their boundaries are indistinct or fuzzy. They are also dynamic

because of the changing intensity and nature of individuals' relationships with other network members, or indeed whether they see themselves – or others perceive them – as part of the network". Finally, the "level of formalisation within networks is low" (p.336). The defining features of the 'network' are not dissimilar to the defining features of sustainable development – indistinct, fluid, voluntaristic. This may suggest that successful governance of sustainable development is best supported through informal networks, rather than clearly defined formal state governance spaces. Section 8.3 questions this notion in greater detail, specifically whether local VCS groups have certain capacities to enervate such state dominance of local governance spaces, making the overall spatiality of the sustainable development local project highly transient and context specific.

	<b>Network</b>	<b>Partnership</b>
Focus	Individual relationships	Organisational relationships
Motivation	Voluntaristic	Voluntaristic or imposed
Boundary	Indistinct	Clear
Composition	Fluid	Stable
Membership	Defined by self and/or others	Defined
Formalisation	Low	High

**Table 4.2: The features of networks and partnerships (from Lowndes *et al.*, 1997, p.336)**

Following Pierre and Peters's (2000) notion of governance as 'process', the analysis of the way sustainable development is positioned at the local level by VCS groups and the state need to emphasise "not so much about the structures but more about the interaction among structures" (p.22). This is particularly pertinent in light of how policy process rhetoric under different governments in the UK (and other western nations) have accentuated the need for citizen consultation, community empowerment and engagement, active civil partnership and 'joined-up' policy in promoting sustainable development (DoE, 1994, p.204; Giddens, 1998, p.78; Cabinet Office, 1999, Intro; DETR, 2001; ODP, 2003, p.5; DEFRA, 2005a, pp.26, 121-3, 126-9).

The closer alignment of the VCS and the state under New Labour has had repercussions for the type of relationship needed to embed sustainable development as a societal project, especially at the local level through pluralist governance spaces like LSPs. Erik Swyngedouw's (2007) work on the post-political condition is useful in explaining how the notion of sustainable development might be congruent with such local governance spaces. For Swyngedouw, "the post-political condition is one in which a consensus has been built around the inevitability of neoliberal capitalism as an economic system, parliamentary democracy as the political ideal, and humanitarianism and inclusive cosmopolitanism as a moral foundation" (p.24). In this sense, policy decisions have already been made, without political debate or challenges from non-state actors. Beck (1994, p.21) describes this as a 'subpolitics'. Swyngedouw (2007) goes on to suggest that the resultant political arena is "divested of radical dissent, critique, and fundamental conflict... in which traditional disciplinary society is transfigured into a society of control through disembedded networks" (p.30). If it is a conflict-based form of politics which acts to change governance structures, then the repression of conflict through state-steering of LSPs is likely to be problematic. The post-political condition would suggest weaker interpretations of sustainability are more pervasive within such governance spaces, whereby local council officers attempt to manage such spaces so that conflict is reduced and LSP stakeholders are in agreement about the need for sustainable development, the need to address climate change and the need to maintain capital accumulation strategies in local policy.

Such managerial approaches to LSP and Community Strategy processes have been cited in research elsewhere (Jonas *et al.*, 2003; Apostolakis, 2004; Raco *et al.*, 2006), prompting a view that such spaces of sustainability are a form of social regulation which legitimates capital accumulation. As Jonas *et al.* (2003) claim: "as with the state,



the environment is largely taken as external to accumulation and is reduced to a condition for social regulation” (p.154). Environmental issues being an extra economic condition may suggest, on the face of it, that LSPs are a post-political space of uncontested politics surrounding sustainability. This is a question which this research will interrogate, especially surrounding the tension between democratically elected members (e.g. councillors) and democratic participants (e.g. VCS) in such spaces (chapter 7).

So whilst a managerial, non-committal and pragmatic approach to (sustainability) governance may be the *modus operandi* in many LSPs, the residual effect of this is that conflict and politics surrounding sustainability is suppressed in such spaces. In this case, VCS groups may therefore seek spaces outside the LSPs and other governance activities in order to practise sustainability politics. In this sense, a democratic politics is so much more than what is decided within political institutional formats like LSPs (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985; Mouffe, 2000; Barnett, 2004; Cochrane and Allen, 2007). Allen (2008) argued that “space, or rather spatiality, is an active part of the ways in which power is practiced... its radically contingent character owes much... to the fact that power is inherently spatial” (p.1613). He goes on to argue how power is not solely about the institutional imposition of force upon a subject, it is rather “what enables us to *make a difference* in the world” (ibid, p.1614, emphasis in original). In this sense VCS actors are able to pragmatically negotiate sustainability outside of such state-led spaces. The potential for VCS agency to be enacted outside of such spaces demonstrates the expedient ‘throwntogetherness’ (ibid, p.1620) of powerful or not so powerful configurations. This is contrary to how Foucauldian interpretations of power as expressed through ‘governmentality’ reject the chance and experience of existentialism (see Section 4.4.1).

Hence, citizen and collective action are found not only within formal institutional arrangements like LSPs but more generally, across both space and territorial scale, as will be demonstrated empirically in chapters 8 and 9. In this sense, the governance spaces in which sustainability are embedded need to be responsive to multi-scalar territorial demands, which is the focus of the next section.

### **4.3 State rescaling and sustainability governance**

Work on the role of sub-national scales (the regional and the local), especially the New Regionalism (NR) plays an important role in this research. My present interest is in the literature on state restructuring and I consider how this literature sheds light on governance as process. An influential contribution has been that of Jessop (1994), who discusses the rise of the Schumpeterian workfare state and its replacement of the Keynesian welfare state. This has triggered literatures concentrating on the region and the local as dominant sites whereby governance processes are taking greater precedence, selectively displacing certain powers away from the nation-state. For example, Jonas and While (2005) offer a way of thinking about geographies of governance that incorporates the idea of governance processes which work across territorial (geographic) scales. They refer to governance as “any social mode of co-ordination in which the aim is to control, guide or facilitate economic and social activities distributed across the landscape, including activities involved in transforming nature” (p.73). This explanation shows how the processes of governance can be fluid and transient; these processes are potentially contested across and within territorial scales over various time periods, and as a result the boundaries for sustainability governance are constantly redrawn depending on the institutional arrangements (structures), the array of stakeholders that influence these structures (process) and their scales of enactment. This is certainly evident from a New Labour sustainability policy rhetoric perspective that

assumes sustainability governance can be located at specific state scales, such as the local and/or the regional. This has taken many policy forms and guises including ‘Regional Development’ through RDAs, ‘Sustainable Communities’, Local Biodiversity Partnerships and ‘Local Strategic Partnerships’ (see UK Biodiversity Steering Group, 1995; Cabinet Office, 1999, 1.14; DETR, 1999a, 7.6-7.12; ODPM, 2003, p.14; ODPM, 2005a, p.11; DEFRA, 2006a, p.6).

Whilst there is no doubt that both policy rhetoric and academic thought has suggested a resurgence of the sub-national, particularly the region, as a possible ‘institutional fix’ for certain governance processes to take place within a post-Fordist context (Storper, 1997; Scott, 1998; Jones, 2001; MacLeod, 2001; Jones and MacLeod, 2004; Harrison, 2008), this resurgence has concentrated disproportionately on the economic side of the sustainability equation. For example, the motivation behind introducing Regional Development Agencies (and therefore of logical consequence, subsuming notions of sustainability into the regions by such RDAs) was and remains wholly economically-centric (the primary object of RDAs was (and still is) to develop Regional Economic Strategies) and problematic (Gibbs and Jonas, 2001; Gibbs, 2002; Painter, 2002; Jones and MacLeod, 2004, English RDAs Website, 2006; Harrison, 2008).

With such literature associating sub-national levels as a possible solution or economic fix to the national crisis of post-Fordism, both environmental sustainability and now (in light of New Labour’s ‘Sustainable Communities’ initiatives), to a lesser extent social sustainability, have been treated as somewhat of a footnote within regional governance remits. As Gibbs and Jonas (2001) claim, there has been an attempt to rescale environmental governance, largely by central government, into the English RDAs. Such rescaling, they claim, has been ‘uneven’ in nature and ‘immature’. Their prophetic

warning – “if sustainable development is to become an important function of the RDAs, these [local] partnerships may have to be dissolved to allow for re-coalescence at the regional scale” (p.284), I argue has not really occurred. Partnerships for sustainability governance still remain firmly fixed at the local state level. One example is the introduction of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs). Used as a vehicle to prepare community strategies that emphasise more broader normative (social, economic and environmental) sustainability principles at the local level, their introduction has been driven by nation-state processes, which are a part of a central government ‘joined-up’ policy imperative that sought to devolve participatory processes to the local (and area) level through the 2000 Local Government Act. This exemplifies how central state arguably ‘steers’ sustainability governance issues. In the case of LSPs, central government policy has resulted in the local arena being the *only* scale whereby sustainability governance can be (loosely) contested within an institutional governmental framework by *local* VCS groups. Yet RDAs are still centrally positioned as being vehicles that subsume sustainable development principles into their remit: “RDAs make sure economic development in the regions takes into account the current and future needs of local and regional communities and the natural environment in which they live” (English RDA Website, 2006). This reflects an approach to sustainability governance by New Labour central office that is highly fragmented and convoluted (for inconsistencies in New Labour policies see Lowndes and Wilson, 2003) – the waters have been muddied as to where sustainability governance should actually be contested<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> Whilst this research will focus on how local governance networks in the East Yorkshire region are organised in respect to sustainability governance, it is important that it interrogates the multi-scalar aspect to the changes increased governance bring. Namely, do certain groups play a more active role within the network and what are the geographic limitations by which this governance is contested and are such limitations resultant of national (state) governmental pressure?

However, a body of evidence supporting the more normative notions of sustainable development have been aligned with New Regionalist arguments. Such work suggests that (through a nationally-driven ‘devolution’ policy agenda) social policies can be successfully amalgamated to policies that are neo-liberal and economically driven at the regional level (Scott, 1998; MacLeod, 2001; Smyth *et al.*, 2004). For example, Scott (1998) claims that regions are “...a corollary, the basic framework for new kinds of social community and for new approaches to practical issues of citizenship and democracy” (p.11). In fact, it has been argued that such an amalgamation of policies would complement regions that aspire to be more economically successful (Amin, 1999; Amin and Thrift, 2002).

Whilst much academic work on the ‘new regionalism’ has posited how sustainability governance processes can potentially complement and align regional economic ascendancy with an increased social economy agenda (e.g. ‘social capital’, ‘social inclusion’ and ‘neo-communitarianism’), a deep infrastructural paradox remains – that of regional economic unevenness. Whilst (global) forces of capitalism seek to infiltrate and ‘use’ regions as sites of capital accumulation to ensure its continued economic survival, producing and reproducing regional differences (Massey, 1985; 1994; also see Ward and Jonas, 2004 for the complexities of the city-regionalist dichotomy), it would be increasingly difficult for local government alone to facilitate stronger interpretations of social and environmental sustainability governance whilst it is preoccupied with ensuring its region’s continued economic survival (for an environmental policy example see Eadson, 2008). In addition to this, UK central government enforces strict economic controls on regional and local government whilst simultaneously devolving certain powers (as demonstrated through the 2007 Sub National Review), resulting in what limited available resources there are being pumped into a region’s economic fuel tank,

rather than into resuscitating its socio-environmental problems. This also reinforces how the nation state still plays an important role as a “critical *animateur* in both structuring and scaling economic and civic life” (Jones and MacLeod, 1999, p. 295) and thus also the associated governance processes (for a regional context see Lovering, 1999). This is in contrast to the notion that the nation-state is ‘hollowed-out’ (see next section). Whilst on the surface, ‘local’ influence of sustainability governance spaces seems apparent, there is, a more complex set of multi-level governance and governmental processes working here.

#### **4.4 Local and regional sustainability governance as state steering**

Aligned within the theoretical debate concerning the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’, one would expect an inevitable consequence of increased sustainability governance by VCS groups would (inversely) result in a certain degree of diminished state responsibility in certain policy arenas; what Rhodes refers to as ‘the minimal state’ (1997, p.47). Yet within this line of argument there are a number of nuanced trends that try to explain nation-state restructuring. Jessop (2004) highlights six trends. I will discuss two of these.

First, the idea of ‘denationalisation of statehood’ tries to explain how the state has lost certain powers to other scales (upwards, downwards and outwards). A second trend points to ‘re- and de-statisation’, which involves, in the words of Jessop (2004) “redrawing the ‘public–private’ divide and modifying the relationship between organizations and tasks across this divide on whatever territorial scale(s) the state in question acts” (p.15). De-statisation is very much centred on the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’, from ‘state’ to ‘civil’. It is not about shifts in governmental power *per se*. Rather, ‘destatisation’ points to the facilitation of greater

partnership between state and civil stakeholders largely because the state has a conscious understanding of the under-tapped potential of civil society and thus, use this to further their own (state) interests and objectives. Governance can be construed as a method “that directs attention to the problems to be solved, rather than to the relevant agents” (Caporaso, 1996, p.32). Thus, the agent (in this case, the nation-state) is able to ‘pass the buck’ by way of sustainability governance, in a politically legitimate sense whilst still holding the instruments of power.

A body of literature describes how state power still persists in a political arena continually influenced through governance spaces (Morison, 2000, Jonas *et al.*, 2004; Taylor, 2007) – yet these spaces are defined through “internalisation of performance cultures that require [the] appropriate behaviour” of non-state actors (Taylor, 2007, p.314). Jonas *et al.* (2004) highlighted how New Labour rhetorically positioned environmental policy spatially and organisationally as part of an ambiguous state modernisation programme that resulted in regional sustainability policy variations, where place-defined policies coalesced through local strategic selectivity. Jessop (2002a) too asserted that “promoting partnerships *requires* a retreat of the [national] state” (p.466). In this sense, the state consciously steers civil society institutions to meet certain objectives and provide a variety of services. This has been described by Jessop (1999) as the ‘governance of governance’ or ‘meta-governance’, which in order to have a chance of succeeding, “there must [also] be greater commitment to a participatory politics based on stakeholding and to sustainable economic and community development” (Jessop, 1999, p.12). One of the main intentions of this research is to evaluate and unpack whether local VCS groups have been strategically steered by the state to govern for sustainability in certain ways, both through the facilitation of partnerships and through the promotion of networks.

#### **4.4.1 State steering**

There is a vast body of literature on state steering. Much of this literature draws on Foucauldian notions of power within a ‘state’ *versus* ‘individual’ heuristic framework. Here a tactful, infallibly-perceived larger state manages the individual, goods and wealth in a way that seeks to legitimise its own political power and interests – that of ‘governmentality’, which is in essence, the ‘art of government’ (Foucault, [1978] 1991, pp.87-104, see also Darier, 1996, 1999; Lukes, 1999). Many academics have utilised Foucault’s notion of ‘governmentality’ to elucidate the way power is constructed within and across particular networks and territorial spaces (Imrie and Raco, 2000; Morison, 2000; Painter, 2002; Whitehead, 2003; Raco, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2005; Counsell and Haughton, 2006; Sending and Neumann, 2006; Taylor, 2007; Legg, 2009). Power within governance networks should not only be thought of as being hierarchical or top down, but also as a form of social control which produces specific knowledges that get internalised by individuals and guides citizen behaviour. This then replicates certain forms of social control, as knowledge enables individuals to govern themselves.

Whilst I do not take Foucault’s concept of ‘governmentality’ as the main inspiration of this thesis, it has been used widely by many academics. In particular, it has been used to explain how certain knowledge discourses are internalised by actors within particular governance and network spaces. Therefore any analysis of the way VCS actors work more closely with the state in the promotion of sustainable development within LSPs and across territorial space, warrants attention to the ‘governmentality’ literature. As Counsell and Haughton (2006) claimed: “governmentality is a term which is intended to embrace a much wider range of actors than simply the state, though in his later work



Foucault did begin to place more emphasis on the role of the state in establishing or legitimating systems and rules of conduct” (p.923).

Hence, the concept of ‘governmentality’ is useful for this PhD research because it can contribute to an explanation of why some VCS actors (and not others) are given legitimacy – defined by Taylor (2007) as ‘active subjects’ – in governance spaces like LSPs. As such, power appears to be decentralised in such local governance spaces, with particular VCS members of LSPs playing an active role in their own self-government. Yet this active role requires the need for individuals to be regulated ‘from the inside’ (also see section 8.3). As Counsell and Haughton (2006) claim: “political subjectivities of actors are influenced such that they in effect internalise the goals of the state” (p.923). Such regulation is produced through the exchanging of specific knowledge discourses – ‘savoirs’ – which “produce new objects and [are] a source of new and complex reconfigurations” (Foucault ([1978] 1991, p.157). In neo-liberal states like the UK, power is based on the predominance of market mechanisms and of the restriction of the action of the state. The ‘savoirs’ produced allows the construction of auto-regulated or auto-correcting selves. As Foucault ([1978] 1991) states, “the new science of the political economy emerges out of the perception of new networks of continuous and multiple relations between populations, territory and wealth; and this is accompanied by the formation of a type of intervention characteristic of government, namely intervention in the field of economy and population” (p.101).

As suggested earlier in this section, some literature has demonstrated how political and economic networks are formed and regulated through the internalisation of certain discourses by the state. Imrie and Raco (2000) use the example of the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) to argue how urban policy operates as a means to regulate,

control and shape political processes. Local stakeholders may be involved in the SRB but in doing so serve wider state interests rather than facilitating community (non-state stakeholder) empowerment. Raco (2003a) shows how the state has attempted to shape (post-devolution) policy discourse through business interest mobilisation, and how the Scottish business community has used this to promote their own agendas and so have an influence on government policy practice and discourse. In light of this research, he explains, “An assessment could also be made of the processes in and through which particular interests and communities internalize, inculcate and challenge designated subjectivities” (Raco, 2003a, p.92).

This is of particular interest to my research as it focuses on how a variety of local VCS groups strategically involve themselves in governance structures and discourses that are promoted by the government as being more ‘participatory’ and ‘VCS-friendly’. As such, this research will assess how some local VCS groups enjoy greater participation in such institutional structures of governance; namely, whether the mechanisms of government have facilitated the empowerment of some groups over others (Swyngedouw, 2005), whether such governance institutional fixes are not a transfer of state power to non-state actors through the redefinition of civil society by government as a ‘passive object and subject’ (Sending and Neumann, 2006) and whether the networks created by a particular VCS group play a causal role in promoting their own self-prominence within a particular governance structure or institutional fix. In addition to this, it will attempt to see how sustainability discourses have been internalised through the mobilisation of certain knowledges in and through particular local governance networks. Work on ‘eco-governmentality’ (Darier, 1996, 1999; Lukes, 1999) is useful here because it shows how the nation state actively manages non-state

actors through internalising power within particular decentred local governance spaces as such to integrate them into a singular, nationwide sustainable development policy.

Work on ‘governmentality’ and ‘eco-governmentality’ should prove useful in unravelling the ‘complex reconfigurations’ going on within local governance spaces and in turn, shed some light on the nature and extent to which normative representations of sustainability governance, that is, those emphasising equality between economic, environmental and social relations, inter-generational and intra-generational equity, empowerment, active citizenship and ‘partnership’ play a prominent role in normalising the notion of an environmental citizen (Darier, 1996). This in turn could reveal why the UK state under New Labour has adopted a particular sustainable development policy pathway that is neo-liberal and market-driven in nature and takes little account of the social and environmental economy. The concluding chapter of this thesis will also reflect on how the concept of ‘governmentality’, alongside other theories forwarded in this thesis surrounding communicative action, governance networks and scale are useful in contributing to understanding how VCS actors promote sustainable development within the local modernisation project. The next section examines how ideas surrounding citizenship and collectivism under New Labour have resulted in a governance of sustainability as exemplified through LSPs.

#### **4.5 Contesting sustainability governance: citizenship and VCS group collectivism**

It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter that implicit within the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ under New Labour is a realignment of the relationship between the citizen and the state. However, whilst there is literature that supports the notion of how the state drives such governance agendas through particular spaces or (VCS) groups (Morison, 2000, Jonas *et al.*, 2004; Taylor, 2007), there is little evidence

of how service delivery in relation to sustainable development agendas (as a space in its own right) are driven. Given the theoretical positioning of sustainable development as a responsibility for everyone, one would expect it would be contested by VCS groups (UNSD, 1992, chapter 27). If this is the case, then there is a need to consider the ways in which ideas and practices of (sustainable) citizenship are being reconfigured inside the state within governance spaces. This idea will now be developed and framed within the context of this research.

The idea of the 'proactive' citizen in service delivery is not new to government. The Conservative government of the 1980s used market-based approaches which utilised the 'citizen-consumer' (Cochrane, 1998). Hence, the 'New Right' devolution programme concentrated on issues like social welfare delivery (Wolch, 1989, pp.199ff), for example, the 'Care in the Community' initiative. Conservative state motivations behind citizen and VCS group service delivery can be interpreted as purely fiscal. Whilst it would be naïve to assume that New Labour's motivations behind utilising the citizen and the VCS for service delivery is not in part, about containing public spending, New Labour would argue that their service delivery programme reaches beyond purely market-based approaches, encompassing a variety of social and environmental issues through 'partnership' and 'joined-up' policies via 'Third Way' thinking. Sustainable development, New Labour would argue, is one such issue.

So it can be argued that sustainable development has been rhetorically positioned by New Labour's modernisation programme as being a responsibility of all citizens within society. It can therefore be asserted that conceptual understandings of citizenship under New Labour have evolved to those which emphasise individual responsibility, obligation and stewardship through a collective, public culture. This is in contrast to

citizenship being merely understood through a 'liberal' definition which is based upon the equal, individual rights of the private citizen, which are protected by duty of law at the level of the nation-state (Newman, 2001). In turn, such a supposition also predicates that notions of citizenship are being rescaled downwards towards 'the self', and that collective participation is decreasing and individualistic participation (e.g. 'micro participation') is coming to the fore (Stoker, 2006, p.92).

This downward rescaling is evident *a posteriori*, exemplified for instance, through the introduction by the government, of a variety of partnership initiatives under 'Community Action 2020 – Together We Can' (DEFRA, 2006b). One such example is the 'Every Action Counts' initiative, which focuses on empowering VCS groups to make them more responsible in governing for sustainability. This epitomises how New Labour is attempting to align the idea of citizenship with normative sustainability principles such as intra- and inter-generational equity. Sustainable development principles place the natural world and its socio-environmental development under the care and duty of each individual and that it is 'our' responsibility as stewards to ensure, collectively, that no harm comes to it. Equally, New Labour's idea of citizenship is defined in terms of individual citizenship and responsibility towards collective goals – only 'active participation' secures our rights of citizenship. Therefore, of consequence, actively 'doing' sustainability can be explicated as 'good' citizenship. Raco (2008) argues that under New Labour, there has been a shift from welfare-based forms of 'expectational citizenship' to a more dynamic and entrepreneurial 'aspirational citizenship'. This shift is 'actor-centred' and based around a politics of responsibility on the part of citizens, a response to what he describes as 'low aspirational spaces' (p.15) which are characterised by extreme forms of expectational citizenship. In light of Raco's assertion, scrutinising the nature by which VCS groups promote sustainable

development at the local level, both within, but more importantly, external to such governance spaces like LSPs, may offer further evidence of this aspirational shift. The work of Evans *et al.* (2006) has already shown that local cases which exhibit sustainable development policy achievements have a higher degree of civil society activity and institutional capacity. This may suggest that Raco's notion of aspirational citizenship may be conducive in producing more effective and functional local spaces of sustainability.

New Labour's policy rhetoric points to the development of a relationship between a state and the citizen which can be construed as becoming more interwoven and quasi-contractual (through compacts for example), with the state now actively engaging in the 'rolling out' of partnership initiatives in which VCS actors can have greater responsibility towards negotiating sustainable development. The VCS have been repositioned as key stakeholders or 'lynchpins' between the state and the individual to ensure citizens actively participate in the provision of particular services that are beneficial to the community (Taylor, 1998; Brown *et al.*, 2000; Turner, 2001; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a). Doing sustainability – whether through social or environmental reform – is one such service. Hence, it appears there has been an attempted shift towards a governance of sustainable development, rather than a state-centric, top-down approach.

The work of Arnstein (1969) is a useful starting point to interrogate how democracy, power and influence are articulated in governance spaces like LSPs (refer to p.36). Whilst she only examined how citizen participation is invoked within a closed system, the eight rungs she proposed – starting with non-participation (bottom of ladder – manipulation and therapy), degrees of tokenism (middle of ladder – informing,

consultation and placation) and degrees of citizen power (top – partnership, delegated power and citizen control) (Arnstein, 1969, p.217) – suggests how state-regulated governance spaces like LSPs bestow, by definition, the VCS as having a degree of citizen power (within rung six, ‘partnership’). This research, in line with the assertion by Sharp and Connelly (2002), who suggest that existing theories derived from Arnstein’s seminal interpretation “provides an inadequate basis for analysing participation processes” (p.57), attempts to scrutinise whether this is the case. A more nuanced understanding of how partnerships and networks form and re-form is more adequately explained by literature that takes a more relational understanding of how power/influence is articulated (within and between scales) between state and non-state actors, in particular, the state and the individual. This is why Foucault’s work on ‘governmentality’ is useful – it could be used to reveal how New Labour has attempted to normalise individual responsibility towards environmental issues at the local level by pursuing a national sustainable development discourse which is weak in form (Gibbs *et al.*, 1998; Neumayer, 1999; Barry and Paterson, 2004). However, it can be argued that the literature on ‘governmentality’ is limited in its scope because it only concentrates on the way in which the state, through various processes and mechanisms, internalises particular individual actions within local governance spaces, disregarding how individuals and collective action on the part of VCS groups may enervate state domination of governance spaces through ‘bottom-up’ working with local state actors. This is where a broad set of literature covering the complexities and processes related to how social actors (and groups) interact through communication (Bourdieu, 1983, 1984; 1990; Habermas, 1979, 1984; Giddens, 1984, 1990, 1998; Davies, 2007). These communicative practices are based on mutual understanding, commitment and trust, which facilitate the shaping of places (Healey, 1997, 1999, 2006).

In the context of this research, Habermas's work is useful in explaining how two or more sets of actors are able to communicate so that social conflict is reduced and consensus is reached. Citing Habermas's (1984) work, Davies (2007) claims that "consensual aspirations are internal to the practices of communication... they are the *raison d'être*... of any communicative encounter" (p.781). Consensus is achieved through 'universal pragmatics' – by understanding each other's speech actions through the "general presuppositions of communicative action" (Habermas, 1979, p.1) individuals develop their own understanding of the 'lifeworld' (Habermas had a two level theory of society consisting of the 'lifeworld' and the 'system'). Building upon Edmund Husserl's ([1936] 1970) concept of the 'lifeworld', Habermas furthered the concept to explain how humans draw from their cultural experiences when they define and co-ordinate particular actions in as far as an "intersubjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding" (Habermas, 1979, p.3) i.e. trust, has been reached by the two subjects. In a similar vein, Giddens (1990) refers to trust relations as 'facework commitments' (1990, p.80) in which bodily posture, for example, shows how an individual bears no hostility to the other actor.

Habermas's work on communicative action has been utilised in the geography and planning literature, particularly by Healey (1997, 1999, 2006). She uses Habermas's (1979, 1984) work on communicative planning theory to show how the use of knowledge in language and social action in everyday practice facilitates a co-ordinated communication process. She uses such work to build an 'institutionalist approach' to planning, whereby specific practices of social relations are embedded in formal organisations through active participation (Healey, 1999, pp.112-113). In terms of public participation (in the case of this research, the VCS), such communicative actions are able to develop relational links between networks (i.e. within and outside of the



particular LSP governance structure) within a particular locality, resulting in the “building up of an institutional capital of place” (ibid, p.118). Such an approach also represents a legitimisation of participation by non-governmental stakeholders in promoting sustainability within governance structures through communicative planning and action which facilitates more participative governance that can be “used to focus and inform new initiatives and responses to change” (ibid, p.117).

However, according to some theorists Habermas’s communicative action theory has limitations. For example, Davies (2007), citing the work of Bourdieu (1990), claims that in any interaction between two sets of actors, individuals have varying degrees of ‘cultural capital’, making consensus through communication more difficult because an individual who possesses a greater critical and reflexive ability (more cultural capital) is able to highlight the other actor’s weaknesses and challenge them. In light of this power differential, Davies (2007) goes on to suggest that “partnerships may have little potential as vehicles for democratic inclusion” (p.784). This suggests that LSPs can also be democratically contentious governance spaces where disagreements arise between the state (representative members) and the VCS (participatory members) over how best to promote sustainable development. This could result in VCS members looking for an ‘exit-action strategy’ (Davies, 2007) from the governance space in question in order to exercise their own objectives surrounding sustainability. This is where the literature on social capital (Coleman, 1988, 1994; Etzioni, 1993;; Maloney *et al.*, 2000; Putnam, 1993a, 1993b, 2000; Smith *et al.*, 2004) proves useful to this research. Ideas derived from the way in which particular stakeholders build social capital are important to understand how VCS groups interact outside of LSPs and therefore, of logical consequence, are intrinsic to scrutinising the way in which VCS actors promote local sustainability.

#### **4.5.1 Social capital**

The literature on social capital is subject to various definitions (see for example Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 1988, 1994; Etzioni, 1995; Putnam, 1993a, 1993b, 2000). For this research it is important to articulate the way in which social capital provides a lens from which to assess how VCS groups promote sustainability discourses at the local level. Equally, it is important to assess the way in which state sustainability policy imperatives (see for example, DEFRA, 2005a, p.19, pp.24-34) position social capital in relation to VCS-state partnership working. In light of this, the ideas of Putnam (1993a, 1993b, 2000) surrounding social capital provide an adequate trajectory for this research. Putnam defines social capital as “features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1993a, pp.35-36). This definition is important because it refers specifically to the collective capacity of VCS groups which exist in a particular locality (Evans *et al.* 2006).

Putnam makes a distinction between ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’ social capital (Putnam, 2000, p.22). The former refers to the way in which groups/networks are more ‘outward looking’ and encompass stakeholders across society. The latter refers to the way in which groups/networks are more inward looking which promotes exclusive identities and homogenises groups (ibid, p.22). For this research, these are important distinctions with regard to how sustainability is positioned at the local level because when stakeholders ‘bond’ social capital they are only reifying narrower discourses of sustainability within particular governance spaces, when they ‘bridge’ social capital they are actually demonstrating that sustainability can be promoted outside of the more formal governance spaces like LSPs. Jochum *et al.* (2005) assert that “the very existence of many voluntary and community organisations is based on people getting

together because they share common features (values, goals, problems, experiences, interests, localities etc), which help create *bonding* [emphasis added] social capital” (Jochum *et al.*, 2005, p.11). Yet through Putnam’s distinctions it is important that research examines the ways in which sustainable development is rescaled by VCS groups, i.e. the way in which VCS groups work with other VCS groups from different localities, because this provides a theoretical bridge from which participants can be more innovative or radical in their approach to combating sustainable development at the local level.

In earlier work, Putnam (1993b) claims that civic engagement, arguably a key function of the VCS, promotes social capital by facilitating “communication and improves the flow of information... allows reputations to be transmitted and refined” (Putnam, 1993b, p.174). More importantly, he draws a distinction between vertical and horizontal networks, whereby the former is often less reliable than horizontal flow because it promotes exploitation (*ibid*, p.175). This can be linked to how many VCS organisations choose to work with their contemporaries, their functioning is based upon sharing information horizontally to all areas of society, rather than disclosing it within a ‘need to know’ vertical network (which is often atypical of government structures and institutions). Other approaches (Maloney *et al.*, 2000; Smith *et al.*, 2004) emphasise a top-down approach to the development of social capital. These approaches claim that Putnam’s notion of social capital disregards the way in which public authorities (vertical networks) influence social capital: “[he] neglects the role played by political structures and institutions in shaping the *context of associational activity* and hence the creation of social capital” (Maloney *et al.*, 2000, p.803, emphasis in original). However, Putnam does refer to how vertical networks have a role in the facilitation of social capital as the VCS can be seen as an important arbitrator between the levels where civic

needs are expressed (e.g. local community) and policy is implemented (e.g. government) (Putnam, 1993b, p.175). Yet it can be argued that sustainable development warrants horizontal network flows simply because it is a societal (civic) issue that is best solved by voluntary sector activity, which provides “customised local solutions to problems of social exclusion”. Furthermore, “this attaches a great deal of weight to the local level and the efficacy of localised solutions to problems of social exclusion” (Amin *et al.*, 2002, p.28). This shows how both formal state governance spaces like LSPs and the sustainability networks created by VCS groups outside of these more formal spaces of governance are equally important to the overall project of sustainable development. As Etzioni (1995) claimed, “many social goals, moreover, require partnership between public and private groups” (Etzioni, 1995, p.260). The VCS contributes to this by providing a platform, “...volunteer work, is desirable to build and express a civil commitment” (ibid, pp.260-1). Thus, in terms of promoting sustainable development *per se*, the VCS is an important stakeholder because they not only help build social capital, but bond, bridge and link it also (see also Yates and Jochum, 2003, pp.6-21).

New Labour documentation appears to position VCS groups as playing an active role in formal state governance spaces like LSPs and in service delivery. However, the preceding paragraphs have highlighted how some VCS groups prefer to work outside of this state agenda and work independently on sustainability issues. Later chapters (7 and 8) both provide empirical evidence regarding whether VCS groups have met the challenge of maintaining their “grass-roots ethos” (Brown, 1997, p.189) and promoted their own particular objectives surrounding sustainable development at the local level. This may prove problematic in light of the state actively courting VCS attention in and

around the more formal spaces of governance, as ‘active citizenship’ is more often than not, defined by and through more direct relations with the state.

Hence, these ‘new spaces of governance’ reflect a potential change in the relationship between citizen, the VCS and the state. Because these new governance spaces open up opportunities for voluntarism, place-based differences or unevenness of citizenship can occur (Kearns, 1995; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a, b; Stoker, 2006). What is of significance here is that spatially uneven local geographies of voluntary activity can reflect and reinforce socio-environmental inequalities (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003b, p.400) in sustainability action *contra* to New Labour policy intentions. Hence, from a methodological standpoint, analysing the rural (e.g. East Riding) – urban (e.g. Hull) dichotomy is imperative as differences in socio-economic and environmental conditions in each respective place may also reflect differences in the functions, activities and involvement of the citizen and the VCS in local sustainability governance processes.

#### **4.6 Sustainability governance as ‘scalar politics’**

Looking at VCS activity within diverse governance spaces may say something more generic about how the local scale is played out within wider state rescaling processes. That is, to reiterate, the local scale within this research framework should not be seen as a rigid entity<sup>4</sup>, but rather a transient scale (Jonas, 1994; Swyngedouw, 1997; Jonas and While, 2005) that is made up of stakeholders from both the voluntary and public (state) sector working in areas that differ socio-economically and environmentally. As a result of this, voluntary and public stakeholders may have varied agendas, functions, networks and activities that may contribute to sustainability governance processes in a more

---

<sup>4</sup> This is not to underestimate the importance of earlier work on scale like Taylor’s (1982) materialist framework in which the urban was the level of ‘experience’, the national the level of ‘ideology’ and the international the level of ‘reality’. Such work has led scale debates to where they are today.

diverse, complex and even contradictory way. In this respect, we can begin to talk of the ‘scalar politics’ of sustainability.

It has been suggested that stakeholder networks, (re)scaling processes and their geographies play an intrinsic role in how sustainability governance is contested (Rhodes, 1997, 2000; Cox, 1998; Stoker, 1998; Gibbs and Jonas, 2000, 2001; Jessop, 2002a, b; Smith and Kurtz, 2003; Meadowcroft, 2004; Bulkeley, 2005; Jonas and While, 2005). Rhodes (1997) asserts that “governance refers to self-organising, interorganisational networks... significant autonomy from the state” (p.15). Such a definition suggests a duality between ‘governance’ and ‘government’. However, the work of Bulkeley (2005) highlights how ‘governance’ and ‘governments’ are not necessarily opposites even though it is represented as a ‘pre-given’ in much of the governance literature (p.877). Her work on reconfiguring environmental governance through multi-scaled networks has shown how environmental governance issues produced at the local level have been elevated to, and influenced, both national and international governance levels – promoting the notion that “scalar and network perspectives are mutually constitutive” (p.883).

In order to examine the scalar politics of sustainability, we need to consider to what extent there is a separate and distinctive local-scale sustainability politics. Identifying and analysing sites where VCS activity coalesces will reveal something about the inception and evolution of local voluntary activity in these governance spaces. Upon initial enquiry one could assume that increased VCS activity is primarily driven by state policy agendas via supra-national and global policies. However, even though this may be the case, this theoretical ‘pre-given’ warrants research scrutiny. Conversely therefore, it is *how* these VCS groups (and what voluntary group typologies) manipulate these

governance spaces in order to actively engage and promote their own particular brand of contributing to sustainability and whether this shapes sustainability state rescaling processes rather than the VCS having to work within state policy parameters and constraints as ‘shadow-state’ apparatus (Wolch, 1989). This in turn will reveal the limits to which voluntary sector activity can actively influence sustainability rescaling processes. In order to scrutinise the interfacial synergies between the VCS and the state and how rescaling processes are constituted, one needs to look at whether (and how) stakeholder networks are developed.

Work by Smith and Kurtz (2003) shows how environmental governance issues have been contested from a highly localised level (the community garden itself) to the city/state level, and succeeded within a highly neo-liberalised state policy process. This shows how environmental governance ‘grass-roots’ issues that, on the face of it, may seem ‘geographically small’ or even irrelevant in the wider context of urban space politics, have used “networks of social associations” (p.210, also see Cox, 1998) to further their specific agenda (for examples of economic struggles in scale see Swyngedouw, 1997). This is especially relevant in light of the intended research subject groups, which include smaller ‘grass-roots’ VCS groups that have limited financial resources and political leverage in order to play a more active role in both local (like LSPs) and wider (regional or national) scalar, governing institutions and mechanisms.

This research will complement Bulkeley’s (2005) and Smith and Kurtz’s (2003) work by looking at how, in the local context of VCS activity in Hull and East Riding, “relations of hierarchy are constituted, constructed and contested” (Bulkeley, 2005, p. 897) in the governance of sustainable development by VCS groups working at a variety of spatial scales. It will explore to what extent Bulkeley’s and Smith and Kurtz’s

assertion of localities having the ability to supersede ‘higher’ scales of governance through ‘scale-jumping’ (Smith, 1984, 1992; Herod, 1991; Smith and Kurtz, 2003; Swyngedow, 1997; Glassman, 2002; Bulkeley, 2005) holds true in the case of sustainability governance. Additionally, it will extend their work by shedding light on whether collective networks of association that coalesce at the local level (exemplified through VCS group activity), *contra* Cox’s ‘unidirectional’ emphasis on scale-jumping (1998, p.3), have the ability to enervate local governance structures like LSPs, insomuch as to make VCS network spaces the main site of sustainability contestation, in opposition to these sustainability governance spaces being state-steered. That is, not only whether these voluntary networks have an active capacity within these governance spaces, but whether governmental structures have to fundamentally change to mould into potentially newly constructed, voluntary network spaces.

In order to deconstruct the various roles played by VCS groups in the study areas, three interlinking factors will be considered. Firstly, one must look at how each VCS group is individually structured – its internal governance structure, available resources and its ability to communicate to other state/civil stakeholders doing sustainability work within the network (one example is whether it has any contracts, Service Level Agreements (SLAs) or ‘Compacts’ with government). Secondly, previous work suggests the value of looking at how the governance or organisational network is organised and mapped out – the extent to which the network allows its structure to be altered by either VCS stakeholders or whether local state mechanisms control VCS stakeholder involvement. This is tied up in the structural (institutional) nature of the network, the degree to which the existing network is hierarchical and/or horizontal. For this research, LSPs in Hull and East Riding have been chosen as examples. Thirdly, research needs to consider how far these networks can extend geographically. Whilst the local-region nexus has been



reported as being the most appropriate scales to combat sustainability governance (Gibbs and Jonas, 2000, Evans *et al.*, 2006), the nation-state (central government) is still important in governance terms (Jessop, 1994; Stoker, 2004; Jonas and While, 2005) – it has a role as “facilitative leader” (Stoker, 2004, p.59). Thus, this research will also evaluate the geographical limits (if there are any) to which VCS groups govern for sustainability: it will look at how their structure and organisation actually produces a geography or geographies of sustainability governance that is contingent upon scalar production practices (see Jonas, 2006), rather than a flat, site-based ontology (see Marston *et al.*, 2005).

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

A review of the literatures on sustainability and governance rescaling suggests that teasing out how socio-environmental sustainability is governed for by VCS groups in practical terms remains quite problematic. Amin (1999) suggests a role for the VCS using the example of how the reformation of welfare state policy can allow the third sector to establish community projects which will eventually create employment and entrepreneurialism and thus, producing regional economic benefits. Yet it is all very well reforming policy, but where are the injections of fiscal resources that will help facilitate practical results and thus, set such a precedent in motion? VCS groups have to rely on funds that are either raised by themselves internally (i.e. at the local/regional level) or are forced to compete in an economically-driven market against other VCS groups (who have similar objectives under the wider banner of social and environmental sustainability), for national and EU funding which has increasingly complex and specific application pre-requisites and criteria attached.

The problem of VCS negotiation of sustainability services is dichotomous. On one hand, these groups have to contest an increasingly competitive funding arena. On the other, they may have to place themselves strategically in state institutional governance structures that may run counter to their working objectives. This dichotomy is particularly pertinent in light of Meadowcroft's (2004) assertion that for a society to maximise the end-product i.e. to be 'sustainable', sustainable governance needs the "participation of all social partners... to develop solutions to the environmental problems in which they are enmeshed" (p. 169). This shows that contestation in both a funding and governance institutional arena could possibly distract VCS groups from attempting to achieve sustainable development, let alone reaching the 'pot of gold' at the end of the sustainability rainbow. Whilst it has been argued that strengthened democratic structures on a national and regional scale offer the potential for economic improvement and (sustainability) governance (Pike, 2004), the UK context show LBPs, LSPs and area partnerships as the only current local policy process vehicles that can be utilised by VCS groups, and potential involvement within these could be limited (for LSPs see Gaventa, 2004 and Maguire and Truscott, 2006). This research looks at LSPs more closely, but because they are non-statutory in nature it anticipates that VCS inclusion within such governance space may be dogged by local council embedded practices and domination. For example, state perceptions of sustainable development may differ markedly to what VCS groups think sustainability should be. As such, LSPs may not be an appropriate local democratic space in which sustainability governance can be practiced by VCS groups, suggesting that sustainability governance may be contested outside of such state-led spaces in a complex variety of networked and scalar forms.

In light of such complexities, this research attempts to scrutinise the governance spaces where sustainability is contested. Firstly, chapter 6 will look at the state rhetoric of sustainability produced through documentation related to LSPs and LBPs examining possible differences between the ‘principle’ and ‘practice’ of sustainable development and how the service delivery agenda of New Labour influences how sustainable development is positioned by the state and therefore promoted by VCS groups. Chapter 7 will examine LSPs more closely, specifically analysing the membership processes of Hull’s and East Riding’s LSPs and whether VCS perceptions of sustainability are being met within such state-led governance spaces under the notion of the ‘congested state’ (Skelcher, 2000). Chapter 8 then focuses on the VCS-state relationship scrutinising VCS perceptions of what type of voluntary sector the state may want to work in partnership with in the delivery of public services. How does VCS perceptions of developing social capital for sustainable development practices mix with the service delivery ethos of New Labour? In light of this dialectic, it then continues by examining the type of network processes formed amongst VCS groups in order to successfully implement particular agendas or discourses of sustainability. Chapter 9 then interrogates whether and how local VCS groups use different geographical scales in order to implement their objectives. What role do the local, regional and national scales play in sustainable development governance processes? Such processes could highlight how VCS groups are competing against each other for local/regional ‘access’ to a specific social economy agenda and limited funding streams as well as having to contend with how state-led local governance institutions and processes take place. Secondly, in extension to the idea of a state-induced competitive culture, are VCS groups actually remoulding state-led governance spaces on their own terms, via these complex scalar networks, in order to hegemonise sustainability discourses?

## **Chapter 5: Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

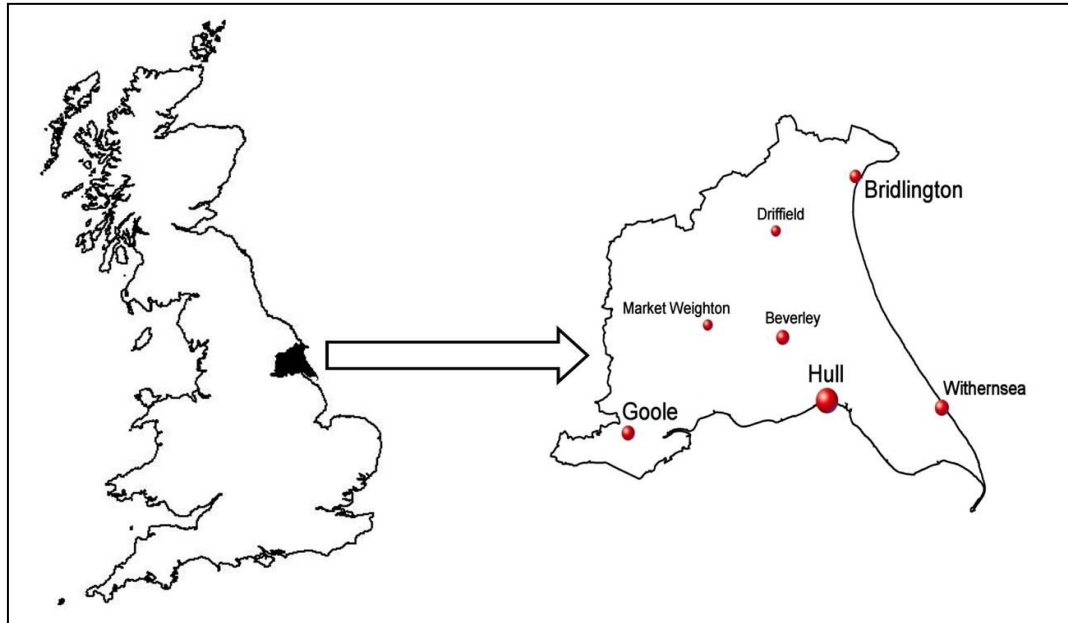
This chapter will explain the methodological approaches used to research the role of the VCS in the governance of sustainable development in East Yorkshire. Section 5.2 will introduce and compare the study areas by outlining their socio-economic and political characteristics, explaining why these areas warrant study. It will also introduce Hull's and East Riding's LSP and LBP initiatives as vehicles to identify VCS groups in the study areas and to examine how these governance spaces attempt to work with VCS groups. Section 5.3 looks at snowballing as the sampling technique used to develop the interviewee database, focusing specifically on why I selected particular interview groups. It then reflects upon how I established contact with potential interviewees, how I was refused certain interview requests and staff turnover issues in the VCS. I then explain whether the omission of particular interviews affects my final results. Section 5.4 discusses the rationale and practice behind using semi-structured interviews covering issues related to interview preparation and issues encountered during the interview process itself (assertiveness, impression, rapport, trust, positionality and ethics). Section 5.5 then introduces the types of secondary data sources used and their associated limitations. Section 5.6 then discusses the analytical process associated with interviews and secondary data sources. It focuses upon how transcript interview data was transformed using the computer program NVivo into various research themes and issues and how these were corroborated with the secondary data sources analysed.

## **5.2 Study areas: Hull and East Riding**

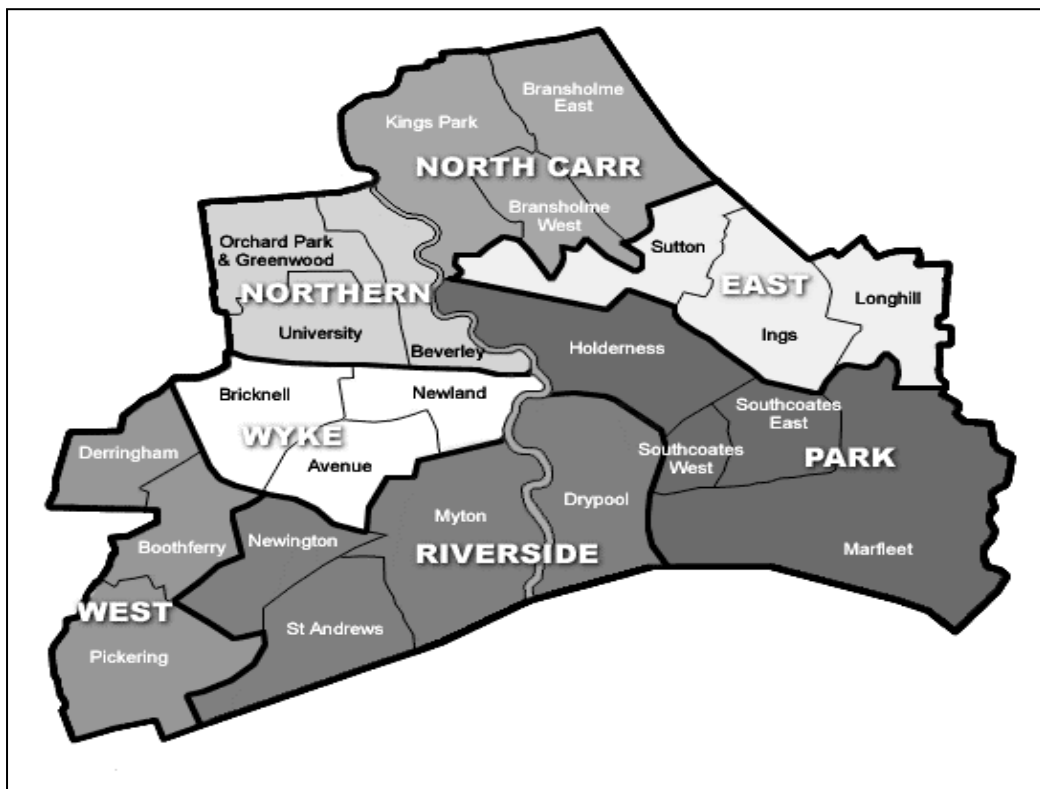
Kingston-upon-Hull is a city located on the north side of the Humber estuary in East Yorkshire (see map 5.1 overleaf). In the 2001 census its population has been estimated at 243,589 (ONS, 2006a). The local authority council is a unitary authority known as Hull City Council (HCC). HCC had been under the control of a Labour administration since the early 1970s up until 2006 when it was led by the Liberal Democrats, although they only took overall control in 2007. The city has weathered post-industrial decline and retrenchment since the 1970s and 1980s (Davies, 2007) and in the last decade has suffered from a tarnished reputation nationally when voted one of the most ‘crap’ areas to live in the world (BBC website, 2003). The Audit Commission had also criticised the council for its corporate governance in 2002 after it was found that the council had set unrealistic monetary budgets and relations between councillors and council officers were more adversarial than collaborative (LGC website, 2002; Pearce, 2003). This was unusual, given that three years earlier the council were reported as being ‘pioneering’ by replacing its old style service committees with new managerial style area committees led by elected portfolio holder councillors, supported by elected members of parties, council officers and members of the community (LGC website, 1999). Yet this managerial style of council eroded the development of public partnerships, with particular tensions between community groups and public managers (Davies, 2007).

The East Riding of Yorkshire is a district that borders North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire and surrounds the city of Kingston-upon-Hull on these three sides (see map 5.1). East Riding is mostly rural and is the largest unitary authority in England with a population of 314,113 (ONS, 2006b). It is run by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (EYRC) from its administrative headquarters in Beverley. Between 1995 and 2007 no party had overall control of the council. Since 2007 the council has been led by

a Conservative administration. EYRC has received less (negative) attention from both central government and the national media than its neighbouring HCC and continues to perform above average socio-economically. Table 5.1 shows key characteristics of Hull and East Riding with the England average where relevant.



**Map 5.1: Study area locations**



**Map 5.2: Kingston-upon-Hull council wards  
(from Hull City Council website, 2009)**

	<b>HULL</b>	<b>EAST RIDING</b>	<b>ENGLAND AVERAGE</b>
Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	72.23	2456.92	N/A
Greenspace (%)	34%	92%	88%
Domestic and Non-domestic Buildings (%)	14.8%	0.9%	1.8%
Unemployment Rate	6.2% (10,825)	3% (6936)	5.4% (in 3 months to May 2006)
Employment Rate	53.2% (92,500)	61.5% (140,510)	74.6% (in 3 months to May 2006)
Education (aged 16-74 with no qualifications)	41.2%	29.2%	28.9%
'Good' General Health	65.2%	68.8%	68.8%
'Not Good' General Health	11.2%	8.7%	9%
Ethnicity (% white)	97.7%	98.8%	92.1%
*Indices of Deprivation- Local Authorities summaries (Total rank out of 354 areas in UK)	9	208	N/A
*Indices of Deprivation- rank of income scale (Total rank out of 354 areas in UK)	16	63	N/A

**Table 5.1: Comparison table showing geographical and socio-economic characteristics of study areas. Adapted from 2001 census data, Office of National Statistics (2006a, b, e, f) and \* ODPM (2004a) commissioned work**

Comparing Hull and East Riding areas shows several differences. The East Riding is typically a rural area dominated by green space, whilst Hull is largely an urban centre. In terms of unemployment, East Riding is below the national average, whilst Hull is above. In terms of health and education, East Riding outperforms Hull. These characteristics are reflected in the Indices of Deprivation, whereby Hull is ranked 9<sup>th</sup> worst area in the country, compared to East Riding's ranking of 208. The various characteristics and statistics highlight a variety of socio-economic problems experienced by Hull. This is reflected through the city being one of the 88 regions in the country which receives extra funding by national government through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (SEU, 2001), whereas the East Riding does not. In terms of community well-being and tenant's satisfaction with opportunities for participation, a survey carried out by each area's respective local authority (as part of the 2001 census survey) found

that 64% of people were very satisfied in the East Riding region compared to 46% in Hull (ONS, 2006c, d).

With the contrasting political and socio-economic characteristics of HCC and ERYC in mind, this research offers a useful analytical test in which to study how the VCS in each study area is supported by each local council in the promotion of sustainable development. With HCC's troubled past and criticism from central government, one might expect the current administration have found it difficult in supporting and encouraging VCS involvement whilst having to prioritise the reinvigoration of the city's socio-economic fortunes. As mentioned previously (section 2.3.3) weak interpretations of sustainability may still hold precedence within local governance processes. This would have repercussions on power relations between the VCS and state in governance spaces (and of consequence the type of VCS involved in such spaces).

On the other hand, with ERYC performing above the national average in many socio-economic characteristics including the opportunity to participate in local governance, one would expect a smoother transition by way of non-state inclusiveness in its local governance processes. One would expect ERYC to offer more opportunity for local VCS groups to get involved in the council's governance structures surrounding sustainable development issues, especially in light of the council prioritising sustainable development in its LSP (see p.185ff of this thesis). VCS groups working in the East Riding who have aims and objectives that are sustainability-related may have greater 'opportunity' (Taylor, 2007) to participate in local governance structures and promote greater capacity building within their sector with the support of the state. Therefore comparing these two study areas represents a good contrast against which to study the activities of the VCS as the differences in geographical and socio-economic



characteristics in each respective region may also reflect differences in the functions, activities and involvement of the VCS in local governance spaces like LSPs and LBPs. The next section introduces Hull's and East Riding's respective LSPs and LBPs.

### **5.2.1 LSPs and LBPs in the study areas**

Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) provide an ideal lens to see how local government has attempted to involve the local VCS in local governance processes. LSPs were introduced by the government in 2000 to bring together organisations from public, private, community and voluntary sector in a local authority area to improve the quality of life in that area by producing a community plan or strategy (DETR, 1999c, 2001). This research will principally use two contrasting LSPs as a way to examine the involvement of the VCS in local governance for sustainable development: those of Hull City Council (HCC) and the East Riding of Yorkshire Council (EYRC). Just as I was embarking upon this research, Hull was relaunching its new LSP, 'One Hull' after receiving criticism from central government for underperformance (see section 6.3.2). Hull has always figured highly in the Indices of Deprivation published by the ODPM (see table 5.1). For these reasons, Hull is an interesting place to study because it shows how VCS groups have responded to the changes made to the Hull LSP and whether this resulted in a greater degree of VCS involvement in local sustainability governance than previously. In comparison to Hull's LSP history, the East Riding LSP history has been less problematic. The ER LSP was founded in 2001 and is made up of over 130 local partner organisations in ensuring its successful delivery. It does not receive any NRF money and has a low ranking in the Indices of Deprivation (see table 5.1). At the time of interviewing, its main objective was "to develop and deliver a plan for the ongoing sustainable development of the area" (ER LSP Website, 2006a). Key tasks of the ER LSP were to:

- Prepare and implement the Community Plan for the East Riding.
- Bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a forum through which service providers such as the local authority, the police and health services can work together to meet local needs.
- Develop and implement a Compact between public sector agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations and groups” (ER LSP Website, 2006a).

However, whilst the above suggested that non-state engagement in the East Riding LSP was high priority, it was found that there was only one representative from the VCS out of fifteen members on the LSP Delivery Board (ER LSP Website, 2006a). This indicated that the local VCS in East Riding may not have had a strong voice at the Delivery Board level and coupled with having less funding than Hull’s LSP, this could have potentially marginalised certain issues like environmental and social sustainability in favour of economic priorities. As such it was interesting to gauge how the ‘One Hull’ initiative was tackling VCS participation within its structure in comparison to the East Riding LSP. More importantly, it was of academic interest to see how such findings translated into the debates on community governance of local policy issues like sustainable development.

Another way to tackle how VCS groups were actively promoting sustainable development, particularly environmental and conservational issues, in local governance spaces was to analyse their involvement in Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs). Whilst this thesis concentrates principally on LSPs as a sustainability governance space, I also interviewed local stakeholders involved in LBPs as I felt that the type of VCS groups involved in LSPs may not have had environmental and conservation issues as

their main priorities. By interviewing stakeholders involved in LBPs I was able to get a greater sense of how all strands of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – featured in governance spaces at the local level.

### **5.3 Sampling: methods, snowballing and selection criteria**

The first issue was to identify potential interviewees. The method I used in order to develop a list of potential interviewees was secondary data sources like local council, local voluntary organisation representative and VCS funding websites like HEROS (Hull and East Riding Options) and the Big Lottery Fund, to identify council officials and potential VCS group representatives/members involved in council-VCS governance initiatives in the study areas.

#### **5.3.1 Snowballing**

Whilst the various secondary data sources mentioned above suggested some potential interviewees, more were needed. The VCS in the study areas seemed very fragmented and diverse, a fact mentioned by many commentators (see chapter 3; Wolfenden, 1978; Kendall and Knapp, 1995). Therefore I decided to contact the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS). They put me in contact with the co-ordinator of Hull Community Network (HCN), a Community Empowerment Network (CEN) group funded by government to provide help for groups who wanted to have an active involvement in representing the VCS in Hull's LSP. I was then able to develop an extended list of potential groups to study through snowballing. Snowball sampling is a method of using one contact to establish contact with someone else, in this case other VCS groups. As Valentine (2005) claims: "through this method, recruiting gains momentum, or 'snowballs' as the researcher builds up layers of contacts" (p.117). Snowballing is an appropriate sampling method because it enables the researcher to get

inside a research network and allows the network itself to develop the sample rather than the researcher. In terms of researching VCS groups that fitted into my main research aims, snowballing helped me identify VCS groups whose activities promoted sustainable development, as well as identifying groups that worked with local councils and participated in local governance processes like LSPs and LBPs. Snowball sampling also allowed me to continually develop a list of potential interviewees from the council, local VCS groups and national VCS groups that worked in a local capacity – and this list would continually grow from within the network created. This is especially important in relation to the ephemeral nature of VCS groups (Zurcher, 1978). Many VCS organisations, especially the smaller ones evolve as a response to an introduction of change in the local community (like a council scheme). Once the scheme has run its course, these groups then become defunct, so it was imperative that I attempted to contact as many local VCS groups as I could to ensure that I had a large sample.

In addition to this, many local VCS groups are directly or indirectly funded by the state (HCN is one important example in the context of VCS involvement in Hull's LSP). Therefore, one limitation of the snowball sampling process is it may have only led me to groups who had received the majority of their funding from state channels. This is because it allowed the network to develop the sample, which originated from my initial contact with the co-ordinator of HCN. However, in an attempt to counter this, I specifically chose some more established environmental groups (e.g. Friends of the Earth and British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) who also generated some of their income from non-state sources, like membership fees. I felt that developing VCS contacts who either received funding from the state and/or were independently funded would give me a clearer picture of the role played by VCS groups more generally, in the

governance of sustainable development. Table 5.2 overleaf shows a complete list of all state and VCS stakeholders interviewed. I conducted 44 interviews in total.

<b>GROUP TYPES</b>	<b>HULL</b>	<b>EAST RIDING</b>
<b>LOCAL COUNCIL OFFICIALS</b>	Director, LSP	Manager, LSP/Compact Development manager
	Sustainable Policy officer	Principal Sustainable Development officer
	Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison officer	Senior Sustainable Communities officer Composting officer
	Biodiversity officer	Biodiversity officer
<b>NATIONAL BODIES</b>	VCS policy consultant, Local Government Association	
<b>REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS</b>	Sustainable Development team leader, Government Office, Yorkshire and Humber Rural officer, Government Office, Yorkshire and Humber	
	Head of Sustainable Development, Yorkshire Forward Rural manager, Yorkshire Forward	
	Sustainable Development manager, Yorkshire and Humber Assembly	
	Regional Biodiversity co-ordinator, Natural England/Yorkshire and Humber Assembly	
<b>LOCAL VCS UMBRELLA ORGANISATIONS</b>	Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network	
	Chief officer, Hull Council Voluntary Services	Chief officer, East Riding Voluntary Action Services
<b>LOCAL VCS GROUPS</b>	Chief co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises	Chairman, South Holderness Countryside Society
	Hull and East Riding Community Project officer, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	
	Co-ordinator, City of Hull Environment Forum	Senior manager, Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council
	Senior manager, Developing Our Communities	Co-ordinator, Flamborough Community and Environmental Action Group
	Hull Green Waste co-ordinator, Friends of the Earth	Local co-ordinator, East Riding and Beverley Friends of the Earth
	Conservation officer, Hull Valley Conservation Group	Humber Project officer, Humber Advisory Group
	Development manager, Goodwin Development Trust	Secretary, Hornsea and North Holderness Countryside Society
	Hull and East Riding chairperson, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England	
	Former chairman and member of Hull Local Biodiversity Partnership and member of East Riding Local Biodiversity Partnership	
<b>REGIONAL VCS GROUPS</b>	Chief Executive, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	
	North Yorkshire and Humber manager, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	
	Co-ordinator, Yorkshire and Humber Regional Environmental Forum	
	Network developer, Friends of the Earth	
<b>NATIONAL UMBRELLA VCS ORGANISATIONS</b>	Regional Development manager, Groundwork Yorkshire and Humber	
	Research officer, National Council for Voluntary Organisations	
<b>NATIONAL VCS GROUPS</b>	National co-ordinator, Every Action Counts (DEFRA funded)	
	National Campaigns Outreach coordinator, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England	
	National Development manager, Groundwork UK	
	National trustee, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	

**Table 5.2: List of interview respondents**

### **5.3.2 Interview group selection**

The following section will justify why I chose to interview respondents from specific groups. I wanted to get a good sample of both state and VCS stakeholders and initially had to think about what type of respondent could fulfil my research aims and objectives. The concerns made in section 2.2 surrounding how economic development has taken precedence over environmental and social issues under ‘weak’ interpretations of sustainability guided me in terms of the kind of VCS group I wanted to interview. Therefore I chose to interview VCS groups with environmental and social concerns rather than groups who focused around the issues of health and economic regeneration. This provided analytical justification for my practical choice of group. In terms of the entire amount of VCS and state respondent groups, the following were identified: government officials at local and regional levels; VCS umbrella organisations; local and regional VCS groups; and national NGOs that work sub-nationally. Each group type will be examined in turn.

#### ***Government officials at local and regional levels***

This list included a variety of local council and regional government officials that worked in the sustainable development field, whether it was in an environmental or social capacity. Interviewing such people is related to the research aims of the project for a number of reasons. Firstly, they provided the governance infrastructure for sub-national sustainability policy and therefore provided the researcher with an insight in how local and regional sustainability policy was formulated and implemented. Secondly, interviewing local council and regional government officials allowed the researcher to gather their perceptions of the importance of local and regional sustainable development. Thirdly, interviewing such people helped the researcher understand the nature of the relationship between local and regional government and the VCS. For

example, talking to council officials involved in the Hull LSP helped build a picture of the mechanisms put in place by council officials to ensure greater VCS participation in local policy. Talking to biodiversity officers allowed the researcher to see how international and national sustainability policy imperatives were being translated at the local and regional levels.

### ***VCS umbrella organisations***

VCS umbrella organisations were useful to interview because they aimed to provide the link between local councils and VCS groups. Such interviewees provided opinions about the strategic aims of the VCS, how the sector was co-ordinated, best practice in the sector, the delivery of public services, how the VCS was funded and how VCS groups responded to government policy (ERVAS, 2006; Hull CVS, 2006a, b; NBF, 2006). For example, interviewing groups like East Riding Volunteer Action Service (ERVAS) and Hull Council for Voluntary Services (HCVS) informed the research by providing a picture of how the council supported (top-down) the VCS through the funding of such umbrella organisations. Interviewing a representative from Hull Community Network (HCN) complemented this by showing how the VCS responded to such council initiatives from a bottom-up perspective. Thus, umbrella organisations represented a medium by which a range of knowledges were transferred between government and the VCS, and as a result, provided justification for interviewing such groups.



### ***Local and regional VCS groups***

Interviewing local and regional VCS groups allowed me to build a picture of what activities were undertaken by such groups in the region, to see how (and if) these groups worked with local councils or regional government to decide policy and how they used such policies to promote sustainable development issues like social inclusion, environmental protection, conservation and socio-environmental regeneration.

By looking at groups that varied in size, function and activity, I was able to establish whether there was a particular group type that is more involved in local governance issues. For example, the Goodwin Development Trust and the Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council played (and continue to do so) a major role in their respective LSPs. Interviewing such groups was useful to gather views on how such groups became involved in local governance issues and how others did not. This highlighted potential problems and issues when VCS groups and councils worked together. Interviewing smaller groups like Flamborough Community Environmental Action Group or Hull Valley Conservation Group established the degree of support needed for such groups to promote their activities and showed why their involvement in local governance issues were more different and problematic in comparison to other VCS groups.

### ***National NGOs that work sub-nationally***

Interviewing representatives from national groups that worked in a sub-national capacity allowed me to see if there was any difference in the way they promoted their objectives and activities locally in comparison to smaller local-only groups. For example, the size and resources of a national VCS group may have influenced the degree to which it was involved in local sustainability governance. Studying both types of VCS groups highlighted how their agendas may have differed and how this

manifested itself in local sustainability governance, posing the question of whether smaller groups were (are?) marginalised in the governance of local sustainability. This also questioned and examined whether sustainability politics and practices worked through different policy 'scales'. For example, comparing how a national trustee for British Trust of Conservation Volunteers perceived the group's involvement in local governance may be different to how the local community development officer promoted the group's national objectives at the local level. Thus, interviewing both types of groups highlighted a number of tensions, constraints and inconsistencies related to communication of group activities and objectives. It also highlighted the degree to which the local or regional affiliate group was supported by their national equivalent. In addition to this, interviewing national VCS groups highlighted the problems faced by smaller local community groups who had no national affiliate to turn to for advice.

I felt that it was important that scale should be factored into my methodology because one of my theoretical aims was to examine how national NGOs worked across and between different territorial scales (chapter 9). To factor in scale, I deliberately attempted to interview NGOs that worked in a local, regional and national capacity. Jonas (2006) also makes the point that scale is important in an epistemological, as well as an ontological sense – by “pay[ing] less attention to an epistemology of local-to-global (or equivalents) and more to one of the ‘inbetweenness’ of scale; and... to work with rather than around or outside particular scalar categories, not least ‘the local’” (p.400). The following were interviewed at more than one scale: BTCV (local, regional and national), Groundwork (regional and national), CPRE (local and national) and FoE (local and regional).

### **5.3.3 Obtaining interviewees**

Table 5.2 shows the respondents I interviewed in this research. However, I did encounter difficulties like initial problems establishing appropriate contacts, refusals when trying to access potential interviewees and staff turnover issues. I will reflect on these issues in this section.

Section 5.3.1 summarised how I first encountered Hull Council for Voluntary Services and then the Hull Community Network, from whom I was able to compile a list of potential VCS interviewees from Hull and the East Riding working in a socio-environmental capacity, although the number was limited. The East Riding equivalent of Hull CVS, ERVAS had no such list. This was probably because ERVAS were going through a state of transition, having being handed the reins of East Riding's umbrella voluntary service from the North Bank Forum. With Hull CVS pointing me in the direction of Hull Community Network, I was able to establish contact with a greater number of VCS groups and state representatives working in Hull and the East Riding.

Even having a list of potential interviewees doesn't necessarily grant access to interviewing such stakeholders. There were a number of potential interviewees (local and national) who I contacted on numerous occasions and they didn't respond to emails and phone messages. These included the portfolio holders for the environment in both councils and senior management in national VCS organisations that also worked in a local capacity like FoE and CPRE. I would have liked to interview a senior management figure from FoE, but the national office didn't even acknowledge my communication. For CPRE, I initially contacted the chief executive (several times) and I was eventually contacted by one of his senior management team. However, upon going to London to interview that person, she was called out unexpectedly, but still managed to find

someone less senior for me to interview. However, not being able to interview these individuals did not change the results of my research too much, although, referring to table 5.2, the number of VCS interviewees working specifically at regional and national scales for the larger VCS environmental groups like FoE, Groundwork, CPRE and BTCV remains limited.

At the local level, the problem of staff turnover in VCS groups also became apparent to me. For example, I interviewed senior managers from a social regeneration group in Hull and from a rural community council in the East Riding, both receiving large amounts of funding from the Single Regeneration Budget. However, upon wanting to contact them again a year after I interviewed them both, they had moved on because their groups had a major cut in funding. The ephemeral nature of VCS groups is one of the major problems when interviewing local VCS groups. This became apparent when interviewing many VCS respondents, and is a result of how funding streams were negotiated between the state and the voluntary sector. For example, many interviewees expressed concern over their funding being given from year to year rather than, for example, a three year basis. With this type of financial flow, VCS groups found it difficult to implement plans.

In terms of the interviewees from LSPs, the 'One Hull' LSP underwent management change during my research, with the chief executive moving jobs (no such changes occurred in the East Riding). The change in Hull maybe symptomatic of the problems it has had since the council received criticism in 2002 and LSP funding was withheld in 2005. Davies' (2007) research on Hull's 2002 CityVision LSP has also highlighted partnership controversies between community and council, with 'creeping

managerialism’ (p.787ff) and ‘non-communication’ (p.790ff) being particular prevalent issues.

From a methodological standpoint I do not view the above issues as obstacles to my research outcomes. They are in fact integral to, and part of, my research outcomes. The methodological problems encountered on a researcher’s journey go some way to explaining the resultant social phenomena a researcher wishes to describe. For example, the upheaval in Hull’s LSP was represented through the methodological problems I encountered with its change of management for example. With this in mind I now turn to the issues encountered whilst I was preparing for and conducting interviews.

#### **5.4 Semi-structured interviews: rationale and practice**

This section discusses the various rationale and practices involved in the main data collection method for this research, semi-structured interviews. These include how I prepared for the interviews and issues encountered during the process of semi-structured interviewing like interview location, interviewer assertiveness, interviewer impression, building rapport and trust, remaining objective (positionality) and ethical issues (Harvey, 2009). Interviews were conducted over a period between July 2006 and October 2007, except for one interview which was conducted in October 2008.

Semi-structured interviewing is one type of method that comes under the banner of qualitative research. Strauss and Corbin (1990) put forward a number of reasons for doing qualitative research. One reason is the nature of the research problem. They claim “some areas of study naturally lend themselves more to qualitative types of research, for instance, research that attempts to uncover the nature of a persons’ experiences with a phenomenon... qualitative methods can be used to uncover and understand what lies

behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known” (p.19). As such it is a useful analytical tool for human geographers who want to make sense of how humans interact in the world around them. Recently there has been greater attention towards the use of qualitative methods in human geography (for example see the corporate interview and feminist geographers positionality exchange between Schoenberger, 1991, 1992 and McDowell, 1992a; the debate on ‘fuzzy concepts’ and quality between Markusen, 1999, 2003, Hudson, 2003, Lagendijk, 2003 and Peck, 2003; and the rise of a ‘post-modern’ human geography with its theoretical fetishism posited by Hamnett, 2003). Such debates show that qualitative methods like interviewing have gained greater impetus in the search for establishing reflexivity and rigour in research.

As such semi-structured interviewing was an appropriate method for this research because it allowed me to look at respondent’s experiences of a phenomenon, in this case sustainability governance. In addition, it also provided insights into how respondent experiences related to the way in which governance spaces and networks opened up, operated and closed. In terms of relating expected phenomena to the group types listed in section 5.3.2, interviewing government representatives at the sub-national (local and regional) level enabled me to see how and if any mechanisms were in place that incorporated the VCS into local policy processes. Interviewing VCS representatives from local, regional and national levels firstly allowed me to see how such groups portrayed themselves and communicated sustainable development to the public arena. Secondly, interviewing local VCS representatives established how they perceived the local council’s work on sustainable development and assessed the degree to which they thought they were included in, made to feel included or offered potential access to local sustainability governance spaces like LSPs. Thirdly, interviewing VCS groups who worked at local, regional and national levels helped me assess whether there were any

multi-scalar links or networks forged between VCS groups in the governance of sustainable development. This was important in light of New Labour's drive to modernise government at all levels and involve its citizens through the joining-up of policy (Cabinet Office, 1999; for a critique of New Labour's local modernisation agenda also see Downe and Martin, 2006). This policy trajectory suggested that examining VCS groups who worked at different spatial scales enabled me to ascertain whether VCS involvement in the multi-scalar governance of sustainable development was a reality.

#### **5.4.1 Interview preparation**

Semi-structured interviews can be defined as an informal interview with an open ended framework whereby the interviewer uses a topic guide/matrix or list of questions in order to understand something. They "take a conversational, fluid form, each interview varying according to the interests, experiences and views of the interviewee" (Valentine, 2005, p.111). This type of method allowed for two-way communication, giving the interviewer the opportunity to obtain a wealth of data and the interviewee an opportunity to express their experiences of 'working in' and 'belonging to' their particular group. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allowed the interviewee to express deeper perceptions of the relationship they have with other stakeholder groups and institutions, in that interviews provide the researcher with "an authentic insight into people's experiences" (Silverman, 1993, p.91).

As such the use of semi-structured interviews was an obvious choice in order to fulfil the project aims and answer the research questions given in section 1.2. Not only did this type of interview give me information on what each stakeholder group did to promote their activities in relation to sustainable development, but they allowed me to

probe into the relationship between the stakeholders – how and if they worked together, how they perceived each other, what problems they each encountered and the nature of each stakeholder’s support networks.

An introductory letter/email (appendix 1, p.458) was designed to approach my prospective interviewees asking whether they could participate in the research. Attached to the letter was a research brief document (appendix 2, p.459) giving them an idea of the research I was conducting. This was written in the clearest way possible as to inform the respondent what my research entailed. In addition to this, a draft topic guide (appendix 3, p.460) was designed to give the interviewee and myself greater control through the interview. All interviews used this format which enabled me to maintain consistency over the types of issues discussed. However, when the respondent wanted to talk about a specific issue related to the research I tried not to deter them. This is the time when the researcher can develop further insights into a particular research phenomenon, insights that may not have been disclosed to the interviewer if this type of qualitative research technique had not been employed. As Oakley (1981) claims, “interviewing is rather like marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets” (p.31). In enabling the respondent to take some control over what they wanted to discuss, I felt that I was able to get greater access to such secrets, for example whether VCS groups had any disagreements with the way in which local government was using funds from central government to promote VCS inclusion within sustainability governance spaces. Whilst it can be argued that giving the interviewee greater freedom in their responses reduces the comparability of interview data (Kitchin and Tate, 2000, p.214), the topic guide enabled me to keep the interview related to the specific topics listed on it.



#### **5.4.2 Interview issues and implications**

Whilst the topic guide was helpful in making my interview technique more consistent, some of the preliminary interviews did encounter various issues by way of outcomes. These are related to where the interview was conducted, interviewer impression, establishing interviewer assertiveness, ethical considerations, attempting to remain objective (positionality) and not leading the interviewee and building rapport and trust with the interviewee.

An important aspect which I needed to consider was the place where the interview was conducted. This makes a significant difference to the quality of data obtained. The practicalities of the environment are so important in relation to the overall success of an interview (Denzin, 1970). It is important to visit respondents where they are most comfortable, “on their own territory... as this facilitate[s] a more relaxed conversation” (Valentine, 2005, p.118). I conducted some interviews at the interviewee’s place of work. When attending a few of these interviews at the respondent’s place of work I found that the interview was difficult to conduct because of a colleague remaining in the office and talking on the phone whilst I attempted to interview. The subsequent interview recording was difficult to decipher as it was muffled. As a result I encountered further problems when attempting to transcribe it later along the research process.

Another important aspect related to obtaining quality data is that of impression management and appearance. This is integral to the overall success of an interview (Oppenheim, 1993; Trochim, 2001). I took an informal dress code to interview people that I thought would be uncomfortable if I wore a suit like smaller VCS groups. When I interviewed government officials I wore a suit as I knew that they would be wearing

more formal attire. Making the interviewee comfortable was a priority as this enabled them to express themselves more clearly and divulge richer answers. Therefore, adapting my appearance in line with the type of respondent created a sense of parity between the interviewee and me.

However, I do remember feeling nervous at my first interview and upon reflecting, I felt that this was a result of me not preparing my research brief and topic guide using simpler language. As a result I feel I may have influenced the interviewee somewhat. Knowing (through briefing yourself) the research aims and how you are going to achieve these aims through the development and use of a generic research brief and topic guide is of paramount importance when preparing for and conducting an interview (Valentine, 2005, p.119). After conducting a few more interviews I realised that there are many factors that can impact on the quality of an interview (Cloke *et al.*, 2004, pp.152ff) and that it is very much a learning process.

One such factor is developing a level of assertiveness. This was a problem in one interview when the interviewee took my research brief and topic guide questions from me and started answering them before I managed to start the digital recorder. I therefore found myself trying to make sure that all topic areas were covered during the interview and that I had asked the interviewee permission to use the interview data in my research. This particular instance was good practice for me as an inexperienced interviewer as it taught me to listen and respond to the interviewee, an important skill mentioned by Valentine (2005, p.122). From then on I made sure that I kept the research brief and topic guide close to me and as soon as I started the digital recorder I asked for informed consent. This leads on to ethical considerations.

It is of utmost importance that as a researcher, I understood ethical considerations as part of my research. The geography department in which I have researched this PhD has an ethics committee and it was my role as researcher to understand what my ethical responsibilities were in order to continue with my research. Finch (1993) emphasises the importance of protecting the research subject's rights to privacy in relation to powerless social groups. Whilst I did not envisage any problems in the context of my particular research, I realised that each interview did not "represent a collaboration of equals" (Cloke *et al.*, 2004, p.164) and that some interviewees (e.g. council officials and national VCS group representatives) may feel more empowered and confident in answering questions than interviewees who represent smaller local VCS groups. Furthermore, because my research involved examining how power was configured and negotiated across space by state and non-state stakeholders involved in the governance of sustainable development, I was aware that some respondents, particularly VCS respondents would want to talk candidly about how particular local government policies or individuals had an adverse effect on their own group. This is why before each interview I reaffirmed to the interviewee a number of ethical related guidelines concerning informed consent, privacy, exploitation, sensitivity to gender/cultural difference and confidentiality. Even though all interviewees gave me informed consent and allowed me use their job title, I have anonymised some interview quotes in parts of this research (for example in section 8.3.1).

Explaining the various ethical related guidelines to respondents had the added positive effect of helping me build up a rapport and trust with some interviewees. This is imperative in trying to obtain good research data. Rapport is also influenced by many other factors that have been previously cited here. For example, where the interview is held "appears to reinforce the power of the interviewer or the subject" (Cloke *et al.*,

2005, p.158). This was certainly confirmed to me when the aforementioned interviewee took the topic guide from me – the interview was being conducted in her office. Rapport is also influenced through the appearance and demeanour of the interviewer (Cloke *et al.*, 2005, p.158) and these have to be considered when undertaking each individual interview, as each is different (Valentine, 2005, p.119).

Before and during each interview conducted I attempted to create an atmosphere that facilitated trust whereby the interviewee could talk confidently and candidly about the research topics. At the start of the interview, the phase which Olesen and Whittaker (1970) refer to as the “surface encounter” (p.384), I physically showed the research brief (aims) to the interviewee and assured them that all answers would be treated with confidence and would only be used for my PhD research with their informed consent. During the interview I tried to remain neutral, follow the flow pattern of the interview (Valentine, 2005, p.120) and not influence the answers. However, although upon listening to the recording of some of my initial interviews I found that I had influenced some of the interviewee’s answers in varying degrees, and this was an aspect of my interview technique that I improved upon as I progressed. Interviewer and respondent positionality is an important aspect to consider when conducting semi-structured interviews. As McDowell (1992) claims, “we must recognise and take account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants, *and write this into our research practice* rather than continue to hanker after some idealized equality between us” (p.409, emphasis in original). In this sense research is a ‘dialogical process’ which is structured by interviewer and respondent (England, 1994). Whilst I cannot talk of the respondents positionality during each interview, I was aware of the fact that I had to reflexively consider my positionality as interviewer. However, I am aware that I was never entirely neutral as I have particular characteristics and views of the world that are

different to the respondents, Fielding and Thomas (2001) describe this as the 'interviewer effect'. Hoggart *et al.* (2002) claim that the researcher and researched are "...visible and creative agents who interact with the institutions of academic convention and inherited methodological traditions. It follows that the research act should be a deliberative and interpretive process that is renegotiated and reflected on before, during and after data 'production'" (p.204). In this sense the methods employed for each interview should be epistemological as well as procedural (ibid, p.204). As such I considered what was expected of me as interviewer (my 'situatedness'; see Ward and Jones, 1999) in advance of, during and after each interview. In advance of each interview I sent the respondent a generic research brief so they could understand my research objectives and ethical considerations beforehand (appendix 2, p.442). At the beginning of the interview I asked for informed consent. During the interview I tried to let the interview flow as much as possible, although I had to be conscious of keeping structure and consistency through use of the topic guide (appendix 3, p.443). After the interview I made sure that the respondent was okay with my questioning and reiterated their right to informed consent.

However much the researcher tries to mitigate the negativities embedded within doing quality research, in hindsight and upon self-reflection there are important issues that warrant address. One such issue is that of power in interviews. The fact that I produced the topic guide immediately created an imbalance between the respondent and myself. It could be argued that I was assuming greater control of the interview process, for three reasons, "by selecting the themes and topics; by ordering the questions and by wording the questions in his or her language" (Bauer, 1996, p.2). However, the assumption that the interviewer possesses the 'locus of control' (Schoenberger, 1991) has been questioned by McDowell (1992a) who claims that from her experience "the interviewer

is more often in the position of a supplicant, requesting time and expertise from the powerful, with little to offer in return” (p.213). My interviewer experience was mixed. At some interviews I felt that I was in control, especially when interviewing community-based VCS groups. When interviewing powerful elites I felt that I had lost some control (see below). This exemplifies that whatever method is adopted by the researcher, understanding ones full positionality is impossible (Rose, 1997). As such, subjectivity and generalisations would always be prevalent because every interview is different (Schoenberger, 1991, 1992; Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). For example, Holloway and Jefferson (2000) argue that “the story told will always be constructed rather than being a neutral account of pre-existing reality” (p.32). I felt that the best I could do as researcher, was let the respondent tell their own uninterrupted story. I had to gauge their mannerisms as they spoke, for example when they looked enthusiastic about a particular story or issue. In this sense, I had set up a kind of collaborative approach between the respondent and me, making each of us more at ease during the interview.

Returning to interviewing powerful elites, I did encounter a few problems when interviewing such officials, especially from regional government. Literature has been published on the problems in local political elite interviewing (Cochrane, 1998; Ward and Jones, 1999). These include issues of power, situatedness and political-temporal contingency. Whilst I have covered the former two, I think political-temporal contingency warrants further discussion because of the nature of my research – local sustainability governance. Ward and Jones (1999) claim “researching the concrete form of local governance requires a reflexive research process capable of taking stock of the new (governance) dimensions of fluidity and complexity, in contrast to the fixity of ‘established’ local government” (p.303, emphasis in original). This suggests that changes to local governance structures, for example through wider spatial policy imperatives, would have an immediate effect on the researcher’s dissemination of

results. Such a change occurred during my research process. For example, one particularly influential respondent involved in Hull's LSP talked about pooled funding in relation to LAAs. I interviewed this respondent in October 2007. However, in April 2008 central government changed their policy of 'pooled funding' for LAAs to an evidence-based system. This has had an impact upon the way I have written a particular section of this thesis (see section 9.3). Such a policy change could have potentially changed the way in which VCS groups became involved in the LSP, and as such my posited findings and subsequent argument may not be seen as valid as it was when I conducted the majority of interviews in 2006/2007.

## **5.5 Secondary data sources**

The first part of this section will examine the use and limitations of secondary data in research. It will specifically concentrate on the use of national statistics in this research.

### **5.5.1 Secondary data**

Secondary data is information that has already been collected by someone else and which is available to the researcher to use (Clark, 2005, p.57). Kitchin and Tate (2000, p.60) put forward three main justifications for using secondary data: firstly, *conceptual*, this is where the data needed by the researcher may not be available in any other form. Examples of such data include record offices and historical archives. In this research, I used census data from 2001 which was easily accessible through the Office of National Statistics website; secondly, *methodological*, this enables analysis to be replicated by other researchers so that corroborations can be made "allowing the possibility of longitudinal and trend analysis, broadening both the scope and dynamism of the variables, and the size of the data sets used in a piece of research" (ibid, p.60); and thirdly, *economic*, which refers to the time-consuming and costly process in collecting

one's own data. I felt for the type of research I was embarking upon, using secondary data sources were a natural complement to the qualitative interviewing technique. The main types of secondary data sources utilised in this research project included websites (government, local council, voluntary groups, funding organisations) that gave a range of information and statistics, and leaflets/newsletters (that gave an idea of the aims, objectives and internal workings of a group/organisation).

However, I am aware that using secondary data sources has limitations. I want to talk about the temporal and cultural issues in relation to this research. Having used 2001 census data from the Office of National Statistics website I understand that such data was produced nearly a decade ago. This data was related to the geographical and socio-economic characteristics of the study areas. Hoggart *et al.* (2002) make the point that such "coverage, definitions and meanings in official statistics are not unchanging" (p.105). The characteristics of the study areas may have changed since the data was collected. The important point here is that I have used the differences in geographical and socio-economic characteristics as an epistemological precursor to reflect the differences in the functions, activities and involvement of the VCS in local governance spaces like LSPs and LBPs (see section 5.2). As such, if these characteristics have changed, then comparing both areas may no longer be a valid foundation to test my research objectives and aims.

In addition to this, Hoggart *et al.* (2002, p.105) question the cultural conditions in which such statistics are produced. Official statistics are socially constructed and therefore subject to the norms of the producer. In attempting to use data gathering methods which complement research objectives, the researcher has to pride him/herself in knowing how the secondary data was collected, what sampling methods were used etc. As such it is



important that I am aware of the possibility of inaccuracies in the way official statistics are gathered and compiled. This is not to say that the methods used in official statistic gathering were not correct, I just have to be aware of such issues because I did not personally gather the information. As such, there is a possibility of inaccuracy and it is wise to be cautious when using such secondary data (Kitchin and Tate, 2000).

This leads on to official statistics reflecting pressures from interested parties like government. Hoggart *et al.* (2002) use Hutton's (1992) example of how unemployment figures during the Thatcher administration were actually higher than the official statistics suggested. Therefore one has to be aware of inconsistencies in using official statistics over time as they are subject to change depending on context, for example changes in government policy or even political administration. The next section now turns to analysis and secondary data source corroboration.

## **5.6 Analysing interviews and secondary data source corroboration**

The first part of this section will examine how I analysed interviews. It focuses upon the approach adopted in transcribing the interviews and how I used the computer program NVivo to code, categorise, sort and making connections and interactions from the original empirical data. The second part of this section focuses upon how such findings were corroborated with secondary data sources.

### **5.6.1 Analysing interviews**

In relation to the analytical process, my research was informed through grounded theory which “is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents... it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon” (Strauss and Corbin,

1990, p.23). This definition suggests that the empirical data collected by the interviewer needs to undergo certain processes or procedures in order to produce a theory about a specific phenomenon, rather than beginning with a theory and then proving it (ibid, p.23).

Kitchin and Tate (2000) utilise an approach to understand qualitative data originally forwarded by Dey (1993) which consists of the description, classification and making connections between the data. Description of the data refers to the “portrayal of data in a form that can be easily interpreted” (Kitchin and Tate, 2000, p.231). For this research it was in the form of interview transcriptions. The processes involved in producing a transcription were as follows. Firstly, I recorded the interviews using an Olympus DS-2200 digital recorder. Interviews were then transferred into audio files onto a computer using the Olympus AS-3000 transcription kit. This kit enabled me to manipulate the speed of the interview recording, making it easier to listen to the interview and transcribe. Interview transcriptions were typed up in Microsoft Word. At the beginning of the document I wrote down a brief description of the situational context of the interview (ibid, p.232). This included the date of interview, the interviewees name and job description and the place where the interview was conducted. In text, I annotated additional notes related to contextual information (ibid, p.233-234) of the interview. These included gestures, emphases and voice inflections of the respondent that would not have been picked up on if I just transcribed each interview verbatim.

Once I had all the interviews transcribed I had to analyse them. This stage involves classification and connection of data (ibid, pp.234ff). To analyse interviews I chose the computer program package NVivo (version 7 and after March 2008, version 8). NVivo enables the researcher to import, organise, code, sift, make connections and develop

relationships from the interview data. As such it was a tool which enabled me to develop the reciprocal link between analysis and theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p.23).

After importing each word document (transcription) into NVivo, I had to categorise the data (Kitchin and Tate, 2000, p.234). I systematically read each interview and created codes for particular issues that were listed on my generic topic guide. For instance, I had a broad section in my generic guide on sustainable development. If an interviewer mentioned this issue then I created a 'node' entitled 'sustainable development'. I applied this to every broad issue from the generic topic guide like 'stakeholder relationships', 'funding and finance', 'geographical scale' and 'partnerships'. However, because interviewees may have talked about something more specific than sustainable development, for instance talking about apathy to sustainable development, I then created a 'child node' (a sub-category) stemming from the original node on 'sustainable development'. This is known as splitting the data (ibid, p.244). I was then able to paste any other references from interviewees who talked about similar issues related to apathy in sustainable development. This interpretive analysis (ibid, p.235) process created a template in which my interview data was being coded, categorised, sorted and split with regard to issues that became prevalent as I progressively analysed the interview data. As such I was able to build a pattern of what issues were being talked about more by the interviewees and build a larger picture of relationships, associations and interactions grounded out of the original empirical data. Dey (1993) likens this process to building a house. Whilst classification involves putting all the bricks, frames and windows in separate places, connections refer to how these fit together in order to produce an effective structure. Out of this transformation process emerged prevalent themes and concepts.

### **5.6.2 Secondary data source corroboration**

Emergent themes and concepts were then corroborated against the various secondary data sources. In this research, chapter 6 looks at secondary data sources more closely, in particular government literature on how sustainable development and the VCS feature in Local Strategic Partnerships, Community Strategies, and Local Biodiversity Partnerships. So if for example a Community Strategy or LSP website claimed that the VCS had easy access to the governance networks associated with that LSP, I could show whether VCS groups were invited, elected or selected to such networks (chapter 7 deals with this issue). Hence, by using this method I was able to effectively prove or disprove claims being made in secondary data sources.

This method strengthened the robustness of my research findings, giving it greater credibility as a standalone piece of research. Whilst it has added further insights into my own research questions (Hoggart *et al.*, 2002, p.69), it has also allowed me to develop my own theories regarding wider academic debates on the VCS, sustainability governance, partnerships, networks and geographical scale. These themes are explored in following chapters (7, 8 and 9) where I use my empirical data (quotes) to support or refute particular assumptions prevalent in the academic literature related to this research.

### **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the various methodologies used in this research. It has discussed the research study areas and related their geographical and socio-economic characteristics to my research aims and objectives. It then examined my sampling technique, snowballing, and laid out the associated limitations of this. I then justified why I chose particular stakeholder interview groups in relation to what I was

researching. I then reflected upon particular issues related to establishing contact with potential interviewees, how I was refused certain interview requests and staff turnover issues. I then explained how such issues may have affected my research. It then discussed the rationale and practice behind the principal research method used, semi-structured interviews. This section covered how I initially prepared for interviews like contacting potential respondents and sending out research briefs. It also examined issues encountered within the interview process itself like assertiveness, impression, rapport, trust, positionality and ethics. It then went on to discuss how I manipulated the interview data using the computer program NVivo, transforming interview transcriptions into prevalent themes and issues which could be corroborated against secondary data source claims. In addition to this, there emerged particular themes which could add to wider academic debates related to the research on the VCS, sustainability governance, networks and geographical scale. The next section focuses on reviewing secondary data sources associated with LSPs, LBPs and service delivery under New Labour, in particular how sustainable development and the VCS feature in such documentation.

## **6. Local Sustainability Governance in principle: reviewing documentation**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to review through secondary data analysis, how sustainable development (particularly the environmental and social strands) and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) feature in documentation for local governance in the form of Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Community Strategies/Plans (CSs) and Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs). The last section (6.7) will also briefly discuss how New Labour's modernisation agenda has utilised the VCS in public service delivery, with special reference to Compacts.

This chapter identifies two sets of literature as a theoretical context: literature related to the problems and inherent tensions of clearly defining and implementing sustainable development at different scales and literature related to the role played by the public and the VCS in participatory decision-making in local sustainability governance.

Chapter 2 suggested that sustainable development is a problematic concept, subject to multiple definitions and interpretations depending on usage of the term (for example see Lele, 1991; Pezzoli, 1997; Eden, 2000; Evans and Jones, 2008; Jordan, 2008). A related literature highlights the tensions between economic, social and environmental relations in sustainable development policy at the national, regional and local scales, respectively (Gibbs *et al.*, 1998; Jonas *et al.*, 2004; Lucas and Fuller, 2005; Raco, 2005; Batchelor and Patterson, 2007). For example, when examining the national-level policies in the UK, Raco (2005) talks of a tension between, on the one hand, state economic policies produced with a view to rolling out a neo-liberal agenda and, on the other, those policies that place sustainable development at centre stage. Raco suggests (p.330) that there are

opportunities at the local level to use sustainable development to steer economies along alternative pathways to neo-liberalism such as the pursuit of social justice. In comparison, Batchelor and Patterson (2007) believe that whilst there is strong policy rhetoric for sustainable development at the local level, the structures for the governance and policy determination are strongly focused on a neo-liberal fix (p.194). As suggested in section 2.3.3, weak interpretations of sustainability i.e. a skewed focus on local economic agendas, may dominate the policy and structures of local governance processes and arrangements like LSPs.

A second set of literature relating to the role played by the public and the VCS in participatory decision making in local sustainability governance also sets the context to this chapter. Some commentators assert that public participation in the decision making process is both necessary and essential (Owen, 1994, 2000) and is widely now accepted, especially in environmental decision making (Webler *et al.*, 2001). This can be applied to sustainable development too, in light of how normative notions of the concept incorporates ideas of social justice through citizen rights and public inclusiveness in decisions which affect all of society (Jacobs, 1999). This has resulted in attempts by government, to mainstream sustainable development into a variety of policy processes at different scales. The local scale is no exception whereby local communities are encouraged to participate in decision making processes (DETR, 1998, 1999c, 2001; Percy and Hands, 2002; Raco, 2003b; Stoker, 2004; Newman, 2005; Evans *et al.*, 2006). As Percy and Hands (2002) claimed, “local government in the UK has been actively trying to deliver sustainable development policy goals in response to the Rio Earth Summit of 1992 at which Agenda 21 was launched” (p.280). Therefore, a defining element of Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) initiatives centred on multi-sectoral engagement in sustainable development, consultation with the VCS and business

groups, participatory target setting and monitoring and reporting procedures in order to track progress and make stakeholders accountable (Percy and Hands, 1999, p.181). Hence, it could be argued that many of the characteristics of the LA 21 process are replicated in LSP processes (DETR, 1999c; DETR, 2001; Williams, 2002; Lucas *et al.*, 2003).

The foreword of a recent government report entitled ‘Principle of Representation’ has also positioned third sector (VCS) groups as having a key role in strengthening local communities through their involvement in LSPs:

*“The third sector is key to delivering ambitions to strengthen the involvement of the community in shaping better places... the Government wants the best local partnership working with the third sector to be the rule not the exception, particularly through Local Strategic Partnerships”* (DCLG, 2008e, foreword)

Haughton and Counsell (2004) offer an explanation as to why the concept of sustainable development goes hand in hand with public participation through its use in legitimating particular governmental policy adaptations as a political resource, tactic or strategy. Therefore, in the context of LA 21 and LSP initiatives, where sustainable development should feature strongly, many commentators assert that public participation needs to be heterogeneous and spread across various policy processes (Carter and Darlow, 1997; Chatterton and Style, 2001; Darlow and Newby, 1997; Liddle and Townsend, 2003; Newman *et al.*, 2004; Scott, 1999; Sharp, 2002; Sharp and Connelly, 2002; Taylor, 2007).



But local documentation related to sustainable development cannot be taken at face value. It will have mixed ideas of what sustainable development actually is. Interrogation of such documentation will answer the call from Jordan (2008) to identify “the causal relationship between governance interventions and outcomes on the ground” (p.29). This chapter will therefore scrutinise the literature produced from “governance interventions” i.e. LSPs, Community Strategies/Plans, Local Biodiversity Partnerships (and associated action plans) and service delivery mechanisms seeing how both sustainable development and the VCS are represented. This therefore introduces LSPs and their policy rhetoric; later chapters discuss the empirical experience of this through “outcomes on the ground” (ibid, p.29).

## **6.2 LSPs, Community Strategies, Local Biodiversity Action Plans and service delivery as multi-scalar policy tools**

National guidance provided information to how local authorities should implement LSPs (DETR, 2001), Community Strategies (DETR, 1999c) and LBAPs (UK Biodiversity Steering Group, 1995). LSPs and Community Strategies/Plans were designed to be empowering tools (DETR, 1999c, 2001; Raco *et al.*, 2006, p.479) whilst LBAPs were supposed to develop Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs) specific to their locality, and later were supposed to link in with other local governance policy like Community Strategies/Plans (DEFRA, 2002, p.68; DEFRA, 2004). The following table shows a timeline of policy related to LSPs, LBAPs and service delivery with the VCS, as a reference point for the sections that follow.

Year	National level	Local level	
		Hull	East Riding
<b>1994</b>	Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan launched  UK Biodiversity Steering Group created		
<b>1995</b>		Hull's first Nature Conservation Strategy published, 'Natureplan'	East Riding Nature Conservation Liaison Group (ERNCLG) operates pre-1999
<b>1996</b>	Deakin Commission on Future of Voluntary Sector proposes formal agreements between government and VCS  UK Biodiversity Group (UKBG) established		
<b>1997</b>			
<b>1998</b>	DETR publishes 'Modernising Local Government. Local democracy and community leadership'  Home Office publishes 'Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England'		
<b>1999</b>	DETR publishes 'Preparing community strategies: government guidance to local authorities' (December)	'Natureplan' reviewed	Draft LBAP published- 'Biodiversity in the East Riding of Yorkshire'
<b>2000</b>	Local Compact Guidelines published	Hull Biodiversity Group formed	First community consultation exercise conducted 'Riding Around' (Nov)
<b>2001</b>	DETR publishes 'Local Strategic Partnerships: government guidance' (March)		East Riding's first Community Plan published, 'Your future... our commitment'
<b>2002</b>	HM Treasury publishes 'The Role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery: a cross cutting review' DEFRA publishes Biodiversity Strategy for England, 'Working with the grain of nature'  UKBG replaced by UK Biodiversity Partnership (UKBP)	Hull's first LSP, 'City Vision' formed and published first Community Strategy, 'Urban Renaissance'  Hull Biodiversity Action Plan was completed and published	ERNCLG becomes the Natural Environment Task Group (NETG) and becomes part of the East Riding of Yorkshire Local Strategic Partnership (2002)
<b>2003</b>			Community Plan was revised, no change of name however
<b>2004</b>	ODPM publishes 'Local Area Agreements: a prospectus' (July)  DEFRA publishes 'Life-Support: Incorporating Biodiversity into Community Strategies'		
<b>2005</b>	ODPM publishes 'Local Area Agreements Guidance' (July) and 'Safer and Stronger Communities Fund: Taking the agreements forward'	'Compact for Hull' published by Hull City Council and LSP (non-statutory)	ER Compact, 'Better Together' co-ordinated by LSP (non-statutory)

	(August)		
<b>2006</b>	New Labour create new department, Office of the Third Sector (May) 'Partnership in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement' published (December)(Office of the Third Sector, 2006b)  The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: interim report' published (December) (HM Treasury, 2006)	Launch of Hull's new LSP, 'One Hull' and second Community Strategy, 'Living, Learning and Working'	LSP launched new Community Plan was entitled, 'Our East Riding' The NETG becomes the Sustainable Natural Environment Task Group (SNETG)
<b>2007</b>	DEFRA publishes 'Conserving Biodiversity – the UK Approach' (October)	Hull LSP revises governance structure (October) (see fig 6.3)  Change of LSP Director (December)	
<b>2008</b>	DCLG publishes 'Principles of Representation' (August)	Hull LSP revises governance structure (May) (see fig 6.4)	Revised Community Plan. ER Compact, rural partnership, Local Development Framework and LAA explicitly incorporated into LSP governance structure  East Riding of Yorkshire Biodiversity Partnership launched (July) and draft ER Biodiversity Action Plan produced (August)
<b>2009</b>	Commission for the Compact publishes 'Compact: Commissioning Guidance' (February)		

**Table 6.1: National and local policy evolution with regard to LSPs, LBAPs and VCS service delivery**

Whilst this chapter will compare and contrast Hull's and the East Riding's respective LSPs, Community Strategies and LBPs in terms of how sustainable development and the VCS are represented, it is important to contextualise such findings using examples of other LSPs in England. The Leeds Initiative provides a model of what is deemed an exemplar LSP, as it has won the prestigious 'Partnership award for sustainable communities' at the Local Government Chronicle/Health Service Journal Sustainable Communities Awards 2008, as well as being awarded beacon status for its LSP and LAA (Leeds Initiative Newsletter, Spring/Summer 2008, p.1). The Leeds Initiative was founded in 1990 (Leeds Initiative, 2004), ten years before the government rolled out

LSPs nationally. This shows that the Leeds Initiative was forward thinking in its approach to using non-state sectors in tackling local issues. Therefore, brief analyses of how the VCS and sustainable development, particularly the environmental aspect of sustainable development is positioned within the ‘Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020’ Community Strategy will offer a benchmark from which my two case study areas can be compared. The current Community Strategy document foreword begins by emphasising the importance of partnership working: “No single organisation can hope to make wide-reaching improvements to the city on its own. We can only achieve these aims if all the organisations and communities that have a stake in the city’s future work together” (ibid, p.3). This implies that VCS organisations will play an integral role within the LSP. The document also talks of how the process of consultation is as important as the document itself (ibid, p.6), and is followed by a breakdown of most important priorities for the future of Leeds, and what specific issues were deemed important to particular social groups (ibid, p.7). The most important priorities are depicted in the table below and can be intrinsically related to wider definitions of sustainable development which emphasise social, economic and environmental aspects.

Improving public transport	33%
Tackling crime and antisocial behaviour	25%
Reducing litter and tidying up areas	24%
Building an arena or concert venue	14%
Improving roads	14%

**Table 6.2: Most important priorities for the future of Leeds as determined by the consultation process (adapted from Vision for Leeds 2004 to 2020, 2004, p.7)**

The document also shows that the consultation process is an ongoing process, with the LSP having produced a document, *A Leeds guide to involving the community in decision making* as a practical tool for community partners to work more effectively and consistently (p.69).

Utilising the results of the consultation process, the LSP has identified eight key themes, all of which are related to sustainable development in some way. These issues are Cultural Life, Enterprise and the Economy, Environment City, Harmonious Communities, Health and Wellbeing, Learning, a Modern Transport System and Thriving Places. In reference to this research, the fact that there is a separate theme on the environment – Environment City – implies that the LSP takes environmental issues as a serious matter in its own right. The vision for an Environment City is: “Leeds will have a reputation for environmental excellence through the quality of our built environment, the use of our green space, the effective use of natural resources, clean air quality and waste management” (ibid, p.45). This implies that a variety of environmental issues will be focused upon, however, there is no mention of biodiversity within the vision although the LBAP is mentioned (p.47). The aim ‘get local people and businesses involved in their own environment’ (p.46) does demonstrate the LSP’s commitment to involving the public within environmental decision-making processes. In reference to the VCS, the most important objectives are:

- create and support community partnerships, especially in Leeds’ deprived areas, for practical projects like community clean-ups and planting trees or bulbs;
- introduce high-profile demonstration projects to raise the awareness and expectations of local organisations and communities – this will include local car clubs and energy-efficient housing, and encourage companies to spend money locally;
- set up a State of the River Management partnership for the River Aire, getting local groups to work more effectively and make the most of this asset. (ibid, p.46)

This shows that the LSP, through having a separate section specifically concentrating on environmental sustainability within the Community Strategy, has demonstrated a clear commitment in helping the VCS play a continuing role in the environmental well-being of their locality. Environmental sustainability is also mentioned in other themes like 'Harmonious communities' (p.50), 'Health and Well-being' (p.54) and 'Thriving Places' (p.66), implying an environmental cross cutting agenda throughout the document.

With regard to exemplar LBPs, it was very difficult finding LBPs which had won national awards. However, upon personal communication with East Riding's Biodiversity Officer (August 2008), exemplar partnerships were those that had SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-limited) action plans which utilised BARS (Biodiversity Action Reporting System). BARS is described by the UK BAP website as a "web-based information system that supports the planning, monitoring and reporting requirements of national and local Biodiversity Action Plans" (UK BAP, 2008). BARS provides local partnerships with a standardised national system in which they can record progress towards local targets and actions plans, thus sharing good practice which leads to additional action on the ground. However, as the Biodiversity Officer for East Riding pointed out, sharing of LBAP good practice has been fairly limited due to the lack of guidance for the production of LBAPs from Natural England, although there has been talk about writing some guidance on this but it hasn't materialised as of yet (personal communication, August 2008). With regard to national guidance, DEFRA published *Conserving Biodiversity – the UK Approach* in October 2007, which specifically focused on the need for partnership working with non-state sectors at both national and sub-national level (DEFRA, 2007, foreword), offering guidance through shared priorities for action (ibid, p.6-14). With regards to how

sustainable development was positioned, the document was supposed to complement *One future – different paths*, the UK's framework for sustainable development (ibid, p.2), reiterating the intrinsic link between ecosystems and human well-being (ibid, p.1). However, it did not mention how biodiversity plans at the local level would link to other local governance strategies and policies. So as the Biodiversity Officer for East Riding alluded to (personal communication, August 2008), what construes a successful LBP and its associated LBAP could be its ability to join up different policy arenas. At the local level, LBAPS should link in to other policy arenas like the LSP, LDF, rural and economic partnerships for instance. At the regional level, all local governance policies should link to the RSS (Regional Spatial Strategy). The Regional Spatial Strategy for Yorkshire and the Humber mentions the links to LBAPs with biodiversity partnerships taking a lead role in their development alongside local authorities, Natural England and the Environment Agency (DCLG, 2008a, p.111). This in turn should link into national planning guidance for local authorities, more specifically PPS9 which concentrates on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, as well as the national biodiversity and sustainable development strategies.

### **6.3 Hull's LSP, Community Strategy and Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

I now turn to my case study areas of Hull and the East Riding, beginning with how Hull developed its LSP. In 2000 there was a LA 21 manager and a LA 21 task group of local councillors to ensure sustainable development issues were embedded into council corporate policy, however the team became defunct just before the first LSP was launched (personal communication, Hull City Council sustainability officer, August 2006). The main problem with how the council approached LA 21 issues, according to the sustainability officer, was that they started to "dilute the message" of environmental sustainability and did not involve all of the community within the LA 21 process,

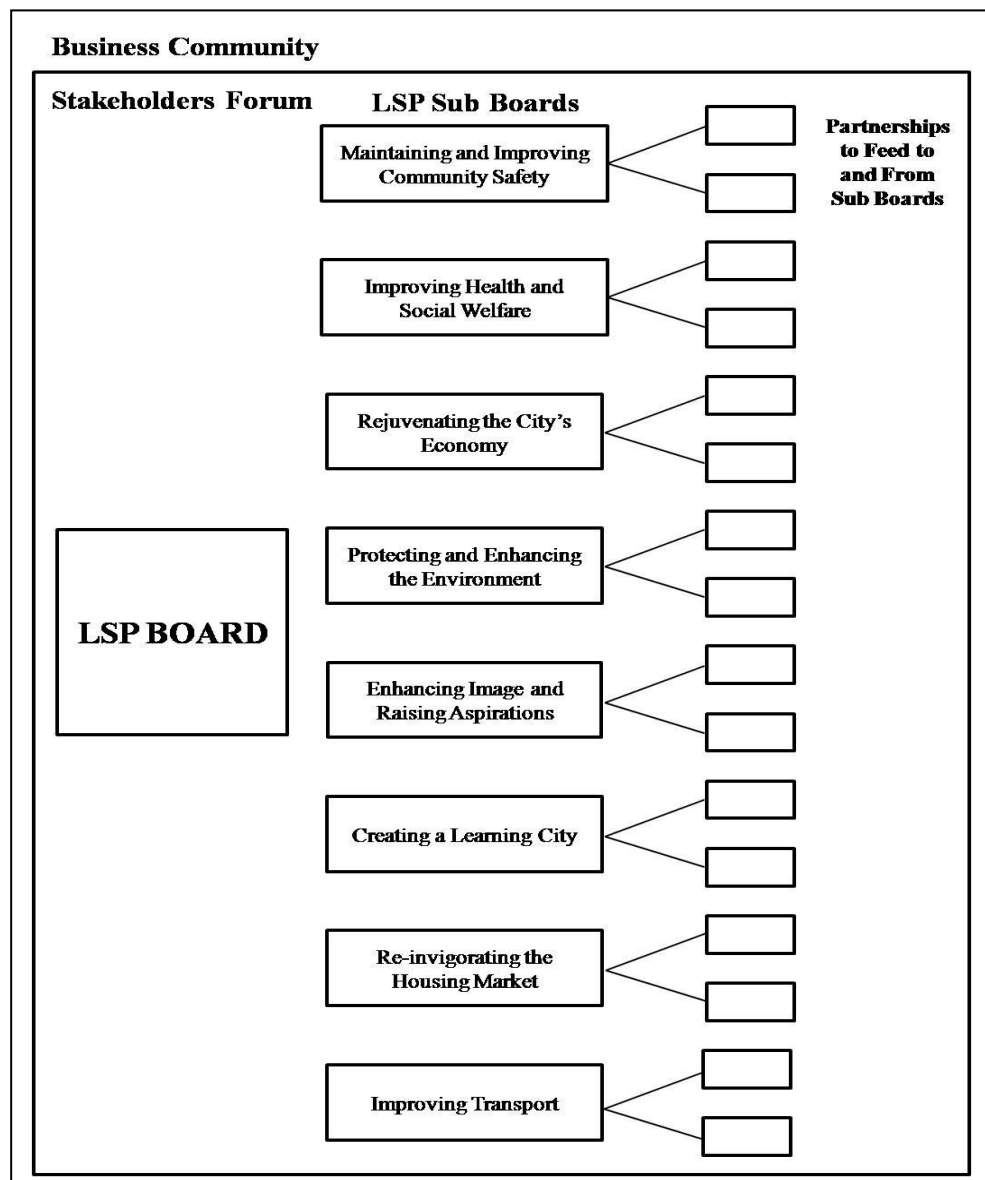
whereas some other councils did through Local Action 21 which was much more community-based. Whilst Hull did not have a Local Action 21 initiative, before the first LSP and Community Strategy was launched, a consultation process involving over 10,000 face-to-face interviews was conducted with local community residents during 2001 to build up community rapport. From this a number of potential partners, including members of the VCS, were identified and over 100 agencies and organisations were drawn from across the city culminating in a variety of stakeholder consultation events which eventually led to the formation of the City Partnership (CityVision, 2002, p.8). The partnership was charged with writing Hull's first Community Strategy. In terms of local biodiversity, the city council launched *Nature Plan* in 1995, Hull's first Nature Conservation Strategy. This non-statutory planning document set out the council's role and duties towards local biodiversity. It was reviewed in 1999 where the decision to make a more comprehensive Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) was made (Hull Biodiversity Partnership website, 2008). The Hull Biodiversity Partnership, a collective of local statutory and voluntary organisations, was charged with developing the LBAP under facilitation from Kingston-upon-Hull City Council. They identified important habitats and species in the city where action could be carried out. These were represented in Hull's Biodiversity Action Plan, published in 2002.

### **6.3.1 Hulls first LSP and Community Strategy, 2002.**

Hulls first LSP, 'CityVision' was formed in 2002. The LSP wrote and launched an accompanying Community Strategy, *Urban Renaissance* the same year. The Community Strategy had a 15 year long term vision for the city to become "a confident, dynamic and inclusive city, where people want to live, learn, work, visit and invest" (CityVision, 2002, p.5).



In order to achieve this vision, the LSP was structured with a main LSP Board, which consisted of members from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The remit of the partnership board was to work closely with the 8 sub-boards to develop “linkages to maximise the effectiveness of the action plans” (ibid, p.5), with sub-boards having thematic names (see figure 6.1):



**Figure 6.1: Operational structure of Hull’s CityVision LSP (adapted from CityVision, 2002, p.7)**

From these themes, it is clear that sustainable development was very much part of the overall rhetoric within the CityVision LSP and Community Strategy. Issues intrinsic to

sustainable development – health, social welfare and the environment – had been given their own sub-boards. There is explicit reference to sustainability issues in these sub-boards. For example, the ‘Health and Social Welfare’ section of the Community Strategy makes a link between health and a deteriorating environment, as well as the need to combat social exclusion to improve the health of the city’s residents (ibid, p.17). This shows the use of a wide definition of sustainable development by the authors, encompassing both environmental and social discourses. Figure 6.1 shows the operational structure of the first LSP, with LSP sub-boards linking partnerships with the main LSP Board. On the face of it, only some of the sub-boards deal with environmental and social discourses related to sustainable development. However, upon scrutinising the objectives of each sub-board group within the Community Strategy, one finds other references to sustainable development. For example, in the ‘Rejuvenating the City’s Economy’ section there is reference to the environment (in the community response section). It reads, “The city must strike a balance between generating economic growth whilst protecting the environment and ensuring equality of opportunity” (ibid, p.23). The ‘Enhancing Image and Raising Aspirations’ section of the Community Strategy also talks of “developing sustainable neighbourhoods” (ibid, p.33) as recommended by Yorkshire Forward’s Regional Strategy.

Embedding an interpretation of sustainable development that includes social and environmental issues suggests the LSP was not just going to focus purely on economic issues. For example, from the document’s onset there is a mention of promoting the “pioneering [of a] a sustainable city” (ibid, p.8). Furthermore, “sustainable development is fundamental and the Community Strategy would build on the Local Agenda 21 strategy for a sustainable City” (ibid, p.8). So whilst economic growth was envisaged as having an integral role to the LSP and Community Strategy, social and environmental

considerations also played an important role with emphasis on what Raco (2005) calls “qualitative notions of sustainability” (p.333-4) like creating a sense of place i.e. the ‘Enhancing Image and Raising Aspirations’ sub-board. In addition, environmental considerations like ecology and climate change were being considered within the document, for example, in the environmental sub-boards overarching objective of “...enhancing amenity and ecological values and protecting the health and safety of the whole community” (CityVision, 2002, p.25). The issue of climate change was also being considered in the document, referring to the role to be played by the Regional Sustainability Commission, parking it at the regional scale, rather than the local/city scale (see Bulkeley and Betsill, 2003).

The document also promotes the idea of sustainable development being interlinked across the sub-boards:

*“The need to meet these challenges in a way that is both balanced and cross cutting will be an underlying principle for the sub boards” (CityVision, 2002, p.11).*

This suggests that the sub-boards would not work in silos, but would integrate with other LSP sub-boards and the City Partnership:

*“Whilst the separate chapters of this document focus on individual themes, it must be recognised that they are closely interlinked, and action on any one would have an effect on others” (ibid, p.8).*

Again the Community Strategy emphasises sustainable development as an all encompassing, embracing solution to economic, social and environmental issues at the local level.

Whilst the Community Strategy was intended as a local document, it also had to reflect national priorities for sustainable development. Central government's envisaged role for Community Strategies was to build on other local partnerships (DETR, 1999c, section 18), in particular Local Agenda 21 (for a local comparison see Scott, 1999). The government therefore intended Community Strategies to be a more integrated, joined-up, 'quality of life' policy document which promoted wider discourses of sustainable development, and not, for instance, environmental issues, which some would argue was the main focus of Local Agenda 21. Community Strategies had "the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely, with local goals and priorities relating, where appropriate, to regional, national and even global aims" as one of their four overall objectives (DETR, 1999c, section 10). It is clear from analysis of Hull's *Urban Renaissance* Community Strategy that both regional and national objectives were integral to the success of local governance arrangements. The national sustainable development strategy's (1999) four priorities of sustainable development were also quoted in Hull's Community Strategy:

- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone
  - effective protection of the environment
  - prudent use of natural resources
  - maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment
- (CityVision, 2002, p.28)

However, the very fact that national sustainability priorities have been used within the Community Strategy to guide its implementation process points to a general paradox inherent within adopting wider interpretations of sustainability at the local level. At what point does central, hierarchical guidance on sustainability cease and local strategies identify and implement issues relative to their own particular characteristics and needs? Development of locally-based strategies (like Community Strategies) have to contend with alleviating the tension between local, particularistic definitions of sustainability and guidance from the higher (e.g. regional, national, global) governmental tiers. This is also represented in micro form, within local governance structures. For example, figure 6.1 shows the operational structure of the CityVision LSP, with the higher tier (LSP Board) being reported to by the middle tier (sub-boards), who in turn are fed into by partnerships (lower tier) within that locality. Successful practical implementation of a particular sustainability issue (whether economic, social or environmental) will only be successful in as much as the higher tier allows. Thus, operational structures that adopt hierarchies point to a number of potential flaws in all structural governance systems. Firstly, hierarchies within governance systems are highly problematic because communication pathways are bounded by internal groups within the overall governance structure, for example, sub-boards in an LSP have different objectives to the LSP Delivery Board for instance. This structural defect influences the capacity of 'agency' amongst lower tier stakeholders in peripheral sub-boards to influence and therefore determine particular desired outcomes decided at Delivery Board level. These boundaries also allow higher tier monitoring of the lower tiers, what Jessop (1999) describes as 'meta-governance' (p.7-8). Secondly, translating rhetoric into workable policy promotes inevitable governance failure. Indeed Jessop (1999) pragmatically argues that we must expect all governance systems to fail, but proceed as

if they are not going to fail, what he calls the ‘self-reflexive irony’ of governance and meta-governance (ibid, pp.11-12).

My analysis of Hull’s 2002 Community Strategy reveals a general tendency towards a more holistic interpretation of sustainability by the LSP of that time, one which at least, attempts to consider economic, social and environmental issues. However, the very fact that the Community Strategy was given the name ‘Urban Renaissance’ may reveal something about its main focus and priorities. The concept of urban renaissance was adopted by New Labour as illustrated with the formation of the Urban Task Group in 1999 and their subsequent report, *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (1999). Urban renaissance, in a similar fashion to its American counterpart, ‘the new urbanism’ (see Katz, 1994; also Ellis, 2002) sought to focus on economic led regeneration of cities. Indeed, Lord Rogers, in his foreword to the 1999 document makes explicit the need “to increase investment in our urban areas, using public finance and incentives towards opportunities for lasting regeneration. And we must all take responsibility... Our cities need strong leadership and democratic structures which are meaningful and accessible to citizens” (Urban Task Force, 1999, p.8). Thus through such rhetoric, it can be construed that national level policy still emphasised the precedence of economic considerations within local democratic structures like LSPs, even though Community Strategies like ‘Urban Renaissance’ were, *prima facie*, waxing lyrical about integrating economic, social and environmental issues into the local sustainability governance equation. As well as the work of authors already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (Raco, 2005; Gibbs *et al.*, 2001; Batchelor and Patterson, 2007; Jonas *et al.*, 2003) which highlight the tensions between economic, social and environmental parameters within sustainability policy, the work of Lucas and Fuller (2005) exemplifies similar tensions in the context of LSPs and Community Strategies. They see

the environmental strand of sustainable development losing out to social and economic issues within LSPs because of the influence of national policy, through the UK National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, which is used as a guiding framework for the development of Community Strategies and is skewed towards socio-economic targets.

Such concerns seem justified by this examination of Hull's first LSP and Community Strategy. There is explicit reference to the synergistic national-local role played by the National Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy: "local partnerships will be developing local community action plans within the framework of the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Both processes need to inform each other" (CityVision, 2002, p.9). Therefore, whilst much of the rhetoric within the *Urban Renaissance* Community Strategy offers a local sustainability fix that could potentially alleviate the economic – social – environment tension, reflecting national priorities may promote socio-economic considerations over environmental ones. This highlights a paradox between implementing national and local priorities for sustainable development.

Furthermore, Hull's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy being mentioned at the end of the Community Strategy document offers further evidence of strong links between the two local strategies and they have the same eight key themes (ibid, p.51), which include environmental aspects. This highlights a possible contradiction with Lucas and Fuller's (2005) assertion that environmental issues may lose out to socio-economic issues as Hull's NRS mentions economic, social and *environmental* aspects. Hull City Council set up area co-ordination teams whose key task was to make sure that "other key partners take seriously their responsibility towards promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of the city at the local level" (ibid, p.52). This represents how

at the time, Hull City Council attempted to devolve wider discourses of sustainable development down to the neighbourhood level.

Interlinked with LSPs and Community Strategies as part of New Labour's local government modernisation programme is how best to promote more participatory forms of governance which involve community stakeholders (DETR, 1998, chapter 4). Given that central government guidance on LSPs advocates the VCS forming an integral role to its overall operational success (DETR, 2001, p.4), one would expect the documentation related to LSPs i.e. Community Strategies to articulate particular roles and functions of the VCS, in as much as they, to some extent represent community stakeholders.

There are various references to the community and the VCS in Hull's 2002 Urban Renaissance Community Strategy. The section covering how the LSP and Community Strategy had evolved does mention the VCS, but generically as "organisations drawn from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors" (p.5). This lacks specificity as to what the exact role the VCS will play in shaping the Community Strategy and the LSP, although mention of them here does convey the notion that the community or VCS had some involvement in the formation of the LSP. However, there is no mention as to what types of VCS groups were involved in this process and how they were chosen, there is just reference to "potential partners identified" (p.5). This generic reference is further confirmed on page 8, which reads: "consequently, involvement of communities (of place and interest) will be at all levels of partnership activity. Community involvement and community development strategies are being prepared to facilitate effective involvement". The sections 'what community and stakeholders said' at the end of each themed section only refer to the VCS in generic terms.



The first reference to a specific local VCS groups appears on page 17 where the North Bank Forum is described as “a key partner” in the ‘Improving Health and Social Welfare’ section. This shows that VCS groups were being utilised in particular traditional problem areas experienced by the city of Hull. In the census of 2001 those residents described in ‘not good health’ equated to 11.2% compared to a national average of 9% (Office of National Statistics, 2008), reflecting the health problems experienced by the residents of Hull. At the time, Hull was one of the 88 most deprived areas in the country which qualified for the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. This was extra money given to the local council and LSP by central government to improve local services (DCLG, 2008c).

This page also links the health problem with wider definitions of sustainable development which include both ‘quality of life’ and environmental discourses:

*Health is important for a good quality of life, for example by enhancing learning and employment opportunities. Similarly, the impact on health of a deteriorating environment, poor housing, crime or the fear of it and social exclusion mean that concerted action across all themes by all partners is required” (CityVision, 2002, p.17).*

This is significant inasmuch as the documentation conveys an explicit link between a particular VCS group having some influence in promoting sustainable development in the city of Hull. This section again clarifies the need to work with the VCS on page 19 where it reads: “working with all sectors including the voluntary sector on promoting the independence of older people”, showing that the VCS are being utilised for certain delivery of services in the city.

Whilst the VCS are represented in generic terms in the *Urban Renaissance* Community Strategy, their involvement in Hull's LSP is best represented by the Hull Community Network, formed in 2001. This was set up using the Community Empowerment Fund from Neighbourhood Renewal Fund money to enable VCS involvement in the LSP, with Hull Council for Voluntary Services being the responsible body for the network (HCN, 2007, p.13). Only the 88 deprived areas of England qualify for money from the NRF to set up Community Empowerment Networks (CENs). As such, the East Riding does not qualify for these funds. The main tasks of the HCN were as follows:

- “to gather the views of the VCS in Hull, organise and channel them to the LSP through its representatives.
- to conduct elections for representatives to the various parts of the LSP such as the Sub Boards and the Board.
- to support VCS representatives once elected by providing secretarial and policy support, briefings before meetings and to summarise documents.
- to provide training for community representatives and groups so that they can be effectively involved in meetings.
- to pay out-of-pocket expenses incurred by people in Hull Community Network activities such as transport, care costs, translation and interpretation.
- to visit groups and communities to get them involved in Hull Community Network.
- to give local VCS groups information and feedback as to what is happening in the city of Hull” (HCN website, 2008).

This shows an attempt to channel resources into facilitating VCS participation within the LSP, both through ‘bridging’ and ‘bonding’ social capital within the sector, as well

as forming linkages between communities and decision-makers within LSPs in order to achieve neighbourhood renewal targets (Taylor, 2006). The VCS view of these resources is discussed further in chapters 7 and 8.

### **6.3.2 Hull's second LSP and Community Strategy, 2006-11**

In February 2006, central government criticised Hull's CityVision LSP (alongside Birmingham's and Nottingham's) for underperforming in the most deprived areas. As a result of this, the government withheld 10% of each LSP's Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocation – just under £1.3 million for Hull (DCLG, 2006b). To tackle this problem, Hull launched the 'One Hull' LSP to replace the old 'CityVision' LSP and produced a new Community Strategy entitled *Living, Learning and Working* (2006). The new LSP and Community Strategy were launched in July 2006 alongside the appointment of a new LSP director. In the context of this research, such changes are important because they reflected the intended policy trajectory of the new strategy by new management. Namely issues related to social exclusion and economic well-being were taking greater precedence within LSP-related literature in comparison to, for instance, environmental issues.

The new Community Strategy was a plan that was intended, in the words of the new director, to “improve the economy of Hull, to really tackle some challenging issues that face us around education, learning, skills, but also, importantly to strive to improve the quality of life for every citizen in the city” (One Hull, 2006a). Therefore, from the onset, the LSP would pay particular attention to improving the economy of Hull through the development of education, health and skills programmes. The emphasis on “every citizen in the city” could promote the notion of intra-generational and inter-generational equity, an essential component of the World Commission on Environment and

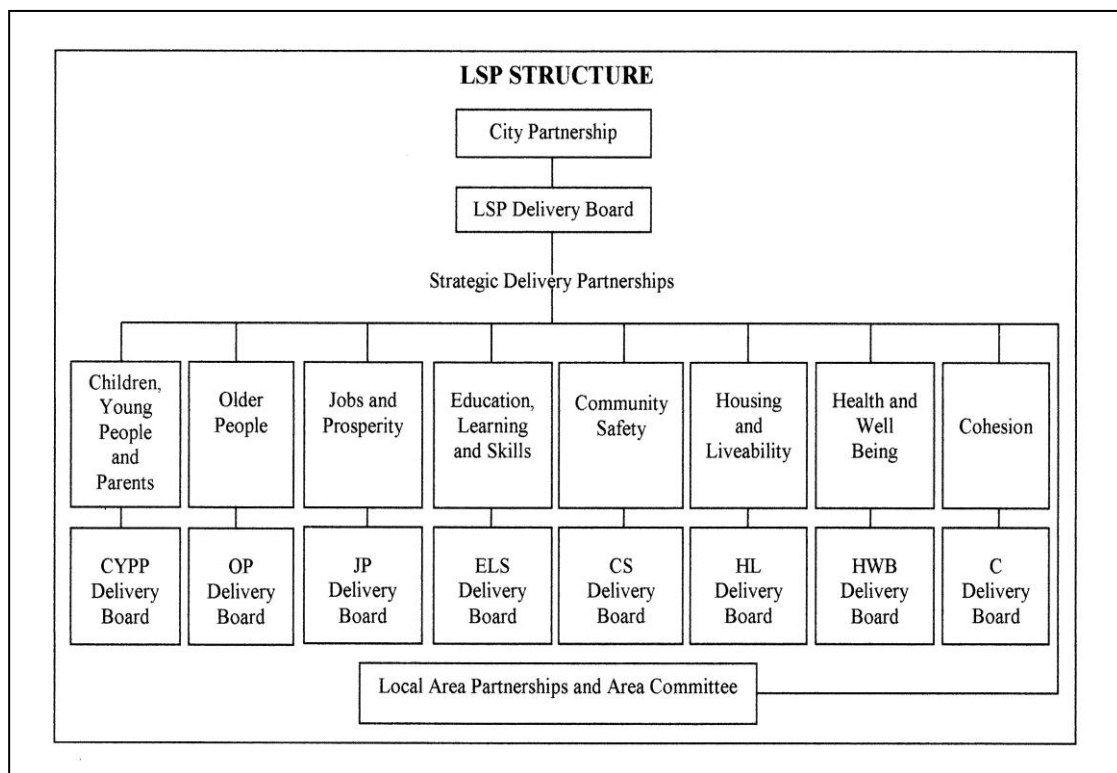
Development's (WCED) widespread definition of sustainable development (see WCED, 1987, p.54). Citizen inclusion was based on a variety of consultation phases during 2005, including documentation being sent to every household and business in the city asking the citizens of Hull what they wanted from their new LSP, over 117,000 in total (One Hull, 2006b, p.7). Such inclusiveness was also applied to the formation of the City Partnership (see figure 6.2), which is "a broad, open and inclusive partnership and, as far as practicable, comprises a balanced number of representatives from organisations and agencies in the Public, Private, Voluntary and Community Sectors, who are actively involved in the City" (One Hull, 2006c). Much of the literature around the launching of the new LSP mirrored its CityVision predecessor, although there was greater emphasis on how local economic-related issues were to be improved, given how the LSP was criticised by central government for underperformance in their most deprived areas. By June 2006, the government decided that Hull had "completed satisfactory plans demonstrating how the gap can be narrowed between the poorest neighbourhoods and the city average" (DCLG News Release, 2006). This acceptance by national government could have prompted LSP management to take advantage of a more positive climate (than previous months) in which to relaunch the new LSP and Community Strategy in July 2006.

Much of the public participatory literature of the new LSP and Community Strategy mirrored its predecessor with emphasis on consultation processes to ensure city wide citizen engagement in the LSP. VCS representatives on the City Partnership were elected after putting themselves forward as candidates for ten places on the City Partnership (Hull Community Network, 2006b, p.6). The City Partnership consists of equal representatives from the private, public and voluntary sectors. Their main remit is to "hold the LSP Delivery Board to account and be responsible for monitoring delivery

of the Community Strategy” (ibid, p.6). The task of the Delivery Board was to “report on progress to the City Partnership toward meeting agreed milestones and oversee and co-ordinate the delivery of the Community Strategy, Local Area Agreement and Neighbourhood Renewal Agenda” (One Hull, 2006d). When looking at the ten successful VCS candidates on the City Partnership, few seemed focussed on sustainable development. Only ‘Developing Our Communities’, a city wide voluntary organisation focussing on issues of social justice and improving certain communities within Hull, could be directly linked to combating sustainable development issues. VCS membership of the Delivery Board was based upon short-listing and interviewing by representatives from Hull Community Network Steering Group, the LSP chair and the LSP manager at that time (Hull Community Network, 2006a, pp.2-3). The three chosen representatives were from a social enterprise, a health charity and the Church of England. Here too, sustainable development does not figure very highly. This is somewhat surprising because one of the main remits of the LSPs (through their Community Strategies) was to “contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK” (DETR, 2001, p.5) and therefore one would expect the ‘One Hull’ LSP and accompanying Community Strategy to have member stakeholders who actively promote sustainability objectives. Whilst it can be argued that the social strand of sustainable development is partially represented through Hull DOC’s membership on the City Partnership, environmental issues in 2006, for instance, had no stakeholder voice at LSP management level.

This is also reflected in analysis of Hull’s 2006 Community Strategy. There were 3 core priorities, none of which, on the face of it, emphasised environmental issues – ‘Jobs and Prosperity’; ‘Education, Learning and Skills’; and ‘Quality of Life’ (One Hull, 2006b, p.7). One could argue that quality of life issues reflect wider cross-cutting discourses of sustainable development, which could include environmental aspects, but the point here

is that the LSP membership have not overtly expressed the environment as having an important role within their 2006 Community Strategy, in comparison to the previous strategy which had a whole section (and a sub-board) named ‘Protecting and Enhancing the Environment’. The rhetoric of the new LSP was intended to be “fit for purpose” (ibid, p.32) and would “drive forward the delivery of these [3 core] priorities through effective partnership working” (ibid, p.32). Figure 6.2 represents the structure of the LSP within the 2006 Community Strategy.



**Figure 6.2: Structure of the One Hull LSP, 2006 (adapted from One Hull, 2006b, p.33)**

Therefore on the face of it, environmental sustainability discourse doesn’t feature much within the 2006 LSP structure as compared to its predecessor, the CityVision LSP. For example, there are no explicit delivery sub-boards charged with the sole remit of ensuring that the environmental strand of sustainable development is embedded within the LSP. Rather, the focus was on improving the areas that the previous LSP was brought to task for (by central government), namely bridging the gap between the

poorest neighbourhoods and the city average. Through such representations, one could suggest that social issues like equity, citizen empowerment and social justice (see Langhelle, 2000; Raco *et al.*, 2006), are given more prominence than environmental issues. However, environmental aspects have been a fundamental part of wider sustainable development discourse for years (see Dryzek, 1997, p.126), yet its inclusion within the headline structure of the One Hull LSP and 2006 Community Strategy seemed less evident. Issues such as jobs, housing, community safety and cohesion are more prominent. This shows that representations of what sustainable development should encompass are subject to local particularistic government/governance changes, even though national policy guidance for LSPs (DETR, 2001, p.2) and Community Strategies (DETR, 1999c, section 9) emphasised economic, social, environmental and physical aspects of sustainable development. This resonates with ideas by Raco *et al.* (2006) who suggested that “CS formation [has] had a range of contrasting and, at times, contradictory effects on the politics of local governance as national guidelines are refracted through existing local political, social, and economic relations. In different places, different processes and practices of strategy development and implementation have taken place” (p.493). In the case of analysing Hull’s 2006 Community Strategy, one could suggest that environmental issues have been marginalised in place of more pressing local socio-economic priorities.

Just as Hull’s LSP structure in figure 6.2 reveals a lack of environmental sustainability within the board structure, analysis of Hull’s current Community Strategy reinforces this notion. The third core priority, ‘Quality of Life’, is the priority in which one would expect sustainable development related discourse to be represented; however ‘quality of life’ only includes the more ‘human’ aspects of sustainable development, for example ‘health and wellbeing’, rather than any physical, ecological characteristics of the

environment, like for example, biodiversity. It reads: “Quality of life for Hull residents is affected by a combination of economic, social and environmental factors, and the Community Strategy aims to maintain the balance of these through delivery of its three interrelated priorities for action between 2006-2011: Jobs and Prosperity; Education, Learning and Skills; Quality of Life” (One Hull, 2006b, p.10). This marked a change from the 2002 Community Strategy (see figure 6.1), which had greater emphasis on education and learning. Thus whilst the 2006 Community Strategy makes reference to quality of life being affected by ‘environmental factors’, it is difficult seeing how jobs, prosperity, education and learning are intrinsically linked to ecological issues, making the 2006 Strategy more overtly skewed towards the socio-economic side of sustainability.

However, one could argue that the ‘One Hull’ LSP was only following what central government guidance required by implementing a cross-cutting agenda for sustainable development that aligned economic, social *and* environmental issues. On one hand, simply compartmentalising the environment into a separate sub-board within the LSP governance structure may weaken its ability to be heard amongst sub-boards whose (socio-economic) remits were given more prioritisation by local government and LSP management e.g. the Jobs and Prosperity sub-board. On the other hand, if the environmental pillar of sustainable development had to co-exist with socio-economic pillars via an integrated LSP governance structure and Community Strategy, through the guise of a quality of life agenda, there is the danger that such an agenda may conflate particular environmental ‘in fashion’ issues like climate change with the environment. As such, there is the problem of other important issues like biodiversity or waste management, which also constitute the environmental pillar of sustainable development, being given less attention. Thus, I acknowledge that a tension exists between how



sustainable development policy implementation is represented through national requirements, and the way it is translated down and manifested in local governance spaces like LSPs. By giving priority to examining the way the environmental pillar is represented within such local spaces, this research will elucidate whether weak interpretations of sustainability are being prioritised within such local governance spaces, as suggested by the literature cited in section 2.3.3.

However, what is unusual about Hull's 2006 Community Strategy is that it does not refer to the core themes and guiding principles of the 2005 national sustainable development strategy, *Securing the Future*. This national document suggests that 'environmental limits' will be given more of a precedence (DEFRA, 2005a, p.6) with a specific reference to the importance of environmental issues like biodiversity (ibid, p.16). Yet the One Hull LSP has not prioritised environmental limits and biodiversity through its governance structures and strategy. This not only highlights the inconsistent nature of how policy is translated from national to local levels, but also shows how, at the local level in Hull, there has been a gradual marginalisation of environmental issues within the LSP's focus on sustainability. This brings into question the use of LSPs and Community Strategies as a governance fix for local sustainable development.

However, this is not to say that environmental or ecological issues have been completely omitted within the current Community Strategy. An alternative reading is that the definitions of what constitutes sustainability may have evolved at the national level, with more of an emphasis on socio-economic issues. The classic Brundtland definition is still quoted: "the community strategy is based firmly on the principles of sustainability... only by understanding all the impacts of our actions, can we ensure that they are truly sustainable, 'and meet the needs of the present without compromising the

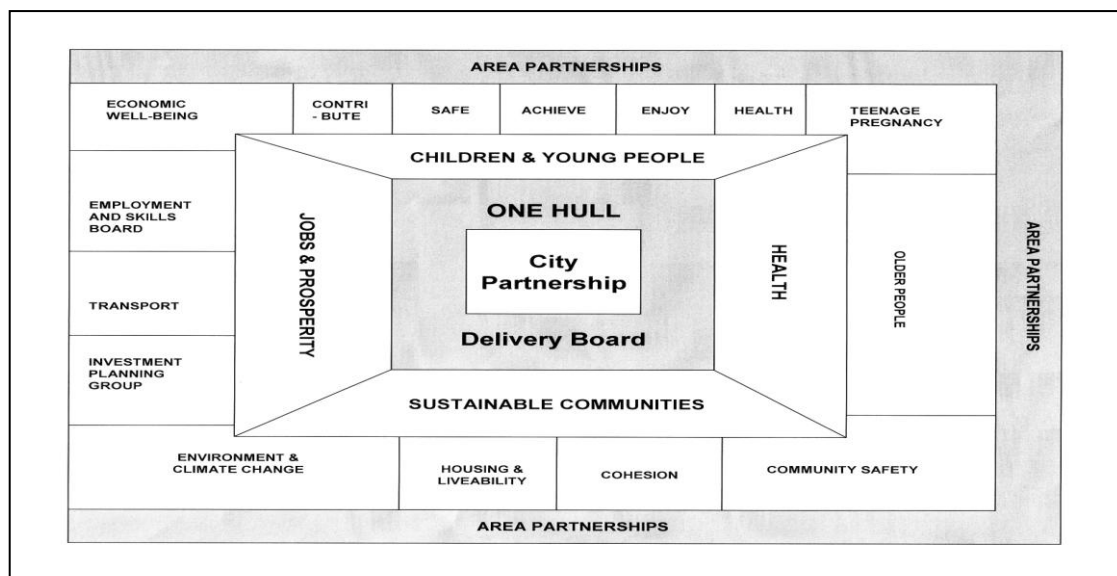
ability of the future to meet its own needs” (ibid, p.10). This shows how Brundtland still holds sway in many policy documents to what Sneddon *et al.* (2005) calls a “guiding institutional principle” (p.253).

But within the rhetoric of the 2006 Community Strategy there is less focus on environmental issues like biodiversity, ecology and green space, and subsequently no sub-board tasked to focus on these. A broader notion of what constitutes ‘the environment’ is being replaced with a narrow focus on climate change. Although the 2006 Community Strategy doesn’t specifically reference the 2005 *Securing the Future* national sustainable development strategy, with its prioritisation of environmental limits and climate change as one of its four priority themes (DEFRA, 2005a, p.6), local commitment to climate change is still implied: “[the LSP] will prepare a Climate Change Strategy for the city and introduce a new sustainability appraisal process for all key projects and plans...” (ibid, p.11). However, the fact that there is no mention of a local action plan or framework to combat climate change strategy within the indicators and targets section (ibid, p.34) suggests that the climate change issue may not have as much priority as other issues like employment, education, crime, housing, life expectancy, decision-making processes and social cohesion, which are mentioned. Furthermore, if climate change were a priority, then there would have been an LSP board charged with addressing it.

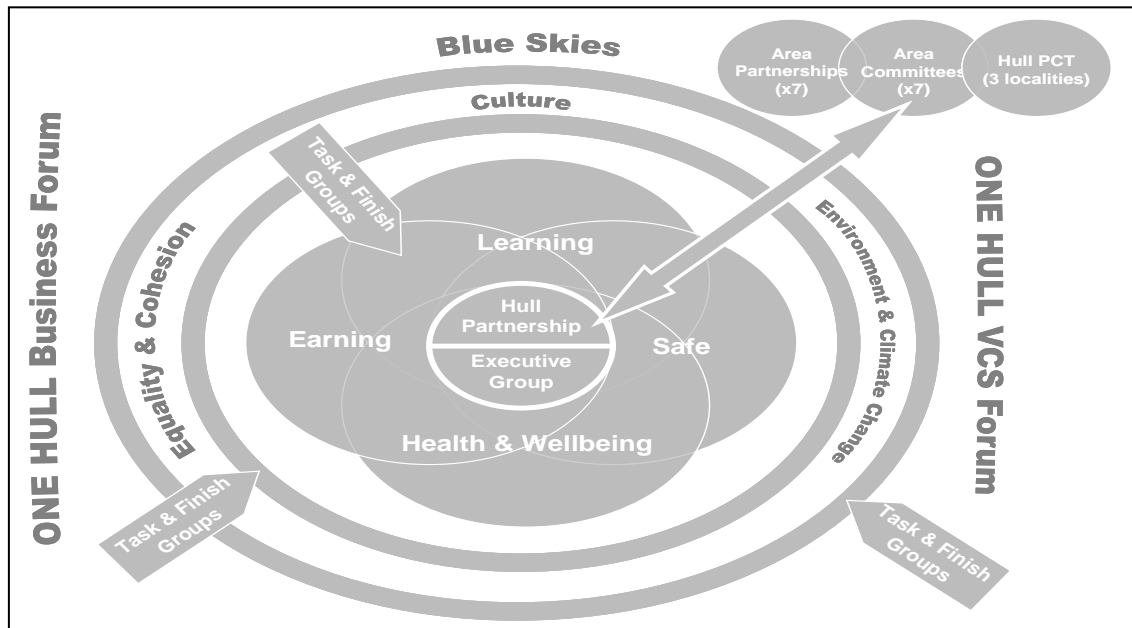
### **6.3.3 Subsequent changes to Hulls LSP and Community Strategies**

Since the launch of the Community Strategy in July 2006, the LSP structures have changed twice, once in October 2007 (see figure 6.3) and once in April 2008 (see figure 6.4). The 2007 structure placed greater emphasis on sustainability issues than the 2006 structure (figure 6.2), because a sustainable communities sub-group was added, charged

with delivery of issues related to environment and climate change, housing and liveability, cohesion and community safety. This showed the evolutionary nature of the LSP and a response to the fuzziness of sustainable development as a concept (see Markusen, 1999, 2003), the difficulty of LSP and LA officers in understanding and placing it within associated documentation, changes to management or how particular sustainability issues become the current focal point of public policy attention. Climate change is a current example of this – it is not explicitly mentioned in the 2006 structure, but is in the 2007 structure. Another reason is that some groups or individuals involved in the development of the LSP and the associated Community Strategy lobbied for greater emphasis of environmental issues after realising their gradual disappearance from the Community Strategy. After 2006, use of the word ‘environment’ in the LSP structure (figures 6.3 and 6.4) increases, but remains peripheral.



**Figure 6.3: One Hull LSP Governance Structure, 2007 (courtesy of LSP Director, October 2007)**



**Figure 6.4: One Hull LSP Governance Structure, 2008 (courtesy of LSP Secretary, May 2008)**

By contrast, (figure 6.4) earning, health and well-being, learning and safety are priorities. However, the Community Strategy *Living, Learning Working*, has not been changed to match the 2007-8 LSP structure and still emphasises cross-cutting quality of life discourses, with little reference to the environmental aspect of sustainable development.

The other important aim of this chapter is to see how the VCS have been represented in local governance documentation. In terms of the current LSP governance structure, there is explicit reference to the involvement of the VCS through the One Hull VCS Forum (as well as the One Hull Business Forum). However, the current LSP website reads: “Executive Group membership and selection is based on an individuals’ ability to influence within their organisation and demonstrate a commitment to contribute resources and in tackling shared aims” (One Hull, 2009). This suggests that VCS group involvement in driving LSP delivery through the current Executive Group structure, like its Delivery Board predecessor, would evolve out of a selection process. The selection

process involved in choosing Executive Group members is not documented. Chapter 7 examines LSP membership more closely with regard to how the previous Delivery Board selected VCS members.

#### **6.3.4 Hull's Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

Whilst section 6.3 gave a brief chronology of Hull's LBAP experience, this section will scrutinise how sustainable development and the VCS role in promoting this is represented in Hull's latest Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). Hull's LBAP has not changed since 2002 (personal communication, Hull City Council officer, May 2008). Therefore this section will briefly look at how the 2002 plan has positioned discourses of sustainable development and the VCS.

Upon close scrutiny the LBAP only mentions sustainable development and local community action briefly in relation to LA21. Firstly, it mentions how if LA 21 was to be achieved a "wide-ranging programme of action is needed by local authorities and local communities" (Hull Biodiversity Partnership, 2002, p.1). The plan then attempts to link biodiversity with LA21: "Biodiversity is one of the key strands identified in the Kingston-upon-Hull LA 21 Strategy" (ibid, p.2). The importance of biodiversity being linked in with wider discourses of sustainable development which include both ecological and human considerations has been expressed within academic literature (Whatmore, 2002, p.13; Evans, 2007).

However, there is no mention of how the Hull LBAP links into the Hull LSP and its associated Community Plan. The plan then gives a brief chronology of how the 2000 Biodiversity Partnership was formed and how it developed the LBAP. There was an emphasis on the broad nature of the partnership, which ranged from "large statutory

organisations to small local interest groups” (ibid, p.2). Consultation was also mentioned, and this was largely under the auspices of the local council. However, the plan also mentions that it should not be “considered exclusive to any one organisation, nor can its full implementation be achieved by any one organisation” and goes onto suggest that it “should therefore form the basis of activity for many different groups. The challenge is for everyone in the City to consider how they can play their part. We are inviting a wider partnership for interested people” (ibid, p.2). This implies that during the plan’s development phase, community interest in getting involved in biodiversity issues in Hull could have been scarce. However, the Habitat Action Plans and Species Action Plans do have sections on how the community can help biodiversity by a series of actions entitled ‘what we can all do’ in relation to specific habitats and species. Appendix B of the document lists a number of policies related to Hull City Council’s 1995 Nature Conservation Strategy, *Natureplan*. Included within these policies is NCS 8: Community and Voluntary Involvement, which states that “the City Council will seek to continue to work with local residents, voluntary groups and others to manage, enhance and create an accessible range of informal recreational areas of high ecological value throughout the City” (Hull Biodiversity Partnership, 2002, appendix b). This does indicate that from the onset, intention to involve the VCS was there. However, the manner in which the council would work with the VCS was not elaborated upon.

The 2006 annual report of the partnerships progress was also made available online. The report largely concentrates on progress with the Habitat and Species Action Plans, although a section is dedicated to community engagement. However this section summarises community events that had taken place in support of the partnership. There were no references to how the partnership and the LBAP would join-up with other local

governance spaces like the LSP and its associated Community Strategy at that time, even though central government had published on the importance of linking biodiversity plans with community strategies (DEFRA, 2002, 2004). This also indicates how the LSP at the time tended to disregard environmental issues, as explained in section 6.3.2.

#### **6.4 East Riding's LSP, Community Strategies and Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

This section will now examine the parallel development of LSPs, Community Strategies and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan in the East Riding Local Authority area. Before the East Riding Local Strategic Partnership was launched, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council conducted a consultation exercise whereby local residents were asked what they thought were the main issues that would improve the quality of life in the East Riding. This consultation exercise was called 'Riding Around', the first of which was conducted between November 2000 and January 2001. These involved representatives from "partner organisations" (East Riding Council, 2002, p.1) visiting over 80 locations to consult with residents and asking one question: "what three things can we do to improve your quality of life?" (ibid, p.1). However, there is no reference to which partners were involved in the consultation, for instance, whether they were from the public, private or voluntary sectors or a combination of all three. There is only a list of 76 partner organisations on the back page of the first Community Plan. Approximately 12,500 views were recorded in the first Riding Around consultation (in comparison to Hull's first consultation which involved 10,000 interviews), covering a wide range of issues which were characterised into five community aims. Following the first consultation, these 76 public, private and voluntary organisations, signed up to these five community aims (East Riding Council website portal, 2005):

- “Improved Health... Improved Quality of Life
- Greater Prosperity... Higher Living Standards
- Reduced Crime... Reduced Fear of Crime
- Lifelong Learning... Improved Educational Achievement
- A Healthy Environment... For Future Generations” (ER Community Partners, 2001, p.1).

The community partners used these aims and feedback from residents as a basis to prepare the first East Riding of Yorkshire Community Plan, entitled, *Your future... our commitment: Your Community Plan 2001-2006*. The Community Plan was officially launched to residents and distributed via *East Riding News*, a newspaper published by East Riding Council, during May 2001. Further consultation exercises were conducted in September 2001 where partners visited 100 locations over a 40-day period asking the same question concerning quality of life. In addition to this, theme day events were held at various venues including shopping centres, village shops and leisure centres. More specific questions were asked on issues such as crime and the environment. Approximately 7000 comments were received (East Riding Council website portal, 2005).

In terms of how the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) has evolved, before 1999 the East Riding Nature Conservation Liaison Group was responsible for developing the original LBAP entitled *Biodiversity in the East Riding of Yorkshire* (1999) which was published as a draft LBAP in late 1999 for consultation. In 2002, the East Riding Nature Conservation Liaison Group changed its name to the Natural Environment Task Group (NETG) and became part of the East Riding of Yorkshire LSP. In 2006, the NETG then became the Sustainable Natural Environment Task Group (SNETG) in 2006. From



2006 until the present day the SNETG has operated to coordinate natural environment related activity in the East Riding including reviewing and rewriting the LBAP. The SNETG steers and coordinates the activities of the new East Riding of Yorkshire Biodiversity Partnership, the existing East Riding of Yorkshire Local Wildlife Sites Panel and the East Riding of Yorkshire Habitat Survey (Phase 1 and LWS Survey). The East Riding of Yorkshire Biodiversity Partnership was launched in July 2008. Key draft sections of the LBAP have been written recently and will be consulted on with the ERY Biodiversity Partnership, who will also develop other sections and will work towards the adoption and future implementation of the action plan (personal communication, East Riding Biodiversity Officer, July 2008).

#### **6.4.1 East Riding's first LSP and Community Strategy, 2001**

The 7000 comments from the first public consultation exercise were presented at the formal launch of the East Riding LSP, the 'Making It Happen' conference held at Bishop Burton College on 9th November, 2001. Delegates at the conference decided upon key development issues for the LSP, reviewed the results from the 2001 'Riding Around' consultation exercise and discussed potential changes to the Community Plan for 2002 (East Riding Local Strategic Partnership Meeting Minutes, 2001). The 'Riding Around' consultation exercise has occurred every year up to the present with specific focus on a particular theme each year. In 2001 there was no particular theme as it was the first consultation. In 2002 the themes were based around the five community aims of the community plan (East Riding Council, 2003). In 2003 it was on culture and recreation, the economy and the environment (East Riding Council, 2004). In 2004 it was housing and planning, health and social services and crime and safety (East Riding Council, 2005). In 2005 it was the local environment, health and local communities and transport (East Riding Council, 2006a). No 2006 Riding Around document could be

found. In 2007 it was based on the four LSP priorities: children and young people, healthier communities and old people, safer and stronger communities and sustainable communities and transport (East Riding Council, 2008b). The findings of the public consultation in each preceding year governed what key themes would be focused upon in the following year. This showed that the public participation process was working efficiently. There was abundant reference to sustainable development within these different themes, indicating that the East Riding LSP was attempting to attach greater significance to such discourses in the LSP and community planning process. This also resonates with central government guidance on LSP roles and the preparation of community strategies, showing a more joined up, fluent implementation of policy between local, regional and national levels of government. This is also reflected within the academic literature on how public participation within such governance arrangements needs to be heterogeneous and move between policy levels (Carter and Darlow, 1997; Darlow and Newby, 1997; Scott, 1999; Chatterton and Style, 2001; Sharp, 2002; Sharp and Connelly, 2002; Liddle and Townsend, 2003; Newman *et al.*, 2004; Taylor, 2007).

Results from the Riding Around public consultation are discussed at the East Riding LSP annual conference, which is usually held in the autumn of every year. This continuing consultation process is supposed to demonstrate LSP stakeholder commitment to quality of life issues relevant to the general public in the East Riding. In addition to this, the findings in the consultation strategy were to be applied within the community planning process and the structural arrangements of the LSP. As the 2002 Riding Around report reads: “Riding Around and the Community Planning process is to encourage individuals and communities to speak up and get involved in shaping their

own environment, to help improve the quality of life for all” (East Riding Council, 2002, p.24).

This leads on to how VCS representatives were chosen to sit on the first LSP board. Personal communication with the LSP manager (September 2008) revealed that a particular VCS group representative, the chief executive of the Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council, who was at the time, the representative of one of the sub-groups, the Sustainable Communities Action Group, was invited by the council and partners to sit on the main LSP board as the LSP became more consolidated. This shows that there were no formal democratic processes by which other VCS groups could put themselves forward as potential representatives. This was the only information available to me as no documentation pertaining to VCS elections or representations was available from the ER LSP team (unlike in Hull’s case). Similarly, in terms of the governance structure of East Riding’s first LSP, there were no diagrams available (personal communication, LSP Manager, June 2008) making it impossible to compare how sustainable development was represented in the two local authority areas in 2001-2. Documentation on how the VCS representatives were chosen for the first LSP was not available either.

However, East Riding’s first Community Plan (2001) *Your future... our commitment*, was available, which makes no explicit reference to the concept of sustainable development in the introduction, unlike Hull’s first Community Strategy. Instead, sustainable development is represented or implied by using ‘quality of life’ discourses. The plan begins by setting out the five community aims and reiterates the importance of partnership working and consultation with the general public, and of having concerns,

targets and priorities for improving the quality of life for East Riding residents, but also states that it cannot take all concerns into account:

*“This Plan will not address all the concerns of local people or cover every aspect of the partners’ work. Partners will continue to provide their services and tackle the wide range of issues that are important to you. However, when planning their services and activities, partners will take account of the priorities and consider their own contribution to the targets.”* (ER Community Partners, 2001, p.1)

This reference implies that much of the work that the VCS does in terms of implementing sustainable development can be outside the formal governance structures of the LSP (chapter 8 explores this empirically), yet still contribute to the internal targets of the LSP.

In the ‘Riding Around’ consultation, public engagement in the LSP is limited in the sense that whilst ordinary people have the opportunity to express the issues which they think affect quality of life and sustainable development in the East Riding, they are not personally active within the formal governance arrangements and networks which influence policy. Rather, it is the LSP partners’ perceptions of what they think are the main issues. Healey (1999) argues that certain individual identities and the relationships that go on within governance arrangements are important in forming a kind of social capital which is unique to a given locality (ibid, p.113). In the East Riding, the community partners represent such individuals. But complete public representation within the formal LSP governance structure is impractical, so public perceptions have to be ‘(re)interpreted’ by those individual stakeholders who are involved. In agreement

with the institutionalist perspective, it is how power relations are internalised and reconstituted (p.113) and how the playing out of such power relations can potentially pose problems between what is an accurate representation of what the public think are the most relevant issues and what is actually reported by those involved *within* the formal structures of the LSP, as explored empirically in chapter 7. In reference to public consultation in the East Riding, the first Community Plan doesn't explicitly convey the content of public participation that was undertaken in the 'Riding Around' process. The introductory pages are very brief and only concentrate on what the Community Plan is, its evolution, why it is needed and who is supposed to implement it.

Whilst Hull's first Community Strategy attempted to link issues of sustainability with other issues (for example a deteriorating environment was linked with health issues in the health section), the East Riding Community Plan did not represent sustainable development in this way. Rather than attempting to embed or position environmental sustainability discourses within each of the five main community aims, only the fifth aim, entitled 'a Healthy Environment' explicitly used environmental sustainability lexicon directly. The East Riding Community Plan exhibited the inverse to the Hull strategy – health was embedded within the environment section, rather than environmental issues being embedded within the Improved Health... Improved Quality of Life section. In this section of the Community Plan, there is no mention of how an improved environment can have positive effects on people's health. The section only concentrates on improving health services through more doctors and nurses, better access to facilities and reducing time on waiting lists (East Riding Community Partners, 2001, pp.4-7).

On first glance, this implies that environmental sustainability discourses were being approached in silo, there was a separate section for environmental sustainability, ‘a Healthy Environment’ and no attempt was made to align sustainable development with other community aims. This may be because health was seen as more of an important issue than environmental sustainability. However, upon closer scrutiny the document tends to substitute and conflate ‘sustainable development’ with ‘quality of life’ rhetoric. ‘Quality of life’ is referred to in every section of the Community Plan, suggesting an attempt to embed wider sustainable development discourses into all sections of the plan. However, there is no mention of how ‘quality of life’ includes economic, social and environmental issues in their own right. Giddings *et al.* (2002) claimed that environment, society and economy are not unified entities even though they are represented or presented as such. This separation of economy, society and environment is exemplified in the ‘Healthy Environment’ section, which begins by describing five issues relating to improving the quality of life of East Riding residents. These were:

- “better public transport services and facilities
- reduced traffic congestion
- improvements to our roads and footpaths
- provision of cycle paths
- reduced road accidents” (East Riding Community Partners, 2001, p.20)

The very fact that transport issues are mentioned first indicates how sustainable development has been interpreted by the authors in terms of economic infrastructure rather than environmental discourses. One point of contention when trying to embed economic issues (like improving transport infrastructure) directly into a section whose ethos is built around maintaining a healthy ‘green’ environment is the fact that the

implementation of such issues involves unsustainable practices. For example, improving the roads might have a detrimental effect on the physical environment with the use of more non renewable resources and the promotion of increased driving. In addition to this, “better public transport services and facilities” (ibid, p.20) is vague and ambiguous. Its meaning can be construed as the promotion of more buses, trains and lanes. Alternatively, it can simply mean the introduction of more energy efficient transport. The document does set targets to “increase public transport usage by 10% from a 2001 starting point” (ibid, p.21), but there is no accompanying implementation plan as to how this target will be met. Reducing traffic congestion and providing cycle paths go hand in hand with cutting vehicle emissions. Yet to build more cycle paths can also mean the use of more non renewable resources like bitumen to build such cycle paths, so in this sense, there is a paradoxical element to the targets. Therefore, whilst the first five issues in this section relate to sustainable development, they only reflect weak sustainability (Turner, 1993; Gibbs *et al.*, 1998; Neumayer, 1999) in a manner that is sympathetic to economic considerations. The environmental issues one would associate more directly with sustainable development are mentioned on the pages following the transport issues:

- “waste reduction and minimisation
- recycling
- more and better play areas for children
- reducing the amount of dog fouling
- conserving and enhancing the built and natural environment” (East Riding Community Partners, 2001, p.22)

Again, the placing of green issues after economic issues suggest a secondary status given to the environmental aspects of sustainability. Furthermore, the first issues to be

mentioned in this section are waste reduction and recycling. This is highly generalised in comparison to Hull's first Community Strategy, which specifies within the strategy eleven environmental issues that the local community think should be addressed (see CityVision, 2002, p.28). This is not to say that more environmental issues have not been mentioned by the East Riding public. Referring to the 2002 Riding Around report, twenty two different environmental issues were mentioned by the public. These can be seen in table 6.3 below.

Category	No. of general comments	No. of themed comments	Total number of comments	Rank
<b>Public transport services</b>	410	198	608	<b>1</b>
<b>Traffic congestion, speeding and pollution</b>	275	119	394	<b>2</b>
<b>Roads, footpaths and public highways</b>	278	89	367	<b>3</b>
<b>Litter/ general cleanliness and tidiness</b>	283	80	363	<b>4</b>
<b>Parking</b>	308	51	359	<b>5</b>
<b>Management of parks, open spaces, grass and hedgerows</b>	211	113	324	<b>6</b>
<b>Domestic waste/ refuse</b>	158	55	213	<b>7</b>
<b>Planning and building developments, construction and repairs</b>	116	30	146	<b>8</b>
<b>Traffic problems needing improved road design/ changes</b>	92	29	121	<b>9</b>
<b>Recycling</b>	61	49	110	<b>10</b>
<b>Road safety</b>	48	30	78	<b>11</b>
<b>Cycling and cyclists</b>	33	33	66	<b>12</b>
<b>Pollution/ air quality/ business pollutants</b>	26	34	60	<b>13</b>
<b>Drainage and flood defences</b>	39	10	49	<b>14</b>
<b>Green belt, protecting the countryside</b>	22	20	42	<b>15</b>
<b>Conservation of buildings and landmarks</b>	23	1	24	<b>16</b>
<b>General awareness of environmental problems, especially GM crops</b>	11	9	20	<b>17</b>
<b>Noise pollution</b>	9	8	17	<b>18</b>
<b>Coastal defence/ shoreline management</b>	13	1	14	<b>19</b>
<b>Animal/ Wildlife conservation</b>	2	9	11	<b>20</b>
<b>Renewable energy sources, cleaner alternatives to fuel etc.</b>	1	5	6	<b>21</b>
<b>Access to information on developments/ changes</b>	4	1	5	<b>22</b>
	<b>2423</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>3397</b>	

**Table 6.3: Summary of 'environmental' issues mentioned through public consultation (adapted from 2002 'Riding Around' Full Report, p.18).**



Whilst transport issues would be expected to figure highly in the consultation (the East Riding is the largest local authority area by geographic size in England), environmental issues like green belt protection and renewable energy are much further down the list (ranked 15th and 21st respectively). Therefore, on closer scrutiny, it can be argued that the authors of the first Community Plan have taken the 10 issues that are mentioned in the Community Plan (5 on transport issues then the 5 on waste, recycling and the environment, see previous page) and misrepresented them as the top ten environmental issues the East Riding public think should be addressed. Indeed there is also the argument whether public transport services, the highest ranked issue, is directly related to sustainable development. Some might argue that it is linked more to an area's economic infrastructure. Furthermore, some of the ten issues mentioned in the Community Plan are not even ranked in the top ten within the 2002 'Riding Around' final report, for example, road safety and cycling are ranked 11th and 12th respectively (ibid, p.18) but feature in the first five issues mentioned in the Healthy Environment section of the Community Plan. Although one might argue such inferences are tenuous, the first five issues are more closely linked with economic infrastructure than any stronger environmental discourses of sustainable development.

The issue that more obviously relates to the environmental pillar of sustainable development is 'conserving and enhancing the built and natural environment'. Unusually, this forms the last issue of the ten environmental issues mentioned in the plan. Even upon analysis of the Riding Around consultation report, this issue is ranked lower than tenth ('Green belt, protecting the countryside' is ranked 15th; 'Conservation of buildings and landmarks' is ranked 16th). This suggests that the authors were probably aware that they needed to address environmental issues in the Community Plan. This could be through the influence of the central government document entitled,

*Preparing community strategies: government guidance to local authorities* published in 1999. This emphasised how a Community Plan/Strategy should “contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely, with local goals and priorities relating, where appropriate, to regional, national and even global aims” (DETR, 1999c, section 10). Section 14 of that document does highlight the integration of environmental issues by italicising the “and” in text. It reads, “Only by promoting and improving the economic, social *and* environmental well-being of their communities will community strategies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK” (DETR, 1999c). Therefore, whilst the public consultation exercise had shown that environmental issues did not figure very highly in public opinion, the authors could have been under pressure from higher tiers of government to include environmental discourses within the Community Plan. This could also account for why the authors named the issue ‘conserving and enhancing the built and natural environment’, as it encapsulates a variety of environmental issues in a generalised way that is subject to multiple interpretations. The main targets and priorities in this section were to:

- “Develop a local biodiversity action plan to conserve local wildlife
- Develop the Joint Structure Plan and the Local Plan which will ensure more sustainable patterns of development and protection for our built heritage
- Facilitate three Village Design Statements per year
- Review existing ‘conservation areas’ and designate a further 20 areas
- Gain at least 3 ‘eco-school’ awards to promote local conservation and protection issues amongst young people” (East Riding Community Partners, 2001, p.23).

This shows that at that time, current interpretations of environmental priorities were related to the development of biodiversity and conservation plans, and more significantly, to embed environmental ideas into the education system with the introduction of eco-school awards. This showed a realisation by LSP stakeholders that to develop sustainably, young people had to be made aware of and get involved in environmental issues. However, the mention of developing a biodiversity plan is ironic given that biodiversity (as an issue in its own right) was not mentioned as one of the 10 main quality of life priorities in the Healthy Environment section of the Community Plan. This implies a secondary status given to biodiversity issues.

To summarise, much of the rhetoric within East Riding's first Community Plan did not represent the integration of all economic, social and environmental issues as directed by central government. Any explicit reference to sustainable development only appeared in the section, 'A Healthy Environment'. The Plan instead conflated sustainable development with quality of life discourses, which weakened the environmental sustainability aspect. Whilst it has been argued here that this section did make a link between social and environmental considerations i.e. health through less pollution and better transport facilities, there was no mention of environmental issues in the Improved Health, Greater Prosperity, Reduced Crime and Lifelong Learning sections. This was only done in the Healthy Environment section, showing how the concept of environmental sustainability was treated in silo within the policy document.

When analysing how the VCS can contribute to sustainable development in East Riding's first Community Plan, like Hull's first strategy, references are scarce. There is no mention of voluntary groups within the 'healthy environment' section of the East Riding Community Plan. The only references to VCS groups or volunteering occurs

firstly on page 3, where contact details of a representative from the VCS are listed. The next reference is in the 'Greater Prosperity' section on page 10, through "generating more of a community atmosphere through better village hall and centres through increased volunteering" (East Riding Community Partners, 2001). There is a list of the 'community partners' involved in its consultation which refers to some VCS groups within the East Riding. These are larger voluntary groups like Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council and the North Bank Forum (ER Community Partners, 2001). Within the first plan then, there were no references to how the VCS would play a role within the development of the LSP, let alone how much influence they would have within it, even though national government guidance specified the engagement and equal involvement of the local community within the LSP and Community Strategy process respectively (see DETR, 1999c, paragraph 50-58; DETR, 2001, p.4).

#### **6.4.2 East Riding's revised Community Strategy, 2003**

East Riding's Community Plan was revised and redrawn in 2003. The five community aims and priorities remained the same. However, there were six new LSP targets grouped into four cross-cutting areas: 'Young People', 'Disability', 'Racism and Insularity' and 'Civic Pride'. Such areas relate to the social side of the sustainability equation like equity and justice, and there was no mention of environmental aspects within these four cross-cutting areas. However, in the section 'a Healthy Environment', protection and enhancement of the environment is mentioned within the lead statement at the beginning of the section: "The Local Strategic Partnership recognises that the East Riding is seen as a healthy place to live and it wishes to maintain the quality of life and protect and enhance the environment" (East Riding Community Partners, 2003, p.35). The parallel statement on the first Community Plan only mentioned 'quality of life' and not the environment (see East Riding Community Partners, 2001, p.20). So the

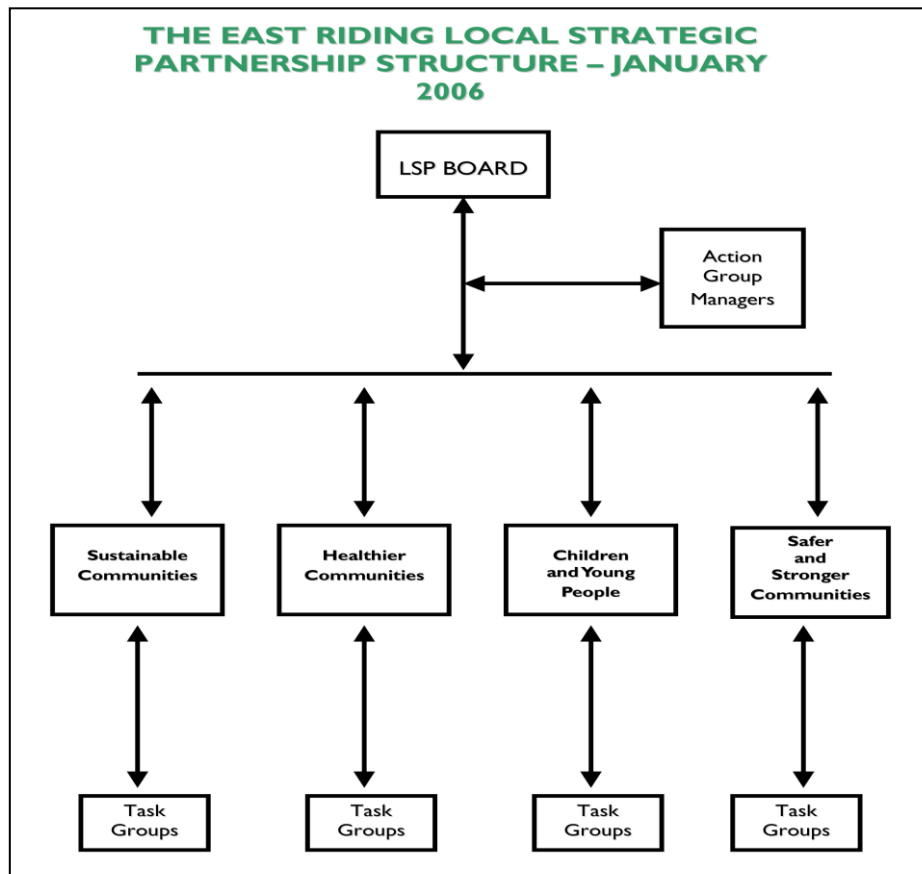
prominence of environmental aspects in the updated plan is unusual given that the new four cross-cutting areas did not mention environmental considerations.

The main difference within the aims and priorities sections was that the 2003 plan now had reports on performance as two years had passed since the introduction of the first Community Plan. Therefore, another way to evaluate how the LSP/Community Plan was performing in terms of improving the environment is whether targets in the preceding plan had been met. In terms of recycling and waste, since 2001, the target of 25% by 2006 of household waste that is recycled or composted had not been met. By the end of 2002 it was 11.5% (East Riding Community Partners, 2003, p.40). In relation to the 'Conserve and enhance our built heritage and natural environment' issue, the section mentions how a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) had been drawn up in 2001 and that contact had been made with local people and VCS groups, who would contribute to the implementation of management plans for local biodiversity (ibid, p.42). Whilst this was not listed as a major priority by East Riding residents in the original Riding Around consultation, it does indicate that biodiversity issues were being dealt with by the LSP and council. Although VCS involvement in East Riding's LBAPs are discussed in more depth in section 6.4.5, mentioning of the LBAP within the 2003 Community Plan shows how the LSP administration was attempting to integrate separate plans related to the environmental strand of sustainable development (like LBAPs) and associated targets within current LSP documentation. The original target of 3 eco-schools in the 2001 Community Plan was surpassed, with 14 schools getting eco-school awards and 5 schools looking to achieve the highest green flag status, although no target date is mentioned within the plan (ibid, p.42). This suggested that the East Riding council were beginning to achieve success in embedding environmental initiatives into local education.

### **6.4.3 East Riding's second LSP and Community Strategy, 2006-16**

During 2006, the East Riding LSP introduced four new priority targets alongside a conceptual structural change (see figure 6.5 overleaf). The Community Plan, officially launched in November 2006, was revised accordingly to cover the period to 2016 with a conceptual diagram depicting the new structure of the LSP in relation to the four new priority targets. The new Community Plan was entitled, 'Our East Riding' and was more robust than previous ones. It was over 40 pages long (the 2001 strategy was only 24 pages long) and the contents page immediately conveyed greater commitment to the concept of sustainable development by the LSP stakeholders with reference to 'Our Sustainability Principles' as a section of the document. There are also sections focussing on global, national and local challenges, on East Riding's role in the region and on each of four priorities, based upon national shared priorities:

- Sustainable Communities and Transport
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Children and Young People (East Riding Council, 2006b, p.29)



**Figure 6.5: East Riding LSP structure, 2006 (from East Riding LSP website, 2006b)**

Therefore, on the face of it, the contents page gives greater significance towards the concept of sustainable development than the first Community Plan. The LSP website reiterated this, with the main function of the LSP being “to develop and deliver a plan for the ongoing sustainable development of the area” (East Riding Local Strategic Partnership website, 2006c). Key tasks of the East Riding LSP from 2006 were supposed to:

- “Prepare and implement the Community Plan for the East Riding
- Bring together local plans, partnerships and initiatives to provide a forum through which service providers such as the local authority, the police and health services can work together to meet local needs

- Develop and implement a Compact between public sector agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations and groups” (East Riding Local Strategic Partnership website, 2006c).

In the context of how the VCS were to be included within LSP processes, the development of a Local Compact between the VCS and the public sector represents an enhanced role for the VCS in comparison to previous key tasks of the LSP pre-2006. The East Riding Compact, *Better Together* (2006) refers to eight key principles in order to strengthen the relationship between the voluntary and public sectors:

- “Equal partnership working
- Equalities
- Improving communications
- Consultation
- Participation and Policy Appraisal
- Funding, Commissioning and Resources
- Volunteering and Capacity Building
- Community Groups
- Diverse Communities: Black and Minority Ethnic Groups” (East Riding LSP, 2006)

It was the task of the LSP to co-ordinate the development of the Compacts by bringing together a number of partners. VCS partners included East Riding Voluntary Action Services (an umbrella CVS-type organisation), Hull and East Yorkshire Mind, Hull All Nations Alliance, Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council and the North Bank Forum. From the list of organisations involved in representing the VCS, many of these



groups have an historical relationship with the public sector. For example, Humber and Wold Community Council has always had a prominent position as an organisation which represents the VCS in the East Riding (earlier in the chapter I explained how this particular representative was invited by the council and its partners to sit on the LSP Board). The VCS members of the LSP Board mentioned above were also invited by the LSP Board rather than elected (personal communication, LSP Manager, September, 2008). This is discussed further in chapter 7. Whilst Raco *et al.* (2006) assert that the “empowerment focussed nature” (p.479) of community plan implementation processes could disrupt voluntary-public relationships, the implementation strategies in the East Riding tend to be an exception. This could be because the LSP is charged with developing and implementing the Local Compact, strengthened through the fact that the LSP manager is also the Compact manager, which gives the whole implementation process a degree of continuity. There was a Voluntary Sector Steering Group for the Compact, led by one of the LSP Board representatives, ERVAS. This group’s remit was to meet with the council to improve the strategic dialogue of the Compacts (personal communication, LSP Manager, September 2008). However, the extent to which the Community Strategy process represents more participatory forms of democracy in as much as it opens up governance pathways for the VCS to have greater influence in previously (local) governmental matters, one could argue that the ‘same old VCS faces’ are merely replacing the public sector as representational actors, nullifying the intended multi-participatory ethos of Community Strategies. In fairness however, the East Riding LSP and council have actively attempted to create multi-participatory pathways, both horizontally (e.g. the Riding Around consultation process) and vertically. An example of the vertical is the integration of local plans and partnerships, which fits into earlier (DETR) national government guidance on Community Strategies published in

December 1999, although it had taken over five years for the East Riding LSP to follow such guidance.

The sustainability principles on page 19 of the 2006 Community Plan explicitly emphasised multi-participatory governance, inter- and intra-generational equity and the importance of integrating the economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development:

- “balance and integrate the social, economic and environmental components of East Riding communities
  - meet the needs of existing and future generations
  - respect the needs of other communities in the wider region or internationally”
- (East Riding Council, 2006b, p.19).

It also lists six sustainability principles agreed by the Local Strategic Partnership:

- “build strong inclusive urban and rural communities which reflect our culture, now and in the future
- ensure that the East Riding is well managed
- protect and enhance the quality of our towns and villages
- provide quality environments
- be economically prosperous
- provide services which meet the people’s needs and are accessible to all” (ibid, p.19).

Whilst this section still uses the words ‘quality of life’, it is different to the first Community Plan in that the phrases ‘sustainable’ and ‘sustainable communities’ appear regularly. This represents an active attempt to embed wider conceptual understandings of the term into the plan. A large section of the plan focuses on a range of priorities for the East Riding that “are focused around long term sustainability principles which aim to improve the quality of life” (ibid, p.20). Example of such priorities include ‘Our Environment’ where key issues that respondents felt would improve their local neighbourhood were reductions in litter, speed limits and improved road maintenance (East Riding Council, 2006b, p.22). The listed priorities are related to the findings of the Riding Around consultations, which emphasised more participatory forms of democracy rather than representational forms, in local governance (see Raco *et al.*, 2006). This is backed up by explicit reference to how the community and the VCS would contribute to sustainable development issues through partnership working:

*“It is more important than ever that local agencies in these areas work together to tackle issues related to education, housing, environmental inequalities, health, attainment, employment, crime and safety and general well-being. The voluntary and community sectors have a key role in service delivery and tackling inequalities and it is also important to recognise how the greater involvement of residents could make a key difference in the future”* (East Riding Council, 2006b, p.26).

In the context of the research aims of this chapter, this preceding quote represented how VCS activity was being intrinsically linked to wider discourses of sustainable development and that on paper, there was a commitment by local government to a local voluntary-state partnership. This voluntary-state partnership ethos is reiterated in the

‘Sustainable Communities and Transport’ section: “The voluntary and community sectors are strengthened so that they can work more effectively with the public sector to provide services that meet people's needs and improve their quality of life” (ibid, p.31). The development of Local Area Agreements (LAAs) represented how the VCS, as key partners, have been more formally tied into local governance processes and outcomes, and their participation endorsed by higher tiers of government (ODPM, 2004b, 2005b, c; DCLG, 2008c, d). As the 2005 guidance on LAAs reads:

*“A Local Area Agreement is a three year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government, represented by the Government Office, and a local area, represented by the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and other key partners at local level”.*  
(ODPM, 2005b, p.6)

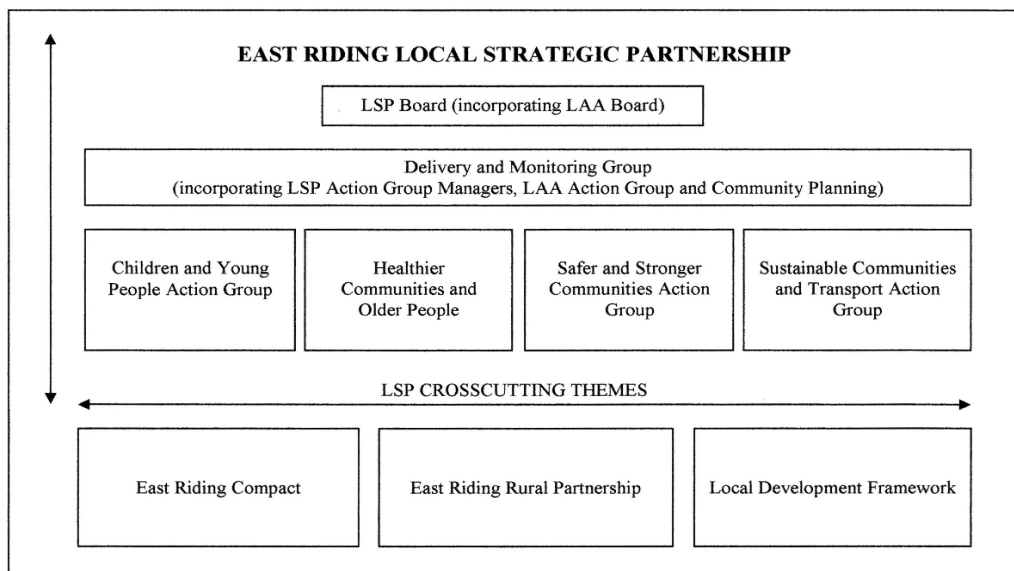
Unlike the processes by which VCS representation on the LSP Board came about previously (invitation rather than election), the focus on delivery of LAAs meant that the LSP had to work through a greater number of VCS organisations, rather than a core few (personal communication, LSP Manager, September 2008).

*“The local Third Sector has a vital role to play in the development of the LAA and should be engaged throughout the process – from informing and helping to set priorities, to the final agreement of targets... and as a provider of local community services many of which will be complimentary to the aims of the LAA”* (DCLG, 2007, p.12)

This shows how in theory LAAs should provide a more robust policy framework from which VCS groups can get involved in promoting wider discourses of sustainable development in their respective locality. In the 2006 Community Plan then, such multi-scalar and multi-participatory representations of how the VCS can get involved with the LSP process, demonstrating a rhetorical commitment by the state to governance interventions. Yet ensuring the practical success of LSPs is more complicated, as chapter 7 later shows.

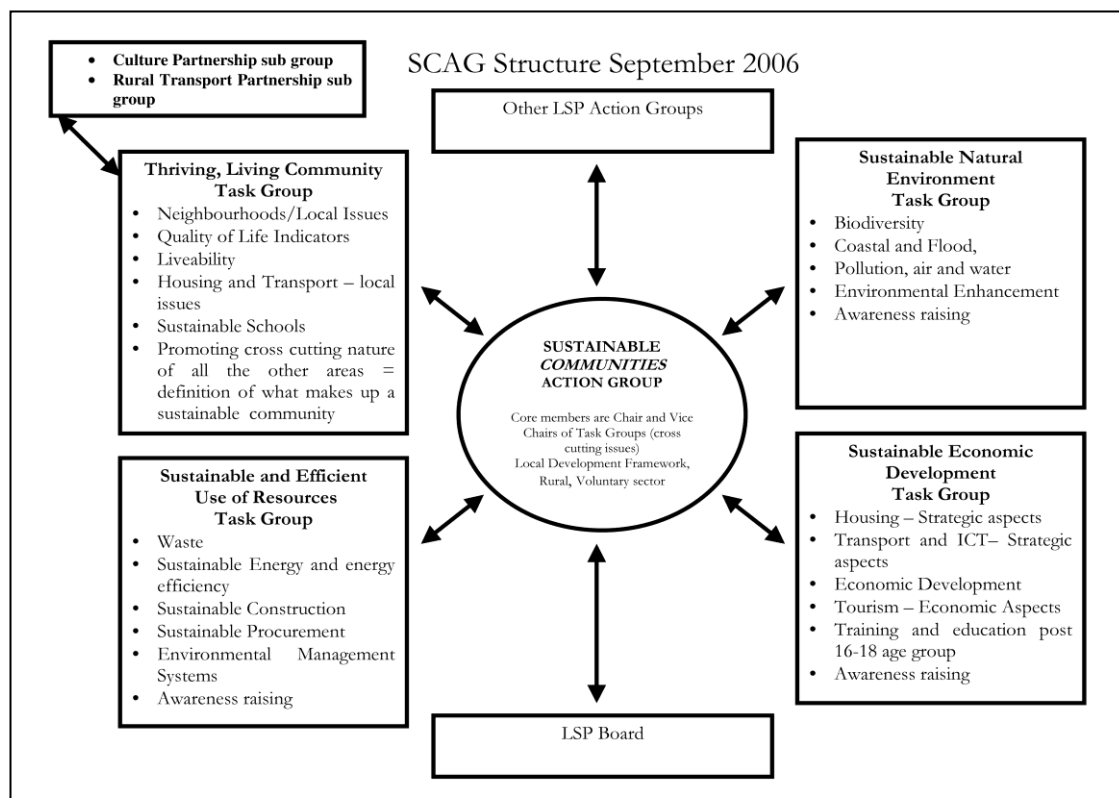
#### 6.4.4 Subsequent changes to East Riding’s LSP and Community Strategies

Since January 2006 there has been a revised Community Plan (2008), and a new LSP structure (figure 6.6 below). In terms of participatory forms of governance, the most important changes are the explicit references to the Compact and the introduction of a LAA Board and Action Group, showing a heightened role for LAAs within the current LSP structure.



**Figure 6.6: East Riding LSP Governance Structure, 2006 (adapted from East Riding LSP website, 2007a)**

With reference to sustainable development, ‘Sustainable Communities and Transport’ is still one of the four main priorities. When looking at the current website there is a link to the Sustainable Communities and Transport Action Group structure, which depicts four task groups: Thriving, Living Community Task Group, Sustainable and Efficient Use of Resources Task Group, Sustainable Natural Environment Task Group and the Sustainable Economic Development Task Group. Each of these groups has their own particular aims and issues they concentrate on. For example, the Sustainable Natural Environment Task Group are charged with looking after biodiversity, coastal and flood, pollution air and water, environmental enhancement and awareness raising. Whilst the Sustainable Economic Development Task Group are charged with the strategic aspects of housing, transport and ICT, economic development, tourism (economic aspects), training and education post 16-18 age group and awareness raising (see figure 6.7).



**Figure 6.7: Sustainable Communities Action Group structure (from East Riding LSP website, 2007b)**

This shows how since September 2006, the LSP has attempted to depict wider discourses of sustainable development and integrate economic, social and environmental issues through the arrangement of such task groups, who then report to the Sustainable Communities and Transport Action Group, who in turn, report to the Delivery and Monitoring Group and the LSP Board (see figure 6.6). Even though such documentation represents the conceptual joining up of wider discourses of sustainable development, that doesn't mean that it is joined up in practical terms. Problems associated with hierarchies within structures still manifest themselves, like internal boundaries which restrict communication between groups, potentially delimiting the capacity of 'agency' amongst lower-tiered groups, promoting 'meta governance' (see Jessop, 1999), that is higher tier monitoring (in this case by the LSP Delivery Board) of such lower tiers (Task Groups) (as discussed in section 6.3.1). The main problem with partnership structures that attempt to amalgamate multi-stakeholder views is that, in practice, a power differential is created between stakeholders that interfere with the altruistic intent of LSPs as being an empowering multi-participatory policy tool (see Raco *et al.*, 2006, p.479). This notion will be further explored in chapter 7.

The East Riding Community Plan (2008a) also repeatedly used words like 'service' and 'communities', as well as the use of local identity and pride of place as a motivator, implying both the LSPs commitment to involving all local residents and community ownership of the Plan (see Tewdwr-Jones *et al.* 2006, p.548). Such language invokes "qualitative notions of sustainability" (Raco, 2005, pp.333-4), like that used in Hull's first Community Strategy, aligning uniqueness with a particular locality. Here we see the way East Riding's current Community Plan describes the transformation of the locality from an aspatial entity to a place with particular distinctiveness and meaning (see Massey, 1984, 1991; also Taylor, 1999), where the essence of community is a

predefining feature. Raco *et al.* (2006) assert that central government guidance has positioned Community Strategies “to supersede these differences and to create a uniform process” (p.479). In agreement with Raco *et al.* (2006), the very fact that the East Riding Community Plan uses uniqueness of place as a selling point contradicts central government guidance which asks LSPs and Community Strategies to advertise how their particular locality fits into other (higher) levels of decision-making (ibid, p.480), which the plan then communicates on the next page: “Global, national and local influences related to the environment, economy and demographic change require a strategic approach across organisational boundaries and flexibility to adapt to new challenges and demands” (East Riding Council, 2008a, p.4).

LAAs are heralded by central government as a tool that epitomises this strategic approach to meeting the priorities of a locality. As the *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities: Statutory Guidance* (2008) reads, the LAA is described as a “shorter-term delivery mechanism for the Sustainable Community Strategy” (DCLG, 2008d, p.34). The concept of LAAs as a delivery mechanism for sustainable development is also expressed in local government literature, such as East Riding’s current Community Plan (East Riding Council, 2008a, p.6). The ‘Sustainability Principles’ section (ibid, p.26) is largely unchanged, although the Community Plan is now described as a ‘Sustainable Community Plan’ throughout. The final section entitled ‘Our Ambition – we value and care for the diverse character of the area’ (ibid, p.34), refers to the development of a more diverse third sector:

*“By 2016, we will be doing more to support a diverse and independent third sector to help cohesion and inclusiveness, where there are deep-rooted problems in areas of deprivation, giving a voice for hard-to-reach groups to have more*



*say over the issues that affect them. A smarter approach to partnership working (and investing), together with increased support with shared resources will build a stronger third sector and its capacity” (ibid, p.34).*

Yet it is difficult to see how greater council influence in promoting this can create such independence. Closer ‘partnership’ working between the public sector and the VCS has been called into question within the academic literature (for example, see Wolch 1989; Craig and Manthorpe, 1999; Dahrendorf, 2001; Wilkinson, 2004; Lewis, 2005), although how East Riding’s current Community Plan envisages and communicates the practical manifestation of partnership intricacies remains a moot point. The concept of ‘partnership’ and its practical outcomes are explored in greater depth in chapter 8.

Finally environmental aspects are with the LAA in the Plan:

“Over the next three years, through the delivery of the Local Area Agreement, we will ensure that:-

- Waste and waste residuals are minimised
  - The impact of climate change in the East Riding is managed well
  - The environment of the East Riding is valued and improved
  - Local people work with agencies to improve the quality of life in their area”
- (East Riding Council, 2008a, p.34).

Hence, the 2008 Plan represents a greater commitment to environmental governance than the previous Plan. However, as pointed out elsewhere in the literature (for example see Tewdwr-Jones *et al.* 2006, p.547), involving local communities within Community Planning is fraught with tensions like identifying what roles are to be played by whom,

especially insofar as government guidance specifies the local electorate as owners of their Community Plan (ibid, p.548, also see DETR, 1999c, section 16). This is inconsistent with the idea that local government are principal facilitators of the LSP and Community Plan. Therefore, in the context of the VCS, such tensions may actively force some VCS groups to work outside of the LSP and Community Plan remit, especially if each group's sustainability aims are mismatched. The next chapter uses empirical findings from both study areas to argue such a case. The next section of this chapter focuses on how East Riding's current LBAP represent sustainable development and the VCS.

#### **6.4.5 East Riding's Local Biodiversity Action Plan**

East Riding's latest draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan was made available by the Local Biodiversity officer. With regard to references to sustainable development and utilising the VCS, the plan appears more robust than Hull's. Section 1.1 summarises the overall vision for biodiversity in the East Riding. It explicitly links the development of biodiversity plans horizontally to other local policy areas, initially, the core policy of the LDF, which is "to sustain and create thriving, vibrant and sustainable communities in which everyone can enjoy a high quality of life" (East Riding Council, 2008c, p.1). The plan also links biodiversity with other normative aspects of sustainable development like health, wealth and well-being of communities. This is in line with the holistic, quality of life approach taken by the 2002 Biodiversity Strategy for England, *Working with the grain of nature*, the 2004 document *Life-Support: Incorporating Biodiversity into Community Strategies* and the 2005 national sustainable development strategy, *Securing the Future* (see chapter 2). The section continues with a description of the eight aims of the plan, two of which specifically relate to the involvement of local communities. Firstly, "to identify and recognise what local communities value about the

biodiversity of the East Riding of Yorkshire” and then to “engage with local communities, raise awareness of the biodiversity around them and develop partnerships to deliver biodiversity action on the ground where people live” (ibid, p.1). It then defines biodiversity, explaining its importance in terms of how it secures the continued existence of humans and that it is a responsibility of all citizens to safeguard biodiversity for future generations (ibid, p.2). It then lists the different international and national legislation relevant to biodiversity, followed by specific reference to how biodiversity links in with policies at the national, regional and local level.

Section 1.7 then describes the role of the East Riding LSP through their Sustainable Natural Environmental Task Group (see figure 6.7). The current LBAP makes reference to the role the SNETG plays in steering the East Riding of Yorkshire Biodiversity Partnership (East Riding Council, 2008c, p.7). This indicates how the council are attempting to join-up sustainability governance spaces like the LSP and the biodiversity partnership.

The last section of the document explains the importance of developing habitat networks and green infrastructure in order to firstly provide more green space for people, and secondly, to facilitate “the movement of species between site based biodiversity” (p.11). What is important here is the explicit link being made between climate change, a key priority in national sustainability policy, and biodiversity. The remainder of the document concentrates on describing the biodiversity of East Riding, the action plan structure and report format, the Habitat Action Plan and the Species Action Plan.

## **6.5 Comparing Hull and East Riding's Community Strategies: interim conclusions**

The two areas contrast in the way sustainable development discourse is represented in their respective first strategies/plans. Hull's first strategy attempts to integrate environmental interpretations of sustainability into various sections of their plan as well as having a section devoted to the environment. The first East Riding plan also has a separate section on the environment, but is slightly different in the way this section refers to other issues like health. This is unusual given the way central government guidance for community strategies emphasised the importance of integrating social, economic and environmental issues in sustainable development and claiming that, "a community strategy that covers only one of those elements will not suffice; nor will the duty be met by producing three separate strands dealing with economic, social or environmental issues in isolation. A community strategy should cover all three in an integrated way" (DETR, 1999c, section 14). There is no explicit evidence in the East Riding Community Plan which suggests or implies that wider discourses of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental) are being used in an integrated fashion and are linking across the five main aims of the strategy. Whilst it has been argued that the environment is linked to health, there is no evidence or plan of action within the two documents suggesting how environmental (e.g. biodiversity, green space) and/or social issues (e.g. social justice, citizen empowerment) are integrated within the economic aims of each plan. Instead each document uses the expression 'quality of life' as a substitute for the wider economic, social and environmental discourses of sustainable development.

Likewise, no linkages have been made in the first East Riding Community Plan as to how other governmental tiers play a role in its development. There is no mention of central government's sustainable development strategy of the time, *A Better Quality of*

*Life.* Local Community Plans should also identify and implement issues relative to their own particular characteristics and needs. Whilst the East Riding Community Plan does take account of issues important to its locality (through the process of the Riding Around consultation exercise and its results forming the five community aims), there is no evidence in the Community Plan of the role played by other governmental tiers (like regional or national sustainable development frameworks) in the promotion of sustainable development within the East Riding. Yet section 14 of the DETR (1999c) guidance does make explicit when, “developing their strategies, local authorities and their partners should have regard to the Government's sustainable development strategy – which provides a national framework for integrating economic, social and environmental concerns – and work on regional sustainable development frameworks”.

There is also no mention of climate change within the first East Riding Community Plan and how this links with other tiers of government although DEFRA asks local authorities to “take account of the ways in which national and global concerns – such as the mitigation of climate change and the protection of biodiversity – can be addressed through local action” (DETR, 1999c, section 14). Climate change was briefly mentioned in Hull’s first Community Strategy and tied into other policy tiers like the Regional Sustainability Commission (CityVision, 2002, p.28), whereas the East Riding Community Plan makes no mention of climate change. However, both the Hull and East Riding documents mention biodiversity and conservation. Both plans represent mitigation of biodiversity loss through a partnership ethos, although it is disappointing not to see the documentation offering further explanation of how the VCS could be utilised. In fact the role to be played by the VCS in helping implement sustainable development within LSPs is nonexistent in both initial Community Strategies/Plans. Whilst there are generic references to the sector in both documents, it seems as if VCS

activity in Hull is more organised with, for example, the Hull Community Network playing an active role in shaping public inclusion within the democratic processes of the LSP. From analysing the East Riding documentation, early voluntary experience in the LSP seems more limited.

### **6.6 Comparing Hull and East Riding's LBAPs: interim conclusions**

The main comparisons that can be drawn between Hull's 2002 LBAP and East Riding's 2008 draft LBAP is the way that East Riding's latest draft plan emphasises the importance of vertical and more importantly, horizontal links between local governance policies. This is in marked contrast to Hull's 2002 plan which only concentrated on developing a biodiversity plan for biodiversity itself and did not attempt to horizontally link in with other local sustainability governance spaces like LSPs and their associated documentation. Whilst it has been argued in this chapter that policy documentation surrounding local sustainability governance, particularly Hull's documentation, may have in theory, portrayed the joining-up of different local governance policies, the East Riding biodiversity partnership has experienced an historic relationship with their LSP, more specifically how the now SNETG plays an intrinsic role in co-ordinating biodiversity activity across policy realms in the East Riding. The nature of this co-ordination is empirically analysed in chapters 7, 8 and 9. Yet what is clear here through reviewing East Riding's current draft biodiversity plan, is a story of a real drive by the East Riding Council to engage with wider discourses of sustainable development in a joined up, horizontal manner with other key stakeholders outside the public sector. Hull's policy documentation only indicates that the council seek to work with local residents and VCS groups; it does not offer a more robust plan of action to include time frames, specific local VCS groups and how local biodiversity policy will link into other local sustainability policies. Research has shown how local biodiversity planning and

participation is people-driven and geographically embedded, resulting in wide geographical variation between local biodiversity plans (Collinge, 2001; Evans, 2004). Therefore one would expect a number of differences between localities in how they approach biodiversity planning. Scrutinising the complex pattern of social relationships within such planning processes is highly significant because such patterns can have profound spatial and cultural implications for voluntary collective participation in biodiversity governance (Goodwin, 1998).

### **6.7 The VCS and service delivery under New Labour: the specific case of Compacts**

Whilst chapter 3 introduced how the New Labour UK government have attempted to develop greater partnership with non-state actors like the VCS at national and sub-national levels, this section will closely examine how the state has documented such partnership working with the VCS in terms of public service delivery. Whilst this chapter has examined the role played by the VCS in LSPs and LBPs (and how they are represented in CSs and LBAPs respectively), this next section examines state documentation related to how government have used the VCS in public service delivery, particularly through the Compact. I do this because the policy trajectory suggested by the service delivery documentation suggests that like LSPs and LBPs, using the VCS in public service delivery could be classified as ‘governance’ working because of its emphasis on giving VCS groups greater institutional responsibility in issues that were previously under state jurisdiction. Therefore, this section chronologically charts the way in which this service delivery relationship has evolved since New Labours accession to power in 1997 with particular reference to the Compact. The Compact has been defined as “an expression of the commitment of Government and the voluntary and community sector to work in partnership for the

betterment of society and to nurture and support voluntary and community activity” (Home Office, 1998, section 4). Both Hull and East Riding adopted a local Compact. Hull CVS represented the views of the VCS when formulating the Hull Compact with the city council (personal communication, Hull City Council VCS Liaison officer, August 2006). In East Riding, ERVAS (East Riding Voluntary Action Services), a similar group to Hull CVS, was charged with rolling out the Compact, *Better Together* (East Riding Council, 2009).

### **6.7.1 National policy on VCS and service delivery**

Both the Conservative and Labour Parties have a history of commitment in utilising the voluntary sector in public service delivery. It was under the Conservative administration in 1996 when the government commissioned the Deakin Report, *The Future of the Voluntary Sector*. Yet New Labour had also committed to the vision of using the VCS more overtly in public service delivery before (Labour Party, 1997a, b) and after their accession to political power in May 1997 by using the Deakin Report as a policy springboard to forge greater links with the sector (for full chronology see Osborne and MacLaughlin, 2002, p.57; Plowden, 2003, pp.416ff).

The idea of Compacts was a key recommendation of the Deakin Commission Report and was launched by New Labour in November 1998 as a Conservative-commissioned memorandum, as a framework for ways in which the government and the VCS could work together in partnership, although Compacts were not legally binding (Home Office, 1998, section 2). Guidelines for Local Compacts were then produced (see LGA, 2000) via partnership between the state (Local Government and the Association Working Group on Government Relations Secretariat) and the VCS (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) and then rolled out within local authorities. On the face of



it, this demonstrated a commitment to a multi-scalar partnership politics between the state and the VCS.

This on-going commitment by New Labour in forging more explicit links with the VCS can be seen in a number of policy examples and documentation since the 1998 Compact, including:

- the *Getting Britain Giving* initiative in 2000 which gave tax relief to charities and promoted charitable activity;
- the 2002 *Cross-Cutting Review* which set out an action plan to boost and improve the sectors role in public services (HM Treasury, 2002);
- the *Social Enterprise – a strategy for success* which set out a vision for sustainable social enterprise through three components: creating an enabling environment, making social enterprises better businesses, and establishing the value of social enterprise;
- the 2002 *Private Action, Public Benefit* report by the Strategy Unit, which provided a series of recommendations for updating and modernising charity law and regulation;
- the *Futurebuilders* project in 2003 that provided the third sector with £125 million to invest in schemes that promoted service delivery (HM Treasury, 2004);
- the *Change Up* project that provided £80 million to help build the capacity and infrastructure of the third sector (HM Treasury, 2005);
- the setting up of the Office of the Third Sector in May 2006 (Office of the Third Sector, 2006a)
- *Partnership in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement* (Office of the Third Sector, 2006b)

- *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: interim report* (HM Treasury, 2006)
- *Compact: Commissioning guidance* (Commission for the Compact, 2009)

In 2002, the Treasury published a document entitled *The Role of the voluntary and community sector in service delivery: a cross cutting review*. This document highlighted a variety of key recommendations which centred on building a strong and independent VCS in:

- Service delivery
- Social and community enterprise
- Capacity;
- The funding relationship
- The development of the Compact (HM Treasury, 2002, p.7).

It also had a whole chapter dedicated to the funding relationship with the VCS (HM Treasury, 2002, pp.25-27), in particular the decision to shift from one year contracts to three year contracts with VCS organisations (ibid, p.26) indicating how more formal ties between the state and the VCS were being developed and strengthened. However, chapter 6 was followed by a chapter dedicated to non-legally binding Compacts:

*“The review found a remarkable consensus that the Compact was, on the whole, “a good thing” and there is little support for its abolition or wholesale replacement.”* (ibid, p.29)

Since the 2002 *Cross-cutting Review*, the government have continuously reviewed the state of third sector. The 2004 VCS Review, *Working Together, Better Together* whilst reiterating the need of a public service delivery stance for the sector, highlighted a number of problems. These included difficulty in defining the sector, lack of co-ordinated evidence about the ‘added value’ of the sector, poor understanding of the governments vision for the sector, a lack of tools in which the policy-makers could approach the sector and finally, “difficulty in differentiating between the direct benefits of the sector to public service delivery, and the wider benefits that may accrue to society and the economy (HM Treasury, 2004, p.4).

Problems aside, further commitment to the VCS at the national level was firmly established when New Labour created the Office of the Third Sector in May 2006. As the website reads:

*“As part of the Cabinet Office, the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) leads work across government to support the environment for a thriving third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals), enabling the sector to campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities.”* (Office of the Third Sector website, 2006a)

In addition to this, two documents published in 2006, *Partnership in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement* (see Office of the Third Sector, 2006b, pp.5-7) and *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: interim report* (HM Treasury, 2006), shows how the VCS-state relationship documented by New Labour appears to revolve around the notions of equal partnership (where learning

was reciprocal) and formality (through service contracts and commissioning processes).

As the latter document reads;

*“The Government wants to ensure that the third sector is at the heart of reforms to improve public services as contractors delivering public services, as campaigners for change, as advisers influencing the design of services and as innovators from which the public sector can learn. This will require a new approach to commissioning and procurement embracing the sector’s multiple roles in shaping and delivering services, and particularly in working with users to ensure that services meet their needs.”* (HM Treasury, 2006, p.37)

More recent government policy reflects this trend, as for example, the *Compact: Commissioning Guidance* published in February 2009 show (Commission for the Compact, 2009). This document outlines how commissioners in the public sector can apply Compact principles to commissioning processes (ibid, p.4) through four stages: analysis; planning; sourcing; and monitoring and review (ibid, p.5). This document further represents government commitment to Compacts by showing how VCS groups can add value to public service delivery, making them more ‘outcome-based’.

However, since 1998 there have been critics of New Labour’s continual commitment to utilising the VCS in public service delivery through for example, Compacts. This highlights major tensions between the roles of (and relationship between) the state and the VCS. Dahrendorf (2001) distinguished between a Compacts sector that benefited from an organised relationship with government and a non-Compacts sector that did not need such a relationship. This highlights an overriding tension between organisations choosing to work in partnerships to achieve their objectives and organisations having a

‘duty of partnership’ (Powell and Glendinning, 2002, p.10), by which government may try to incorporate the VCS into the state (Wolch, 1989; Taylor *et al.*, 2002). Therefore there is a danger of the VCS losing the ‘checks and balances’ identity talked about by Edwards (2000, p.15) and becoming “prisoners of the state” (Taylor *et al.*, 2002, p.2).

However, it has been argued that the development of Compacts goes far beyond the notion of incorporating the VCS into the state. The national government realises the ability of the VCS to reach out to smaller grass roots groups that were previously unreachable through national government mechanisms – they use terms like “user focus”, “personalisation” and “responsiveness” (HM Treasury, 2005, pp.24-27) to describe the advantages the third sector brings to public service delivery. Morison (2000) also highlighted how national government sought Compacts because “the apparatus of central and local government has been so depleted by privatisation, contracting out... [that the] voluntary sector, and the voluntary sector in partnership with business and government... provides the only possible solution to a range of problems, particularly relating to social exclusion” (p.105). However, Taylor and Warburton (2003), looking at legitimacy and the role of the third sector in policy processes, warn of the dangers inherent as ‘government’ gradually moves towards ‘governance’. Referring to the relationship between the third sector and government, they claim that “while government bodies invite involvement in policy making (and accept evidence) from organizations which they consider ‘legitimate,’ this is rarely related to the downwards, responsive, and communal accountability that is valued by many third sector organizations” (p.335). They conclude that the higher profile third sector organisations enjoy comes with a “responsibility to address issues of legitimacy more effectively” (ibid, p.336). Added to this issue of legitimacy is the fact that the Compact is not a legally binding document (see Plowden, 2003, p.423).

However, the development of a Compact by national government has given the VCS consistent funding to deliver services and greater legitimacy, especially at local levels (see Taylor, 2003, pp.432-433) although government also claims that the local level plays an intrinsic role in the success of the national Compacts strategy (HM Treasury, 2005, p.9).

### **6.7.2 Sub-national policy on VCS and service delivery**

It is also important to translate national policy on partnership working with the VCS down to local policy level. Ed Miliband, just after he became the inaugural Minister for the Third Sector in September 2006, saw the VCS as partners in delivering societal change at the sub-national (local) level:

*“The third sector should not be seen as a threat, but as a partner that can use all its attributes to deliver a shared vision of a more just society.”* (ACEVO website, 2006)

The development of Local Compacts have been integral to the changing relationship between the VCS and the government. Their development best represents how the ‘local partnership ethos’ has manifested itself. Osbourne (1999) focuses on the role that Local Development Agencies (LDAs) have played in Local Compact processes. Citing the work of Burrige (1990), he highlights various types of LDAs including ‘generalist’, which provide a range of services (like Councils for Voluntary Services), ‘functional’ (which provide a specific service) and ‘specialist’, like play associations (Osbourne, 1999, p.1). Thus, whilst different LDAs may play a variety of roles, their generic remit is to facilitate community action through need identification, service development, support services and liaison. Capacity building therefore lies at the very heart of their

infrastructure and framework (ibid, p.39). But Plowden (2003, pp.425ff) found that the process of developing and implementing Compacts to be slower than originally expected, due to mistrust, poor procedures and miscommunication.

Both Hull and East Riding adopted a Local Compact as explained at the beginning of section 6.7. Furthermore, as mentioned even earlier in this chapter (section 6.3.3), the local authority in East Riding attempted to strategically join up local policy through aligning the Local Compact within their LSP structure. Whilst there is a VCS Liaison officer in Hull City Council, whom I interviewed, there was no mention of whether Hull's Local Compact would be formally embedded within the current LSP structure, even though she did attend some HCN meetings. This resonates with research by Craig *et al.* (2005b), who found that only a small minority of Local Compacts were being developed through LSPs (p.35). Many VCS groups (particularly the smaller and medium size ones) had little involvement in the government's *Change Up* initiative – a key component of Local Compacts – or its £93 million national budget (Craig *et al.*, 2005a, p.14). Whilst the 2009 *Commissioning Guidance*, which includes a monitoring and review stage, may suggest that government have attempted to spatially link Compacts, criticism has tended to revolve around the inability of Compacts to practically join up a spatial VCS-state partnership policy. Craig *et al.* (2005b) found that Government Office, whilst aware of what Compacts were, had a minimal role in their development. Problems may be exacerbated by central government continuing to promote, through documentation, more formal binding ties with the VCS, whilst sub-national implementation practices inconsistently lag behind. What this may mean for VCS involvement in local sustainability governance processes is discussed in the next section.

### **6.7.3 Evaluating the influence of VCS service delivery mechanisms on sustainability governance**

The importance of the trajectory of government policy surrounding public service delivery could therefore have dramatic effects on the way the VCS become involved in local sustainability governance spaces like LSPs and LBPs. A body of literature has positioned New Labour's overall modernisation agenda as representing a congested (Skelcher, 2000) cross-cutting mix of diversity, inconsistency and pragmatism (Davies, 2000; Temple, 2000; Lowndes and Wilson, 2003). Compacts have evolved under New Labour from being represented as a 'memorandum' in 1998, to currently being positioned through formal contracts and commissioning (Commission for the Compact, 2009) seemingly to support the increased ability of citizens, the community or the neighbourhood in taking a more active role in shaping their locality (see Imrie and Raco, 2003; Newman *et al.*, 2004). However, it has also been argued that in practice, local spaces of governance do not necessarily reflect such participatory governance (Davies, 2000, p.420; Wilson, 2003, pp.317-318) and much of the academic literature surrounding VCS involvement in public service delivery has concentrated on the problems with the VCS being more closely aligned to the functions of both market and state (see Wolch, 1989; Seibel and Anheier, 1990; James, 1990; Simon, 1990; Walsh, 1995; Fisher, 1997; Kendall, 2000; Deakin, 2001; Taylor *et al.*, 2002; Trudeau, 2008), more specifically, the scale-place tensions that arise out of such problems (Taylor and Bassi, 1998; Wilkinson and Craig, 2002; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003b) and how this weakens VCS legitimacy and democratic renewal (Edwards and Hulme, 1996; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a; Lewis, 2005). Later chapters will therefore consider what these wider VCS-state policy implications mean for VCS groups who emphasise sustainability discourses as their *raison d'être*, and of consequence, how sustainable development is represented and implemented as a local governance project by state and VCS actors.



## **6.8 Conclusion**

So for all the adoption of a ‘governance’ policy rhetoric by New Labour that emphasises ‘joined up’ local policy spaces, the way in which both sustainable development discourse and VCS involvement in such discourse is defined and represented through associated policy documents, is quite different. To summarise, this chapter has demonstrated through analysis of Hull and East Riding local council documentation that local policy has defined sustainable development inconsistently and, more often than not, skewed this towards socio-economic meanings. This socio-economic trajectory is also reflected through the increased reference by the state in utilising the VCS in service delivery through Compacts. The next chapter will use empirical evidence of the VCS experience within Hull’s and East Riding’s LSPs to see how local sustainability governance is actually contested in practice, in comparison to how it is represented in the documentation analysed in this chapter.

## **Chapter 7: Local sustainability governance in practice: the VCS experience**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapter 6 reviewed how sustainable development and the VCS are represented within LSP, LBP and service delivery documentation. This provided a normative ideal of sustainable development and VCS participation. This chapter will focus on how local sustainability governance is contested in practice, using the lens of VCS participation experience in LSPs, LBPs and service delivery mechanisms. Whilst LSPs, LBPs and service delivery mechanisms are heralded by the state as particular democratic spaces in which VCS groups can promote sustainability discourses, this chapter will argue that the VCS experience differs from how it is represented in the documentation. The reality points to a number of tensions associated with VCS activity. These include how VCS groups are only given regulated freedom in council dominated LSPs and are constrained by council perceptions of what VCS groups should be delivering in LSPs, which are dominated by socio-economic discourses. This has weakened the way environmental sustainability is positioned and governed for by local governance arrangements like LSPs, showing how the local scale may not be a panacea for VCS inclusion within the governance of sustainable development.

As previously stated (section 2.2), local governance spaces like LSPs and LBPs were required via central state policy to allow for non-state actors to have greater influence over sustainable development in their particular locality (UK Biodiversity Steering Group, 1995; DETR, 2001). One would therefore expect central state policy to translate efficiently to the local level, enabling LSPs and LBPs to promote wider (e.g. non-state, VCS) participatory forms of democracy within their structures. However, the experiences of VCS groups reveal a variety of issues, barriers and inconsistencies within

this policy translation process. My empirical findings reveal a disjuncture between ‘principle’ and ‘practice’ of LSP, LBP and service delivery procedure/activity, which will be examined in the following sections. Firstly, section 7.2 will cover how various governance processes occurring within governance spaces – particularly the structure, membership, selection, discourses and practices of LSPs (as perceived through interviews) – may (or may not) determine VCS membership of LSPs. Secondly, section 7.3 will look at the degree to which such local spaces prioritise and promote particular discourses of sustainability. Section 7.4 will look at VCS perceptions of government support (previous and present) given to them in the context of the ‘congested state’ (Skelcher, 2000), with regard to embedding sustainability issues within governance spaces like LSPs. The chapter concludes by stating that the way in which some local VCS groups are regulated through local state domination of LSPs compels them to negotiate and promote sustainable development external to such spaces through various networked processes.

## **7.2 Structures, membership and VCS selection processes**

The structure, membership and selection processes of Hull’s and East Riding’s LSPs exemplify how particular precedents and modes of embedded practice occur in governance spaces. The work of Coaffee and Healey (2003) is useful here. They show with regard to ‘partnership’ stories at the local level, how “innovations were unable to spread because of the deliberate strategies and embedded discourses and practices of other key organisations, particularly... the City Council” (p.1983). Table 4.1 depicted Coaffee and Healey’s (2003) conception of the levels and dimensions of governance processes. This section will concentrate on whether stakeholder selection processes, particular discourses and practices can potentially produce what Coaffee and Healey describe as a ‘mobilisation of bias’ (ibid, p.1983) within governance spaces. By this they

mean the ways (networks, selection processes, discourses and practices) in which particular organisational habits are reshaped and become embedded within the mainstream structure of the particular governance space. As they continue, “the interest is to assess the extent to which the new arenas and procedures have created or have the potential to create, the mobilisation power to influence significantly the mainstream process” (p.1984).

The selection processes for membership of particular boards within respective LSP structures in Hull and the East Riding were quite different. I will explain this first. Membership of the Hull City Partnership, which sits right at the top of the governance hierarchy (figure 6.2) was determined through an electoral process. Firstly, VCS groups belonging to Hull Community Network (HCN) had to forward themselves as candidates. The criterion for nominated candidates was that they had to represent the views of the sector and not their individual group (Hull Community Network, 2006a, p.1). An election was then held whereby all VCS members of the HCN could vote for the candidates they wanted representing the sector. Membership for the LSP Delivery Board, which sits below the City Partnership in the LSP governance hierarchy, had a different selection process, based upon short-listing and interviewing by representatives from Hull Community Network Steering Group, the LSP chair and the LSP manager at that time (Hull Community Network, 2006a, pp.2-3). As one interviewee claimed:

*“No they weren’t elected they were selected through an interview process to go on the LSP Delivery Board and what the LSP was looking for on the Delivery Board was people who are in a position to influence the way the voluntary sector delivers public services basically, so they were looking for people from the organisations that had a degree of influence.”* (Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

By ‘degree of influence’, the respondent implied that the Delivery Board sought VCS members who already had an active political involvement in the city, particular groups or individuals who had already developed some sort of relationship with local government stakeholders and could offer ‘best value’. By comparison in the East Riding LSP, originally there was only one member representing the interests of the VCS on their equivalent LSP Delivery Board. In 2002, the Chief Executive of Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council was invited by the council and its partners to sit on the main Delivery Board. This member was already a member of the Sustainable Communities Action Group, a sub-group of the LSP (personal communication, ER LSP Manager, September 2008) (also see 6.4.1). By 2007, a further VCS representative from the North Bank Forum appeared on the meeting minutes for the LSP Board (ER LSP Meeting Minutes, February 2007), this representative was also selected or invited by the LSP Board (personal communication, ER LSP Manager, September 2008). VCS membership of the Delivery Board was therefore selected through invitation. This was confirmed through personal communication (October 2008) with that very representative:

*“There isn’t really a process in the East Riding. The voluntary sector infrastructure organisations are just invited to send representation”* (Chief Officer, North Bank Forum and VCS representative, East Riding LSP Board)

The different processes used to select VCS representatives highlight inconsistencies in LSP processes. Whilst East Riding’s LSP relied solely on invitation, Hull used a combination of an election for the City Partnership, and inviting applications, short listing and interviewing for membership of their Delivery Board. Hence, there was a degree of democracy in the fact that City Partnership members were voted in by

members of the VCS in Hull. This is quite interesting in relation to promoting wider involvement of the VCS within Hull's LSP because the VCS allocation on the City Partnership was ten places at the time of election. This resulted in greater opportunity for smaller VCS groups to express matters relevant to smaller voluntary community groups in comparison to the Delivery Board, whose VCS members were from larger VCS organisations. As an interviewee from Hull CVS claimed:

*“To my mind the important thing actually is that within the LSP, the City Partnership of which the voluntary sector has ten representatives and they are not all from the big organisations and that's the place where the City Partnership is supposed to hold the Delivery Board to account in the way it delivers public services.”* (Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

This quote shows then, on the face of it, that Hull's LSP has attempted to democratise, to a certain degree, VCS representation within its governance structures, namely its City Partnership. Yet actual VCS representation in both Delivery Boards in each respective LSP was still based upon a selection process. Yet selection or invitation to these Delivery Boards, as opposed to elections shows how some council decisions are paternalistic and managerial, with council/LSP workers deciding what the structure of the LSP should look like, who they want to be working with and what it should be delivering, rather than encouraging greater innovation through increased non-state input into such governance structures, as central government guidance advocates. The work of Stoker (2004) suggests that paternalistic practices are common in particular institutions who look after their own vested interests and that these are reflected through the institution's particular structure as service providers (p.55).

The fact that VCS representation on the City Partnership had an electoral process, and VCS representation on the Delivery Board was determined by a selection process prompts the question of which LSP structures have more power in relation to how local services are administered and delivered. On the face of it, it would seem that the VCS has an important role to play on the City Partnership, whose “members are expected to represent the breadth of opinion within their identified organisation, sector, community, constituency or partnership... the membership reflects the characteristics and aspirations of the city and the opportunities for development identified in the Community Strategy” (One Hull, 2006c). The Hull CVS interviewee felt that the City Partnership is more important because it holds the Delivery Board to account:

*“... in my mind the voluntary sector has two roles in the LSP. One is actually about service delivery, because we do deliver services in Hull, not, obviously not to the same extent as the public sector does but we have a role in delivering services. But much more importantly I think, is about that accountability stuff, it's about holding the public sector to account for the way it does things within Hull. Ermm, and that's the job of the City Partnership, so to me that's the important bit.”* (Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

However, I would argue that the most important position within the LSP structures regarding influence within the LSP is the Delivery Board, because this is where the delivery strategies and targets for the Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Agenda and the Local Area Agreement are set (One Hull, 2006d). In short it is the heart of the LSP. Stakeholders from the One Hull LSP team, the HCN and the VCS saw delivery as a major objective and obstacle for the LSP respectively. In particular, the LSP executive framed particular LSP discourses around the service delivery ethos:

*“But I think we need to be more focussed around delivery. There’s been a lot of talk about what we need to do, we need to get on now and say how we are going to deliver it and what we need to do where and where are we meeting blockages to performance.”* (Director, Hull LSP)

Whilst the interviewee representing Hull CVS thought that the City Partnership was the most important group in the LSP because of their ability to hold the Delivery Board to account, he also conceded how delivery was the main focal point of the LSP:

*“...what the LSP was looking for on the Delivery Board was people who are in a position to influence the way the voluntary sector delivers public services.”*  
(Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

The importance of delivery was also reiterated by a representative from Hull Community Network:

*“I mean the emphasis now, the LSP are constantly telling us that on these theme partnerships the emphasis is all on delivery so they want people on these theme partnerships who can deliver things and commit organisations to delivery. And so they’re saying to us, “we want organisations from the voluntary sector who can, who are delivering things.” So it’s all around these.”* (Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network)

This then may offer an explanation as to why VCS members of the Delivery Board were selected by council. The selector will invite or choose VCS groups which they can identify with (Maloney *et al.*, 2000) and think can offer ‘best value’ through provision of



certain public services that are top of the council agenda, without threat to senior council/LSP member's current power base within the LSP structure.

With senior LSP officials playing an important role in shaping the context of VCS representation within LSPs, this has important consequences as to how social capital (see section 4.5) amongst VCS groups is locally distributed. Work which emphasises a relational approach to how social capital is produced (Maloney *et al.*, 2000; Smith *et al.*, 2004) has shown how there is a distributional quality to social capital with certain groups being excluded from accessing inter-organisational social capital. As Smith *et al.* (2004) claim, "it is organisations that have regular contact with councillors and/or officers and that are involved in city council forums that have good information flows across the sectoral boundary" (p.516). This suggests that the amount of social capital in a locality cannot be determined solely by the number of VCS groups involved in the governance space in question; it is rather the characteristics of those groups involved and the nature of their relationship i.e. degree of trust with government officials within the governance space at that given time. Looking at the top-down role played by public authorities in developing social capital amongst voluntary groups at the local level, Maloney *et al.* (2000) claim that "social capital is context specific. Only by being sensitive to the different locations in which social capital is created or inhibited is it possible to judge its impact on governance" (p.804). This shows how VCS membership of governance spaces like LSPs can be temporal and context specific – the type of VCS groups the LSP needs at any particular point in time is a function of the characteristics of the VCS group i.e. what services they can deliver. This has significant connotations for the power dynamic within such governance spaces as particular VCS groups can potentially be excluded by senior LSP officials if not offering the right services or disagreeing with current LSP objectives.

Shifting objectives of LSPs therefore, offers one way in which the current LSP executive can retain and reproduce its power within the governance structure, whilst delimiting certain VCS groups. In reference to how councils like to retain power, even around consultation issues, the following VCS member of an LSP sub-group talked of the problems experienced when questioning particular council actions:

*“The council likes to retain all the power in its own hands and I think they know they’ve got to consult with other groups but councils in general are power hungry organisations and they don’t like sharing it. They certainly don’t like it if people are going to question what they’re doing and we do question this council.”* (Co-ordinator, FoE for Beverley and East Riding)

Newman *et al.* (2004) also point to the temporal, context specificity in which particular groups are included or excluded within the governance space and the dominant role of councils in selecting representatives and defining their roles, “...their conception of ‘the public’ with whom they are engaging is likely to be significant both for *which* citizens are drawn into participation and for the constitution of citizen roles and identities” (Newman *et al.*, 2004, p.207, emphasis in original).

This section has demonstrated that the selection processes involved in VCS membership of Hull’s and East Riding’s LSPs are dominated by senior members of respective LSP Delivery Boards. This allows them to position VCS actors within the context of particular local policy arrangements. The next section will discuss the consequences of such selection processes, namely how the decision to use the ‘usual suspects’ affects the way in which sustainable development is positioned within LSPs.

### 7.2.1 Consequences of selection

The empirical evidence highlighting the managerial, paternalistic attitude of senior council/ LSP officials has various implications for LSPs. LSP stakeholder processes like membership selection and the framing of particular discourses and practices produce council domination within the governance space. The LSP experience in Hull and East Riding doesn't match the ideals found in the literature that LSPs are forums of deliberative and participative democracy. Legitimacy and lack of accountability affect how LSPs are perceived by stakeholders (Apostolakis, 2004; Geddes, 2006; Maguire and Truscott, 2006; Liddle, 2007). Maguire and Truscott's in-depth study of six LSPs shows how legitimacy, democracy and representation are significant issues amongst stakeholder interviewees: "words like 'representative' and 'democratic' are often used inconsistently and confusedly, and adversarial political structures have, at times, been experienced by some groups and individuals as obstructing participation in local decision making" (p.11, 2006). My work echoes these findings. So whilst the theory of LSPs may be welcomed by VCS respondents, in reality there are inherent tensions between the LSP process and democratic accountability:

*"I think the idea is good, I think it is worth pursuing, but I just don't think local authorities have the ability to... there's a fundamental flaw in the Local Strategic Partnership process because it actually butts straight up against the democratic process. You've got two processes sitting parallel to one another. So you've got a stakeholder, community engagement process called Local Strategic Partnerships, and then you've got your democratic accountability process which is your councils being elected by a few people who bother to turn up. And they just butt up against each other, and at the end of the day, it's those democratically elected, all be it by six people and their dog councillors, who run*

*the local authorities. They are the equivalent of my Board of Trustees, so they don't take any notice of the Local Strategic Partnership.*" (Chief Executive, Regional Wildlife Trust)

The above quote shows the existence of a dichotomy between LSP and council processes. LSPs are designed as a space that engages with the local community as much as possible, whilst councillors are democratically voted into office through an electoral process. When these processes "butt up against each other", it is the councillors who have the final say as they have been elected democratically. This automatically sets up a power differential between those in power (the elected councillors who sit on the LSP) and those with no real power (the non-elected representatives, e.g. VCS) who have been invited to sit on particular LSP boards. This in turn reproduces and reinforces the pre-existing council governance cultures within the structures of the LSP, delimiting the capacity of widened democratic participation of non-state actors within such a space. The decision by the LSP chairperson on the Delivery Board (who was also Deputy Leader of the Council) to stop funding the activities of the Hull Community Network in December 2007 (after I had conducted all my interviews) highlights the tensions between democratic participation by the VCS and the democratic representation of the council within LSPs. Whilst LSPs were intended as a pluralist governance space in which a participatory and representative polity could functionally intermingle, this research reveals how power remained in the hands of local authority members, particularly democratically-elected representatives (councillors). As the special meeting minutes read, "[The LSP chairperson] (the deputy leader of the council at the time) felt the LSP's vision was there but expressed concern regarding HCN's representation and function... and moved the recommendations outlined in the accompanying report. The Board agreed... to leave the notice served in place and discontinue the relationship with

HCN beyond 31 March 2008” (One Hull, 2007, pp.2-3). The fact that the Delivery Board could actually make that decision is indicative of where power within the LSP actually lays and demonstrates how governance spaces designed to include VCS groups are at the whim of local authority influenced LSP boards. Even a local voluntary sector manager, whose group was actually selected by senior council/LSP officials to take one of the three VCS places on the Delivery Board, sees LSPs as an extension of the council:

*“... I think what is clear is that it [the LSP] just becomes another department within the council rather than an external partnership.”* (Manager, Goodwin Development Trust, Hull)

Hence, some VCS representatives see that the LSP does not have any real autonomy from the local council. This perception is reiterated through interviews with national VCS umbrella organisations, showing that the Hull and East Riding LSP ‘governance’ experience is typical of experiences in other localities:

*“I think organisations are not sure of where to engage and definitely for LSPs there is a mixture of feeling of whether they are useful or not. I think the general impression is that they are still very much led by local government.”* (Research Officer, National Council for Voluntary Organisations)

One consequence of this local government steering is that VCS representations on LSPs tend to be peopled by the ‘usual suspects’– people or organisations who have a history of attachment to the council, LSPs or LBPs, ‘active subjects’ (Morison, 2000; Taylor, 2007) whom local government deem as having the necessary tools to enable delivery. By tools, I mean the characteristics of the VCS groups in terms of its governance, its

human and financial resources, its professionalism, how it negotiates, learns and remembers – in short its internal and external organisational behaviour. Thus the way a VCS group projects itself has to fit in with the way the council works (Cowell, 2004) and should reinforce previous council interests, not change them (see Bailey and Peel, 2002 for a case study on public participation). This is especially the case with the added constraints which are placed upon local authorities by regional and more importantly, central government, *vis-à-vis* the rolling out of LSPs nationally. VCS groups which exhibit the above characteristics have been heralded by some VCS interviewees in this research as the ‘usual suspects’:

*“...and I wouldn’t say the LSPs are tokenism, thinking of ladders of participation and stuff like that. I think they do try. I mean they suffer from the usual suspects don’t they... and they suffer, the council.”* (Regional representative, Groundwork)

*“So the consultation is at different levels, and what we’re saying is, and certainly through these strategies, it is, if it’s at, you’re telling people, you’re informing people, then say you are informing people. If the decision is already made people will live with that. But tell them, be honest. If you are going to engage, if you are going to consult, these are the different levels of participation. But you need to actually be very clear about what it is you are doing. Because there has been quite a lot in the past that has gone on where people have been in consultation..., where people have said that they have been consulted and they haven’t. And there’s been consultation where they clearly haven’t been listened to and there’s been consultation whereby consultation is done for consultation sake because the government has said you have to and they’ve ticked the boxes,*

*and they've said "thank you very much". And they usually have consulted with the usual suspects." (Manager, Developing Our Communities, Hull)*

These quotes suggest that working with particular people, the 'usual suspects' is the safer option for local government because they already have pre-conceived expectations of how such actors will conform to the rules of that space (which are set by those government officials) and so seek particular modes of representative democracy through the 'usual suspects'. This in turn, confirms the council's position as power-broker and limits the possibility of tensions within the space and promotes consensus (Raco *et al.*, 2006). This has therefore resulted in the exclusion of many VCS groups from the governance space, especially those hard-to-reach groups (see Coaffee and Healey, 2003). Swyngedouw (2005) claims that governance networks "do not (yet) have codified rules and regulations that shape or define participation and identify the exact domains or arenas of power" (p.1999). This work shows that *contra* Swyngedouw's argument, such networks have codified ways of working that shape participation, the exact domain of power being the LSP itself. This is exemplified through council tending to ask particular people or groups who have historically been familiar with local government to get involved in LSPs.

Cultures of local political historicism run counter to central government's positioning of LSPs and CSs as widening participation of communities in local governance (DETR, 1999c, 2001). Through their very nature, the introduction of LSPs marks a potential threat as a 'domain of power' to (previous) council jurisdiction over particular public issues and thus one would expect them to be messy, inconsistent areas in terms of who is included and excluded, therefore, government and LSP representatives expressed a

preference to work with a single organisation which represented the interests of the local VCS as a whole, rather than multiple VCS groups:

*“If we were to try, which we did, and look at a single organisation which was Humber-wide, so that was East Riding, Hull, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, to kind of work with us, co-ordinate activity across the voluntary sector, there wasn’t one.”* (Manager, Yorkshire Forward)

Lewis (2005) has shown how government agencies prefer to work with larger VCS representatives or umbrella bodies rather than a variety of VCS groups because they have greater resources at their disposal (pp.126-7), Local government also prefers to work with fewer VCS representatives to enable a more efficient way of co-ordinating and delivering services. The challenge of reconciling council objectives and VCS incorporation into LSPs may offer an explanation as to why councils legitimate particular VCS groups as ‘usual suspects’ and representatives of the sector within LSPs.

Whilst I have alluded to the fact that LSPs may strategically align themselves with VCS organisations who have similar characteristics to their own, for example by being larger and more professionally organised than some smaller local community groups, there is a caveat in that larger VCS groups (like Groundwork) also find it difficult to engage with council processes because of the way in which local councils are organised and governed:

*“There’s very clear guidance on areas like the Local Area Agreement, that Local Authorities should be trying to get the voluntary and community sector to try and deliver as much of Local Area Agreements as they can but you know it’s very*



*difficult from Groundwork's perspective's getting Local Authorities to pass their budgets on and things like that but that's something that we have to work on. That's just a challenge for us really.*" (Regional representative, Groundwork)

This adds impetus to the notion that the LSP executive actively seek to work with VCS stakeholders they have worked with before and trust, the size and capabilities of a VCS organisation are not the only criteria LSPs/councils use. Capabilities have to match with current LSP/council agendas and there has to be some sort of historically nurtured relationship embedded with trust. The notion of trust and how VCS groups change and adapt to working with local government will be considered further in section 8.3.3.

However, the Director of Hull's LSP recognises this problem of the usual suspects and worries that it might lead to inappropriate VCS representatives.

*"using representatives of the voluntary sector in the best way is something that I would always strive to do, but you can't take everybody with you over everything. And my general view is can we have the right people please, not just someone because they are active in a pool of groups and are next on the list."*  
(LSP Director, Hull)

This highlights differences in the way government agencies communicate their objectives and the way they are perceived by local VCS groups. Although some VCS groups think that councils prefer to work with the 'usual suspects', this quote suggests that in her view the usual suspects are not necessarily the right people. This has wider repercussions for sustainable development as a local governance project because it limits the ability of the excluded VCS groups to promote their own particular sustainability

objectives within such spaces, which in turn creates a lack of diverse ideas surrounding the promotion of sustainable development within such local governance spaces. The quote above suggests that the LSP Director may not have the final say in which VCS groups are chosen, showing that council-members of the LSP Delivery Board may retain overall decisions regarding membership issues. As a result, the types of groups excluded from the LSP may include the more environmentally-radical type, those that are not willing to change their own group's objectives to fit into the councils pre-conceived idea of what role a VCS member group should play within the LSP. The council could also exclude those VCS local groups who had a previous history of being more outspoken over council and/or LSP policy, people who they think may interfere with the council-led status-quo of the LSP. Introducing such radical groups may interfere with the council's slower 'town hall' modes of practice, even though LSPs are supposed to be spaces of rapid strategic innovation. So whilst in theory, LSPs are supposed to represent decentralised spaces in which non-state groups can get involved in local decisions, they ironically reinforce the council cabinet mentality as a closed shop for decision making (Sullivan *et al.*, 2001; Coaffee and Healey, 2003) through the creation of certain 'positions' (Lowndes, 2005), the highest of which belong to council members of the LSP.

### **7.2.2 Motivating and empowering VCS groups**

But it is not solely senior council/LSP officials' fault that their 'positions' are highest and that VCS groups are not fully involved. Some VCS interviews reveal limited VCS presence as a result of their own inaction and experience, with lack of motivation on their part being a key issue. This may offer a reason as to why councils have tended to work with specific VCS groups, namely groups who exhibit similar characteristics, especially speaking the same language:

*“...there’s a certain attitude about voluntary groups in Hull shouldn’t expect anything. They’ve also got to earn their seat, they have also got to put their money where their mouth is. I think that in the past the LSP has been dominated by a small number of big groups which were probably more in common with the council than where they came from as voluntary organisational sector, employing loads of staff. So there’s that issue and partnership isn’t about electing someone from a voluntary group and then sitting around the table and saying an occasional word.”* (Co-ordinator, CHEF)

*“Yes, well I think it’s true that there aren’t enough groups in Beverley. We’re kind of the usual suspects now... and there should be other people. There should be five more people. I mean I was at a meeting the other day... and there was only me and two others. There were two council officers and three members of the public at a meeting about the centre of Beverley. So developing the community and the motivation of the community, to get involved in these things is a major issue.”* (Local co-ordinator, FoE for Beverley and East Riding)

This shows that although governance spaces like LSPs can provide VCS stakeholders opportunities to participate in the local democratic project if they are willing to support one another (also see Doak and Parker, 2005, p.35), some representatives actually feel that some of their peers lack the motivation and experience required to sit in on meetings because of their reticence of council processes. Maguire and Truscott (2006) also found that LSP meetings tended to disempower certain VCS groups because of their inapproachability as spaces of inclusion, with one of their interviewees describing their experience of an LSP meeting being ‘like a very insular schoolboy network’ (p.35).

Whilst lack of experience and motivation reflects reluctance on the part of some VCS groups to take a more active role in LSPs, it also explains why they are willing for local councils to take the lead in such governance arrangements. Indeed, VCS group representatives expressed a desire for the local council to show greater commitment and action within the newly restructured Hull LSP in 2006. This suggests a desire for councils to take some sort of lead and commitment in delivering services through the LSP:

*“I think in the past it didn’t have a direction... it didn’t have a team. It didn’t, it had no driver, it had nobody in the City Council sort of driving this agenda. Well I should know I used to be there. Because prior to our new Community Strategy, we had the old Community Strategy. Again that was launched in a blaze of glory and publicity, but it was then forgotten about. If you like, it was just put on the shelf and we had all this sort of huge LSP structure set up, but there was nobody driving it and just got into chaos really and meetings descended into sort of talking shops. So there was no sort of commitment from the council I think at the time to sort of take the leadership and drive this agenda for us.”* (Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network)

*“I’ve got high hopes of the new LSP, my concerns are that all the structures are not in place, okay? So it will be interesting to sort of see. I think that what I see, I see a move towards and there has been a great improvement. So on the one hand, what you’ve got is the new LSP, who are committed, the Chief Executive of the council, are very committed to change and I like a lot of what he has done.”*  
(Manager, Developing Our Communities, Hull)

These quotes show that some VCS groups see council leadership playing an important role in guiding the LSP with commitment firstly coming from within council chambers. However, it is important to note that these groups receive the majority of their funding from public sources, and therefore may be sympathetic to local council influence in the LSP. Looking at Leicester's LSP, Apostolakis (2004) found that leading partners (i.e. the local council) played an important role in how its LSP functioned: "the leading role of the council is in many instances inevitable, as it is privileged in relation to other partners regarding facilities and financial resources" (p.109). This was also apparent in Maguire and Truscott's (2006) study.

Adopting a stricter, managerial approach in implementing the LSP may have been necessary for Hull (as place) at that time so that local socio-economic conditions could be improved. The reason for this could be attributed to a "wider cultural appetite for hierarchical governance" (Entwistle *et al.*, 2007, p.77) because "the strength of these vertical linkages provides some explanation of the continued enthusiasm for hierarchical solutions to social problems" (ibid, p.77). Yet we must also look outside of such vertically inclined, council-led governance agendas and scrutinise how the challenges of wider spatial policy pressures have an effect on power relations within the LSP<sup>1</sup>.

This section has stated how the preference for working with particular VCS groups reinforces managerial modes of representative democracy and excludes particular VCS groups. Yet such exclusion homogenises what should be diversely engaged participatory local governance structures into structures which promote particular service delivery agendas. A body of work on governance networks concentrates on how non-state actors are both directly and indirectly influenced by state actors and wider socio-economic

---

<sup>1</sup> Section 8.2.1 will deal with this in more depth.

spatial processes (Huxham and Vangen, 2000; Morison, 2000; Raco *et al.*, 2006; Swyngedouw, 2005; Swyngedouw *et al.* 2002). Raco *et al.* (2006) explained how “the fusion of representational and participatory democratic processes... have heralded a re-empowerment of local government in that local authorities have found themselves in a pivotal position in emerging partnerships and processes of strategy formation” (p.493). Similarly, Swyngedouw *et al.* (2002) have shown how the state has taken a prominent position in the formation of the new institutional and regulatory configurations associated with governance, whilst Swyngedouw (2005) shows how such governance networks are “Janus-faced” (p.1991), with the “the position and role of civil society... [being] closely related to the dynamics of other ‘moments’ of society – i.e. state and economy” (p.1996). Similarly, Huxham and Vangen (2000) acknowledge how individual partnerships are significantly influenced by the broader policy and institutional context. This work reinforces much of the above literature.

Whilst on the face of it, governance spaces like LSPs are supposed to enable new forms of participation and democracy, the reality is that they rearticulate the state-civil relationship and disempower particular actors whilst empowering others; what Swyngedouw (2005) calls the “democratic deficit of governance beyond the state” (pp.1999ff). In reference to compacts, Morison (2000) has described civil society as an ‘active subject’, of whose power is exercised through ‘responsibilised autonomy’ in order to promote particular government policy (pp.119-120). Therefore the ‘active subject’, I argue, is congruent with the ‘usual suspects’ within this research. These actors have been specifically chosen by local council to sit within governance networks to legitimise government policy as representative of VCS interests. This has significant connotations for how power is distributed in the Arnsteinian sense, i.e. to plan sustainability, to develop sustainability policy, to take overall management of the

governance space. Clearly, in the eyes of those VCS participants interviewed, there is limited ability for VCS members “to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders” (Arnstein, 1969, p.217). As such, this section has suggested that VCS groups within the research areas have only been given regulated freedom by the processes embedded within the governance space, what Arnstein describes as ‘placation’ (Arnstein, 1969, pp.220-221). This has important consequences for the types of sustainability discourses that are governed for by the state within these spaces (particularly green discourses). This is the focus of the next section.

### **7.3 How green are the LSPs in Hull and the East Riding?**

Chapter 6 concentrated on how discourses of sustainable development and the VCS feature in policy documentation for LSPs and LBPs and how New Labour approach utilising the VCS through service delivery mechanisms affects the way in which VCS groups approach sustainable development. This section will offer empirical analysis of how VCS experiences local sustainability governance, revealing a mismatch between principle and practice. Firstly, this section will argue how some VCS groups feel that low priority has been given to environmental issues within LSPs. It will then discuss how such low prioritisation is reflected through the manner in which some VCS groups are resourced (section 7.4). It will then go onto discuss how the VCS has adapted to such under resourcing (section 7.5). It is important to note that the following will reflect points already made in chapter 6 with regard to documents, but will use evidence with regard to interviews.

Chapter 6 noted how many of the characteristics of the LA 21 process, specifically public participation, are replicated in LSP processes in principle (DETR, 1999b; DETR, 2001) and would thus be expected to figure highly within the governance activities

associated with LSPs in practice. However, the VCS experience of LSPs to some extent was inconsistent with what they experienced with LA 21. As one interviewee claimed:

*“There’s the Local Agenda 21 work which unfortunately died with the LSPs actually. I think a lot of that activity got subsumed into the setting up of LSPs and that became a completely different beast.”* (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts initiative)

Although the VCS had a significant role within LSPs through their statutory involvement in signing LAAs off with regional government through statements of community involvement (ODPM, 2005a, p.8), their effect has still been limited. LAAs have tended to prioritise economic outcomes through delivery of local services, suggesting that the LA21 process didn’t fully “run its course” (Evans and Percy, 1999, p.182) and sustainability policy has a low priority in local governance practice. Two environmentally-focused VCS groups that had a history of involvement with the Hull LSP cited examples of how sustainable development is given low priority there:

*“The LA21 team when they were there were fine. We worked with them very well but they went into demise quite some time ago and I mean again, it’s a measure of how unimportant the Council sees the sustainability agenda”.* (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

*“City council just, I think at the end of the day, just doesn’t know what it is doing with the environment.”* (Co-ordinator, CHEF)



As well as having low priority, the VCS interviewees compared the council's own activities/behaviours unfavourably with their written policies, for example, the East Riding LSP through their community strategies waxed lyrical about the need to promote the use of public transport (see section 6.4.1), but when talking about the issue of transport to an LSP Sustainable Communities Action Group meeting in East Riding, the following VCS interviewee said:

*“When we've been to meetings we're definitely the radical end of the meeting... these meetings haven't been happening recently, there's been a big gap. The last one... I went on the bus and I got there and found the car park was full of cars and I made that point – why wasn't it organised that say a bus that could've brought most of the council employees out and brought them back again instead of all these cars going. And that of course is not a popular thing to say because the council is so car focused. Everybody's able to buy their cars on different schemes and its very car focused...”* (Friends of the Earth representative, Beverley and East Riding)

In a similar vein, the following interviewee conveys the reticence of his group being involved with the East Riding LSP because it was too policy strategic and didn't have any relevance to the grass roots environmental work that they did:

*“[The LSP] didn't seem to be focused on the requirements of the lesser members within it. Talking at a very high ethereal level of all sorts of things which really didn't get down to the sharp end of nature conservation, or what we expected from it...”* (Chairman, South Holderness Countryside Society)

And talking about LSP meetings at County Hall, Beverley...

*“... I couldn't help but feel that if we didn't meet there, but met on one of our nature reserves with a spade and got on with work, we wouldn't have needed funding to do that because it would have been done.”* (Chairman, South Holderness Countryside Society)

As well as the LSP, he also felt that the council as a whole interpreted environmental sustainability quite differently to his group:

*“From a personal point of view I don't think environmental sustainability and nature conservation necessarily mix in terms of the requirements and understandings of councils. I think it's back to their idea of sustainability is that we put money in to create a nature reserve for as many people to go and visit and possible buy ice creams and such like... I'm not entirely sure that councils fully appreciate that we are creating a better place for wildlife, not for wild humans.”* (Chairman, South Holderness Countryside Society)

Similarly, VCS groups in Hull also felt that the current LSP was not paying enough attention to the environmental side of sustainable development, and that the reason for this could have been related to an historically embedded socio-economic priorities agenda in the city:

*“I think that some of the problem is historical in that Hull has been in special measures for a number of years. So the environment issues have been seen as,*

*well it's not that important. I sort of will shove it to one side...*" (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

At the time of interviewing, the new Hull LSP, One Hull, had just been launched (summer 2006). The chief officer of Hull CVS, an umbrella organisation which was responsible for the Hull Community Network hub, thought that environmental sustainability was being given low priority on the new LSP's agenda:

*"In terms of kind of environmental sustainability I would say we haven't had a lot of success at all. It's pretty low on the agenda I think for the local authority. It doesn't feature very high on the community strategy or the Local Area Agreement, there's bits and pieces of stuff in there but it's not a major issue for them."* (Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

Other VCS interviewees also felt that this lack of importance was reinforced insofar as the 2006 governance structure (see figure 6.2) did not have a sub-board solely devoted to environmental priorities. The previous Hull LSP, 'City Vision' (2002-2006), did have an environmental sub-board, 'Protecting and Enhancing the Environment' (see figure 6.1), chaired by the co-ordinator of CHEF, but this changed with the 2006 relaunch:

*"They [the LSP Executive] kicked against putting an environmental sub-group in there on its own..."* (Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

*"I think in the new structure the environment's sort of been lost; it's sort of been subsumed into the Jobs and Prosperity Partnerships. And I know a lot of our members felt that environmental issues have been you know... like taking second*

*place for the economic development agenda. You know, from being a theme group in its own right to being a little working group from the Jobs and Prosperity... sort of brought down the environmental issues as not sort of prominent anymore.” (Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network)*

As the following quote shows, VCS reaction to the decision by the LSP executive to not include a sub-board devoted to environmental issues within the new LSP governance structure, highlighted real tensions, several VCS groups who had been involved in the previous environmental sub-board of the CityVision LSP expressed their concern of how the environment was being treated by the One Hull partnership during the 2006 relaunch:

*“We were very alarmed at the LSP... and we had a meeting with [the LSP Director] and it was acrimonious. We basically said to her that [the] partnership was not doing enough, promises were broken... I believe my view is also the view of... the portfolio holder, who was not happy with the LSP and the way that the environment was being treated. Their response is that the city climate change strategy will be embedded in the LSPs Community Strategy, but that’s it, and we said it’s more than just the climate change strategy. At the end of the day, it isn’t just worth trying to fight that battle down that road, we’ll fight it another way.”(Co-ordinator, CHEF)*

This suggests that even the portfolio holder for the environment and transport, an elected representative within the local council, was allegedly not happy with the decision to conflate the environment with climate change, yet could not do anything about the situation. This is unusual given how the legitimacy of democratically elected councillors

to have power over participatory representatives to make decisions within the LSP was cited as a significant issue earlier (section 7.2) and in the academic literature (Apostalakis, 2004; Maguire and Truscott, 2006). This may indicate that configurations of power within LSPs could also revolve around specific personalities and key protagonists across the network in a more heterarchical (see Jessop, 2000, p.15) fashion rather than in a hierarchical command and control sense in which publically elected council officials have legitimate precedence over LSP elected representatives. It also reveals how structures of power, whether hierarchical or heterarchical, are contingent arenas in which stakeholders can use the structural governance and regulatory framework to their own advantage. This fits into the assertion by Raco *et al.* (2006) that the community planning and LSP process may have produced a platform in which senior management within councils, not elected councillors, can initiate change through ‘managerial opportunism’ (p.492). This also suggests that the personalities of key council officers can play a key role in the way power is configured within LSPs. For this research, it shows specifically that VCS contribution to, and involvement in local governance spaces could be subject to council approval through a gate keeping system. Maguire and Truscott (2006) also found that some LSPs were “*too officer led*” with so called “professionals claiming *privileged knowledge and understanding* over community representatives who they experience as amateurs” (p.22, emphasis in original). Even a local council officer interviewee was well aware of how certain personalities of colleagues may have inhibited VCS involvement in the LSP processes:

*“...and of course what didn’t help was that, and may I say quite candidly, is that our previous manager... was a difficult person to work with and not the most community-focused, and that made things very difficult, and it probably gave in*

*those days, our unit quite a bad reputation.”* (Sustainable Communities Officer, East Riding Council)

So the personalities of certain council officers can reinforce council power within such governance spaces, influencing the type of VCS participation in such spaces. This in turn influences how local sustainability policy can be shaped. As Newman *et al.* (2004) claim:

“...they are powerful actors within the organisations they manage, and their actions – and personal commitments – may have important consequences for how institutional resistance is met and for how the outcomes of participation are translated into new policies and practices... councils in each case retained the power to decide which issues were ‘local’ and which were ‘strategic’, with control over the latter being retained by the centre” (pp.207-208).

The response by the LSP executive that the environment was being taken into account through the climate change strategy shows how the LSP may be conflating climate change with the environment or essentially narrowing the scope of what constitutes the environment within local sustainable development policy. This trajectory can be clearly seen through analysing the governance structures of Hull’s LSP since 2001 (figures 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4) culminating in the current Standing Advisory Group (SAG) aptly named ‘Environment and Climate Change’. The effect of this is that it precludes other important local ecological issues which are subject to anthropogenic influence like waste, biodiversity and green space. Such issues, in their own right, are intrinsic to understandings of what constitutes the ecological side, or stronger interpretations of

sustainable development (see Lele, 1991, pp.608ff; Williams and Millington, 2004). As the Hull LSP Director confirmed:

*“I actually think the challenge that government’s got, this is a national thing, and it’s how really to get climate change, global warming, the environment, call it what you will, embedded in our thinking and the obvious first port of call would be local government...”* (LSP Director, Hull)

Conflating quite separate issues into a single environmental block, as the interviewee implied, could be a product of how national government policy has positioned the climate change issue. For example, the 2005 UK sustainable development strategy, ‘Securing the Future’, describes climate change as the greatest threat (DEFRA, 2005a, p.72). Hence, one would expect it to figure highly within sub-national policy agendas and could be indicative of the way local policy outcomes are highly contingent upon national policy priorities (see chapter 8).

So, although *all* aspects of sustainable development – social, economic and environmental – are supposed to be embedded within the practices of LSPs, as expressed through their associated Community Strategies (DETR, 1999c, section 9; DETR, 2001, p.22; One Hull, 2006b, pp.10-11; East Riding Council, 2006b, pp.19, 22), several VCS interviewees who had historic links with their LSP felt that many environmental aspects were left out/not prioritised. Hence, LSPs were not meeting their expectations of being a governance space which provided an environmentally inclusive, holistic approach to promoting sustainable development at the local governance level. Instead, LSP policy was geared towards promoting more cross-cutting themes, especially in Hull, through jobs, prosperity, education, learning and quality of life discourses (One Hull, 2006b,

p.10). Embedding sustainability through cross-cutting issues was described by the then, Director of the Hull LSP:

*“There’s always a paragraph that you have to write in about sustainability of what you are doing. So I guess it just ripples through everything... We are very slow at understanding cross-cutting issues, I hate that phrase, but understanding subjects that can’t be treated in isolation. I think it’s because we are products of our education system or just the way our minds work in this country that we just can’t, we have to put a label on things like ‘environmental sustainability’ and ‘equalities’, ‘culture’ and put them in a box, as opposed to thinking all the time, what is the affect on what I’m doing on, you know, the fabric of our society.”*

(LSP Director, Hull)

The mentioning of environmental sustainability by the LSP Director is particularly interesting because the cross-cutting themes of the Hull Community Strategy at the time made no particular reference to how other environmental issues were to be combated, only climate change mitigation was explicitly mentioned (One Hull, 2006b, p.11). Hence, the positioning of sustainability as a holistic, cross-cutting agenda butts against certain environmental issues in their own right. This could be linked to arguments on how the state repositions or promotes particular economic agendas over environmental agendas through supposed incorporative sustainable development governance arrangements like LSPs. The work of Jonas *et al.* (2004) is particularly useful here. Using the concept of state strategic selectivity, they argue how the incorporation of environmental priorities (or economic and social for that matter) within local government and governance projects are highly dependent on national policy priorities. The way in which Hull’s LSP has specifically focused on mitigating climate change, and



excluded issues like biodiversity, exemplifies this. They quote a local authority officer from Lancaster regarding how certain environmental issues would be “shoved down the agenda” (ibid, pp.157ff) with the introduction of Community Strategies. Whilst they suggest that the introduction of community strategies has weakened sustainability at the local level, they also assert that the introduction of community strategies will ensure that environmental issues will be heard in debates (ibid, p.158). But local strategic selectivity allows local government to promote their own particular agendas on sustainable development. Such an agenda can be framed around socio-economic development, rather than environmental issues, even though central government has positioned biodiversity as key in the community strategy and LSP process (DEFRA, 2002, 2004). So the main point here is that far from ensuring environmental debates are heard at the local level, the introduction of community strategies has given local authorities the opportunity to *exclude* environmental issues, rather than include them. VCS experiences in Hull suggest that environmental issues such as biodiversity and green space have been strategically excluded in favour of socio-economic development. As the following quotes suggest:

*“when they did the Community Strategy... the first draft was appalling in that it was very much, the environment and transport was stuck on the end cos somebody had realised that they had forgotten it and... there was nothing there, and there still isn't a great deal in the strategy about the environment is there?... I mean they talked about hanging it with Jobs and Prosperity, very economic angle, obviously an economist's suggestion. But at least it would have been somewhere, but at the moment it's not anywhere.”* (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

*“I think economic development, from my experience is the top priority and I think if that sort of environmental issues come under the sort of Jobs and Prosperity partnerships, I think jobs and economic development will be... especially of that partnership’s are going to be led by the Business Forum and I think the private sector is totally focused on jobs, skills issues. And I think environment, I know it sounds awful but it could be given lip service I think.”*

(Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network)

Whilst analysis of documentation in chapter 6 (6.3.1 and 6.3.2) and empirical evidence in this chapter has suggested that Hull’s approach to sustainable development was supposed to be cross-cutting and incorporative, the following interviewee felt that council policy was not joining up the different aspects of environmental sustainability:

*“City council just, I think at the end of the day, just doesn’t know what it is doing with the environment. There is some individual good policy there. Particularly on things like public transport policy, cycling. Where we excel more than other areas like the East Riding, but what Hull lacks is the corporate approach to sustainable development. So whilst you have individual pockets of good practice in transport, in waste and recycling, in energy, there doesn’t seem to be any corporate policy, there’s no corporate drive, no corporate targets. It’s just pockets of good practice and that’s just it. It’s not brought together.”* (Co-ordinator, CHEF)

However, the East Riding is different to Hull in that its economy is more buoyant, it does not receive NRF and therefore the (local) state can afford to explicitly incorporate environmental ideas within their LSP and council structures. For example, East Riding

of Yorkshire Council has a Community and Sustainable Development unit with higher grade officers which is representative of the council executive paying greater attention to sustainable development (particularly environmental issues). Furthermore, one of the following interviewees remit was to give support to LSP sub-groups:

*“I’m a Senior Sustainable Communities Officer. It’s the first Sustainable Communities Officer we’ve had in our service area. Traditionally, or historically we were all sustainable development officers and what we’ve done is obviously followed central government agenda for changes and appreciated that sustainable development, whilst still very relevant has to be delivered locally and hopefully engage communities about making them more sustainable. So that’s why my post has been created, and a lot of that work will support LSP sub-groups.”* (Sustainable Communities Officer, East Riding Council)

Variations in commitment towards environmental sustainability are also implied through analysis of sustainability rhetoric in Hull’s and East Riding’s Community Strategies (see chapter 6). East Riding’s current Community Plan consistently emphasises the importance of a range of environmental issues (the Sustainable Natural Environment Task Group are charged with looking after biodiversity, coastal and flood, pollution air and water, environmental enhancement and awareness raising – see figure 6.7) as an equally important part of the sustainability equation. In contrast, Hull’s current approach to sustainable development post summer 2006 revolves around quality of life discourses which by definition, narrows the scope of what constitutes environmental issues. In line with this, one would expect VCS groups in the East Riding to praise their LSPs attempts to embed a range of environmental issues within their LSP and Community Strategy. However, upon scrutinising the experiences of some VCS groups within the East Riding,

the practical application of environmental sustainability still remained a moot point. For example, the instance when one VCS interviewee suggested that council workers use public transport to get to a SCAG meeting (see p.238 of this thesis) resulted in certain problems for that member. As she claimed:

*“They don’t really want you there and they know they’ve got to have you there, really they find it a bit uncomfortable. And I think I’ve actually had to scrub my way back to those groups and sometimes I’ve found I’ve somehow dropped off it [the group list] and I’ve had to remind them to put me back on it.”* (Friends of the Earth representative, Beverley and East Riding)

Responses like this suggest that the practical application of environmental sustainability differs quite markedly from how Community Strategy represents it on paper. The next section will discuss VCS experiences of support and resourcing from local government within the ‘congested state’ (Skelcher, 2000), as this is indicative of the way in which the LSP and local council supports collective action surrounding environmental sustainability as a local project in its own right.

#### **7.4. Support and resourcing for local VCS groups in the ‘congested state’**

Skelcher (2000, p.4) argues that “the congested state is reflective of the current period, in which a complex of networked relationships between public, private, voluntary and community actors have created a dense, multi-layered and largely impenetrable structure for public action.” He then goes on to suggest that the primary policy driver of the ‘congested state’ – public service delivery – is at odds with the government policy drive of including VCS actors through the rolling out of local ‘sustainability’ governance projects like LSPs. Namely because state perceptions of what the VCS should bring to

LSPs (for example, adding value through service delivery) is mismatched with VCS notions of what they should bring to LSPs (for example, expertise on sustainability).

Literature referring to the idea of a 'congested state' (Skelcher, 2000; Cowell, 2004) suggests it is increasingly difficult for non-state actors to play a significant role in governance spaces. Skelcher continues, "the congested state denotes an environment in which high levels of organisational fragmentation combined with plural modes of governance require the application of significant resources to negotiate the development and delivery of public programmes" (2000, p.12). For this research, scrutinising the way in which VCS groups are supported and resourced by local government with regard to LSPs may hinder their ability to promote sustainable development at the local level, whilst simultaneously attempting to fit in to the governance spaces that make up the 'congested state'. Similarly, using the community planning process in Scotland as a policy context for governance, Cowell (2004) has argued that whilst community plans may extend opportunities for greater participatory involvement, democratising local governance has become subservient to dominant concerns that promote joint-working and demonstrating added-value. This shows how local governance spaces like LSPs could be subject to steering through 'many hands' (Sullivan, 2003) and that VCS involvement in such spaces is a reflection of the way in which they are supported and resourced by local government.

The issue of financial support to attend LSP meetings resonated in several interviews with VCS representatives across Hull and East Riding. For example, the following interviewee was very angry with the way in which the One Hull LSP did not continue support of an environmental sub-board within their governance structure in 2006. Talking firstly of the failure of the LSP to support environmentally-focused VCS groups

who took an active role in the LSP pre-2006, he then goes on to question the concept of partnership within LSPs:

*“We were just very bitter in the end, as were people like [co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises]. Well we all took time out of our daily busy work schedules, where we all have to earn money, to sit around the table with a load of faceless bureaucrats who get paid anyway who do their standard hours anyway and that’s it, so yet to be proved.”* (Co-ordinator, CHEF)

The manner in which VCS groups have received support from their respective LSP and local council in the past strongly influences any future contribution a VCS group would give towards the LSP, let alone the promotion of sustainability in their locality. This interviewee also perceived a gulf between VCS (unpaid) representatives and LSP/council professionals (paid), demonstrating that the council was not just different in terms of their higher position within the LSP, finance also played a role in inhibiting a VCS group’s ability to play an active role in the LSP. The following interviewee who had an active involvement in the East Riding LSP also flagged this issue:

*“I think initially, it came down to money, and I think they [Local Strategic Partnership] were looking for voluntary organisations to actually play a part in contributing in some way, be it secretarial work or whatever. You know, for example there would be a meeting and they were hoping that a voluntary organisation would take the minutes. But that wasn’t feasible because they didn’t really have that resource.”* (Hull and East Riding Chairperson, CPRE)

It was suggested earlier (section 7.2) that the idea of ‘best value’ formed one of the council’s criterion regarding whether to include VCS groups in governance spaces. In relation to this, the preceding quotes suggest that to Hull’s and East Riding’s LSPs, getting ‘best value’ from the VCS could be reinterpreted as ‘free’ participatory service from the VCS, which will tick certain political (e.g. Government Office) boxes. These quotes also suggest that in light of the difficulties faced by some VCS groups, LSPs/councils have a lack of appreciation of how committed some VCS groups are towards working with the local state and related governance spaces. There is the assumption that VCS groups want to do it because of the kudos involved. Research has shown how some partnerships assume community representation would be free via ‘unpaid community professionals’ (Anastacio *et al.*, 2000). This not only immediately sets up a power/role differential between state and community stakeholders involved (Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004), but also socially excludes those smaller community groups who cannot afford to translate innovative ideas into practical action because of the rules of the governance game. The following interviewee had an active involvement in Hull’s current LSP so therefore one would expect his group to understand the rules of the governance game, yet he also complained that the VCS were not being supported in the manner in which he thought the LSP should:

*“I think that if you were to look at the pooled resources of the Local Strategic Partnership, for example, say it’s £100 million a year. What proportion of that £100 million naturally fits in with the voluntary and community sector? It’s miniscule when you take into consideration size of the police authority budget, the fire brigade’s budget, and the council’s budget around education, social services, adult services, the primary council so you know, I think we’ve got to accept that the relative influence and importance of the sector within that is*

*probably overstated as it is.”* (Development Manager, Goodwin Development Trust)

Even for relatively inexpensive requests, translating sustainable ideas into practice was a low priority:

*“At a local level I can go to our Area Director and she’d say “yes that’s a fantastic idea putting solar panels on 30-40 houses or whatever” but we haven’t got any money for it.”* (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

Similarly, the following small community group from the East Riding explained that several other VCS groups experienced problems with financial support in attending meetings and highlighted the LSP as a perfect example of the way in which local VCS groups go unsupported:

*“Well, for example, the groups that go [to LSP meetings]... have to fund their delegates, they have to fund themselves. So if you’ve got I mean for instance you can end up having two or three meetings a week and if you are going all around the East Riding two or three times a week, that can be quite expensive and so that’s what they need to do more, that’s value what the volunteers do... I mean if people, if the powers at be are expecting the volunteers to do more stuff, then they need to give them more support. The perfect example is the LSP.”* (Co-ordinator, Flamborough Community Environmental Action Group)

Whilst many of the preceding quotes relate to financial support of the VCS in going to meetings it is important to note that the notion of support manifests itself in different



ways and is not confined to economically-based definitions. As the following interviewee implied:

*“No, all sorts of support, financial support will help but other support in providing help with administration, stuff like that that would be useful to... It would be nice if we could have a bit more support.”* (Co-ordinator, Flamborough Community Environmental Action Group)

The need for VCS groups to receive various types of support was mentioned to the following council officer based in the East Riding and she appeared genuinely disappointed and offered an explanation as to why some VCS groups may have gone unsupported:

*“Well that... is a key thing by you asking me that and it’s something that I need to bring up with [the manager]. I don’t see how we can justify ourselves, and if that’s the key thing that’s supposed to be driving this, partnership working and community and voluntary group involvement, that’s what we’ve got to do...”*  
(Sustainable Communities Officer, East Riding Council)

If LSPs could not afford to fund or reimburse VCS attendance to necessary meetings then it is difficult seeing how it would be able to fund the practical application of sustainable development. The following interviewee was quick to point out how the government could utilise VCS expertise on sustainable development issues, but also acknowledged the issue of limited time resources:

*“We have got a lot of expertise that they [government] can draw on, both locally and nationally, a lot of experience of sustainability, especially when it comes to communities and volunteers. And likewise other sectoral organisations clearly have that expertise as well. I think the problems are limited staff time resource, that always seems to be the issue, both possible from a local authority side as well as the community sector side, but that’s always going to be one of the main problems...”*

The interviewee then elaborates why his group had limited time resources:

*“When we are looking at, when we have got specific funding to deliver certain projects the staff have to then therefore focus on those projects, we don’t have, we constantly have to look at what we’ve got our funding for and how much time we have available to actually attend development meetings really.”* (Regional Manager, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

This illuminates how the government agenda of utilising the VCS in public service delivery may encroach upon a VCS group’s ability to attend partnership meetings. VCS groups are preoccupied with trying to fulfil their own objectives without trying to show government how they can ‘add value’ in an economic (for example, signing contracts with government) and/or a ‘new corporatist’ (see Lowndes and Sullivan, 2004) sense (through participating in governance spaces like LSPs). The following interviewee specifically identifies how the priority of floor targets dominates LSPs and local councils. Floor targets were introduced by the government in 2000 as a way of reducing the gap between the poorest areas and the rest of the country and show what priorities or public services a particular locality should improve upon (DCLG, 2009). These are an

example of how the state, under New Labour is becoming ever increasingly congested with different policies (see Lowndes and Wilson, 2003). Other research (Taylor, 2006) has shown how local authority floor targets limit the ability of VCS groups to ‘build bridges’ between neighbourhoods and communities of interests to access NRF money. Similarly, the following interviewee also implies how having such targets affect the ability of the VCS to develop capacity and creativity:

*“But how can you ever think that communities will have a greater voice when the city has got such floor targets that it’s got to meet, you talk about Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, but actually that money is to fund teenage pregnancy... and it was an opportunity to use money in a creative way, that perhaps couldn’t... it wasn’t to keep things going as they were. This was additional money to ensure there was much more creativity. And I haven’t seen that.”* (Manager, Developing Our Communities, Hull)

Other research on community involvement in LSPs (Lucas and Fuller, 2005) has suggested that peoples aspirations would be raised if they had “ownership of the public realm” and that LSPs “were moving towards the idea that formal mechanisms, such as community contracts, need to be in place to ensure that service providers are far more directly accountable to communities for the services that they are responsible for delivering” (p.470). Yet this section has shown how such a trajectory clearly impedes the ability of some VCS groups to actively get involved in local governance spaces because they are positioned by the ‘congested state’ as having to be ‘all things to all men’ by proving first and foremost how they can ‘add value’. This clearly impedes the ability of those groups promoting sustainable development to get involved in governance spaces like LSPs. Securing governance rights through effective participation

in LSPs *and* keeping afloat financially has proved difficult for some VCS groups simply because they do not have enough time, are under resourced and under supported. Yet this is not to say that some VCS groups have not attempted to adapt to this policy trajectory, as examples in the next chapter will show.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that many local VCS groups are supportive of LSPs as renewing community involvement in local democracy. However, in reality, the ways in which they can exercise influence is clearly limited due to council domination of such spaces (Coaffee and Healey, 2004). Council domination of such spaces is reflected through VCS membership/selection processes in LSPs and how particular VCS groups are positioned as the ‘usual suspects’ within these spaces. This has repercussions on accountability and legitimacy within such spaces (Apostolakis, 2004; Maguire and Truscott, 2006; Raco *et al.*, 2006; Liddle, 2007) with VCS groups having only regulated freedom within such spaces. Yet section 7.2.2 has shown how the exclusion of VCS actors within LSPs is also a result of VCS inability to motivate and empower themselves to adapt to the state-regulated freedom such spaces bring. This in turn has important consequences for the way environmental sustainability is governed for within LSPs (section 7.3). Whilst much of the policy documentation of LSPs (e.g. community strategies) position sustainability with high priority, the practical application of environmental sustainability through the eyes of VCS stakeholders groups shows how environmental sustainability, especially in Hull, is weakened by the local state strategically selecting socio-economic discourses of sustainability (Jonas *et al.*, 2004). Section 7.4 has examined VCS perceptions of support and resourcing for groups with sustainability objectives who have had an involvement in their respective LSPs. It suggests that these VCS groups go unsupported regarding issues of sustainable

development. The exclusion of an environmental sub-board for the 2006 One Hull LSP by senior LSP officials represents this.

The reason why some VCS groups go unsupported is symptomatic of the ‘congested state’, whereby a VCS group’s ability to deliver public services and add value is the primary driver of whether they can become involved in LSPs. Hence, VCS perceptions of doing sustainability don’t match with state perceptions of what VCS groups should offer LSPs. Therefore, the local governance project as it stands has two major repercussions for VCS groups. Firstly, becoming involved in state-led local governance spaces creates problems for the VCS in terms of their independence. If involved in such governance spaces, can VCS groups maintain their ethos as a vibrant, autonomous and critical sector, in which social capital can develop, free from state interventionism? Section 4.6 put forward the question of whether collective VCS action over sustainable development had the potential to enervate state domination of governance structures like LSPs, forcing the state to adopt terms of engagement within such spaces that fit into a newly constructed VCS networked space of sustainability governance? This chapter suggests an emphatic no. Council-led LSPs also point to a second repercussion for VCS groups. The organisational nature of LSPs is such that not all VCS groups are prepared to work in such local governance spaces. LSPs have had a fragmentary effect on VCS groups at the local level. Inevitably some groups would be compelled to work outside of the governance space in particular networks and exercise greater independence in promoting sustainable development. Whilst other groups may try to politically align themselves with local government and governance spaces like LSPs in order to promote their own particular sustainable development agenda. These issues and relationships will be discussed in the next chapter with particular reference to the way in which central policy changes have strengthened the foothold of the local authority on such

governance spaces with VCS groups forming different types of governance networks in order to pursue sustainable development at the local level.

## **Chapter 8: VCS autonomy and networks in the sustainability governance project**

### **8.1 Introduction**

Chapter 7 reviewed the experiences of VCS groups in relation to the selection, membership and structural processes of governance spaces, with particular reference to LSPs in Hull and East Riding. Far from enabling new forms of participative and deliberative democracy, it found that such spaces were managerial and council-led, disempowering some VCS groups whilst empowering others. It then went on to explain how sustainable development, particularly the environmental strand, was positioned in LSPs. It found a lack of a match between the principle and practice of sustainable development in general, with low priority given to green issues in LSPs. This is reflected through the (low) degree of support and resourcing given to VCS groups who have had a history of involvement with council processes. These results suggest that contra state rhetoric on sustainability policy, the local scale (and the governance processes therein) may not be a panacea for VCS groups to successfully implement sustainable development.

This chapter will offer further analysis of the treatment of VCS groups in spaces of sustainability governance, using the story of Hull Community Network (8.2.1) to show how local government maintain a majority of power over VCS groups involved in LSPs. In short, changes to central policy have given local authorities a greater say in the way funding is distributed amongst VCS groups via the Hull Community Network. The nature of this distribution of funding is such that some VCS groups find it difficult to align their developmental aims with the objectives of the state. Section 8.2.2 covers this in greater detail revealing a tension between, on one hand, VCS groups attempting to maintain autonomy and build capacity within the sector to deliver their own objectives

surrounding sustainability, and on the other, adapting to the public service delivery *modus operandi* of the ‘congested state’ through state-regulated governance spaces like LSPs. Section 8.3 then discusses the ways in which sustainability-led VCS groups have reacted to the problems associated with these governance spaces and misaligned objectives with regard to the positioning of sustainability discourses. It focuses specifically on how the process of network building outside of formal state spaces (8.3.1) and in and around such spaces (8.3.2), is significant to the way in which VCS attempt to embed sustainability at the local level. The building of VCS networks is important because they reflect the way in which the sector has had to develop social capital sub-nationally in response to particular shifts in central state policy regarding partnership working towards sustainability and service delivery. In this sense, networks and territorial scales are mutually constitutive (Legg, 2009) in how the VCS govern for sustainable development. In addition to this, utilising work on “governmentality” (Foucault, [1978] 1991; Darier, 1996, 1999; Rose, 1997, 1999; Morison, 2000; Raco, 2003a, b; Taylor, 2007) and how groups develop trust and understandings through communication practises (Habermas, 1979; Giddens, 1984, 1990, 1998; Seidman, 1992; Healey, 1997, 1999, 2006), this section also explores in greater detail how VCS groups in their own right develop relationships within networks, with state actors and other VCS groups, and how such interactions bring about certain discourses of sustainable development.

## **8.2 VCS autonomy and spaces of sustainability governance**

This section will scrutinise the experiences of case study VCS groups in reference to whether they can maintain their diversity and autonomy if involved in sustainability governance spaces like LSPs. Alternatively, does increased involvement in such spaces potentially make them “a prisoner of the state”? (Taylor *et al.*, 2002, p.2). Such



experiences are important to the overall thesis because one can gauge whether state policy has actively attempted to bring specific VCS groups into local state-regulated governance spaces or whether VCS groups, in general, have actively attempted to engage in sustainable development on their own terms, either in and around state-regulated governance spaces, or external to such spaces.

To reiterate, the previous chapter went some way to explaining that the experience of LSP governance structures by VCS groups is largely based around council-led, managerial modes of practice. This implies that the whole ethos of the VCS as a diverse and innovative sector is not suited to such ‘governance’ cultures. Moreover, it suggests that the idea of ‘the local’ as the ideal scale to combat sustainable development is in practice, questionable. This theme is explored in more depth in this section using two lines of related reasoning grounded in interviews with local VCS stakeholders. Firstly (8.2.1), with empirical reference to the Hull Community Network experience, the positioning of sustainable development can be attributed to changes within wider spatial policy processes, showing how the central state still assumes both a ‘metagovernance’ role (Jessop, 2000, 2003; Taylor, 2006) and an accountability role (Sullivan, 2003) in relation to how local state governance spaces like LSPs operate. Secondly (8.2.2), interviews revealed a tension between service delivery – a core tenet of current LSP strategies – and capacity building within the VCS, suggesting the difficulty of VCS groups in successfully negotiating sustainability issues solely at the local scale.

### **8.2.1. The Hull Community Network story**

Chapter 3 showed how problematic it is to define the VCS. The sector includes a diversity of organisations and community groups, each with a various status, functions and remits. Like the VCS, the public and private sectors also have problems associated

with their definition (see for example, Perry and Rainey, 1988). Given the problem of appropriately defining each sector, one would expect tensions to arise within governance spaces between voluntary, private and public sector bodies with regard to power distribution. In turn, how such power dynamics are played out within LSPs would have a temporal and spatial effect on the way VCS stakeholders view their role within and external to governance spaces at the local level as well as the way in which they promote discourses of sustainable development. The limited power of VCS groups involved in Hull's LSP with is exemplified through the evolution of the Hull Community Network.

Section 6.3.1 went some way to explaining the tasks of the Hull Community Network. It was set up in 2001 using the Community Empowerment Fund (part of the NRF) to give VCS groups a voice in their respective LSPs. NRF money was allocated by central government to the 88 most deprived areas in the country, which included the city of Hull. Central government guidance on how this money was to be channelled down to the VCS stated that it should be administered by Government Office (regional level) and not the local authority (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2001, p.7). However, in Hull's case this happened up to 2005 after which time funding was channelled straight to the local authority (personal communication, Hull CVS Chief Officer, October 2008). Upon further scrutiny of the relevant policy document, the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) published in August 2005 stated that:

“Government Offices have a ‘reserve power’ to require that the core funding is passed directly to the Community Empowerment Network from the Accountable Body where it has not been possible to negotiate proper involvement in the SSCF Agreement... SSCF funding will be paid to Local Authorities as the

Accountable Body in the same way for LAAs... Local Authorities will need to agree with the partners delivering the outcomes how the SSCF will be distributed and managed locally” (ODPM, 2005b, p.12).

What is important here is the shift from funding being administered at the regional level to local level. Such a shift in the way central policy has been spatially utilised has had repercussions in relation to empowering VCS groups at the local level. For example, one of the key tasks of the Community Empowerment Fund as explained in central government’s preliminary guidance in 2001 was to enable equal VCS representation on LSPs (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2001, p.5) through the setting up of community networks (ibid, p.12). One of Hull Community Networks remits was “to conduct elections for representatives to the various parts of the LSP such as the Sub Boards and the Board” (HCN Website, 2008). As such, one would think that an electoral process amongst VCS groups in Hull would enable the VCS to have greater powers of responsibility within the structures of the LSP, and at least have parity of decision-making powers in line with other senior council members of the LSP. However, the interventionist stance of the SSCF in 2005 represented a change in the way the funding was channelled down to VCS groups at the local level in comparison to the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit 2001 guidance, giving greater powers of distributing such funding to the local authority. Simultaneously, the impetus given to local authority ‘legitimacy’ as power brokers within LSPs was exacerbated by the fact that LSPs are not statutory (DETR, 2001, p.4). Hence, here we see how changes in central government policy around funding such governance spaces have had repercussions on the power relationship between local VCS groups and the local government within LSPs. Moreover, how local authorities have the power potentially to orchestrate VCS

participation on LSPs (through funding streams that on the face of it, are supposed to lay the foundations for widened non-state participation). As one interviewee claimed:

*“I suppose the worry is given we’re funded by them [the local authority], if we go too far we could end up with half the funding. I know that’s been a big worry in the past, by some of our members about... you know when you’re funded hundred percent by the City Council if you challenge anything you could get retaliation or something.”* (Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network)

This suggests that local VCS groups are unable actively to position themselves as having an equal representative voice on LSPs, and have limited power to make important decisions with regard to LSP policy direction. This fact is lost with some interviewees however, who probably naively assumed that the HCN enjoyed relative independence from the auspices of the council and LSP, but still, paradoxically, thought they worked in ‘partnership’ with the council and LSP:

*“Our main role is to champion the voluntary community sector. And I know whilst we’re funded by the council I like to think that we’re a, through our members, we’re a sort of critical friend of the LSP. As a staff team, we’re not simply council officers or LSP officers in disguise. You know if it came to the crunch I think we’re here to champion the sector’s interests on the LSP. That may mean on occasions that we agree to disagree or challenge something the LSP is doing.”* (Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network)

In theory then, central policy has propagated the notion of increased VCS representation on LSPs and, as the above quotes suggest, this may have filtered down into the

consciousness of those involved in increasing VCS activity in LSPs. But the reality is that inconsistencies and changes in central policy have resulted in the potential for the local authority to take greater control of the LSP as a governance space. The existence of VCS groups within the Hull LSP thus seems to be contingent upon local authority decisions (see section 7.2.1). Furthermore, it begs the question as to whether the Hull Community Network is actually an autonomous body to both Hull City Council and the LSP.

So, in light of how current power networks between the VCS and the local authority have been positioned, one has to question whether HCN ever had the capacity successfully to negotiate and represent the sole interests of the VCS within Hull's LSP. Paradoxically, this 'independence' is highly dependent on local authority decisions. Whilst the HCN did promote greater forms of participatory democracy into the LSP structure through the 'City Partnership' electoral process, the actions of the councils via particular VCS selection processes (see section 7.2) highlighted how the idea of community networks are merely a public relations exercise within the local governance project. Whilst Coaffee and Healey (2003) would describe the process which led to VCS inclusion within the LSP's City Partnership as a successful "specific episode[s] of interaction amongst actors" (p.1983), the Hull LSP membership experience overall reveals how embedded mainstream practices can be reproduced in state-regulated governance spaces. So, whilst the channels to VCS membership of the City Partnership, on the face of it, offer some recourse to widened democratic participation within governance spaces at the local level, scrutinising "the interaction among structures" (Pierre and Peters, 2000, p.22) actually reveals that the type of governance going on at the local level does not represent a panacea of transparent participatory governance – one which enables VCS groups to exercise greater independence (Taylor, 2006) and

express their own ideas *per se*, let alone ideas related to sustainable development. Instead, the interview data revealed a tension between on one hand, service delivery, a distinct governmental mode or function within the ‘congested state’ (whereby the state gives attention to VCS groups who are willing to deliver public services), and on the other hand, capacity building within the VCS which has acted to limit the negotiation of discourses of sustainability within such governance spaces. This will be discussed next.

### **8.2.2 Delimiting VCS discourses of sustainability? The service delivery – capacity building tension**

Newman *et al.* (2004) suggested that the development of social capital is one of New Labour’s national policy drives (p.206). However, whilst this section shows that this may be the case in the experiences of some VCS groups, other VCS groups find it difficult marrying the policy agendas of building, bridging and bonding social capital within the sector and offering ‘best value’ through service delivery. With regard to this service delivery – capacity building tension, the SSCF document offers a useful starting point to reflect on the complex and paradoxical tensions between functions of government and functions of the VCS. It reads, “The VCS was particularly concerned about their ability to express views robustly when they relied on a partner around the table for their future funding” (ODPM, 2005b, p.12). This quote implies that when VCS groups relied on funding from governmental partners (i.e. the local authority), they are fairly reticent in expressing to government how they could potentially utilise the funds in terms of building up social capital and promoting particular forms of sustainable development. This could be because government funding (i.e. money that is used within the public domain), has to be accounted for, and is therefore administered under tight regulatory controls where outputs have to be tangible and aligned to certain local floor targets and economic priorities. Therefore, the mechanisms and parameters by which

service delivery funds are controlled by government may appear over bureaucratic to some VCS groups, which have traditionally used money to invest in people through developing social capital (see section 4.5) and providing a better quality of life. Posited as a possible fix to the crisis of post-Fordism (Brown *et al.*, 2000, p.54-59; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a), the whole service delivery ethos is now centred on VCS groups becoming more efficient, target-driven, business-minded and professional (Austin, 2003; Deakin, 2001; Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a, b; Mitchell, 2001; Morison, 2000; NCVO, 2003; Osborne and MacLaughlin, 2002). This has acted to ‘mainstream’ *particular* VCS groups into government policy (Kendall, 2000, 2003). In reference to the DEFRA-funded Every Action Counts initiative, which is based upon advising, supporting and linking VCS organisations nationally over reducing their impact on the environment, the following interviewee supported this notion:

*“It’s actually being very output driven as a programme that has done that so we signed up to deliver a certain set of outputs that are really challenging, we don’t have a great deal of time to be diverting ourselves off to looking at other issues potentially or sort of raising other issues collectively. So I don’t feel at any point that we’ve been prevented from saying very much but then we probably haven’t tried to say very much because our focus has been on doing the job and delivering it.”* (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts initiative)

Likewise, with locally based VCS groups also, the rhetoric of ‘service’, ‘delivery’, ‘adding value’, ‘corporate aims’ and ‘priorities’ is also being used. The following quote shows how this particular local VCS co-ordinator believes the LAA is formalising the roles to be played by the VCS:

*“City Council is looking how it procures funding in the voluntary sector and yes, you will be commissioned to be used as a service through a Local Area Agreement, so whatever the priorities are in an area of the city, the idea is if you can provide that service they will buy you in to deliver it, that’s really the main change. City Council is putting together voluntary funding strategies, so instead of just responding to a funding enquiry, again, it’s how you can add value to the city’s corporate aims I suppose, that’s the only real new change on the horizon.”* (Co-ordinator, CHEF)

Similarly, the following VCS interviewee cautiously talked of how the government are attempting to utilise the VCS in service delivery and LAAs:

*“There is a really strong push from central government to kind of, ermm, raise the profile of the VCS and to give the sector a much bigger role in public service delivery and that’s starting to have an impact on public sector partners locally. And they’re starting to look at that for instance in terms of you know, our role in delivering parts of the LAA for instance. Which is all fine and wonderful and it’s you know, a lot of people in the voluntary sector will say it’s really good. And it is in a way but I keep saying to people, well the voluntary sector is about much more than contracting with you to do deliver public services.”* (Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

This is also exemplified through interviews with government officials at a variety of spatial levels. For example the following quote shows how government requires VCS groups to work in a specific business-like manner:



*“That’s one of the things we’ve driven through with the Community Composting Scheme. [The Community Composting Officer] has had to make sure that the groups that we’re getting involved with are going to run like a business, yes, they can have the community side of things, that’s great and we’d happily support that, but we need to make sure that when we are paying the money, it’s not disappearing, it’s running through the right kind of things.”* (Principal Sustainable Development Officer, East Riding of Yorkshire Council)

Similarly, at the regional level, the notion of the government utilising the VCS in delivering services through business-oriented contractual obligations is also emphasised:

*“There’s also a lot of stuff coming out, the local government White Paper and moves towards service delivery and recognising the key role that people have, but then getting through all the intricacies of all the tendering and contractual processes when they are small organisations... if they want to draw down funding from various sources they have to understand, if they just want to be a lobby group with membership subscriptions, that’s fine, but if they want to draw down and deliver services and get grants, they have to understand that process.”* (Sustainable Development Team Leader, Government Office Yorkshire and Humber)

On the face of it then, these quotes suggest that government require a particular business-like attitude on the part of the VCS when it comes to the delivery of public services. Furthermore, there is little room for manoeuvring on the part of VCS groups who want independence from the constraints of government funding criteria in order to

build, bond and bridge social capital as a precursor to facilitate sustainable development in more innovative ways. The work of Wolch (1989) has been useful in unpacking how the roles of the VCS as a partner with government agencies are more complex and heterogeneous than simply being a separate (third) sector whose role revolves around being critical of government. Her work contrasted the advocacy of voluntarism as being based upon firstly, ideological conviction and secondly, pragmatic political budgetary considerations (Wolch, 1989, p.1999), showing that the voluntary-state experience revolves around a specific axis of ‘meta-governance’ control through state funding of VCS initiatives and schemes. However, VCS interviews in this research reveal inconsistencies in terms of whether central government explicitly controls the voluntary sector through partnership mechanisms. The following quote shows how one VCS interviewee thinks that a central government department, Communities and Local Government, is actively attempting to empower people and communities over environmental issues rather than trying to promote a command and control agenda:

*“The other aspect, the main aspect is really around community action on environmental issues and specifically on climate change although not just on climate change. And Communities and Local Government are the clear sort of successor sponsored department for that sort of work which ties in very closely with the empowerment agenda, that people need to be personally empowered to take actions on these issues because they are large scale global issues which can be completely disempowering.”* (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts initiative)

So this quote highlights a more multi-directional approach to the VCS-state relationship. The work of Trudeau (2008) is particularly relevant here. Building on Wolch’s work, he offers a relational approach which “reflect[s] the complex

arrangements that now characterize relationships between institutions of the state and civil society” (Trudeau, 2008, p.670). These include ways in which the voluntary sector interacts with the state, one whereby influence travels in multiple directions, is interacted across multiple scales and is embedded in place (Trudeau, 2008, p.684). His work may suggest that, although the central state may retain overall power of how sustainability is promoted, there are potential spaces within society whereby VCS collectivism can influence the sustainability agenda. The issue of influence being a reciprocal process is implied in the following quote, whereby this particular interviewee makes the point that government should be funding freedom because of specific place-based knowledges the VCS can bring to the service delivery agenda:

*“But I think that the government has to realise that the voluntary sector has quite a distinctive offer to give. And I think that the new Charity Commission has been very good at expanding on exactly what that means. So I think that the government has to accept, it has to, the phrase I would use is that it has to fund freedom, then of course, the reason why the government values the sector is because it is working on the ground, it understands local communities, it is very responsive, often, and it is certainly very true of us, often a lot of the staff, particularly at the local level we’re volunteers.”* (National Trustee, British Trust of Conservation Volunteers)

Such funding and support is important because it not only offers the VCS access to particular governance networks at the local level, it also helps catalyse change regarding sustainability issues. Government support through funding therefore allows VCS groups to develop a degree of independence in the way their services are delivered locally. As the following quote shows:

*“But from previous experience is that yes that’s what starts to happen, you get some effective local organisations normally funded through some kind of regenerative development programme, quite often obtaining some funding or support in kind through the local authority. They become effective, once they become more effective, they then become more influential in regard to the local authority but they also become a nexus, a connection point for other local groups who begin to see links, who speak to them in local fora so I think that some of the stuff around neighbourhood level governance might actually start to help to catalyse some of that...”* (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts initiative)

This quote resonates with the idea of the chance of space where different actors are thrown together through various experiences (Massey, 2005; Allen, 2008). Allen (2008) claims that the chance of space is a “combination of calculated interventions that can largely be put down to chance” (p.1620). Funding from the state represents a calculated intervention, which in turn, facilitates the development of social capital, the empowerment of communities and sustainable development. But the way this social capital develops is totally random in the sense that some VCS groups are quick to realise the mutual benefits that come with government funding. For example, the following interviewee is aware that the public sector, in the long run, can save money by funding a range of voluntary social and environmental initiatives. This is an example of a ‘calculated intervention’ to attract funding:

*“I think we have to accept that the public sector is likely to be our main source of funding for the foreseeable future. And I think there’s that kind of question of principle if you like as to what our value is to the public sector. And I’ve put a bit of thought into how we make our case in terms of whether over a period of*

*time we can actually save the public sector money rather than costing it by virtue of the synergy we can get between the different kinds of programmes that public sector would otherwise be trying to pursue separately. And the big area for that at the moment is the social agenda really, there's a lot of overlap between the environment and the social agenda.”* (Regional Co-ordinator, Yorkshire and Humber Regional Environmental Forum)

Many VCS organisations then are quite aware of the advantages of being in receipt of government funding in order to bond and bridge social capital ('synergy') which can then facilitate the promotion of particular discourses of sustainable development. Yet some of the larger, national level VCS groups interviewed had the ability to, and were aware of, the need to maintain a degree of independence by diversifying the way they approached funding streams:

*“What I really appreciate about the charity is that on one hand we are very well connected with government and have a very big strategic relationship and can deliver a lot of money on a national level which obviously feeds down after that... But at the same time there's a massive web of local and regional partnerships, which I think is really healthy. One: because it means we are matching our activities to local needs by devolving those decisions locally, but also gives us greater financial security than some charities because the entire charity is not relying on massive government national funding streams. They are very helpful, but there are a lot of local partnerships as well which will hold up if something was to go badly wrong with the national as well, funding.”*  
(National Trustee, British Trust of Conservation Volunteers)

Similarly, some groups have chosen to be more delivery-focused in the hope that bonding social capital i.e. community involvement, can come out of such tangible delivery outcomes:

*“But I know that this sort of debate is happening at a Groundwork UK strategic level about whether we should be more of a lobbying organisation, but I see Groundwork as a delivery organisation. We are somebody who you know we can get £150 million a year through various sources, but we won’t spend that on sitting around and talking about things. That goes on projects, it goes on building projects really and getting the community involved in building those projects.”* (Regional Manager, Groundwork UK)

This shows that some VCS groups are more willing to be pragmatic about the funding relationship they have with government and accept the post-political managerial ethos of the VCS-state partnership through particular governance arrangements (see section 4.2). Such pragmatism then is tied up in the sector having a clear strategy of where they stand with regard to the specific agenda of the government using the VCS in delivering public services (HM Treasury, 2002; NCVO, 2003). This is the type of pragmatic politics talked about by Allen (2008). Such a politics potentially enables some VCS groups to make a difference through the enactment of agency in terms of capacity building with other groups around sustainability, even though such a politics is originally conceived and orchestrated by a central state service delivery agenda. Allen’s (2008) notion of how power is exercised with a “*purpose in mind*” (p.1615, emphasis in original) is significant here. Some groups are well aware what they are giving up in terms of autonomy, but for such groups, the price they pay through such a trade-off may be commensurable with the benefit of giving sustainable development a higher position

at the political table. As the following quote shows, larger environmentally-focused VCS groups understand the rules of the partnership game, namely that the government are the lead partner, but they are able to align themselves to particular government policy trends through the reframing of operational modes and agendas e.g. strategic thinking in order to secure funding:

*“I’m not sure what the empirical research shows. But what we are trying to do is in preparing our BTCV board recently is we are obviously looking carefully where [Gordon] Brown is going and the Office of the Third Sector, DEFRA is going. Because [Gordon] Brown puts a real emphasis on climate change, but it’s not clear what that emphasis means for environmental charities working on the ground with volunteers in the UK. And one, because I think there might well be a pressure to link that climate change to Gordon Brown’s environmental agenda, he usually relates to global poverty. So there may be funding being diverted. Green money might be sent abroad. So I’m not really sure actually and that’s something we are working quite hard on behind the scenes to try and get a clearer steer on where the government is going because that is enormously important to us.”* (National Trustee, British Trust of Conservation Volunteers)

Similarly, the following regional level VCS interviewee (of a national VCS group) looks at the funding criteria in order to ascertain how his organisation can fit in to particular government policy funding streams:

*“I mean if you look at Objective One funding... I mean again that’s got economic outputs and things like that so you read through the single programme and document and you have under various measures and you... can be funded*

*for improving the quality of life in an area because you've got to have attractive neighbours, people to live in with lots of facilities, jobs, get a work force in... things like that. But then if you go and try and spend some Objective One money on building a play area for a community in need, you know you have to have a discussion with them and you have to, that's just... But all voluntary and community sector organisations have the same problem, it's just the way funding works isn't it? It gets set at a level. They write their guidance on what they want to spend the fund on. Groundwork like every other charity reads that guidance and goes, "Right. How can I bend this so that it fits what we want to do. What our aims are. What the communities we're working with want to do. How can we make an argument?" And there's forever that back and forth. Things like Objective One, things like Yorkshire Forward funding which are economically based. You know you go through a process of trying to make sure they have the words in the document that you can then call back on... You know you get it in there." (Regional Manager, Groundwork UK)*

At the local level too, the idea of strategy and 'fitting in' also plays an integral role to the way a smaller VCS group develops its aims and objectives. This interviewee also expounds the difficulties that local groups face with getting involved with council initiatives:

*"...they don't really seek us out apart from allowing us to come, you know, us having to make sure we're on the LSP." (Friends of the Earth representative, Beverley and East Riding)*



So a range of VCS groups are more malleable in the way they approach getting funding from government to deliver specific services. This points to, as Allen (2008) suggests, an element of ‘doing’ related to how power is exercised in particular movements and a degree of multi-directionality in terms of power relations (Trudeau, 2008). Yet the reasons for this trend could also be centred around the co-option or steering of the VCS rather than empowerment on their own terms (Taylor *et al.*, 2002) in order to embed a non-conflicting and managerial style of governance politics around sustainability within LSPs. Indeed, some VCS groups are aware that their own working aims and objectives may suffer because of possible steer from government around sustainability issues:

*“...there is an issue. Do I have a problem with that? I think that I don’t at this moment in time. It depends on how much influence or steer you are actually getting but I think that you have to be pragmatic about what’s available. As long as we don’t steer too far away from our original aims, I think I am alright with that... So yeah, I can see there has been a steer, but whether that’s been government driven or an internal organisational decision, I’m not sure really, I suppose it’s been a bit of both.”* (Regional Manager, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

Such pragmatism on the part of the VCS, I would argue, is enforced and symptomatic of the changes that the VCS has gone through over the past decade with the government’s focus on utilising the VCS more in the delivery of public services. The following interviewees recognise such changes the sector has undergone, but also associate such changes with the VCS, in their own right, having to make particular choices. And these choices have potential costs in the form of VCS ability to innovate, maintain independence and lobby government through community activism:

*“If you want to apply for money now, as an organisation, and with the Lottery as well, you have to say how you fit into the government policy, right? And in one way you can say, “mmm, perhaps that’s getting everything focused”, but on the other you got to have a sceptical side and say “what actually happens to... are we killing, you know, some of that, you know, community activism because are we saying you should be acting on that or there, and if you’re not then you can’t have the money”. You really know, I think it’s going to be another interesting time. But I have to say over the past 10-15 years I have seen ‘contracts culture’ come in...”* (Manager, Developing Our Communities, Hull)

The above quote suggests that some VCS groups have to make choices when it comes to receiving funding from government. The ‘contracts culture’ described by the above interviewee may suggest that some groups will have to choose between maintaining independence or relinquishing some control over their developmental aims and objectives. As such, its position and ethos as a vibrant (third) sector that can keep both the public and private sectors in check through its ‘value expressive’ function (Kendall and Knapp, 1995, p.72) is brought into question as some groups gradually transform into a state-serving (Wolch, 1989; Taylor *et al.*, 2002; Lewis, 2005; Trudeau, 2008) or quasi-public (Ragin, 1998) sector. Hence, it can be argued that such a policy trajectory by government produces winners and losers amongst the VCS and that this can potentially negatively translate down to those groups actively promoting sustainable development at the local level. Larger, more resourceful VCS groups like Groundwork and BTCV are able to reframe their governance workings in order to fit into policy changes (Lewis, 2005), whilst smaller groups at the local level find it much harder to stay afloat as policy changes inhibit their ability to adapt quickly enough to changes in state-regulated governance spaces like LSPs. For example, the following interviewee

couldn't afford to go to meetings when the East Riding LSP decided they couldn't fund VCS groups attending sub-group meetings:

*"...we're also in the Local Strategic Partnership. But that is limited to what we can achieve through that... I was finding that I had to fund going to all these different meetings out of my own pocket."* (Co-ordinator, Flamborough Community Environmental Action Group)

Fyfe and Milligan (2003a) also found that state-initiated moves to develop voluntary responsibilities have acted to empower some citizens whilst disempowering others. This has been the case in this research as interviewees talk of killing community activism, the ongoing professionalisation of the sector and the need for strategic thinking in line with government policies. Yet such a step change in the way the VCS is perceived would inevitably have reverberations with regard to their involvement in local governance spaces like LSPs in terms of democratic renewal (Unwin, 2003; Lewis, 2005). In turn, this change would inevitably have an effect on the way sustainable development is approached within such spaces, especially in light of Hull and East Ridings experience of voluntary inclusion (chapter 7). The experiences in these localities show that VCS inclusion within LSPs revolves around historically embedded relationships with local government (see section 7.2). This suggests that in some LSPs, *governance* cultures can be redefined as *government* cultures, in which an intended agenda of wider capacity building within the sector is reduced to an ethos of local service delivery because of local government influence of such spaces. Yet this is not to say that influence within governance spaces is whole heartedly uni-directional and top down. In fact some VCS groups exhibit pockets of resistance to being wholly

influenced by a top down, governmental funding agenda. As a Friends of the Earth regional interviewee explained:

*“Not from government, no, we wouldn’t take it... We are apolitical so we retain the right to be critical, to criticise and potentially praise any of the political parties...”*

Yet this is not to say such a group would never work with government on issues related to sustainable development. She continues:

*“Working with is different to endorsing. So we do, potentially have worked, not me personally but organisationally, have worked in an advisory role in certain issues. But maintaining a distance so, and that thing is important. I know for example that one of our planning officers worked quite extensively at helping to develop the planning policy statement on climate change, so that’s an example of where it has been a very positive working relationship.”* (Regional Network Developer, Friends of the Earth)

This section, through empirical evidence, has suggested that the framework in which the VCS work with government is highly complex. More specifically, such complexities could be framed around the size and resources of a VCS group (Lewis, 2005) and how these enable it to respond to government policy trends. The inconsistency of government policy (Lowndes and Wilson, 2003) within the ‘congested state’ (Skelcher, 2000) has resulted in a myriad of configurations and reconfigurations surrounding a VCS group’s ability to capacity build, promote discourses of sustainable development and deliver particular services. For those groups involved in state-regulated local

governance spaces which have an influence on the socio-political make-up of a locality, their characteristics are largely a function of their ability to be compatible with a managerial-oriented, state-driven economic agenda. Therefore, such groups have to be pragmatic in the way they approach their aims and objectives. On the face of it then, it would be reasonable to assume that the way in which sustainability issues are promoted by local VCS groups is also driven in some way by their ability to adapt to the national policy context of service delivery with the VCS. The following section will explore this with regard to how VCS groups in Hull and the East Riding form particular networks surrounding the promotion of sustainable development within and external to LSPs. In this sense, networks are formed across space and are spatially contingent.

### **8.3 VCS adaptation to sustainable development through governance networks**

This section will discuss the ways in which the VCS have attempted to promote sustainable development through two types of networks at the local level: non-state controlled networks and state-influenced networks. VCS groups can form networks internally and externally to state-influenced governance spaces. There is an abundance of literature related to how state and non-state stakeholders interact within particular governance networks (Lowndes *et al.*, 1997; Rhodes, 1997; Hirst, 2000; Pierre and Peters, 2000; Coaffee and Healey, 2003; Kooiman, 2003). Whilst this literature is explored in greater depth in section 4.3, some network studies place “emphasis on the actor or organisation level; these are supplemented with studies looking at actor-qualities and... theorising their structural components” (Kooiman, 2003, p.105). In line with this argument, the main aim of this section is to show that although such governance networks are in part influenced and regulated by national state policies and agendas, each particular network has their own internal framework or regime (see Sterling, 2005, p.141) which is in part, framed by specific ‘actor qualities’. This is

important because such qualities allow particular networks, in their own right, to be cohesive enough to resist and even challenge particular state powers (Pierre and Peters, 2000, p.20) – and this has repercussions in the way sustainable development is promoted by VCS groups at the local level.

### **8.3.1 Non-state controlled networks**

Within the research areas it was found that some local VCS groups preferred to pursue their own objectives surrounding local sustainable development outside of state-regulated spaces of governance. In this sense such groups work within a network detached from formal state interference. This is a type of informal sustainability politics enacted outside state structures and institutions, which incidentally, makes it no less political than what goes on inside the LSP. Such a postmodern, radical democracy enables the VCS to be independent, yet politicised in the broad Laclauian/Mouffian sense of the word, and to get on with the doing of sustainability ‘on the ground’, not being predisposed with the various formalities of institutional state-led spaces. Stevens and Morris (2001) describe such groups as “individual actors who are self-starters and interested in development from a self-interest perspective” (p.150). This ‘self interest’ makes such actors knowledgeable and morphs them, albeit unintentionally one could argue, into experiential political actors in the broad democratic sense of the political. Such stakeholders resonate with Bang’s (2005) idea of the ‘everyday maker’. The ‘everyday maker’ is a “form of lay citizenship shaped by everyday experience... which is being sought in a range of partnerships and governance networks... whom elites seek to ‘empower’ in new forms of collaborative governance” (p.162). This could suggest that grassroots activists are being redefined from being an individual or group that traditionally has drawn their political identity from the antagonistic relationship they have with the state regarding particular environmental discourses (Castells, 1997).

However, in this research, there are instances where the state has actively attempted to engage and collaborate with such actors by offering funding for objectives which further their own agenda, which they rejected. For example, one group was quick to realise that the council's objectives were mismatched with their own particular conservation and biodiversity objectives:

*“I think we have got entirely different objectives. Again its back to we are looking to nature conservation, about maximising biodiversity in any given habitat. And I think councils are looking for public accountability of what they have spent on the project in terms of how many people they can get in there. We've had cases where we have been offered money to erect an interpretation panel at the gate with East Ridings logo on it, but they are not providing any funding for actually buying the land or developing it”* (Chairman, South Holderness Countryside Society)

Here, the policy was primarily about the council establishing public accountability, but funding a conservation group would also have the added effect of enhancing the council's green image. The refusal of state funding exemplified here shows how some VCS groups do not necessarily see state collaboration as the way forward in promoting environmental sustainability and that a type of external politics is enacted by VCS groups, and is necessary for a more vibrant rolling-out of sustainability. Indeed work in the US has suggested how some local sustainability initiatives occur without state interference or financial support (Krueger and Agyeman, 2005). The work of Bang (2005) confirms this notion in that such (VCS) actors “do not feel defined by the state; neither do they see themselves as apathetic or opposed to it, they simply do not wish to spend their precious time participating in formal political institutions... they want to do

things by themselves, where they are, on their own terms and for their own purposes” (p.167). However, this research has also found that VCS actors do collaborate and network with similar local VCS groups to their own in order to promote specific discourses surrounding conservation and biodiversity:

*“We’ve been involved in the past with the [East Riding conservation groups y]. We’ve planted trees for them and they’ve planted trees for us. They’ve done hedgerow management for us, they’ve joined in our voluntary conservation tasks. [East Riding Conservation group y] don’t have many reserves or areas of their own in which to do conservation work, but if they did we would go and help them.”* (Chairman, South Holderness Countryside Society)

The reasons for such voluntarism could be attributed to the fact that by working outside of the more state-regulated governance arrangements, such groups were effectively being excluded from certain government funding streams because it was aligned to council defined agendas and not their own. However, by working together in networks, such VCS groups realised that achieving their particular brand of sustainable development was not wholly down to economic conditions, but creating an environmental-focused capacity in the sector:

*“I think for small societies like us, we don’t really have any great funding to go for really and then if you do say, okay why don’t you work with [group x] or the [group z] whatever they are, and you work together and you create your critical mass.”* (East Riding conservation group y secretary)



However, this is not to say such spaces were harmonious. As in state-regulated governance spaces, non-state controlled networks too exhibit similar inter-organisational tensions; for example, personality clashes (see section 7.3). As such I have anonymised some of the following VCS group quotes. In referring to other East Riding conservation groups x and z in their area, the East Riding conservation group y respondent claimed:

*And then you get the petty jealousies, well he's the chair of that and he's the chair of that, and if you start combining them, someone loses their position within the community.”* (East Riding conservation group y secretary)

Yet one common feature amongst groups involved in non-state networks was their cynicism and frustration with current state-regulated governance arrangements in providing an adequate platform in which to promote particular ideas surrounding environmental sustainability, particularly conservation. Referring to the LSP, the following representative claimed:

*“To be cynical I think they [the LSP] were only paying lip service to our requirements”* (Chairman, South Holderness Countryside Society)

The following national VCS representative felt that local collective action surrounding sustainable development was more productive than groups engaging in local state governance structures:

*“At a local level, I think it has to be through actually collective local action and engaging more with other voluntary organisations who share an agenda*

*actually and that that's probably a more effective way of influencing the locality, currently than engaging through the governance structures... they're very limited, there's a very limited scope in engaging with governance agendas. I don't know of any particularly good local consultative processes. I think some of the parish planning stuff in the rural areas has been quite inclusive and has resulted in some quite sophisticated debate around sustainability and making some of the links there.*" (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts)

This was reiterated by community-level groups. In reference to their members wanting their group to be involved with state-regulated governance arrangements like LSPs, the respondent for conservation group y claimed:

*"... I can't say that as a society we are greatly bothered by it because of the general membership, I think it's just not what they want to be involved in... I think the members are happy being a little tiny conservation group doing what they do with their winter talks, but we are not like Greenpeace or Friends of the Earth, we're not like that."* (East Riding conservation group y secretary)

Such local VCS groups were characterised by a sense of pride in their independence from working within state-regulated governance arrangements because of a perception of different working objectives between such governance arrangements and themselves. This was especially the case in terms of those interviewees whose group practiced conservation work. This resonates with ideas by Goodwin (1998) who suggested that there are "systematic discrepancies between the motives, experiences and understandings of the various policy actors towards the theory and practice of a participatory conservation" (p.481) which "undermines the effectiveness and credibility

of existing participatory conservation initiatives” (p.495). In terms of the experience *within* such groups, effectiveness could have been undermined through their petty jealousies and personality clashes as previously suggested. Yet overall, such groups were willing to work with other groups who had similar objectives to their own, showing an ability to transcend certain personal differences in favour of the greater good of local conservation outcomes.

Pierre and Peters (2000) make the point that “one of the dilemmas of the contemporary state is that whilst it needs networks to bring societal actors into joint projects, it tends to see its policies obstructed by those networks” (p.20). However, this research has demonstrated that the emergence of non-state controlled networking processes amongst some VCS groups may not be attributed to the need to obstruct state policy as necessity, but rather is symptomatic of a particular group’s will to promote certain actions related to sustainable development which current local policy disregards or excludes at a particular point in time. Being focused and creating the ‘critical mass’ surrounding particular environmental and conservation objectives made the network stronger and more protected from state influenced governance spaces. In this sense, the state has been ‘hollowed out’ somewhat regarding informal VCS collective activity surrounding sustainable development (see Kooiman, 2003, p.105). It also shows that far from being a panacea, collaborative governance between the state and the VCS can be, in the eyes of some VCS groups, viewed as being counter-productive to the end goal of promoting particular discourses of sustainable development.

### **8.3.2 State-influenced networks**

Alternatively, there were several interviewed VCS groups in the research areas who attempted to adapt to the particular service delivery oriented *modus operandi* of both local government and governance structures in order to promote sustainable development. Such groups can also be characterised through actively trying to create more formal alliances or networks with other local VCS groups with similar modes of working as a way of strengthening their own individual position. To do this, they explicitly show a willingness to work in partnership, and be partly influenced by, local government and related governance structures like LSPs. I call this ‘state governance aligning’. Such groups realised that in order to fit into, or align themselves within such formal arrangements and promote their own agenda or objectives surrounding sustainable development, they needed to galvanise support from across the sector locally and have some degree of partnership interaction with, and influence from, state spaces. However, it is important to note that the end objective of groups belonging to this more state-influenced network was not dissimilar to those groups who belonged to the non-state controlled network – both groups had sustainable development in some shape or form, as their end objective – it is the processes and means by which they achieved their objective which was different.

The following is a quote from a local BTCV community project officer, who expresses the benefits of working through alliances with public bodies in order to create a more influential power base from which to promote specific local conservational discourses. Talking about HEYwoods, a local conservation initiative in Hull and the East Riding made up of public (both ER and Hull Councils), private and voluntary groups, whose main aim is to manage and increase woodland cover in the area, he said:

*“so we now dragged HEYwoods in, who we were all involved with before, and we said to HEYwoods what we need is a focal point, what we need is a hub... HEYwoods agreed that they could be that hub, through which we work as part of a partnership.”* (Community Project Officer, BTCV)

Similarly, another VCS stakeholder facilitated the creation of an alliance with groups who had differing social and environmental objectives as a way of taking advantage of wider spatial funding pots which would help them deliver specialist initiatives and services in the locality:

*“what we’ve developed is the Community Alliance which is the largest delivery organisations in the area acting together to offer a range of activities in each of our specialist areas and so we operate as a secretariat for the alliance, and we are developing that alliance and developing an employment project on the back of that... But it’s also tying our alliance together with other organisations like that in order to be able to cover the whole area so that we’re all delivering in our own areas so we’re all still benefiting at the community level, but we can go for those pots of money that are becoming available at regional level, as the funding is pulled back and the layers of administration are taken out, which is why it’s happening really. But yeah, its sort of economies of scale and definitely partnership.”* (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

Examples like this show that some local VCS group stakeholders tended to be more pragmatic about how best to promote sustainable development, and adapted to government policies like partnership working by becoming part of a stronger network or alliance of groups. These groups understood that working with a variety of local public,

private and voluntary stakeholders (and not just voluntary groups) across space, was necessary in order to attain certain sustainability objectives. This entailed a great deal of compromise and adaptation on the part of some groups objectives surrounding sustainability, suggesting also that some VCS groups are more reflexive in understanding how their position within the state-voluntary policy nexus entailed working within state dominated modes of active citizenship and partnership working (see Marinetto, 2003; Jochum *et al.*, 2005).

There was an active realisation that for local VCS groups to be more successful they needed to fit into this new policy agenda of closer working with not only the public sector in general but those in greater positions of power within the public sector. In order to achieve certain goals, such groups realised that they had to relinquish some of their own independence and specific working objectives (as opposed to VCS groups that worked through non-state controlled network processes) as a kind of trade-off in order to promote particular forms of sustainable development. As a quote from the same local environmental group co-ordinator shows:

*"It's about speaking the same language as the economists. Because the economists are always going to be the ones with the most influence because they've got money... [and] is going to hold sway and it's going to be like that for a very long time to come and I can't see it changing overnight. So therefore it's about being able to put the environment in economic terms and it's not always an easy thing to do but banging on about doing something for the sake of saving the blue tits isn't going to sway an economist or someone who is in that mindset, "why the hell would I give a toss about the blue tits, that's not bringing me money in"... I strongly believe personally, that the environment is important as*

*an intrinsic importance, for its own benefit and for our mental health and all sorts of things but that doesn't sit well with the people who are making the decisions.”* (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

Knowing how to engage with stakeholders from other sectors in a professional manner was imperative to the end means of securing resources, as failure to engage in this particular way could result in exclusion from the governance space in question (Etzioni-Halevy, 1993; Sterling, 2005). The importance of remaining within this particular network is exemplified by the following interviewee, because she was also personally involved in the altercation with the LSP executive in their refusal to embed an environmental sub-group into Hull's LSP governance structure in the summer of 2006. Yet she still took an active role in the newly formed LSP. As she continued:

*“Well I have a lot of involvement around, for example there's the North Carr Partnership Meeting, which is the local version of the LSP, so I sit on that and I also chair the Local Jobs and Prosperity, People and Skills group. We don't have an environment group either because the local structures are supposed to mirror the city LSP structures... But, and through that, I can feed that through the Alliance and the Community Network.”* (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

Similarly, this interviewee from a regional VCS group also expounded the importance of 'state governance aligning' in order to secure funding for their organisation:

*“We've now got these Local Area Agreements which, have you heard of that yet, and we're almost trying to work with that because that's where all the money is*

*going to come down from in the end so it's in our interest to be part of that process. We're on the [East Riding] Local Strategic Partnership. I'm on the subgroup of the Local Strategic Partnership which is the 'Learning and Education Partnership'... our Chief Officer, she's on the board of both the Local Strategic Partnerships [East Riding and North East Lincolnshire] so we're involved in that way. We're also involved because we've got transport partnerships and which is made up of local authority as well and so we're on those partnerships.” (Manager, Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council)*

These quotes show willingness on the part of VCS groups to adapt and work within state-regulated governance arrangements like LSPs, yet what is of more significance here are the motivations behind doing this. The co-ordinator for Bransholme Enterprises for instance exhibited quite a Machiavellian approach in aligning her group with local state governance arrangements in order to promote certain sustainability objectives. This particular group's working objectives were environmentally centric, yet they got involved in the economic sub board of the Hull LSP so they could promote their environmental objectives within a sub-group that historically had more political influence within the LSP, and then fed that back into the VCS network to which they belonged. This particular networked mode of working results in the forging of a closer relationship – partnership – between the state and VCS groups. Writing on such a relationship through the lens of governance, Rhodes (1997) asserts that “government confronts self-steering interorganizational networks. The relationship is asymmetric, but centralization must co-exist with interdependence” (1997, p.4). Like this research, Rhodes also implies that collaborative relations between the state and VCS are highly complex and involves greater degrees of powers shared amongst particular stakeholders within networks, across space at particular times. Similarly, Kooiman (1999, 2000 and



2003) also positions political society as undergoing a particular pattern of working in which balances shift between modes of state (hierarchical governance) and civil society (networked governance): “from the side of civil society, the state can be interpenetrated (build and consolidate civil society) by means such as building the foundations of a civil society, building alliances, developing intermediary channels, opening up trans-national space and building citizenship” (2003, p.216). In terms of sustainability governance, whilst both modes of control do occur, I argue that there is no pattern; it is rather defined through temporal contexts. Hierarchical forms of sustainability governance still take precedence through state governance spaces like LSPs as chapter 7 demonstrated, but external networks also operate alongside state-regulated governance spaces, having an interdependent and asymmetric effect on the way sustainable development is positioned locally. The following section explores the nature of this asymmetrical relationship more closely, specifically deconstructing the nature of partnership and collaboration between the VCS and the state.

### **8.3.3 Adapting to state policy shifts – deconstructing VCS-state ‘partnership’ working**

Previous sections in this chapter (8.2.2, 8.3.2) established that some VCS groups have had to realign their own ways of working in order to fit into the state’s agenda of using the VCS in public service delivery. This section utilises the literature derived from ‘governmentality’ theory and how trust is built through communication to show how power is distributed between the state and the VCS when working together in partnership and through governance spaces like LSPs. Such literature is useful in unpacking the relational tensions that become apparent when state and non-state stakeholders govern for and promote particular discourses of sustainability.

This research (chapters two and four) and others (Ward and Williams, 1997; Betsill and Bulkeley, 2004; Bulkeley, 2005; Evans *et al.* 2006; Pattberg and Stripple, 2008) have highlighted how various discourses of sustainable development, multi-scalar networks and governance are inextricably linked. Evans *et al.* (2006) asserts that for sustainable development to be achieved government cannot act alone and that governance processes are “regarded as a key mechanism to involve and incorporate citizens and local organizations into the decision-making process, thereby increasing political engagement and levels of acceptance of what are often difficult decisions” (p.849). This suggests that VCS actors may have to become more politically engaged and adapt to state policy shifts in order to have some degree of inclusion in the governing of sustainable development at multiple geographic scales. This was implied by the following interviewee who was actively conscious of how their group objectives had changed over time:

*“I have seen a move within the organisation more away from the environment and looking after the environment to more people, communities and organisations. It’s definitely been steered towards that. Again I come from the environment background so I am more interested in the environment and involving people in the environment, whereas opposed to, and we have a number of projects that are just involving people doing, it’s all about people development and community development. So yeah, I can see there has been a steer, but whether that’s been government driven or an internal organisational decision, I’m not sure really, I suppose it’s been a bit of both.”* (Regional Manager, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers)

This shows how some VCS groups are increasingly becoming more politically engaged, having to react to particular shifts in state policy and strategically align their selves to governance spaces in order to promote their own aims and objectives. The concept of ‘governmentality’ (Foucault, [1978] 1991) is a useful starting point in explaining why some individuals and collective groups, through the parameters of governance spaces, are co-opted by government (Taylor *et al.* 2002; Taylor, 2007) to behave in certain internalising, self managing ways. The previous interview quote may allude to how some groups are oblivious to what or who changes their agenda, only realising that the agenda itself has changed. Whilst this could suggest that a process of social regulation is occurring within local sustainability governance policy, it also suggests that particular stakeholders, for whatever reason, hold certain powers (see Marinetto, 2003, p.104) inasmuch as they can be described as ‘active subjects’ (Morison, 2000; Taylor, 2007) or ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ (Lowndes, 2005) within the governance space. The crux of the question therefore, is why these particular VCS stakeholders are ‘active subjects’ and other VCS stakeholders are not?

Atkinson (2003) suggests how “both individuals and communities have the potential to develop ways of governing themselves that, whilst meeting the requirements of government, can better meet their own needs” (p.117). Whilst this may suggest that all VCS stakeholders have equal capacity and ability to engage in local governance spaces, this research suggests that this isn’t the case. Those VCS groups who are more closely aligned to LSPs and local council are more willing to draw on funding from government sources, which means adapting and moulding themselves into government policy. As the following VCS interviewee from East Riding who had a history of involvement with their local authority and LSP claimed:

*“We’ve got to learn now how to commission for work, we’ve got to get leaner, we’ve got to get smarter and we’ve got to pick up a gear in as much as, as we are we do things very professionally... but I think we’ve got to be seen to be doing it, because they’ve [government] always looked at us as being people that are ‘pink and fluffy’ that work with communities and we do a little bit here and a little bit there, they’ve now got to see us as a major player, and we are one of the major players.”* (Manager, Humber and Wolds Rural Community Council)

The above VCS stakeholder resonates with Bang’s (2005) idea of the ‘expert citizen’ who co-operates more professionally and strategically with public and private organisations (p.163). Bang asserts that “politics for the expert activist is a fusion of representation and participation in and through a strategic form of communication, where it is necessary to make ones expertise felt discursively upon the conduct of others... the goal... is no longer social solidarity but political influence” (p.165). So in order for VCS groups to secure wider sources of funding they may feel it necessary to politically align their selves with state influenced spaces. The easiest way to do this is through government ‘approved’ routes, of which governance spaces like LSPs are the most obvious. This suits government in that they are able “mainstream resources in line with local needs and priorities that emerge through local partnerships” (Lever, 2005, p.912) and absolve certain institutional responsibilities (Hickey and Mohan, 2004), like sustainability, onto non-state actors like the VCS. The VCS in turn, accept the responsibility willingly because they need to align themselves with the governance space in order to attract funding. In this sense, the state – non-state stakeholder network within the governance space is mutually beneficial. However, the involvement in LSPs of those VCS groups who have professionalised, are willing to compete for resources and develop services which ‘add value’ does act to depoliticise such governance

structures (Taylor, 2007, p.301), namely because the space isn't really representative of governance in a truly democratic sense (i.e. inclusive of a variety of VCS groups). LSPs then are representative of the way New Labour policy has institutionalised competition to a far greater extent which has fragmented social relations and forced community groups to compete for resources (Edwards, 1997; Atkinson, 2003, p.107; Lever, 2005, p.913). As a result VCS groups which do not have the capacity to develop professionally and have different objectives to government are being systematically excluded from such spaces. This is especially the case for those groups who concentrate on the conservation side of sustainability, as shown through previous interviewee quotes alluding to the LSP not focussing "on the requirements of the lesser members within it" (see p.212).

Whilst Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' does offer an explanation as to the way in which the national state exercises social regulation over localities through governance spaces like LSPs, it is important to note that the nature of power cannot solely be reducible to those that steer and those that are steered. As Atkinson (2003) claims, "power engenders resistance, and domination is only ever partial... programmes of government... are rarely realised as they were intended" (p.105). This suggests that through government influenced governance spaces like LSPs, 'bottom-up' activism and capacity building within the VCS can be catalysed, a point made by the following interviewee:

*"...but from previous experience is that yes that's what starts to happen, you get some effective local organisations normally funded through some kind of regeneration development programme, quite often obtaining some funding or support in kind through the local authority. They become effective, once they*

*become more effective, they then become more influential in regard to the local authority but they also become a nexus, a connection point for other local groups who begin to see links, who speak to them in local forma so I think that some of the stuff around neighbourhood level governance might actually start to help to catalyse some of that.”* (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts initiative)

Some of the preceding quotes in this chapter have suggested that having an involvement in LSPs are not effective enough to have any real influence over local environmental issues. It could be argued that the ineffectiveness of an LSP in influencing local sustainability policy has an indirect influence in helping such VCS groups understand how local government works. Therefore, the ineffectiveness of governance spaces like LSPs can actually help catalyse local VCS action through certain actors looking for more effective conduits in which to promote sustainable development.

So far, this section has used the concept of ‘governmentality’ to explain how power is disproportionately distributed in favour of state interests over VCS stakeholder interests and that such actors need to change and adapt to such spaces in order to promote sustainable development. This lends itself to a ‘them and us’ scenario whereas the experiences of the following local VCS interviewee showed that although there were problems between state and non-state actors within the initial LSP process, stakeholders on both sides empathised with the various constraints of other stakeholders and that time was needed to understand each other through collaborative process like LSPs:

*“When [LSPs] first came out, how I got involved was because I had been at this meeting which I had been invited to on the community aims. And initially I felt it was a talking shop. It’s like any change in culture. It takes a lot of time to*

*develop. However much we don't like it, if we work in a government department, to some extent, we've been conditioned. You can't stop that, you know, you try to keep an open mind, but there's definitely something about that culture that's becoming part of us. And I think that when that culture changes, it takes a long time for an individual to be able to see the other side of the coin, and suddenly you think that's what it's all about, like sustainability. And it takes a little while I think, even an officer said to me the other day, "we are beginning to recognise that this is a two-way process, it's not that we didn't want to, it's just that we didn't know how to go about it". And I think that's coming."* (Hull and East Riding Chairperson, CPRE)

Yet the notion of having even an adequate amount of time to embed spaces like LSP and make them a legitimate part of the local political landscape doesn't fit into New Labour's transient, inconsistent local modernisation reform agenda (Lowndes and Wilson, 2003). This agenda has a history of focusing around finding the quickest institutional fix to local problems that are highly complex in nature, rather than any long term policy goal to create an infrastructure conducive to equal partnership working between state and non-state actors. This is exemplified through the variety of modernisation initiatives already rolled out by the New Labour government. It is therefore of no surprise that some VCS groups find it difficult to adapt and change in line with governance initiatives like LSPs. Changes in local political leadership for example, can lead to a "dramatic swing either towards or away from public participation" (Lowndes *et al.* 1998, p.54). Whilst one may counter that LSPs have survived nearly a decade, this is only in name, as their key functions have also been transient, dependent, as this research has demonstrated, on both wider spatial (central guidance) and place-based pressures (local authority floor targets). So LSPs have to be

responsive spaces which can facilitate certain services from specific actors at specific points in time. This represents a fundamental friction between on one hand, the need for a dynamic, policy responsive LSP, and on the other hand, the time in which it takes for a successful collaborative partnership to evolve. As the interviewee continued:

*“...and partly it’s VCS organisations that maybe at fault, but I noticed in the early days that we went to the Local Strategic Partnership, I wasn’t the only one who didn’t say very much, a lot of organisations didn’t... And a lot of organisations didn’t go to the second meeting because they felt they weren’t influencing. But I felt we could have influenced, had we either been more assertive, not aggressive, or more confident or knowledgeable about what the council was trying to do, that was my feeling, and I got very frustrated that they didn’t because here was the opportunity and why weren’t we making the most of it? I knew my feelings because I hadn’t got that specialist knowledge. But the opportunity was there, so I feel that it hasn’t been one-sided.”* (Hull and East Riding Chairperson, CPRE)

This also highlights the dangers of VCS stakeholders thinking that the collaborative process within governance spaces is straightforward. Adapting to shifts in governance policy is not a case of getting state and non-state representatives in a county hall for ‘three hours six times a year’ and thrashing things out (Taylor, 2006). The processes involved in establishing effective governance spaces are far more complex and context driven, especially with the increasing pressures of a mixed economy (Goss, 2001, p.17). Being drawn into such collaborative processes results in VCS stakeholders having to develop greater understanding of potential multi-stakeholder conflicts, and develop through shared reflexive experiences over time, resolutions to particular problems that



emerge. Within this process, trust is built; cultures are formed and transformed (Habermas, 1979; Giddens, 1984; 1990, 1998; Friedman, 1992; Healey, 19997, 1999, 2006; Seidman, 1998). As Habermas (1979) claimed, “learning processes also take place in the dimension of moral insight, practical knowledge, communicative action, and the consensual regulation of action conflicts – learning processes that are deposited in more mature forms of social integration, in new *productive relations*, and that in turn first make possible the introduction of new productive forces” (p.98, emphasis in original).

To facilitate ‘new productive forces’, relationships need to be built, trust needs to develop and there should be a shared and mutual understanding of problems encountered over a period of time between all stakeholders. This particular CPRE representative was prepared to go to other meetings and realised that it was a two way process in which trust needed to be built between public and voluntary stakeholders. This resonates in the work of Giddens (1990) who refers to ‘facework commitments’ in which “trust relations... are sustained by or expressed in social connections established in circumstances of copresence” (p.80). This also shows that partnership is not necessarily a ‘them and us’ situation as implied through the literature on ‘governmentality’. Some VCS groups do feel that partnership in governance spaces actually works, given time. As the CPRE interviewee continued:

*“I wouldn’t like to say it was intentional [not going to second meeting]. It was because the other groups couldn’t bring anything forward... But I don’t think it was intentional and I think that initially, they felt that they had to lead, which they did in terms of, but gradually they did start changing. I mean this has been going on for some years now, and then they started, the chairman would be*

*someone from another group, it wouldn't be a council led chairman, and now it's really getting off the ground, it's taken a few years I think.*" (Hull and East Riding representative, CPRE)

However, the fact that some VCS groups were reluctant to go to the second meeting does show how the quick institutional fix may reside in some VCS ideologies and that there are always tensions within local multi-stakeholder partnerships. Yet in the case of this interviewee's experience of partnerships, for inclusionary pathways to become successful within governance arrangements, all stakeholders had to experience a process of self-realisation, knowledge gathering and empathy with all the partners within the network. Reluctance to do this on the part of some groups, who didn't return to the next meeting, meant that local councils may have been forced to take the lead. As Goss (2001) claims, "There is no binary process of agency talking to community... identities are multiple and overlapping... public agencies are learning to recognise and value difference, and to resist the temptation to paste identities onto people from the outside" (p.44-45). This shows how through an initial period of local councils taking the lead coupled with initial VCS co-operation, trust could be built within the space over a prolonged period. Whilst this relationship was imbalanced at inception, the 'consensual regulation of action conflict' and valuing different identities over time morphed the relationship into a collaborative process, whereby the voluntary partners enjoyed greater engagement (for example, VCS group as chairman) within the governance space. Greater VCS activity in positions of power within LSPs have been highlighted elsewhere (Taylor, 2006). Hence, the positioning of larger, resourceful VCS groups, who are more often than not the 'usual suspects', could be deemed necessary in order to catalyse collaboration. Council are aware of, and may struggle with the ephemeral nature of some smaller VCS groups, and as such, are understandably reluctant to place

such groups in roles which they might not be able to fulfil. This is the case with both the Hull and East Riding LSPs, whose most active voluntary members are either large or umbrella type VCS groups.

#### **8.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has focused upon the complex nature in which relationships and networks develop between VCS and state stakeholders in the governance of sustainable development at the local level. Two VCS governance networks are suggested. Firstly, there are non-state controlled networks outside of state-regulated spaces. This network allows groups to carry out their own brand of sustainability, apparently free from more overt forms of state interference. Secondly, there are groups who build networks that coalesce around state spaces like LSPs and the local authority – state-influenced networks. This ‘state governance aligning’ allows some groups to gain access to state funding streams in order to maintain their own functioning, but enables others to ensure sustainable development was being embedded into more state-regulated governance spaces like LSPs. Implicit within such VCS governance networks is the rationale that in order for local sustainability to be promoted, social capital between stakeholders needs to develop at the local level. However, with chapter 7 highlighting the limitations of LSPs as inclusionary local governance spaces, the role of the local scale as a panacea for sustainable development comes into question. Therefore, the next chapter will focus on how VCS groups pursue particular discourses of sustainable development through a ‘scalar politics’, which involves VCS groups developing social capital at other scales to the local. In this sense, sustainable development is negotiated by VCS across space, between scales, rather than simply at the local scale.

## **Chapter 9: The scalar politics of sustainable development**

### **9.1 Introduction**

Section 9.2 of this chapter will examine VCS and local government perceptions of why the local scale matters in the promotion of sustainable development discourses. It argues how some VCS and state stakeholders view ‘the local’ as an important site and territorial scale in the promotion of sustainable development because of its proximity to the everyday experience of practicing sustainability. However, section 9.3 goes on to reveal a reality of associated tensions and limitations that place-based or local distinctiveness bring to VCS groups who actively contest sustainable development as a wider spatial project, especially in the context of the region. Using debates on the New Regionalism (NR) as an academic context, this section reveals how the regional scale acts as a buffer for central government allowing it to regulate some local VCS groups. Conversely, ‘the region’ also offers a strategically opportune scale for VCS groups to build up social capacity and promote their own particular discourses of sustainability. Section 9.4 then explores the ways in which some local VCS groups draw such social capital enabling them to negotiate and implement specific discourses surrounding sustainable development through ‘scale jumping’ (Smith, 1984, 1992; Herod, 1991; Swyngedow, 1997; Smith and Kurtz, 2003; Glassman, 2002), demonstrating that sustainable development is a networked *and* scalar governance process.

### **9.2 The local scale and sustainable development**

Section 6.3.1 and 6.4.4 explained how LSP documentation (e.g. community strategies) in each research area has used ‘qualitative notions of sustainability’ (Raco, 2005) like place-based differences or distinctiveness as a way attracting wider citizen involvement in local community governance. On the other hand, LSPs have been positioned by

central government as being a distinctive political and economic spatial project in which local stakeholders govern their ‘own patch’<sup>1</sup>. These suggest that the ‘local’ is an ideal meeting ground for two contrasting views of sustainability governance. Taylor (1999) has implied that place and space are two distinctly-defined entities: “we tend to think of cultural landscapes and social areas as representing places while political territories and economic locations are viewed more as spaces” (Taylor, 1999, p.9). Consistent with this view, LSPs are representative of a dichotomous attempt by different territorial state actors to align place (local state) and space (national state) within them. Through their respective Community Strategies, LSPs and the local state have positioned ‘place’ as a tangible political entity, self-defined through its very own cultural, social, economic and environmental roots – its own uniqueness and particularity (Massey, 1985). Yet national government has positioned LSPs as a multi-scalar governance project, i.e. part of a wider UK modernisation approach in which levels of state join-up in a cohesive, clinical manner. This place-space dichotomy is compounded by the contested nature of sustainable development, with its interpretation by local stakeholders (LSP, local council and VCS actors) resulting in a myriad of local practices (Sharp and Connelly, 2000). The way in which sustainable development is produced and embedded within a particular place then is intrinsically dependent on wider spatial political conditions which have the power to reconstruct and redefine place-based governance processes (Tuan, 1977; Taylor, 1999). Of logical consequence then, place-based differences can potentially have a significant political effect through the degree to which an LSP is structured and the particular agenda(s) it promotes.

Some VCS groups feel that local sustainable development policy agendas are politically constructed and reproduced through and by the state (Jonas *et al.*, 2004; McGuirk,

---

<sup>1</sup> This sits comfortably with the global commons political notion of how sustainable development is best achieved through local action (for example, Local Agenda 21).

2007; Krueger and Savage, 2007)<sup>2</sup>. In turn, such construction determines the degree to which environmental objectives are promoted by other non-state groups like the VCS in a given locality. For example, the previous two chapters pointed out that in Hull, the exclusion of certain environmental issues by the LSP and council has influenced how VCS groups socially construct (see Marston, 2000), and attempt to embed, particular environmentally-focused discourses external to such state-regulated governance spaces like LSPs. The idea of ‘the local’ or ‘the community’ we see in state policy literature is far from abstract; it is a tangible, experiential (Taylor, 1982), emotionally charged political arena (Massey, 2004) within which various state (see Krueger and Agyeman, 2005) and more importantly, non-state actors develop identities through active socio-political negotiation and construction with regard to the delivery of sustainable development and quality of life discourses (Kythreotis, 2008). As the following VCS interviewees explained:

*“Well I suppose what you can only get at a local level, which you can’t get at the regional and national level, is that sense of ownership... so people feeling a real sense of ownership about that big piece of land around the corner or the thing at the end of the street... if you want to have sustainable development then I think people have to be on board. I think local communities really have to be leading on that. Above any policy, anything that is driven nationally will be meaningless unless people are actually leading themselves. So I think that local connection is really important.”* (National Trustee, British Trust of Conservation Volunteers)

---

<sup>2</sup> Although Bryant (1991) argues that the state might not be so receptive to enforcing political will around ecological policy that involves a multiplicity of policy areas and actors.

*“...that’s not necessarily contributing to sustainable development. I think where you’re talking about that large scale national delivery of service, no. Where you’re talking about utilising what the sector does which is kind of fill in those spaces and gaps and have that really close fit with the local community because it is the local community and understands what it needs and that there is ... if there’s a respect for that knowledge and that ability in the relationship, then it has potential to be a really key part of delivery.” (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts)*

*“...we have a very strong ethos and philosophy, which is about working with people, in their own time, their own place, and at their own pace. And about, local people being able to make decisions on issues that are not only affecting their own lives but actually developing and working with people so that, ermm, not just to influence policy and strategies, but development.”(Manager, Developing Our Communities)*

*“I think where local campaigning on sustainable development issues has a real strength is just that immediacy and connection to local areas. So if we have got a local group, like Hull for example, campaigning against the incinerator, that has a real tangible effect in their local media, in their local communities, with the decision makers at that level seeing very publicly what they are trying to do and what their arguments are.” (Network Developer, Friends of the Earth)*

The preceding quotes support the view that the local level is the most appropriate level of action towards sustainable development because of its connectedness to our everyday experience, it’s where relationships are forged. The significant role of local stakeholders

is reiterated by both local and regional government respectively. At the community level, the East Riding LSP manager felt that the VCS would be better than the public sector in delivering services. He also felt that national government were keen to drive this agenda forward.

*“I mean there’s... many ways the voluntary sector are advocates for the community, for communities in some ways in, I think they can deliver services more professionally. Not professionally, they can deliver some services better than the public sector at a local level. And I think there’s a move towards that in the future. But I think that’s the sort of way, it is the way forward really. I mean the government’s new white paper, coming out in October will sort of move towards that.”* (LSP Manager, East Riding)

Similarly, the idea of sustainable development being driven by local state actors was also reiterated at regional government level:

*“No, well the local authority are deliverers of some of the key environmental issues and there’s very much greater awareness of all those issues and a greater prominence. If you look at the importance of a position in the local authority, the person who dealt with environmental management, now it’s pretty much at the top of the, one of the key directors on the board of the local authority, so that’s certainly gone up in importance. I think there is an increasing recognition of central departments that there’s a lot of joining up on cleaner, safer, greener, when we are joined up with the Home Office on more environmental primes, and that came as a joint initiative from the different ministers. So it’s being policy driven from national, but the delivery and the keenness to get involved has*



*rocketed up from the Local Strategic Partnership and the local authority side.”*

(Sustainable Development Team Leader, Government Office Yorkshire and Humber)

These government stakeholder quotes show how the state has, on the face of it, normalised the local as being the most appropriate scale for sustainable development action through particular networked government and governance pathways. Yet as section 8.2.1 and research elsewhere (Taylor, 2006; ODPM, 2005e) has alluded to, such networks are subject to a contradictory influence from higher national state policy imperatives. In HCNs case, central government have exercised power so that Hull City Council could take greater control of non-state stakeholders within the LSP by giving local authority members of the LSP more decision-making capabilities. Similarly, Eadson (2008) has suggested that local authorities have been given greater responsibility without the power, which remains firmly in the hands of national government (p.149). In this research too, the tensions inherent within the centrally-regulated shifting of responsibility down to the local level with limited budgets to work with were expressed by the LSP Director for Hull:

*“But you know there are huge pressures on local government around budgets. So there’s a national policy agenda, political pressure behind this, but I think local government are feeling, “just a minute, how many more things can we take responsibility for?” There is a tension there.”* (LSP Director, Hull)

However, whilst there is widespread consensus on the importance of ‘local stakeholders’ in promoting sustainability discourses in an abstract sense, the practicalities of implementing such discourses seems to be lost in the rhetoric at the

regional level. For instance, the last interviewee only mentions the policy role of local *state* stakeholders in sustainable development, not how it can be delivered. This reveals something about the practicalities of multi-scalar governance in general – the higher up the policy hierarchy you go, the more many detached non-state stakeholders become from implementing sustainability policy. Many of the VCS representatives I interviewed felt that the lower echelons of the LSP governance structure – the sub-groups – were not areas where they could have a lot of influence over local sustainability policy. It was rather the delivery boards which had most influence over local policy. State governance stakeholders would argue that this is why community networks like Hull Community Network were created:- to facilitate tangible links between state and non-state actors within local policy. This was actually confirmed by the co-ordinator for HCN, who claimed that one of their key functions was to catalyse community partnership working at neighbourhood levels, again normalising this notion of the local as the most appropriate lens to combat sustainable development:

*“Our also other function is really to get as I say its neighbourhood renewal so were also helping groups get involved at a more local level. I think in the city there are seven area partnerships being set up around the area committee bounds. So that seems like East Hull, North Carr, West Riverside etc (see map 5.2). And again, there will be like, if you like, mini LSPs at an area level looking at specific issues in neighbourhoods. And again we’re supporting community groups, voluntary groups in each area, get together, organise to present their views to this partnership.”* (Co-ordinator, Hull Community Network)

Local authorities have to involve the VCS as part of the new ‘duty to involve’ the community in LAAs as of April 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 (DCLG, 2008e, pp.19-25). Non-state action

regarding the promotion of sustainable development (in a climate of strict spatial budget constraints) within LSPs may become dependent on a particular VCS group being able to meet higher multi-scalar state political agendas (see Peck and Tickell, 1994; Swyngedouw, 1997; Brenner, 2004). Many of the interviewees suggest that the way in which sustainable development is approached in local state-regulated spaces of governance reveals more about the politics of local government and governance inside the state than about how sustainability is tackled as a local issue in its own right (Hempel, 1999). In terms of the way local politics are used to tackle environmental issues, one interviewee was quite vociferous in his criticism of Hull City Council and the Hull LSP (also see section 7.3). Even though he felt that the local level was important – it represents a proximate level in which people could see real differences being made – he conceded how any action towards sustainable development must complement higher political scales:

*“What happens is what you do at the local level to complement what can be done at the international and national level. So it’s finding your role. There’s no point in existing if there’s no real role for you or confusing the subject matter of what it is all about.”* (Co-ordinator, CHEF)

This suggests that the local scale can complement higher scales when it comes to the rolling out of sustainable development as a distinctive project. State and non-state actions at different scales can complement each other also, with state strategy/policy taking the lead. The following local government officer noted how the local level was important because this was the territorial scale in which multi-stakeholder engagement could catalyse action towards biodiversity:

*“Almost everything in biodiversity has a very local level to it because it is about a habitat at one particular location or it is about a species which occurs in one particular place. So to get proper implementation of anything biodiversity wise, there always has to be that local level of engagement with whoever runs the site, manages the site, lives near the site, records at the site, you know, or involved with that particular species at that location. So without that grass roots involvement it’s impossible to do anything properly. You can talk about biodiversity at a strategic level, but its only as good as what is on the ground at the end of the day.”* (Conservation Officer, East Riding Council)

He continues by suggesting the importance of linking local sites of biodiversity to spatial scales like the region and the nation:

*“Yes, I would probably say the local is the most important level for biodiversity. I would say closely following is how you link the local into the bigger picture. So in terms of your sites, if you have one site which is one habitat, or which contains that one population of species, obviously they fit into a larger population that links across the region and the country. And it’s the same with habitats, they have to sit within a bigger network otherwise they are isolated and fragmented and it’s not sustainable, you can’t maintain those populations if its isolated or small, and they will become fragile. So you’ve got to think about the bigger picture and how you fit these in because it is no good having one site because it is susceptible to destruction if you have only have one small resource.”* (Conservation Officer, East Riding Council)

In the governance of issues related to sustainable development, ‘the local’ both abstractly (scale) and specifically (place, e.g. Hull or East Riding) plays an important contextual role in how sustainable development policy and actions are explored by state and non-state (VCS) groups respectively. Yet it also raises more questions than answers by implying that wider spatial geographic scales, and the politics thereof, can potentially control how sustainable development policy is positioned locally (Adger, 2002; Adger *et al.*, 2004; Agyeman and Evans, 2004; Jonas *et al.*, 2004) with other territorial scales playing an active role in the negotiating of particular state strategies surrounding social, environmental and economic reproduction practices.

So whilst I have suggested how the state maintains overall control over non-state groups like the VCS through various steering and regulatory mechanisms, the exact nature and manifestations of this spatial controlling is neither fixed nor pre-meditated. As Adger *et al.* (2004) claim, “[i]t is crucial to recognise that outcomes and decisions are not one and the same: decisions can lead to unintended and unexpected outcomes because alternatives combine with the uncertainties to produce unexpected outcomes” (p.1096). Such ‘unintended and unexpected outcomes’ I argue, are highly contingent upon particular tensions surrounding *how* sustainable development is played out between various stakeholders operating across space and between spatial scales. Therefore the structures and processes at play between sites and scales, and between scales, are complex, messy (Jonas, 2006) and riddled with tensions. Such tensions are played out through a scalar politics of sustainable development, which will be explored in the next section.

### **9.3 The scalar politics of sustainable development**

The preceding section demonstrated how VCS and state stakeholders felt that the local level is an important site and territorial scale for the practical promotion of sustainable development issues because of its tangibility and proximation to the political electorate. However, given the complex and diverse nature of VCS groups (see chapter 3), one would expect the spatiality of territorial scales to inevitably affect and produce tensions amongst various VCS groups, between scales in different ways. This section highlights these scalar tensions which arise amongst VCS groups when attempting to actively negotiate and promote sustainable development discourses, finding that sub-national scales are entangled with complex and shifting processes (Swyngedouw, 1997; Goodwin *et al.*, 2005), under the control or steorage of the ‘central institutional locus’ (Cox, 1998), the nation-state (Jessop, 2000; Haughton and Allmendinger, 2008). In summary then, this section highlights the importance of connections and tensions between scales, rather than the relations nested within them, in the way VCS groups contest and negotiates sustainable development.

One major tension that came out of the interviews involved how larger national groups managed their affiliate groups at the sub-national level. Examples of such groups interviewed in this research included Groundwork UK and BTCV. One would expect these larger groups to face greater logistical challenges surrounding the promotion of sustainable development than for example, smaller community groups who work at the community or city level. One such challenge that came out of interviews with such larger VCS groups was balancing delivery outcomes across territorial scales. The following interviewees from BTCV and Groundwork UK claimed that this was an issue:

*“I think a huge challenge for us is about balancing and I think like any organisation in our local-national situation, a big challenge is how you know enough about what is going on locally while not creating so much of an administration burden that people go crazy. I think there is a very fine balance there and that leads on to another big challenge for us which is how you make the national team and their work feel relevant to the local picture and vice versa, how you keep the national team in touch with the work on the ground... So that obviously poses quite a big challenge for us, how you embrace that diversity whilst protecting the charity at the same time.”* (National Trustee, British Trust of Conservation Volunteers)

*“So there’s been a number of drivers; economies of scale, efficiencies in the one hand and having structure where we can deliver more widely across a region engage more effectively with the regional partners. But there’s always a difficult balance to be struck between how do you have very local accountability, local delivery and local sensitivity on the one hand with the economies of scale and the relative size on the other so that’s always difficult one.”* (National Development Manager, Groundwork UK)

*“There’s constant dialogue which I can imagine a little bit of conflict between you know local priorities, regional priorities, national priorities and things like that. One of the issues that Groundwork has is the, one of our strengths is that we’ve been built up from local trusts which have responded to local niches and when you look at it from a national perspective in the middle, it creates a lot of diversity and there are an awful lot of projects which trusts are delivering. But*

*sometimes it can be not coherent and it can be difficult to describe the role of Groundwork to somebody...*” (Regional Manager, Groundwork UK)

These quotes show how geographical distance between places is potentially problematic in how local development is experienced (Massey, 1984; Lagendijk and Oinas, 2005), with distance creating diversity and conflict amongst local VCS groups who are accountable to a national affiliate. For instance, the national affiliate may have a particular way for local groups to work whilst the local affiliate may be more attuned to the needs of their locality. As such the “interactions between actors and the modalities of co-ordination... play an essential role in the integration of space” (Torre and Gilly, 2000, p.174).

The organisational nature of larger groups would suggest that they are faced with greater logistical problems than smaller more tightly woven groups because they have to negotiate and roll out sustainability objectives to different territorial levels within their organisation. Yet smaller VCS groups working at the community or urban level face similar logistical problems in negotiating sustainable development because they have to complement or adhere to particular agendas from higher political territorial scales. The logistical problems encountered by the smaller groups are the hierarchical inverse of the logistical problems encountered by the larger groups. Again, the work of Foucault is a useful context in which to demonstrate how power is exercised by central government, through knowledge discourses across territory, with smaller VCS groups being indirectly regulated by central government.

Even though Foucault never used the word ‘scale’ in his work on ‘governmentality’, this work had all the implications of scale playing a role in how individuals were



governed and regulated through organised (scalar) practices. As Legg (2009) claims, “his [Foucault] ‘governmentality’ research explored the emergence of population, economy and society as scales with supposedly self-regulating processes, as identified/created by demography, political-economy and sociology” (p.239). Other work by Foucault was more overt with regard to the scalar metaphor. For example, in ‘Questions of Geography’ he did express the importance of spatial categorisation within knowledge and power processes: “once knowledge can be analyzed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power” (Foucault, [1980] 2007, p.177). Foucault continues by stating the usefulness of spatial metaphors: “endeavouring on the other hand to decipher discourse through the use of spatial, strategic metaphors enables one to grasp precisely the points at which discourses are transformed in, through and the basis of relations of power” (ibid, p.177). The use of words ‘transformed in’, ‘through’ and ‘basis of relations’ imply that Foucault saw territory as scalar in some way and that nested verticality is shot through by government in order to exercise discourses of power over (local) subjects. Indeed spatial differentiation is important to the successfulness of how subjects are regulated and governed by central state.

In terms of VCS funding for sustainable development issues, central government is able to regulate local VCS groups through state funding channels (see Woods, 2002) which filter down through discrete nested political scales of national (a government department), regional (the RDA) and local government (local councils, LSPs, state sponsored community networks) respectively. Smaller, less-resourced groups working at the level of the local state are more receptive to such regulation because they simply have limited resource capacity in comparison to larger groups, finding it more difficult

to respond to power pulses from the centre. This can potentially hinder vertical movement of local VCS groups up scales in order to promote sustainable development, resulting in the coalescing of VCS groups at the local level in the pursuit of sustainability objectives. Through this process central “[g]overning is performed *through* autonomous subjects, not *on* passive objects” (Sending and Neumann, 2006, p.669, emphasis in original).

Whilst smaller, locally-based groups are able to organise themselves more efficiently in a practical logistical sense, they are still constrained by particular economic (funding) and political (council-led) factors which have a greater propensity to preclude them from local state spaces of sustainability governance. This is why some groups have undergone a process of forming informal networks outside of these spaces (see 8.3.1) in order to promote their own particular sustainability discourses. Even local affiliations of national environmental groups realise that at ‘higher’ territorial state levels to the local, sustainable development becomes less tangible and more abstract:

*“I think that what’s driving us. I think at a regional and national level, I think they are looking to incorporate sustainability into all of the core of the organisation, that is what they are looking for and they are looking to make it so much a part of the fabric of the organisation that you perhaps can’t see it. That’s what they would like to achieve, I think we’ve got a long way to go because at our level we are so focused on today, tomorrow, next week, next month, getting the next programme out, getting the next dollar in because we have to be.”* (Local Community Project Officer, British Trust of Conservation Volunteers)

Tensions between territorial scales in the rolling out of sustainable development as a spatial project are further revealed in the encroachment of market driven forces (like the settlement of funding pools) upon the social reproduction of sustainable development amongst VCS groups. In terms of this research, several VCS groups working at the local level experienced particular economic problems when trying to establish development objectives that were regional in focus. The following interviewee was highly critical of the government for funding the infrastructure for local community groups to work at the regional level, but then pulling money out after community groups had committed to the plan making it increasingly difficult for such groups simultaneously to drive a sustainability agenda at the local (city) level:

*“They [the government] put in infrastructure monies in and they developed infrastructure, you know, organisations and networks, where’s the money coming through cos we’re not seeing it, they developed a network, you know on a personal level, what we actually had was people started to be involved in the regional agenda, they took their eye off the ball in terms of the city agenda, do you know what I mean, so you forfeit one against the other. So we’ve missed out again, and whilst everything is focused on the region and we have done a lot of work, we work with the community, well Regional Community Development, and you know we’ve ran conferences etc, you know done quite a lot of work on the needs of what is going to happen in the future.”* (Manager, Developing Our Communities)

The above quote shows how multi-scalar activity is problematic for some groups working locally because they find themselves in a position where city agendas were forfeited for regional agendas. This made forging local development networks

increasingly difficult. Similarly, the following local VCS representative working in Hull felt that the city agenda was first and foremost based upon the economic side of development, and that the region was focusing more on sustainability, suggesting inconsistencies between scales regarding the meaning and scope of sustainable development:

*“There’s the lack of support at city level in this area, I mean regionally it becoming more on the agenda, there’s the Regional Spatial Strategy, and obviously the development of the ‘Northern Way’ stuff. I know that’s more economic, but it [sustainable development] has a strand in there. So it is becoming sort of more high profile... But locally, yeah, we’re lacking that support and the other issues as I said when you are working in a low income area that is always the priority.”* (Co-ordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)

This may explain why some local VCS groups looked to the regional state level because of the way in which it was ‘seen’ to be embedding sustainability into ‘Sustainable Community’ (e.g. ‘Northern Way’) and RSS policy. The same interviewee continued by pointing out the tension between central government driving a local agenda and then funding being given to regional stakeholders. This exemplifies the inconsistent way in which, on one hand, the state has normalised the local (through its policy literature) as the most appropriate level for sustainable development, and on the other hand, have prioritised funding for it at the regional level. This has fundamentally altered the way in which her group has attempted to secure funding for sustainability projects. Her group had to work through partnership networks with other VCS groups in order to attract funding streams that were originally supposed to be locally sourced, but are in fact, regionally nested:

*“And again, there’s that juxtaposition with the Local Area Agreement where Councils are funnelling money down very locally like you say with David Miliband [Secretary of State for Environment] spreading this out locally and then everybody else saying well no, we’re taking it back a level. Yeah. I don’t know how it will all shake out really. It will have to at some point. I was at a meeting with Job Centre Plus the other day and they were saying exactly the same thing. Their local money has been taken off them effectively and has gone to regional directors or regional managers for them to control so now I can’t look to contract with our local job centre for services that we provide because they don’t have any money anymore and if the money is being held at regional level only effectively delivering to one area of Hull, interested so we’ve just applied, put a tender in for some money with the East Hull Alliance and with Goodwin as a partnership. Whether we’ll get anywhere or not I don’t know but that’s the first step to us working citywide with other organisations.” (Coordinator, Bransholme Enterprises)*

However, the Hull LSP Director felt that the new arrangements for pooled funding in LAAs made it easier for voluntary groups to become involved in the governance of their own locality:

*“I think their life will get easier. I think Local Area Agreements will force partnerships to stop talking and do stuff. There will always be tensions from people, as you recognised, always be tensions around money, at what we are getting better, although increasingly Local Area Agreements will attract what is called the ‘pooled funding’, so money coming out of central government that won’t be tied to particular regimes, programmes and monitoring and you know,*

*dotting i's and crossing t's to show how you have used the money. We will be able to decide locally what we are doing with it. So there may be an anti social behaviour funding programme going into a pool pot, they might use it to something completely different. That will be a really good opportunity.*" (LSP Director, Hull)

'Pooled funding', in theory, gave local government the opportunity to use money flexibly to meet local priorities and reduce bureaucracy (Improvement and Development Agency, 2006a). However, this also gave local government greater power in promoting sustainability issues as they identified what the local priorities were, not the local VCS. For Bransholme Enterprises, money just wasn't there for the delivery of local environmental objectives. As a result, this group formed an alliance with other local VCS groups across the city, to effectively 'scale-up'<sup>3</sup> from their own community in the pursuit of funding. Whilst pooled funding may have encouraged partnership working on a grander scale, it also set a Darwinian precedent for VCS groups who were not active within local governance spaces like LSPs. Such groups needed to get stronger, through network and alliances, to survive. Hence, the local council, through control of such pooled funds (choosing which VCS groups have access to them) were able to maintain their power base through replicating the 'usual suspect' VCS members talked about in section 7.2.1. This inevitably focuses attention to questions on accountability, transparency and trust – as the LSP Director said, "*We will be able to decide locally what we are doing with it.*" This had not gone unnoticed by other stakeholders. Quoting a draft paper by the Local Government Association roundtable in September 2006, the Improvement and Development Agency (2006b) read: "Pooling or alignment of funding streams and budgets within LAAs currently relies more on partnership commitment and

---

<sup>3</sup> In this context I mean VCS groups forming alliances and networks in order to give them the necessary political and economic will to bargain at higher spatial state scales.

trust, as an act of faith, than on rational, long-term investment planning.” For some VCS groups in Hull then, the precedent of pooled funding being ‘locked up’ at the local level (through their LAA) has forced them to look at other spatial scales like the regional level to secure funds and draw up social capital amongst the sector in order to promote sustainability<sup>4</sup>. The next section discusses this.

### **9.3.1 The role of the region in scalar sustainability politics**

As section 4.3 showed, the proliferation of academic literature on sub-national scales like the New Regionalism (NR) suggests that the regional scale is important as an economic space in its own right (Storper 1995; Scott, 1998; Jones, 2001). Furthermore, material and abstract usage of the regional scale suggests that it (and all its hybrid forms) continue to play an integral role within academic and policy debates on multi-level governance and political processes. Academics have claimed that regions have the power to shape “the territorial framework of public life” (Keating, 1997, p.383) and can form ‘new state spaces’ (Brenner, 2004). However, in terms of how sustainable development is governed for by state and non-state actors alike, this section will empirically show how regulation still originates from central government, with guidance dripping down and tingeing both state and non-state (VCS) actors through nested scales, albeit at arm’s length (Haughton and Allmendinger, 2008). The quote by the co-ordinator of Bransholme Enterprises in the last section showed that the (state) arm is still an economic mechanism, although it has moved in a different (scalar)

---

<sup>4</sup> In light of these problems, LAA targets were no longer based on pooled funding streams after April 2008, being replaced by an evidence-based LSP assessment of local performance and need. The intention was to establish clear contractual arrangements and a robust commissioning framework surrounding LAA delivery targets (Improvement and Development Agency, 2006c). As the interviews for this research were conducted before April 2008, no comprehensive assessment of the way in which this currently affects local VCS groups can be empirically grounded. However, in light of the local authority still being the accountable body for both Hull’s and East Riding’s LSPs, coupled with the fact that VCS membership in both Delivery Boards remain unchanged, may suggest that the transition from pooled funding to an evidence-based assessment has had no real effect on both Hull’s and East Riding’s council power base within their respective LSPs, replicating limited VCS inclusion within them.

direction, with funding streams shifting to the regional level. This also highlights how regional capital accumulation can affect the way in which VCS groups attempt to promote sustainable development by securing funding for projects through particular networks. The positioning of the region as an influential economic space of capital accumulation has resulted in the dovetailing of other forms of *non-economic* capital being promoted at the regional level.

For example, Ward and Jonas (2004) suggest that geographies of collective provision, which include “the politics of the urban environment and sustainability” (p.2121), remain important, yet undertheorised aspects of the sub-national state territoriality management project. They utilise Harvey’s (1982; 1985a; 1985b) work which locates territory as a condition and outcome of capitalism. Although the spatial positioning of this territory they argue, is ambiguous<sup>5</sup> and contingent, an autonomous urban politics is produced nevertheless, in which factional interests coalesce (Ward and Jonas, 2004, p.2131). This research has found that, in the same way that Harvey maintained how capital sought spatial fixes, sustainability does too, through VCS coalitions or alliances. But the way in which sustainability seeks out spatial fixes is very much attributed to where the capital accumulates. VCS social capital on sustainability forms around such transient economic spaces. Much of the NR literature is motivated by the idea that social capital forms naturally around places and regions, rather than at the national scale. For example, Jonas and Ward (2007) point to how agglomerations like city-regions can create “positive externality (third party) effects at the urban-regional scale [through] the development of intra- and inter-urban co-operation networks and alliances” (p.171). In this sense, how sustainable development is addressed, like

---

<sup>5</sup> Ward and Jonas (2004) highlight how Harvey’s scale of territoriality could be the urban and/or the regional (p.2131).



Harvey's territory, is very much a condition and outcome of capitalism and its spatial accumulation strategies.

This research has shown how VCS groups that promote sustainability are increasingly forming such networks and alliances in order to negotiate and attract funding for projects that traditionally would have been funded for groups working singularly at the local state level. The importance of the regional level as an economic site whereby funding for local authorities is also 'locked up' is also reiterated by the head of sustainable development at Yorkshire Forward, the Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire. He was aware of how local authorities were to be bestowed greater responsibility from central government, but he too was reluctant to release funding to local authorities unless they became more strategic in the way that they used such funding:

*"Well city regions... we don't know whether they will come to fruition or not. Local authorities will become more powerful, they will have more and more responsibilities given to them. Local authorities will want to get our money, basically. We will want to ensure they keep a strategic view and we'll keep our money as long as we can. Encourage them to have that strategic view. National government is obviously very important. It provides the national framework, the national policies and should give us the national longevity of policy that enables the regions to be able to be attractive for investment in those policy areas."*

(Head of Sustainable Development, Yorkshire Forward)

State funding channels are subject to gate-keeping practices at each nested level of the state, making it increasingly difficult for VCS groups to access such funds. Although, if

sustainability aides capital accumulation in some way, then the state would pursue this trajectory in order to stimulate a region's economy. In this sense, sustainability is also defined and produced by the state through and for, economic reasons. The following national level VCS interviewee was well aware of this, citing the importance of RDAs in funding projects related to sustainable development because of the economic benefits it brings to the region:

*“I would say that the relationship with Regional Development Agencies is pretty crucial I would say, because a lot of funding now one way or another, directly or indirectly, the Regional Development Agencies are the gatekeepers, so that's pretty crucial for us. And trying to, I think the relationship is kind of settled to a place that is by and large working okay. But I would say that a few years ago there was more of a tension between Regional Development Agencies, the very economic dimension which Regional Development Agencies were at, which seemed to be a million miles away from where sustainable development was at I think. Those agendas in some regions more than others have got a lot closer together. So for example, I know that in the North West region, there's a recognition that the aesthetic fabric of the region is a key determinant of the economic prospects. And therefore the Regional Development Agency has put a lot of money into forestry and woodland, the Newlands Programme, its economic development, why are they planting trees? Well they have figured out the link and increasingly that is happening.”* (National Development Manager, Groundwork UK)

Similarly, the following regional VCS interviewee felt that the regional state level had an important position in communicating to national government on their behalf:

*“Government Offices in the region as a sort of regional mouth piece of central government policy are quite useful because they’re, it’s easier to join things up with the Government Offices than it is in kind of Westminster. If we’ve got a good relationship with the Government Office, then most of the time they will do our bidding for us as far as national government departments are concerned.”*

(Co-ordinator, Yorkshire and Humber Regional Environmental Forum)

This quote shows that relationships are integral to a VCS group’s success in promoting sustainable development. As a result, winners and losers are inevitably produced amongst VCS groups. This makes influential contributions to the local sustainability project by smaller local VCS groups engaged in sustainability for its own intrinsic sake more difficult. This difficulty in engaging with and influencing regional sustainability state agendas has not gone unnoticed by some VCS groups. The following interviewee worked on a national programme delivering support to local VCS groups in the rolling out of environmental projects and was quite jaded with regional processes:

*“My experience of engaging with or influencing the Regional Development Agencies is that it’s almost an impossible job for the voluntary sector organisation and will lead you to nothing but tears. So I think at a regional level it’s very hard...”* (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts)

Like other preceding VCS interviewees, the co-ordinator for Every Action Counts continues by emphasising the importance of building collective action and alliances in order to have an impact on how sustainable development is promoted, rather than groups singularly engaging within local state-regulated governance spaces and processes:

*“I think it has to be through actually collective local action and engaging more with other voluntary organisations who share an agenda actually and that that’s probably a more effective way of influencing the locality, currently than engaging through the governance structures... they’re very limited, there’s a very limited scope in engaging with governance agendas. I don’t know of any particularly good local consultative processes.”* (Co-ordinator, Every Action Counts)

The problems of working at the regional level were also echoed by a research officer working at NCVO. She talks of how regions are too distant for people to identify with and how the addition of regional policy structures only complicates how governance is negotiated:

*“I’m not sure that the regions, I mean at one point people thought that that was the way forward, but then government seemed to think, “oh no, people are actually identifying with smaller areas, we are talking about neighbourhood governance”. I think, again it reflects the complexity of the governance structures and I think people are not sure where the decisions are made on those, so its, my feeling is that people don’t like the regions too much. They think it’s a little bit too distant for them.”* (Research Officer, National Council for Voluntary Organisations)

The problems in joining-up processes at the regional level are also reflected upon by the following regional manager of Groundwork:

*“You know it’s difficult when you’ve got five trusts in the region all with different priorities with what they want to see the regional office do. And then nationally they’ve got priorities. So there’s quite a lot of discussion joining up the regional business plan.”* (Regional Manager, Groundwork, UK)

Whilst the following local VCS representative felt that there was not any regional state processes within which they could involve themselves to actively promote environmental sustainable development:

*“Well there isn’t really any regional level government, I mean there’s Yorkshire Forward, there’s a Regional Chamber and the Regional Assembly and they keep us in touch with Regional Spatial Strategies and regional plans. It tends to be on a consultation basis. There is Hull City Council, they attend a regional economic forum, a regional environmental forum, we don’t. Again, we don’t have the time to do it.”* (Co-ordinator, CHEF)

Even the following local authority officer felt that in terms of practical processes the regional level was disjointed, and still had a “long way to go” before the governance of biodiversity was fully implemented at the regional level:

*“I think with regards to biodiversity, there has been, it’s [the region] been quite disjointed at times. There has been very strong legislation perspective. We have had some good legislation for some time, like protected species and habitats, and some good big planning policies, the international directives that have been signed up. But how that drips down to the local level has been the tricky bit. Council have developed with their partners, Local Biodiversity Action Plans,*

*and they have tried to implement some of the national targets. But in Yorkshire up until I think, the last couple of years there hasn't been that middle layer of the sandwich to help that translation from the national to the local. That is starting to happen now with development of the Regional Biodiversity Strategy and with the Yorkshire and Humber Biodiversity Forum, but that's still a process which has a long way to go. Especially when it comes to co-ordinating Local Biodiversity Action Plans within the region, so, how they are related to each other, because boundaries and things is quite a tricky process.”* (Local Biodiversity Officer, East Riding Council)

The fact that several interviewees felt that regional structures were limiting, disjointed or unworkable in terms of facilitating active governance and collaborative engagement around sustainability issues has also been reflected in the academic literature. Raco (2007) has argued that “there can be a significant difference between the aspirations of policymakers and the institutional structures and resources that exist, or are created, to bring policy measures to fruition” (p.225). In much the same way, the resources needed for local VCS groups to implement sustainable development may not have been appropriate at the regional level, even though some VCS groups actively realised that funding had coalesced there. This has marginalised some of the smaller, less-resourced groups.

The work of Morgan (2007) also supports the notion that contra state intentions, sustainable development does not feature principally at the regional state scale, and offers a solution for regions to embed sustainability. He uses the concept of city-regions as a replacement for regions to posit his argument. He claims that city-regionalists are putting too much faith in the development of an elected city-region mayor to unlock

economic growth, arguing that this only fuels a ‘city-centric agenda’ at the expense of rural areas. He continues by proposing the need for a strategic planning area across the entire city-region for the joint management of initiatives, boosted by sustainable development and polycentric planning. Such a process, he argues would foster greater collaborative engagement rather than the zero sum game of economically competitive city-regionalism (p.1249).

In terms of state interviewee perceptions of this regional dilemma, the quote from the Local Biodiversity Officer for East Riding does suggest the inklings of regional *governance* processes that promote wider non-state engagement in biodiversity issues in the form of a Regional Biodiversity Strategy and the Yorkshire and Humber Biodiversity Forum. In terms of voluntary perceptions however, the following quote from a regional co-ordinator verifies Morgan’s warning of rural marginalisation within a city-region governance agenda:

*“The fact that the project of elected regional government flopped casts an interesting light on what happens next in terms of the structures that the NGOs try to respond to, and the city-region agenda is a big one and one which we are trying to get a handle on... and that kind of thing maybe where regional governance goes more generally as the city-region comes more significant in the governance structure. We need to have a counter point in terms of the bits of the region that aren’t covered by city-regions which are rural areas. Rural areas risk getting a raw deal out of the city-regions in the same way that they risked getting quite a raw deal out of elected assemblies as well. And that’s something we need to have a separate eye on.”* (Co-ordinator, Yorkshire and Humber Regional Environmental Forum)

With the 2004 North East Regional Assembly vote derailing New Labour's regionalist agenda by taking the general public for granted (see Tickell *et al.*, 2005), the notion of the region as a singular socio-economic spatial fix to ensure more efficient political governing has resulted in central government having to take a step back with regard to the devolved regions question. In line with the dovetailing of state economic capital discussed earlier, this has had repercussions on the way other forms of non-economic capital, like sustainable development is governed. In short, sustainable development is still regulated strongly from the centre. The following quote from the Principal Sustainable Development officer from the East Riding advocates that sustainability discourses should be primarily driven by central government yet be joined-up between discreet state levels, culminating in local authorities having jurisdiction over its electorate:

*"I think the majority of sustainable development issues need to be driven from the top. I do believe that local authorities need to be in a position where they can make their own decision for their residents because they know them best. But I do think there needs to be guidance through central government, through the regional bodies to give officers in the local authorities, and members of the local authorities, clear direction of what we should be doing and a clear argument to people who maybe don't agree with what we're doing."* (Principal Sustainable Development Officer, East Riding Council)

The above quote suggests that sustainability issues should be filtered down through nested scales using a command and control approach through *government* processes. However, the interviewee also felt that the central driving of sustainable development through nested scales also created regional tensions like inter-regional competitiveness:



*“It doesn’t come straight down to us, but certainly things like, there’s a lot of talk at the moment about separating carbon rationing for countries and things like that and whether that will come in, who knows? But if it does come in then you can be sure as eggs is eggs, that central government will decide that each authority has a certain number of carbon tonnes that they’ve got to deal with and it will be down to us to try and work out how it will all, central government will decide that the region has a certain amount or number, and that will be even worse because we’ll have to try and compete with Leeds and Sheffield to get some carbon value... but it all comes from central government.”* (Principal Sustainable Development Officer, East Riding Council)

Inducing competitiveness amongst sub-national state stakeholders results in reducing sustainable development to economic terms, yet by doing this central government is able to regulate and maintain its position as policy power broker (Gonzalez, 2006; Harrison, 2008) encouraging stakeholders to ‘jostle for position’ at sub-national scales of governance. In this sense, constructing regions as a territorial political scale is highly functional for central government. Central government regulation is protected through the buffering effect of the region scale, yet non-state actors like the VCS are also appeased because the region acts as a spatial fix for collective sustainability politics, through which sub-national stakeholders are purportedly able to practically implement (and rework) sustainability policy across territorial space<sup>6</sup>. Far from being critical of the way in which central government is able to regulate sub-national spaces, the following

---

<sup>6</sup> Whilst many proponents in the scale debate warn of the dangers in conflating scale with space (see Marston, 2000; Jones III *et al.*, 2007), it is difficult not to argue that territorial space and nested scales are mutually constitutive. If we talk of political negotiation occurring at a particular nested scale, the outcomes of that negotiation are inevitably translated and constructed across, and has an effect upon, territorial space (see section 9.5; also Brenner, 1999; Taylor, 1999; Smith and Kurtz, 2003; Bulkeley, 2005).

local VCS interviewee surprisingly felt that the central state should be stricter in the way they positioned sustainable development policy and take the lead:

*“I mean national is the key isn’t it. You’ve just got to have strong laws. You’ve got to lead from the top. It’s not good saying, “Oh we have a voluntary agreement and maybe these firms will actually agree to cut back their carbon production by 150%.” Oh yeah – rubbish! That’s why we’re complaining for mandatory targets not just say “industry’s so nice so they’ll do it anyway.” I mean smoking. They’re not frightened putting a law that says you can’t smoke in public. They should actually have a law that says for example, we should bring in rules about packaging and not all the time put it on the ordinary consumer. You know, “you don’t throw away rubbish, you don’t do this.” We wouldn’t throw it away if it wasn’t there in the first place. You know they’re not bringing in laws, they’re not bringing in sufficient regulations to stop the over production in the first place. So that’s what’s best handled at the national level.” (Local volunteer, Friends of the Earth)*

Several other VCS groups felt that central government have a significant role in catalysing action towards sustainable development policy and practice at the local level:

*“Perhaps setting up some of the frameworks or some of the contexts in which that can be done is, or disseminating some of the good practices that, you know, how that seems to work best, is something that can happen at the centre. I think that certainly if there is any policy influencing to be done then the centre is, by aggregating the experience and the knowhow and the learning of the local, the*

*centre is the strongest place to, you know, talking about the major changes of public sector policy.” (National Development Manager, Groundwork UK)*

*“I’m principally charged with looking at national government policy and trying to interpret how that will trickle down and realise itself in the whole context and to try and position the organisation in many ways ahead of the game in terms of developing initiative services etc. So certainly taking the lead from national government policy.” (Development Manager, Goodwin Development Trust)*

Paradoxically, both state and VCS groups have on one hand, normalised the local as the most appropriate for sustainable development action, whilst on the other hand, VCS groups also see central government playing a prominent role in catalysing action towards local sustainable development. I argue that this spatial territorialisation of sustainability discourses by central state is intrinsic to the way in which sustainable development is experientially promoted at the local level by VCS actors. The state regional tier assumes an effective spatial position in the process of mainstreaming sustainability as a multi-level governance project i.e. between national and local state territorial scales:

*“At a regional level I think you can interact better with Regional Development Agencies and things like that if you are able to move it from being a specific local problem in one area to something that is seen to affect a much broader cross section of the population. They all interact and they all assist each other I think, at the end of the day.” (Network Developer, Friends of the Earth)*

Whilst the above quote suggests that through multi-level governance processes, all forms of territorial scale are subject to networks and relational connectivity (Amin, 2004; MacLeod and Jones, 2007), this research shows an overriding privileging of the region as a space for drawing up social capital through VCS network and alliance building. MacLeod and Jones (2007) claim that, “all contemporary expressions of territory – regional, urban, national – are, to varying degrees, punctuated by and orchestrated through a myriad of trans-territorial networks and relational webs of connectivity” (p.1185). The proviso “to varying degrees” is key here. Incorporating greater institutional thickness through a regional tier enables central government to orchestrate and maintain economic, political and social regulation over its spatial territory (Painter, 2002, 2008; Jonas *et al.* 2004; MacLeod and Jones, 2007; Morgan, 2007; Harrison, 2008). Far from withering away, the nation state is still the power broker in the sustainable development project, “exercising their power in a network of interaction with... sub-national micro processes” (Castells, 1997, p.365). This form of central control, I argue, is the primary process in the sustainability policy project.

Yet as advocated by Castells (1997) and MacLeod and Jones (2007), a by-product of this controlling process enables ‘sub-national micro processes’, ‘trans-territorial networks’ and ‘relational webs of connectivity’ to be politically reworked by VCS groups having an active interest in promoting sustainable development in and around state-regulated spaces of governance at sub-national levels. This is empirically expressed through the way some VCS groups have internally reorganised themselves in order to possess some sort of political agency across territorial state space in the forms of networks and alliances. The network developer for FoE continues by claiming that her organisation has attempted to internally reorganise itself to allow for the successful

trans-territorial flow of particular internal strategies and priorities *into* and *through* regional state decision-making processes:

*“We have been talking about this quite a lot at the minute. We are going into a new five year plan of which this kind of question has been quite extensively discussed. I think at a regional level, the idea is to have a clearer focus and to not try and be knowledgeable about everything that is possibly happening within the region with an environmental basis. But to be a little more strategic and take on national campaign priorities at a regional level and try to fill that trickledown effect to regional government and decision making people.”*

(Network Developer, Friends of the Earth)

Similarly, the following VCS group also underwent restructuring in order to fit into the political project of regional devolution:

*“Whilst of course local communities remain crucial, if you’re looking at the whole public sector and lots of other organisations are structured there is a very strong, increasingly strong regional tier and I think that if you go back a few years and look back at Groundwork structure we had a strong centre and strong trusts but nothing much in the middle yet that’s where the whole kind of direction of travel in terms of devolution if you like giving regions greater autonomy was going so we built in over the years a much stronger regional structure and it’s one of the main things carried through really.”* (National Development Manager, Groundwork UK)

The way in which particular VCS groups restructure their own internal governance systems in line with central state-led policy changes not only reifies the predominance of central political re-territorialisation practices through sub-national scales like the region, but shows how the concept of territory is bounded yet porous (Amin, 2004; Morgan, 2007) giving local VCS groups the opportunity and capacity to construct particular forms of social capital not only around, but between scales. In this sense, regions, territories, even the spatial, are in the words of MacLeod and Jones (2007), “forged out of political struggle and discursive imaginings” (p.1186). Therefore, the way in which particular VCS stakeholders contest sustainability across territory highlights how scale is not a pre-given entity devoid of process, VCS groups can actively jump between scales in order to promote their own agenda on sustainable development. The next section focuses on this.

#### **9.4 Scale jumping and negotiating sustainable development across space – VCS experiences**

The previous section highlighted some of the scalar tensions experienced by VCS groups in actively negotiating and contesting sustainable development. Whilst most theorists take particular nested scales as givens or perhaps as sites of specific processes, this chapter has shown the importance of examining what connects scales through the lens of sustainability governance. The way in which VCS groups contest sustainable development show that scales are entangled with complex and shifting processes because of their porosity. Whilst there is a national policy lead on how sustainable development is promoted, several local VCS interviewees felt that the regional (and/or the city-regional) scale played an important role in for example, funding processes. I have interpreted this to show how funding for VCS groups is hierarchically nested and ‘locked up’ at particular sub-national state scales, with the regional state tier playing an

important role in the overall sustainability project by buffering central government, so that it can maintain control (through a framework of hierarchical, yet unseen scalar practices) from the centre. Yet the buffering induced from nested scales concomitantly gives VCS groups spatial opportunity to exploit and promote individual agendas on how sustainability should be positioned as a project in its own right. This section examines the way in which some VCS groups enact agency in the promotion of sustainable development through the notion of ‘scale jumping’ (Smith, 1984, 1992b; Herod, 1991; Jonas, 1994; Adams, 1996; Glassman, 2002; Smith and Kurtz, 2003; Swyngedouw, 1997; Bulkeley, 2005).

An appropriate starting place to define ‘scale jumping’ is by Neil Smith (1984). He claims that “by organising the fractal spaces at one scale into a coherent, connected place, struggles elevate themselves to the next scale up the hierarchy” (p.232). Whilst the scale (jumping) literature has burgeoned (and in some respects has become confused) since Smith’s definition, what I want to take out of his definition is how the concept of ‘struggle’ is apposite for the way in which local VCS groups contest and negotiate sustainable development, rather than his implication that scales can only be jumped one scale at a time i.e. from local – regional or from regional – national.

Whilst the last section reported several VCS interviewees finding the regional scale as an important territorial scale within the spatial process of sustainability, this section finds inconsistency in the way local VCS groups jump between scales in the construction of their own sustainability agendas. One group working at the local level may jump to the national scale, whilst other local groups jump to the regional scale. Taking Smith’s definition further, Swyngedouw (1997) shows how “spatial scales are never fixed but are perpetually defined, contested and restructured... relative social

power positions will vary considerably depending on who controls what at which scale” (p.141). This suggests that VCS groups can jump multiple scales within particular networks, without order or logic. In addition to my assertion in the last section of how central government agendas are the primary influence within the VCS sustainable development project, I suggest that this project is also constructed around a scalar politics of unevenness.

The way in which VCS actors jump scales in order to establish particular agendas and intentions is a complex process, devoid of any distinctive pattern or formula. One may expect VCS groups to confine themselves to their own ‘local’ territory, to do sustainability ‘on the ground’ because this is the level of ‘experience’ (Taylor, 1982). Several VCS groups thought that ‘the local’ was the appropriate scale to promote and enact sustainability (section 9.2). Paradoxically, this research has found that some of these same interviewees also attempted to jump scales in pursuit of their own developmental objectives, exhibiting agency *between* scales. For example, the manager from Developing Our Communities felt that the local level was about “*working with people, in their own time, their own place, and at their own pace... local people being able to make decisions on issues...*” (see p.307). Whilst this implies the importance of ‘the local’ in the sustainable development project, the very same interviewee felt that it was important to enact multi-scalar agency in the promotion of their objectives:

*“Depending on what the project is then we actually feed into the regional level, so like, the last project we just spoke about, the user involvement, that feeds in at a local, a regional and, until recently because it was funded through a pot of money through the Home Office, it was feeding in nationally and it still will be but indirectly away from us. All the targets groups that work will be fed right*



*through... I think that other ways we've actually been fed through, ermm, certainly community development, we've just made the national links and certainly with the occupational standards, ermm, and some of our work, some of our work has actually been lifted off different sorts of aspects and different projects as good practice... So ermm, so yes we do, and certainly we are linking with the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, quite often we're on think tanks, you know, we get different areas we get invited to speak on at a national level."*

(Manager, Developing Our Communities)

Similarly, the following CVS officer claimed the local council were taking Neighbourhood Renewal Funding money which should have been used for community development and quality of life issues. This potentially hindered VCS promotion of sustainability within the Hull LSP:

*"...what happened with the Neighbourhood Renewal Funding that was coming into Hull was that the council took most of it. It went down I think from about 90% to about 70% but the council took most of it. Basically to subsidise their mainstream budget where they had shortfalls. Now that was never what it was intended to be used for, Neighbourhood Renewal Funding was supposed to be targeting on particular issues in particular areas and we, I particularly, argued that in the Local Strategic Partnership Board and basically didn't get very far with that because the council kind of well, I have to say they bullied their way through the Local Strategic Partnership Board and got the rest of the public sector partners to agree with them, they didn't want to rock the boat basically."*(Chief Officer, Hull CVS)

As a result his organisation had to jump to the regional state level in order to rectify the situation, in doing so he enacted political agency between the local and regional scales:

*“I lobbied Government Office about that and said “this is not acceptable, it’s not what Neighbourhood Renewal Funding was meant to be for, what are you going to do about it?” And, they did eventually, after a couple years, I mean now it’s quite different because, ermm with, I have to say with a fair bit of pressure from people like Government Office and the Audit Commission, the council had stopped doing that basically and we’ve got a system in place in the Local Strategic Partnership where if you want Neighbourhood Renewal Funding you have to go through a proper appraisal process, you have to be able to demonstrate and evidence that you what you are going to do is going to have an impact on the Neighbourhood Renewal floor target in the target areas in the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.” (Chief Officer, Hull CVS)*

Likewise the following national level interviewee from BTCV realised the importance of the local level in sustainable development: *“well I suppose what you can only get at a local level... is that sense of ownership... if you want to have sustainable development then I think people have to be on board. I think local communities really have to be leading on that.”* (see p.306). Yet he felt that it was necessary for the organisation to restructure itself and utilise scale in order to have a more strategic view of promoting its conservation objectives:

*“...we restructured ourselves on an operational level, so moving from a lot of smaller regional offices to big super regions, so the regional managers are covering a bigger region. And that was very controversial at the time, but that is*

*sort of bedding down. But it seems to be working well, and part of that change was the chief executive trying to take on a more strategic role.”* (National Trustee, British Trust of Conservation Volunteers)

These quotes show that whilst many VCS groups see ‘the local’ as a significant scale in the delivery of sustainable development, they also see it necessary to enact agency across territory, between and through other higher scales, as part of the sustainable development process. Therefore this shows that local governance and government processes alone might not be enough for VCS groups to engender sustainable development at the local level. Particular forms of capital, whether social, economic or political need to be drawn from higher spatial scales. The reasons why such groups have managed to jump scales and forge such higher spatial links could be attributed to the way they are prepared to diversify, restructure, create alliances and promote wider spatial resonance in their projects – in short be pragmatic and experiential in the way they contest sustainability (Allen, 2008). This shows how the internal characteristics of a particular VCS group can influence the amount of agency it enacts, as well as the amount of capital it can draw upon. This to some extent determines future success surrounding the spatial construction of particular sustainable development agendas by VCS groups above *and* below the local level. As one of the preceding interviewees continued:

*“And when you talk about community development and sustainability, we have to work really hard and restructure, resurface those ideas down to neighbourhood level to ensure that we can meet the needs of the community beyond that shortfall, so we have to work at a regional level and work with a lot of partners in the region...”* (Manager, Developing Our Communities)

The above quote shows how the politics of scale can have a multi-directional effect: power over sustainability issues is therefore, spatially ambiguous and contingent (Allen, 2005). Cox's (1998) work is also useful in making sense of this notion of multi-directionality. He drew a distinction between "spaces of dependences" and "spaces of engagement" in the politics of scale. The former "are defined by those more-or-less localized social relations upon which we depend for the realization of essential interests and for which there are no substitutes elsewhere" (p.2). Whilst the latter "are the space in which the politics of securing a space of dependence unfolds" (ibid, p.2). Whilst Cox places a uni-directional emphasis on the jumping of scales in order to secure certain citizen rights i.e. from local to national or international, the effect of that jumping is multi-directional. The previous interview quote from the DOC manager shows how the space of dependence is the neighbourhood which "define[s] place-specific conditions" (p.2) and the space of engagement is the regional. Whilst I have implied that the notion of jumping scales is uneven in the sense that VCS groups can jump from local to region, local to national, regional to national, this quote also shows how scalar politics is used to secure or position certain goals at lower scales to the enacting agent, further emphasising the scale politics of spatiality (Jonas, 1994) and VCS movement across territory in the negotiation of sustainability discourses.

Whilst the DOC example shows how a VCS group enacted agency to alleviate neighbourhood issues, the following VCS group felt that it was necessary to 'scale jump' because central government offered no real support to groups working at the city-wide level. As such he felt that his group had to work at the regional and national scales because top-down, central government policies compelled him to do so:

*“I’m principally charged with looking at national government policy and trying to interpret how that will trickle down and realise itself in the whole context and to try and position the organisation in many ways ahead of the game in terms of developing initiative services etc. So certainly taking the lead from national government policy. We try and ally that locally in terms of local needs analysis, looking at consulting with local people, residence and business etc, to insure that what the government is saying nationally is actually needed locally and by locally I mean Hull.”* (Development Manager, Goodwin Development Trust)

After questioning why he felt his group had to broaden out to other scales, he replied:

*“I think... that increasingly the nature of funding and service delivery was pushing us to move outside of that original geography.”*

Interviewer: *Is that national policy?*

*“Yeah. National and local, so if we were to retain that area of benefit, it would have been quite restricting for us. And we also saw that as an opportunity in many ways in terms of expanding the brief of the organisation and being able to deliver city-wide services so it was kind of carrot and stick I guess.”*

(Development Manager, Goodwin Development Trust)

He continues by talking about how the national scale determines his group’s developmental objectives:

*“There seems to be little or nothing in terms of infrastructural support locally it does seem to occur more at a national level i.e. the Carbon Trust, The Environment Trust and others, as long as we can get access to that support into the organisation that should be fine. I would kind of argue in many ways that you know there probably needs to be a bit more support in terms of Hull and how the council disseminates it’s messages and support structures to the private, public and voluntary sectors yeah. We don’t have a grant or a trust for example and other parts of the country tend to take a lead on this stuff.”* (Development Manager, Goodwin Development Trust)

Goodwin Development Trust’s experience of scale was through the national level acting as an agent of scalar processes. The manager felt that he had to forge links outside of his geographical domain because of central policy imperatives. In this sense, the production of social capital (through alliances/networks with other local actors) surrounding sustainable development did not originate from ‘bottom-up’ working. It was originally catalysed through ‘top-down’ policy, compelling this group to *“move outside of [their] original geography”* and form relations with a wider set of local stakeholders across the city. Thus, the mobilisation strategy or agency enacted by the GDT manager was sensitive to policy changes at higher spatial levels (Miller, 1994). Only after this were relational processes and ‘bottom-up’ working enacted by VCS groups through consultation and network associations (Cox, 1998). This was the effect. The cause was change in national policy. This example shows how structural economic changes (national policy on funding the VCS) can mediate the contingency of VCS socio-spatial relationships at a particular (local) scale (Lovering, 1989) i.e. the mobilisation strategy (or agency) in which VCS groups promote sustainability. As such, the relational sets of processes involved in promoting sustainability are not necessarily independent from

state policy and processes – structure and agency are mutually constitutive (Giddens, 1984). Scale-jumping processes undertaken by VCS groups can therefore be tied in with and constituted by wider spatial (national) relations (Murdoch and Marsden, 1995). This constitution of the local-national was also confirmed by a national level interviewee working at CPRE head office in London:

*“I think in a way you can detect influence in the sense that MPs know you’re there, they will refer to you because knowing what is happening means that you are mentioned sometimes. If an MP in a speech says, “as CPRE says...” That’s a good thing and you know that you are part of the debate and being part of the debate you are, to some degree, also influencing it I would say. It’s interesting because I was actually interviewing a volunteer... and he was saying that on a local level, which I think can still reflect the national level, that not very often will you see a direct link between what I said and the changes made in policy, but you can quite often see a leaning towards what you are saying. And the assumption is that that would not have happened if you had not been lobbying. So you see your influence in that way...”* (National Campaigns Outreach Coordinator, CPRE)

The fact that relational processes are a product of individual agency suggests that internal organisational perceptions of particular groups (or individuals in those groups) play an integral role in how and whether VCS networks are formed and/or whether scale-jumping is necessary. This has a direct affect on the way in which sustainability objectives are negotiated, contested and positioned by VCS groups. The circumstances of some VCS groups were such that jumping scales was deemed unnecessary. For example, the following local VCS interviewee from an environmental group in Hull felt

that the most influential state scale related to his work was the local council, unlike the manager from Goodwin Development Trust, he felt he had no need to ‘scale jump’ in order to pursue his sustainability objectives:

*“Especially somewhere like Hull, the local authority is the most influential partner, and this is why we get on well with them, we work closely with them, we try and influence from within. We also, its difficult also for some voluntary groups to get any influence because you’ve got to understand how the system works and I think we do. You don’t take things personally, and you keep on lobbying, you keep on pushing. Try one thing, you try something else.”*(Coordinator, CHEF)

Similarly, the following CPRE interviewee who was responsible for Hull and East Riding felt that negotiation of particular agendas was served better around the scale in which they already worked:

*“Now if I was lobbying then okay I would occasionally go to Government Office... and they responded, but normally I would lobby and go to the regional group, for example, I talked about the wind farm applications and I said this was our policy in the East Riding, and the regional policy officers said, “well actually I’ve just been to the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly and the East Riding council officers are saying exactly the same thing as you were.”* (Hull and East Riding Chairperson, CPRE)

The main point being made in this section is that VCS stakeholders enact the scalar politics of sustainable development in an uneven fashion. The spatial is not autonomous



from the social agency or mobilisation techniques invoked by VCS stakeholders in the promotion of sustainable development (Massey, 1985). This chapter has shown how sustainability governance is in fact, socially and politically reproduced across space via the agency of stakeholders whether it is through networks (Castells, 1989), political and social scalar construction practices (Herod, 1991; Adams, 1996; Marston, 2000) or both (Cox, 1998; Smith and Kurtz, 2003; Bulkeley, 2005; Legg, 2009). But for VCS actors to be identified as possessing agency there needs to be uneven sustainable development across scales. This begs the question of what comes first, agency or uneven development? Uneven development is defined through the very process of VCS groups possessing or not possessing agency and having the necessary characteristics to mobilise VCS action at particular scales. As such there is a ‘power-geometry’ within the spatial (Massey, 1993) – some VCS actors possess greater agency than others. This further suggests that the agency of VCS stakeholders comes first; a teleological component in the production of uneven geographies of sustainable development within networks, between scales and across territorial space. However, those who possess agency may do so because they sing the tune of central government through responsibilised autonomy *vis-à-vis* Foucault’s ‘governmentality’. The next section attempts to elucidate how agency is enacted by VCS groups through the context of the scale debate in human geography.

### **9.5 VCS sustainability governance and the scale debate**

This research has shown how scale is a process actively contested, negotiated and constructed across space. The words ‘contested’, ‘negotiated’ and ‘constructed’ suggest that there is a ‘power-geometry’ within the spatial between those VCS groups who have certain agency ‘power’ and those who don’t. This also suggests that framed within this binary is the notion of hierarchy; those with power possess elevated status within

society in comparison to those who have power exerted upon them. As such, far from being negotiated over, and being representative of a flat ontology (Marston *et al.*, 2005; Jones III *et al.*, 2007), sustainable development is negotiated by VCS groups between scales and across space. This research supports the notion of scale in human geography. Chapters 8 and 9 have examined the way in which particular VCS actors are able to enact modalities of agency through partnership networks at and between particular nested state scales and across territorial space. For example, in section 8.2.2 quotes from a local VCS interviewee, the co-ordinator of CHEF, suggested that government policy emphasised partnership working and voluntary participation in the delivering of certain public services, so he proactively approached the local council to offer services promoting sustainability to the local community. This decision had an effect on the way the sustainable development project was constructed across territorial space within the physical geography of Hull and East Riding. Yet it simultaneously had an irreversible effect on the way the local state scale (Hull City Council) operated with regard to its positioning of sustainability. Those advocating a site-based ontology in the scale debate (as opposed to ‘scalists’) would probably argue that negotiation takes place at specific sites – the local park, a cafe, the beach – yet this assumes that struggles or negotiations are about discrete sites, when in fact they are at the same time struggles about the relationship between those sites and wider concepts of territoriality. This is why scale – with all its hierarchy – is a useful concept for human geographers. It is a useful analytical starting point, an ontological vehicle<sup>7</sup> by which we derive and then develop ideas and theories. For the purposes of this research, scale is the Hull council chamber, the East Riding LSP meeting room, the SSSI, the RDA and GO offices in Leeds – all hierarchical and nested, but tangible arenas where policy and politics are played out. Within these state-regulated institutions stakeholders are able to get a legitimate

---

<sup>7</sup> Although in agreement with Marston *et al.* (2005) scale is most definitely a chaotic concept.

foothold into political negotiations surrounding sustainable development. Though I have implied that scale can be hierarchical, it is far from being rigid as agency is enacted within the council chamber, within the East Riding LSP meeting room. After negotiation takes place at these particular nested scales, the results are rolled out across territorial space<sup>8</sup> and are rearticulated through VCS networks for instance, having not only an effect upon the relational space around us, but also changing the way (albeit in a more nuanced manner) in which the point of origin (scale) operates in the future (Smith, 1992a; Swyngedouw, 1997; Leitner and Miller, 2007). Making this point, Leitner and Miller (2007) claim that “the scalar characteristics of social struggles can have important implications for the dynamics and outcomes of those struggles; scales are themselves constructed through social struggles” (p.118). Hence, within the governance of sustainable development, scale is a material concept. It is a political (see Adams, 1996) and social (see Herod, 1991; Smith, 1992b; Marston, 2000, 2004) process and can be constructed, reproduced, collapsed and reformed across space.

## **9.6 Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter, VCS group (and state) stakeholders believe that the local territorial scale is important for the promotion of sustainable development issues because of its tangibility and closeness to people – the scale of sustainability ‘experience’ (Taylor, 1982). In reality however, many of those local VCS groups interviewed have experienced shifting spatial channels of economic support, which have the effect of rearticulating tensions between the sub-national territorial scales at which they hope to work. Local VCS groups believe the regional state scale plays a pivotal role as a linchpin in cascading down central policy imperatives on funding for

---

<sup>8</sup> Think of Neil Smith’s (2000) definition of scale, “in the broadest terms, specific geographical scales can be conceived as platforms for specific kinds of social activity. They are platforms of absolute space in a wider sea of relational space” (Smith, 2000, p.725).

sustainable development, which in turn indirectly (but intentionally) steers VCS action on sustainability. Some local VCS groups are well aware that central state agendas influence how they articulate and form networks and therefore, contest and negotiate sustainability. In support of such state regulation, many of the quotes from government officials in this section have shown state perceptions of scale as being clearly hierarchical and having degrees of order when it comes to the driving of sustainability policy. From an analytical viewpoint, state institutional thickness buffers central government, allowing greater control from the centre. At the sub-national level, VCS groups react to these spatial tensions by forming alliances/networks in order to gain greater impetus and secure certain rights within the central state-regulated sustainability governance process. It is difficult for some groups to implement their own projects around sustainability within state-led governance spaces because funding is locked-up by state gatekeepers at each particular scale. This has especially been the case at local level, where pooled funding in LAAs had allowed local councils to decide which VCS groups merited funding. However, I have argued (using ideas by Amin (2004), MacLeod and Jones (2007) and Morgan (2007)) how the spatial is porous, thereby affording some VCS groups the opportunity to form networks and assemblages, develop social capital and exploit how sustainable development is relationally constructed and produced *via* connectedness and tensions between scales outside of such state-led spaces. Thus, even though central government regulates VCS stakeholders in certain self-managing ways, these actors still possess degrees of agency within particular networked and scalar confines (Jonas, 1994). Whilst this could be pre-emptive of a theoretical tension between regulation and agency<sup>9</sup>, this research has found that VCS agency in finding solutions to local sustainable development more often than not, occurs outside local state-led spaces in non-state controlled networks (as section 8.3.1

---

<sup>9</sup> Section 10.3 examines this notion more closely.

explained). Such non-state controlled networks also highlight how it may not be appropriate to synonymise 'the local' as the appropriate scale to combat local sustainable development. The mitigation of local sustainable development issues are in fact, relationally constructed across territorial space because of the inherent weaknesses (i.e. the inability of VCS groups to practically engage within them) of local state-led governance spaces (like LSPs) as they stand.

## **Chapter 10: Conclusion**

### **10.1 Introduction**

The aim of this PhD research was to examine how VCS groups engaged in local sustainability governance issues in Hull and East Riding. Paying particular attention to Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Local Biodiversity Partnerships (LBPs) and service delivery mechanisms, the intention of this thesis was to offer important empirical evidence to support and test academic debates surrounding the governance of sustainable development, VCS-state partnership and communication practices, power, networks and scale. In concluding this thesis, the next section (10.2) will critically reflect upon my empirical findings with a view to linking my research questions with the academic debates. Section 10.3 then examines the implications of my findings to policy and section 10.4 examines what directions any future research might need to take.

### **10.2 Addressing research questions**

This section will address each of my research questions in order to critically reflect on whether New Labour's governance agenda works for the promotion of sustainable development at the local level, as well as what such state-regulated local governance might reveal about the VCS-state relationship in the promotion of sustainability discourses in general.

## **1. How do the state and the VCS seek to incorporate sustainable development into local governance spaces?**

This research has concentrated largely on the role that the LSP plays in the governance of sustainable development between the state and the VCS. In Hull and East Riding, each LSP is led by the council (see chapter 6 and sections 7.2 and 7.2.1), supplemented by public consultation (see chapter 6) and VCS membership (section 7.2.2).

My research showed that VCS groups in Hull and East Riding were limited in the amount of influence they could exert surrounding sustainability issues in each LSP, due to organisational cultures of managerialism and embedded practices within LSPs. State representatives dominated the most important decision-making board within LSPs: the Delivery Board. VCS members of the Delivery Boards were also selected by council members and senior managers and tended to be ‘the usual suspects’, that is, senior management and council members preferred to select VCS groups that had similar organisational practices and greater resources to the state’s, so that they could deliver services that the council needed. In Hull, VCS membership of the LSP Delivery Board included a large social enterprise with national links and contracts with local government, the Church of England and a Council for Voluntary Service. In the 2006 East Riding LSP Delivery Board too, VCS membership consisted of a regional rural community council and an umbrella group working across the entire Humberside region.

So, only VCS groups who fitted in with council expectations and agendas had any real chance of participating in the mainstream activities of LSPs and groups that failed to fit this profile were often sidelined. With VCS members of LSP Delivery Boards

consisting mainly of larger VCS or umbrella groups, there is the danger of eroding place-based distinctiveness and ‘on the ground’ capacity building which is integral to sustainable development’s success. Such membership practices also suggest that LSPs are a post-political space in which environmental sustainability issues are acknowledged, but depoliticised through consensus about the inevitability of neo-liberalism and parliamentary (representative) democracy (Swyngedouw, 2007). This is especially the case in Hull, where in the previous CityVision LSP, research has cited how local council members thought the VCS had too much power (Davies, 2007).

For example, the issue of climate change has become more prominent in Hull’s LSP (see figures 6.3 and 6.4), resulting in other issues, like biodiversity and conservation (which are inherently local in a material, practical sense) being given no prominence whatsoever (see section 7.3). Biodiversity in Hull is dealt with through the Local Biodiversity Partnership, a distinct separate governance space from the LSP. This suggests that Hull’s LSP uses a ‘weak’ definition of sustainability and contradicts national guidance that the community strategy process (which LSPs are responsible for) should incorporate biodiversity (DEFRA, 2002). In comparison, in East Riding, there has been a gradual policy drive to incorporate the LBP into the community strategy process (see Figure 6.7) and the current LBAP for East Riding is more explicit in linking biodiversity issues into the East Riding LSP (see section 6.6) than is the case in Hull.



## **2. How is this process of addressing sustainable development through local governance experienced and perceived by the VCS?**

In terms of positive VCS experiences, some groups felt that, through spaces like LSPs, they were able to promote their own individual position by engaging in negotiation and building consensus over sustainable development. This involved forming alliances with other VCS groups who had similar working objectives and adapting to the more predominant socio-economic agenda of the LSP and local council. This process of ‘state governance aligning’ (see section 8.3.2) shows how some VCS groups were able to gain a more powerful position locally and thus become ‘players’ in local governance, at least in comparison to other VCS groups who were reluctant to engage within such state-influenced networks. However, this greater prominence in LSP processes may require VCS groups to trade their environmental objectives. For example, the co-ordinator for Bransholme Enterprises was quick to point out that to ensure her group had access rights to the ‘One Hull’ LSP, she had to put the environment in economic terms. Similarly, in the East Riding, a senior manager for Humber and Wold Rural Community Council claimed that in order to secure funding for particular projects, they had to align themselves to the East Riding LSP (see section 8.3.2). This suggests that sustainable development within such local governance spaces are framed around a socio-economic agenda.

So the VCS experience of the way sustainable development has been treated by the state is often negative. In Hull, the VCS felt that socio-economic discourses tended to dominate priority-setting agendas, because of central state pressure to modernise through best value practices, performance management and public service delivery. In the East Riding too, whilst LSP and community strategy documentation was not so explicitly dominated by a socio-economic agenda, the organisational practices of the

LSP and its relationship to local VCS stakeholders suggests a lack of priority for environmental sustainability. As noted above, there was a mismatch of expectations between the VCS and the state over what types of sustainability should be prioritised. This could be attributed to the ‘congested state’ (Skelcher, 2000) where many New Labour governance policies coalesce at the local level, creating competing interests between the state and the VCS, as well between different types of VCS groups.

Another negative experience was that the VCS was not given enough support by the state to engage in local governance spaces (section 7.4), especially financial resources for attending LSP meetings. If the state actively seeks non-state contributions to local governance spaces, there has to be some sort of financial incentive for smaller VCS groups to get involved. The VCS are concerned that their role will become about capital accumulation and budgetary spreadsheets, and not broader societal issues like sustainability.

As well as financial resources, VCS representatives also felt the need to have the capacity to contribute as professional, ‘active subjects’, if they are to fully participate in local sustainability governance. Some VCS groups felt that this skewed participation towards particular non-state actors. For example, the majority of VCS groups I interviewed in this research were large and were run in a business-like, professional manner showing that such groups had the organisational capacity to be active subjects and offer expert advice to the state in local governance spaces like LSPs. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) has also been an important mechanism for the state to actively attract and formalise VCS contributions to public service delivery.

So VCS groups may feel excluded for reasons not to do with their exclusion from the LSP's Delivery Board, but to do with what personal abilities or 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1990) they bring to such governance processes. This shows how pluralist governance spaces like LSPs are not solely about opening up pathways for greater non-state inclusion through participatory democracy by the state. Rather, they are also spaces which have other criteria attached. For example, the Chief Officer for Hull CVS and the co-ordinator for Hull Community Network claimed that the LSP were actively looking for VCS groups who could deliver public services (section 7.2).

However, in some cases, cultural capital could be built through the process of participation, rather than preceding it, suggesting that being part of local sustainability governance is a long-term learning process. One interviewee from the CPRE highlighted how she experienced a type of Habermasian dialogic process with the state that took time to develop (see section 8.3.3). To that person, trust was first and foremost, a characteristic based on experiential communicative learning over a prolonged period of time through 'facework commitments' (Giddens, 1990).

**3. What are the major issues faced by the state and VCS groups in ensuring sustainable development principles are incorporated at the local level, either within state-regulated governance spaces or external to these?**

The research has found that the state is co-opting the VCS (Taylor *et al.*, 2002) and giving certain groups only regulated freedom. Utilising the VCS is beneficial for the state in two ways. Firstly, by neutralising any external threats over sustainability, the state can spatially internalise control and create consensus over the type of sustainability politics enacted in LSPs. Secondly, the state can use the green image of VCS

organisations to legitimate its intention to combat sustainability, ticking the public accountability box. Hence, LSPs are not very innovative governance spaces and do not challenge local governance processes. Such governance spaces have the potential to undermine local democracy and accountability through a managerial and consensus-based politics, under the guise of promoting democratic participation (Apostolakis, 2004; Gaventa, 2004; Geddes, 2006; Maguire and Truscott, 2006; Raco et al., 2006; Liddle, 2007).

‘Governmentality’ theory (Foucault, [1978] 1991; Rose, 1999; Taylor, 2007) has been useful for this research in helping describe how the state is able to regulate the VCS ‘at a distance’. Theoretically, LSPs are ideal spaces in which VCS action over sustainability can emerge, because they operate at a distance from interventionist central government. But distance rearticulates acts of coercion into a more subtle diffusion of power (Rose, 1997, 1999), which practically manifests itself through ‘responsibilisation’ of particular VCS actors (Somerville, 2005).

This research therefore showed that VCS groups had only limited influence over the way particular forms of (environmental) sustainability were incorporated into LSPs, because of an embedded council culture of elitism and managerialism. Some VCS actors may feel empowered by a sense of belonging, but in reality are disempowered because their decision-making capabilities are controlled by council members of LSPs. The decision to stop the funding of Hull Community Network demonstrated this (section 7.2.1).

Whilst some groups accepted funding from the state in order to pursue particular objectives, many VCS interviewees were wary of relying solely on such funding from the state because of its potential to compromise their autonomy as a voluntary group. Section 8.2.2 discussed how the amount of funding given to VCS groups was a function of their ability to deliver services in line with the state's modernisation agenda. This has highlighted a tension within the VCS between service delivery and capacity building. On one hand, increased state funding has given VCS groups the means to tackle particular sustainability issues. On the other hand, VCS groups have traded some of their independence by allowing the state to actively steer a particular sustainability agenda.

Funding has resulted in some VCS groups becoming more empowered whilst others lose out (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003a). Larger VCS organisations are able to attract greater amounts of funding by strategically aligning themselves with government policy through their national arms, which have greater organisational capacities and an understanding of state procurement processes. These larger VCS groups can then 'fund freedom' to a certain extent because of the large amounts of funding they receive, as the BTCV quote on page 283 demonstrates. Even interviewees from state regional bodies said that they preferred to work with larger VCS groups because of their understanding of state organisational practices. This has been found in research elsewhere where larger VCS groups were found more likely to have formal contracts with the public sector (Lewis, 2005).

In response to these problems of co-option, the research found that many local VCS groups worked outside of state-led spaces to promote their own environmental

sustainability objectives and to retain greater independence. This was especially the case for those groups who worked on biodiversity and conservation issues as section 8.3.1 shows. Working outside the state helps to concretise a diverse local politics and externalises a radical politics of (environmental) sustainability from the state-led space. To capture these different spatialisations of governance, Chapter 8 distinguished two types of networks: non-state controlled networks (section 8.3.1) and state-influenced networks (section 8.3.2). By non-state controlled networks I mean particular networks that are free from state interference. This allows members to promote their own objectives surrounding sustainability and ‘bridge’ social capital (section 4.5.1) across the various networks which are formed. State-influenced networks on the other hand, are VCS groups who actively seek out alignment with the state in order to promote sustainability and as such, are influenced, in varying degrees by state processes. State-influenced networks are more complex and are used by VCS groups to promote and embed particular environmental discourses within LSPs. Whether a VCS group decides to align with the state (section 8.3.2) or resist state steering or co-option (section 8.3; 8.3.1) depends largely upon actor qualities. This research has found some VCS groups attempt to form alliances with other groups in order to give them a more powerful position locally when dealing with the local state. This is because configurations of power within LSPs are largely dependent on the ability to be opportunistic. This was especially the case for senior council officers and councillor members of LSPs who dominated decisions through the Delivery Board.

#### **4. How is sustainable development scaled as a local governance issue, particularly in the experience of the VCS and the local state?**

My empirical findings have reinforced the notion of the local level as being important for both state and VCS actors in the implementation of sustainable development, because of its connectedness to everyday experiences and practices (section 9.2). Yet local sustainable development is enacted by VCS groups with much less rigidity and is not reducible to a singular, fixed territorial scale (Haggett *et al.*, 1965; Haggett, 1972); it is socially constructed, spatially ambiguous and contingent upon experiential practices (Delaney and Leitner, 1997; Allen, 2005, 2008), but nevertheless relationally constructed and negotiated across territorial space (Smith, 1992a; Jonas, 1994; Swyngedouw, 1997; Moore, 2008).

Section 9.4 focused on how many VCS groups in this research had to work outside of the local scale – they had to ‘scale jump’ (Smith, 1984, 1992a, b; Swyngedouw, 1997) – in order to promote particular local discourses of sustainability. This was because economic support coalesced at higher spatial levels, particularly at the regional level through the RDA. This created a tension between the local and regional levels as to which was the ideal territorial scale for VCS groups to promote sustainable development. I have identified the regional state scale as a buffer by which the central state could indirectly steer VCS groups and maintain central control, using work on ‘governmentality’ to contextualise this. Yet some VCS groups like Bransholme Enterprises, the Goodwin Development Trust and the East Hull Alliance reacted to these spatial tensions by forming networks and alliances to secure funding from the regional level (section 9.3, p.333). Therefore, whilst the region acts as a buffer for central government to exercise control at a distance, its porosity enables such VCS groups to enact certain degrees of agency through a pragmatic politics and develop

social capital outside of the local (see Giddens, 1990, p.21) in order to address local issues of sustainable development.

In this respect, this thesis has shown how local sustainable development practices by some VCS groups can be relationally constructed at diverse scales of the state (Jonas, 1994), playing down the state perspective of ‘the local’ as being the most appropriate scale for sustainability governance, even though this is the scale in which sustainable development is materially experienced. Yet some VCS groups are still marginalised within local governance processes like LSPs because they have been unable to fit in with council perceptions of what a VCS group should offer such spaces. Whilst some groups have pragmatically reacted to this through network building across space, other smaller groups have failed to build networks with their peers outside of the local level. This seems to suggest that LSPs have not really been very effective at promoting the VCS-state relationship in terms of partnership working over local sustainable development issues.

In summary, my research has shown how local governance spaces, particular LSPs, offer little recourse for VCS groups to equitably engage in a dialogic politics over certain environmental sustainability issues within such spaces. This results in some VCS groups (pragmatically) externalising such engagements through networks, alliances and assemblages across space in order to ensure the promotion of certain sustainability objectives at the local level. In short, pragmatism is essential to sustainability being rolled out as an individual local project in its own right.



### **10.3 Implications for policy**

There have been calls within the human geography discipline for research to be more policy relevant and to work towards solving societal inequities (Harvey, 1974; Peck, 1999; Markusen, 2001; Martin, 2001; Gibson-Graham, 2008). This section therefore considers the implications of my research for improving policy and state-VCS relationships in the future.

I have argued how LSPs were theoretically intended as a space in which non-state actors can contribute towards the governance of their locality, but the organisational realities of such spaces were in fact managerial, elitist and council-led, showing how LSPs are not really a panacea for the local governance of socio-environmental agendas of sustainability. One possible recommendation to limit potential steering by the local state is the introduction of a community participation fund, which bypasses local and regional government and is administered directly by DCLG into a LSP-managed pool for all LSP areas. This can be done on a pro-rata scale in line with the indices of deprivation ensuring every area gets funding for ensuring non-state participation in LSPs, not just the 88 deprived areas. Full VCS participation is necessary in every LSP to ensure it is a spatially consistent policy.

Firstly, having such a fund will minimise the potential for local government intervention in the LSP, giving central government a 'metagovernance' role in ensuring LSPs operate effectively at the local level. Separating local council interests from LSP interests is of high importance if LSPs are to be non-state inclusionary spaces.

Secondly, such a fund can potentially even out the 'rules of engagement', by separating local council interests from LSP interests. VCS groups in Hull and East Riding always

felt as if they were on the back foot with LSPs, because they operated through a state organisational culture. The LSP management team, which should also be funded by and responsible to central government, not the local council, need to draw up guidelines in relation to roles, incentives, accountability and participation between local public, private and voluntary stakeholders.

Thirdly, funds can be directed at establishing mechanisms which engage all types of VCS groups in an equitable manner, especially smaller groups. My empirical findings suggested that VCS members of Hull's and East Riding's LSP Delivery Boards were selected, rather than elected (section 7.2). Like research elsewhere (Maguire and Truscott, 2006; Taylor, 2006), council representatives thought only larger VCS groups had the ability to fit into such spaces. This precedent only negates the whole ethos of having a local governance space which is open to a variety of non-state stakeholders.

Making LSPs statutory and introducing a central funding pool to facilitate community participation are useful starting points for strengthening local governance. But there is still the issue of how sustainable development, particularly the environmental strand, can become embedded within LSP processes, in order to avoid the implementation of merely 'weak' sustainability at the local level. This research found that Hull LSP only incorporated environmental sustainability in a half-hearted way and conflated 'the environment' with 'climate change' (section 7.3). The One Hull LSP did not have an environmental sub-board like its predecessor, whilst the East Riding LSP did. In Hull, this excluded many VCS groups from LSP processes. This is why, in line with the 'metagovernance' role of central government, LSPs should be controlled more tightly by central government. Whilst this does contradict New Labour's devolution

programme somewhat, it may be temporarily necessary in order to catalyse VCS participation in LSPs.

One way to instil this is through the national sustainable development strategy. *Securing the Future* (DEFRA, 2005, p.127) already mentions the role to be played by the LSP and sustainable community strategy process at the local level, but should clarify that these processes are not mutually exclusive. LSPs need to be disassociated with local authorities and given more political kudos at the national level, which will strengthen them locally. This will also have the added bonus of ensuring central government departments like DCLG and DEFRA are more joined-up in terms of the way LSP policies translate to sub-national levels.

Such a step-change does go against the policy of giving greater powers to local authorities. However, given the capacity for LSP processes to butt up against council processes, there seems no real alternative in ensuring the survival of LSPs, unless they are abolished altogether. This could become a reality after the next general election. So ultimately what the LSP-council tension issue highlights, is the contradictory nature of New Labour's local modernisation programme(s), which through its very own paradoxical policies, may never find that elusive local state fix for sustainability governance.

#### **10.4 Implications for future research**

This section suggests future research directions, following on from the ideas in this thesis.

First, more work on the way conservation and biodiversity issues are handled by the VCS and the state outside of LSPs could consider more fully whether LBPs experience the same VCS membership issues as LSPs, especially in light of central guidance recommending that biodiversity processes are linked into community strategies (DEFRA, 2002). It will be interesting to examine whether LBPs promote the hard science of biodiversity conservation, like physical analyses and habitat modelling, or whether (like LSPs) they focus on promoting 'softer' issues of sustainability like social inclusion through biodiversity. This may also be tied in with the 'metagovernance' role of central government and how a wider state economic-regulatory framework of 'governmentality' influences sustainability as a local project in its own right. Research on LSPs and LBPs have tended to be conducted in silo. Any future research that assesses local pluralist governance spaces need to examine whether LSPs are incorporating biodiversity into the community planning process by strategically aligning themselves with their respective LBP. Much academic work on LBPs has examined biodiversity and conservation processes in purely local terms (Goodwin, 1998; Evans 2002), although work on biodiversity partnerships has now attempted to incorporate a spatial aspect to local processes of biodiversity planning (Evans, 2007). More work is needed on how collectively, the LSP and the LBP are strategically placed within spatial planning processes and what this means for sustainable development and its position in the 'new localism' agenda.

Second, future research could also consider whether Multi Area Agreements (MAAs) are opening up pathways for sustainable development to be embedded regionally. The structure of MAAs seems to suggest an ‘as you were’ scenario, and will probably encounter the same barriers faced by LSPs and LAAs, as New Labour continues to add a myriad of layers into the sub-national governance policy agenda.

Third, with climate change mitigation and adaptability measures dominating the sustainability policy agenda for the foreseeable future, research in the next 10-15 years will need to utilise notions of scale to understand how climate change risk is managed spatially, from policy at higher scales to implementation processes at sub-national levels. Incorporating scale into research theory and methodology enables one to critically evaluate state institutional resilience to climate change and its spatial repercussions. In particular, examining the relationship(s) between local governance spaces and other scales is integral to successful promotion of *in situ* adaptation measures through governance interventions and autonomous adaptation measures through social capital and collective action processes. With climate change being a spatially pervasive issue, it is important that future research examines how non-state, relational processes of social reproduction affect state territoriality and policy decision-making processes in a multi-scalar geographical context.

## **Bibliography**

Adams, P.C. (1996) Protest and the scale politics of telecommunications. *Political Geography*, **15** (5), pp.419-441.

Adams, W.M. (2005) Sustainability. **In:**

Cloke, P., Crang, P. and Goodwin, M. (eds) (2005) *Introducing Human Geographies*.

London, Hodder Arnold.

Adger, W.N. (2002) Inequality, environment and planning. *Environment and Planning A*, **34** (10), pp.1716-1719.

Adger, W.N., Brown, K., Fairbrass, J., Jordon, A., Paavola, J., Rosendo, S. and Seyfang, G. (2004) Governance for sustainability: towards a 'thick' analysis of environmental decision-making. *Environment and Planning A*, **35** (6), pp.1095-1110.

Agyeman, J. and Evans, B. (2004) 'Just sustainability': the emerging discourses of environmental justice in Britain? *The Geographical Journal*, **170** (2), pp.155-164.

Allen, J. (2005) Arms length imperialism? *Political Geography*, **24** (4), pp.531-541.

Allen, J. (2008) Pragmatism and power, or the power to make a difference in a radically contingent world. *Geoforum*, **39** (4), pp.1613-1624.

Allen, J. and Cochrane, A. (2007) Beyond the Territorial Fix: Regional Assemblages, Politics and Power. *Regional Studies*, **41** (9), pp.1161-1175.

Amin, A. (1999) An institutionalist perspective on regional economic development. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **23** (2), pp.365-378.

Amin, A. (2004) Regions unbound: towards a new politics of place. *Geografiska Annaler*, **86** (1), pp.33-44.

Amin, A., Cameron, A. and Hudson, R. (2002) *Placing the Social Economy*. London, Routledge.

Amin, A. and Thrift, N. (2002) *Cities: reimagining the urban*. Cambridge, Polity.

Anastacio, J., Gidley, B., Hart, L., Keith, M., Mayo, M. and Kowarzik, U. (2000) *Reflecting Realities: Participants' Perspectives on Integrated Communities and Sustainable Development*. Bristol, The Policy Press.

Anheier, H.K. and Seibel, W. (1990) Sociological and Political Science Approaches to the Third Sector. **In:**

Anheier, H. K. and Seibel, W. (eds) (1990) *The Third Sector Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations*. New York, Walter de Gruyter.

Apostolakis, C. (2004) Citywide and Local Strategic Partnerships in Urban Regeneration: Can Collaboration Take Things Forward? *Politics*, **24** (2), pp.103-112.

Arnstein, S.R. (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation. *American Institute of Planning Journal*, **35** (4), pp.216-232.

Ashley, M. (2002) Local Government and the WSSD. *Local Environment*, **7** (4), pp.459-463.

Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations Website (2006) 'Ed Miliband gives first major speech as third sector minister to acevo members.' **At:**

[https://www.acevo.org.uk/index.cfm/display\\_page/news\\_press/control\\_contentType/news\\_list/display\\_open/news\\_342](https://www.acevo.org.uk/index.cfm/display_page/news_press/control_contentType/news_list/display_open/news_342)

Last Accessed: 12:45 (13/02/09)

Austin, M. (2003) The changing relationship between nonprofit organizations and public social service agencies in the era of welfare reform. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, **32** (1), pp.97-114.

Bäckstrand, K., Kronsell, A. and Söderholm, P. (1996) Organisational Changes to Sustainable Development. *Environmental Politics*, **5** (2), pp.209-230.

Bang, H. (2005) Among everyday makers and expert citizens. **In:**

Newman, J. (ed) (2005) *Remaking Governance: Peoples, politics and the public sphere*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Bailey, N. and Peel, D. (2002) Building Sustainable Networks: A Study of Public Participation and Social Capital. **In:**

Rydin, Y. and Thornley, A. (eds) (2002) *Planning in the UK*. London, Ashgate.

Barnett, C. (2004) Deconstructing radical democracy: Articulation, representation and being-with-others. *Political Geography*, **23** (5), pp.503-528.



Barry, J. and Paterson, M. (2004) Globalisation, Ecological Modernisation and New Labour. *Political Studies*, **52** (4), pp.767-784.

Bass, S., Dalal-Clayton, B. and Pretty, J. (1995) Participation in Strategies for Sustainable Development. *Environmental Planning Issues*, **7**, International Institute for Environment and Development, London.

Batchelor, A. and Patterson, A. (2007) Political Modernisation and the Weakening of Sustainable Development. **In:**

Krueger, R. and Gibbs, D. (eds) (2007) *The Sustainable Development Paradox*. London, Guildford Press.

Batty, S. (2001) The Politics of Sustainable Development. **In:**

Batty, S., Layard, A. and Davoudi, S and Batty, S (eds) (2001) *Planning for a sustainable future*. London, Spon Press.

Bauer, M. (1996) *The Narrative Interview*. LSE Methodology Interview Papers, Qualitative Series, No.1. **At:**

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/methodologyInstitute/pdf/QualPapers/Bauer-NARRAT1SS.pdf>

Last Accessed: 15:40 (30/4/09)

BBC Website (2003) Where is the worst place to live in the world? **At:**

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking\\_point/3158560.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/talking_point/3158560.stm)

Last Accessed: 10:25 (14/10/09)

Beaumont, J. and Loopmans, M. (2008) Towards Radicalized Communicative Rationality: Resident Involvement and Urban Democracy in Rotterdam and Antwerp. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **32** (1), pp.95-113.

Bebbington, A. and Riddell, R. (1997) Heavy hands, hidden hands, holding hands? Donors, intermediary NGOs and civil society organisations. **In:**

Hulme, D. and Edwards, M. (eds) (1997) *NGOs, states and donors: too close for comfort?* Basingstoke, Macmillan (in association with Save the Children Fund).

Beck, U. (1994) The reinvention of politics: Towards a theory of reflexive modernization. **In:**

Beck, U., Lash, S. and Giddens, A. (1994) *Reflexive modernization: Politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Betsill, M. and Bulkeley, H. (2004) Transnational Networks and Global Environmental Governance: the Cities for Climate Protection program. *International Studies Quarterly*, **48** (2), pp.471-493.

Blowers, A. (1993) Environmental Policy: The Quest for Sustainable Development. *Urban Studies*, **30** (4/5), pp.775/796.

Blowers, A. and Young, S. (2000) Britain: unsustainable cities. **In:**

Low, N., Gleeson, B., Elander, I. and Lidskog, R. (eds) (2000) *Consuming cities: The urban environment in the global economy after the Rio Declaration*. London, Routledge.

- Bolton, M. (2003) *Voluntary Sector Added Value: A discussion paper*. London, NCVO.
- Bourdieu, P. (1983) Forms of capital. **In:**
- Richardson, J.C. (ed) (1986) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of education*. New York, Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London, Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Boyer, R. (1990) *The Regulation School: a critical introduction*. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Brenner, N. (1999) Beyond State-centrism? Space, Territoriality and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies. *Theory and Society*, **28** (1), pp.39-78.
- Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. (2002) Preface: From “New Localism” to the Spaces of Neoliberalism. *Antipode*, **34** (3), pp.341-347.
- Brenton, M. (1985) *The Voluntary Sector in British Social Services*. London, Longman.

Briassoulis, H. (2001) Sustainable development and its indicators: through a (planner's) glass darkly. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, **44** (3), pp.409-427.

Brook, V. (2005) Sustainability speak: Discourse and practice paradigms in subdivision design. *Local Environment*, **10** (6), pp.613-627.

Brown, K., Kenny, S., Turner, B. and Prince, J. (2000) *Rhetorics of welfare: uncertainty, choice and voluntary associations*. London, Macmillan.

Brown, L., Khagram, S., Moore, M. and Frumkin, P. (2000) Globalisation, NGOs and Multisectoral Relations. **In:**

Nye, J.S. and Donahue, J.D. (eds) (2000) *Governance in a Globalizing World*. Washington DC, Brookings Institution Press.

Brown, M. (1997) *Replacing Citizenship: AIDS Activism and Radical Democracy*. London, Guilford Press.

Bryant, R.L. (1991) Putting Politics First: The Political Ecology of Sustainable Development. *Global Ecology and Biogeography Letters*, **1** (6), pp.164-166.

Bulkeley, H. (2005) Reconfiguring environmental governance: Towards a politics of scale and networks. *Political Geography*, **24** (8), pp.875-902.

Bulkeley, H. and Betsill, M. (2003) *Cities and climate change: urban sustainability and global environmental governance*. London, Routledge.

Burridge, D. (1990) *Facing the Future*. London, NCVO.

Cabinet Office (1999) *Modernising Government*. **At:**

<http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm43/4310/4310-00.htm>

Last Accessed: 11:55 (10/03/06)

Caporaso, J. (1996) The European Union and Forms of State: Westphalian Regulatory or Post-Modern? *Journal of Common Market Studies*, **34** (1), pp.29-52.

Carter, N. and Darlow, A. (1997) Local Agenda 21 and Developers: Are We Better Equipped to Build a Consensus in the 1990s? *Planning Practice and Research*, **12** (1), pp.45-57.

Castells, M. (1989) *The informational city: information, technology, economic restructuring and the urban-regional process*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Castells, M. (1997) *The power of identity*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Chan, G. (1991) *Taken for Granted: Community Activity and the Crisis of the Voluntary Sector*. London, Community Development Foundation Publications.

Chatterjee, P. and Finger, M. (1994) *The Earth Brokers: power, politics and world development*. London, Routledge.

Chatterton, P. and Style, S. (2001) Putting Sustainable Development into Practice? The role of local policy partnership networks. *Local Environment*, **6** (4), pp.439-452.

Chatterton, P. (2002) 'Be realistic: Demand the impossible'. Moving towards 'strong' sustainable development in an old industrial region? *Regional Studies*, **36** (5), pp.552-562.

Christie, I. and Warburton, D. (2001) *From Here to Sustainability: Politics in the Real World*. London, Earthscan.

CityVision (2002) *Urban Renaissance: Hull Community Strategy*.

Clark, G. (2005) Secondary Data. **In:**

Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (eds) (2005) *Methods in Human Geography: A guide for students doing a research project*. Harlow, Pearson.

Cloke, P., Cook, I., Crang, P., Goodwin, M., Painter, J. and Philo, C. (2004) *Practicing Human Geography*. London, Sage.

Coaffee, J. and Healey, P. (2003) 'My Voice: My Place': Tracking Transformations in Urban Governance. *Urban Studies*, **40** (10), pp.1979-1999.

Cochrane, A. (1998) Globalization, fragmentation and local welfare citizenship. **In:**

Carter, J. (ed) (1998) *Postmodernity and the fragmentation of the welfare state*. London, Routledge.

Cochrane, A. (1998) Illusions of power: interviewing local elites. *Environment and Planning A*, **30** (12), pp. 2121-2132.

Coleman, J.C. (1988) Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology*, **94** (s1), pp.95-120.

Coleman, J.C. (1994) *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

Collinge, S. (2001) Spatial ecology and biological conservation. *Biological Conservation*, **100** (1) pp.1-2.

Commission for the Compact (2009) *Compact: Commissioning Guidance*. London, Commission for the Compact, February 2009.

Connelly, J. and Smith, G. (1999) *Politics and the Environment: Theory and Practice*. London, Routledge.

Counsell, D. and Haughton, G. (2006) Sustainable development in regional planning: The search for new tools and renewed legitimacy. *Geoforum*, **37** (6), pp.921-931.

Cowell, R. (2004) Community Planning: Fostering Participation in the Congested State? *Local Government Studies*, **30** (4), pp.497-518.

Cox, K.R. (1998) Spaces of Dependence, Spaces of Engagement and the Politics of Scale, or: Looking for Local Politics. *Political Geography*, **17** (1), pp.1-23.

Cox, K.R. and Jonas A.E.G. (1993) Urban development, collective consumption and the politics of metropolitan fragmentation. *Political Geography*, **12** (1), pp.8-37.

Craig, G. and Manthorpe, J. (1999) Unequal partners? Local Government Reorganisation and the Voluntary Sector. *Social Policy and Administration*, **31** (1), pp.55-72.

Craig, G., McNamee, S., Peake, R. and Wilkinson, M. (2005a) *A21CVCS4Y+H- The future contribution of voluntary and community sectors to the Yorkshire and Humber region*. University of Hull.

Craig, G., Taylor, M., Carlton, N., Garbutt, R., Kimberlee, R., Lepine, E. and Syed, A. (2005b) *The paradox of Compacts: monitoring the implementation of Compacts*. University of Hull and University of West England, January 2005.

Dahrendorf, R. (2001) *The Arnold Goodman Lecture*. Tonbridge, Charities Aid Foundation.

Daly, G. and Davis, H. (2002) Partnerships for local governance: citizens, communities and accountability. **In:**

Glendinning, C., Powell, M. and Rummery, K. (eds) (2002) *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare*. Bristol, The Policy Press.

Darier, E (1996) Environmental Governmentality: The Case of Canada's Green Plan. *Environmental Politics*, **5** (4), pp.585-606.

Darier, E (1999) Foucault and the Environmental. **In:**

Darier, E. (ed) (1999) *Discourses of the Environment*. Oxford, Blackwell.



Darlow, A. and Newby, L. (1997). Partnerships: panacea or pitfall? Experience in Leicester Environment City. *Local Environment*, **2** (1), pp.73-81.

Davies, J.S. (2000) The hollowing-out of local democracy and the ‘fatal conceit’ of governing without government. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, **2** (3), pp.414-428.

Davies, J.S. (2007) The Limits of Partnership: An Exit-Action Strategy for Local Democratic Inclusion. *Political Studies*, **55** (4), pp.779-800.

Deakin, N. (2001) Putting narrow-mindedness out of countenance: the UK voluntary sector in the new millennium. **In:**

Anheier, H. K. and Kendall, J. (eds) (2001) *Third Sector Policy at the Crossroads: An international non-profit analysis*. London, Routledge.

Delaney, D. and Leitner, H. (1997) The political construction of scale. *Political Geography*, **16** (2), pp.93-97.

Denzin, N. (1970) *The research act: a theoretical introduction to social research*. Chicago, Aldine.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2006a) ‘Government confirms cash to benefit poorer communities’. News Release, WM2963/06, June 27.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2006b) News Release. **At:**

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/content/detail.asp?NavigatedFromSearch=TrueandNewsAreaID=228andReleaseID=210375andprint=true>

Last Accessed: 15:45 (28/04/08)

Department of Communities and Local Government (2007) *Development of the new LAA framework: Operational Guidance 2007*. London, HMSO.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008a) *The Yorkshire and Humber Plan: Regional Spatial Strategy to 2026*. London, HMSO, May 2008.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008b) *Local Area Agreements*. London, HMSO.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008c) *Neighbourhood Renewal Fund*. **At:**

<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=611>

Last Accessed: 13:05 (04/07/08)

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008d) *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities: Statutory Guidance*. London, HMSO, July 2008.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008e) *Principles of Representation: A framework for effective third sector participation in Local Strategic Partnerships*. London, HMSO, August 2008.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2009) *Departmental Floor Targets*. At: <http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=585>

Last Accessed: 16:55 (23/02/09)

Department of the Environment (1994) *Sustainable development: The UK Strategy*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2000) *Guidance on Preparing Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks*. London, DEFRA, February, 2000.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2002) *Working with the grain of nature: A biodiversity strategy for England*. London, DEFRA, October 2002.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2004) *Life-Support: Incorporating Biodiversity into Community Strategies*. London, DEFRA.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2005a) *Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2005b) *One Future – different paths*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2006a) *Securing the Regions' Futures: Strengthening delivery of sustainable development in the English regions*. London, HMSO, April 2006.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2006b) *Community Action 2020 community support programme: Programme Overview document for Inviting Expressions of Interest*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2007) *Conserving Biodiversity - the UK Approach*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (1998) *Modernising Local Government. Local democracy and community leadership*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (1999a) *A better quality of life - strategy for sustainable development for the UK*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (1999b) *Quality of life Counts*. London, HMSO.

Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (1999c) *Preparing community strategies: government guidance to local authorities*. London, DETR.

Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (2000) *Our Towns and Cities: The Future. Delivering an Urban Renaissance*. Cm 4911. London, DETR.

Department of Environment Transport and the Regions (2001) *Local Strategic Partnerships: government guidance*. London, DETR.

Dey, I. (1993) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*. London, Routledge.

Doak, J. and Parker, G. (2005) Networked Space? The Challenge of Meaningful Participation and the New Spatial Planning in England. *Planning, Practice and Research*, **20** (1), pp.23-40.

Downe, J. and Martin, S. (2006) Joined Up Policy in Practice? The Coherence and Impacts of the Local Government Modernisation Agenda. *Local Government Studies*, **32** (4), pp.465-488.

Doyle, T. and McEachern, D. (1998) *Environment and Politics*. London, Routledge.

Dryzek, J. (1997) *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Dryzek, J., Hunold, C., Schlosberg, D., Downed, D. and Hernes, H. (2002) Environmental Transformation of the State: the USA, Norway, Germany and the UK. *Political Studies*, **50** (4), pp. 659-682.

Eadson, W. (2008) Climate change mitigation in Local Area Agreements: an enforced lack of ambition? *People, Place and Policy Online*, **2** (3), pp.140-150.

East Riding Community Partners (2001) '*Your future... our commitment*': *Your Community Plan 2001-2006*. Woodmansey, East Riding Print and Design, East Riding Council.

East Riding Community Partners (2003) *'Your future... our commitment': Your Community Plan 2001-2006, 2003 Update*. Woodmansey, East Riding Print and Design, East Riding Council.

East Riding Council (2002) *2002 Riding Around: Results Summary*. **At:**

[http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/LSPMAIN/LSP/LSPPROJECTS/RIDINGAROUND/2001/RIDINGAROUND2002\\_FULLREPORT.DOC](http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/LSPMAIN/LSP/LSPPROJECTS/RIDINGAROUND/2001/RIDINGAROUND2002_FULLREPORT.DOC)

Last Accessed: 15:55 (15/05/08)

East Riding Council (2003) *2002 Riding Around: Executive Summary*. **At:**

<http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/LSPMAIN/LSP/LSPPROJECTS/RIDINGAROUND/2002/RIDING+AROUND+2002+SUMMARY.PDF>

Last Accessed: 15:58 (15/05/08)

East Riding Council (2004) *2003 Riding Around: Full Report*. **At:**

<http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/LSPMAIN/LSP/LSPPROJECTS/RIDINGAROUND/2003/FULL+REPORT.PDF>

Last Accessed: 16:35 (15/05/08)

East Riding Council (2005) *2004 Riding Around: Executive Summary*. **At:**

<http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/LSPMAIN/LSP/LSPPROJECTS/RIDINGAROUND/2004/REPORT+-+EXECUTIVE+SUMMARY.PDF>

Last Accessed: 14:45 (15/05/08)

East Riding Council (2006a) *2005 Riding Around: Full Report*. **At:**

<http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/pls/portal30/docs/FOLDER/LSPMAIN/LSP/LSPPROJECTS/RIDINGAROUND/2005/REPORT+--+FULL+RIDING+AROUND+2005.PDF>

Last Accessed: 16:51 (15/05/08)

East Riding Council (2006b) *'Our East Riding': The East Riding Community Plan 2006-2016*. East Riding Council.

East Riding Council (2008a) *'Our East Riding': The East Riding Community Plan 2006-2016: 2008 Update*. East Riding Council.

East Riding Council (2008b) *2007 Riding Around: Full Report*. **At:**

<http://www.lsp.eastriding.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/category.jsp?categoryID=21450>

Last Accessed: 16:00 (28/05/08)

East Riding Council (2008c) *East Riding of Yorkshire Biodiversity Action Plan Introduction and draft example Local Development Framework Biodiversity Policies*.

Goldman Associates, July 2008.

East Riding Council (2009) *East Riding Compact*. **At:**

<http://www.lsp.eastriding.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/category.jsp?categoryID=21444>

Last Accessed: 15:30 (30/05/09)

East Riding Council Website Portal (2005) *LSP FAQ*. **At:**

[http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/servlet/page?\\_pageid=221and\\_dad=portal30and\\_schema=PORTAL30and\\_type=siteand\\_fsiteid=73and\\_fid=3612and\\_fnavbarid=1and\\_fnavbarsiteid=73and\\_fedit=0and\\_fmode=2and\\_fdisplaymode=1and\\_fcalledfrom=1and\\_fdisplayurl=](http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/servlet/page?_pageid=221and_dad=portal30and_schema=PORTAL30and_type=siteand_fsiteid=73and_fid=3612and_fnavbarid=1and_fnavbarsiteid=73and_fedit=0and_fmode=2and_fdisplaymode=1and_fcalledfrom=1and_fdisplayurl=)

Last Accessed: 15:50 (15/05/08)

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership (2001) *Meeting minutes, 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2001*.

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership (2002) *Meeting minutes, 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2002*.

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership (2006) *East Riding Compact: Better Together*.

East Riding Council.

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership (2007) *Meeting minutes, 28<sup>th</sup> February, 2007*.

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership Website (2006a) *Members*. **At:**

<http://lsp.eastriding.gov.uk/>

Last Accessed: 15:45 (24/06/06)

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership Website (2006b) *Structure*. **At:**

[http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/servlet/page?\\_pageid=321,323,339,509and\\_dad=portal30and\\_schema=PORTAL30and796\\_LSPMEETINGS\\_92.p\\_subid=8715and796\\_LSPMEETINGS\\_92.p\\_sub\\_siteid=113and796\\_LSPMEETINGS\\_92.p\\_edit=0](http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/servlet/page?_pageid=321,323,339,509and_dad=portal30and_schema=PORTAL30and796_LSPMEETINGS_92.p_subid=8715and796_LSPMEETINGS_92.p_sub_siteid=113and796_LSPMEETINGS_92.p_edit=0)

Last Accessed: 15:40 (24/06/08)



East Riding Local Strategic Partnership Website (2006c) *About*. **At:**

[http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/servlet/page?\\_pageid=321,323,335,445and\\_dad=portal30and\\_schema=PORTAL30and796\\_LSPMEETINGS\\_92.p\\_subid=8715and796\\_LSPMEETINGS\\_92.p\\_sub\\_siteid=113and796\\_LSPMEETINGS\\_92.p\\_edit=0](http://erycdata.eastriding.gov.uk/servlet/page?_pageid=321,323,335,445and_dad=portal30and_schema=PORTAL30and796_LSPMEETINGS_92.p_subid=8715and796_LSPMEETINGS_92.p_sub_siteid=113and796_LSPMEETINGS_92.p_edit=0)

Last Accessed: 10:45 (19/05/08)

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership Website (2007a) *LSP Structure Diagram*. **At:**

<http://www.lsp.eastriding.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/category.jsp?categoryID=21432>

Last Accessed: 15:45 (24/06/08)

East Riding Local Strategic Partnership Website (2007b) *Charts 7 Aims Objectives of SCAG.pdf*. **At:**

<http://www.lsp.eastriding.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/category.jsp?categoryID=21442>

Last Accessed: 15:45 (24/06/08)

East Riding Voluntary Action Services (2006) *Our Services*. **At:**

[http://www.ervas.org.uk/about\\_us.shtml](http://www.ervas.org.uk/about_us.shtml)

Last Accessed: 11:22 (17/06/06)

Eden, S. (2000) Environmental Issues: Sustainable Progress? *Progress in Human Geography*, **24** (1), pp.111-118

Edwards, M. (2000) *NGO Rights and Responsibilities: A New Deal for Global Governance*. London, Foreign Policy Centre.

Edwards, M. (2005) '*Civil Society*', *the encyclopaedia of informal education*. **At:**

[http://www.infed.org/association/civil\\_society.htm#public\\_sphere](http://www.infed.org/association/civil_society.htm#public_sphere)

Last Accessed: 11:57 (19/05/09)

Edwards, M. and Hulme, D. (1996) Too Close For Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations. *World Development*, **24** (6), pp.961-973.

Ehrlich, P. (1968) *The Population Bomb*. New York, Ballantine.

Elkington, J. (1997) *Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. Oxford, Capstone.

Elkington, J. (1998) Partnerships from Cannibals with Forks: the Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business. *Environmental Quality Management*, **8** (1), pp.37-51.

Ellis, C. (2002) The New Urbanism: Critiques and Rebuttals. *Journal of Urban Design*, **7** (3), pp.261-291.

Elliot, L (1998) *The Global Politics of the Environment*. London, MacMillan.

England, K. (1994) Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality, and Feminist Research. *The Professional Geographer*, **46** (1), pp.80-89.

English RDA Website (2006) *Sustainable Development*. **At:**

<http://www.englishrdas.com/sustainabledevelopment.aspx>

Last Accessed: 12:23 (21/11/06)

Entwistle, T., Bristow, G., Hines, F., Donaldson S. and Martin, S. (2007) The Dysfunctions of Markets, Hierarchies and Networks in the Meta-governance of Partnership. *Urban Studies*, **44**, (1), pp.63-79.

Environment Resources and Information Centre (2001) *Sustainable development and the modernising local government agenda: mainstream or marginal?* University of Westminster. **At:**

<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/eric/files/gfg%20final%20report%206.95.pdf>

Last Accessed: 14:20 (28/02/06)

Etzioni, A. (1995) *The Spirit of Community: Rights, Responsibilities and the Communitarian Agenda*. London, Fontana.

Etzioni-Halevy, E. (1993) *The Elite Connection: Problems and Potential of Western Democracy*. Cambridge, MA, Polity Press.

Evans, B., Joas, M., Sundback, S. and Theobald, K. (2006) Governing Local Sustainability. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, **49** (6), pp.849-868.

Evans, J. (2004) What is local about local environmental governance? Observations from the local biodiversity action planning process. *Area*, **36** (3), pp.270-279.

Evans, J. (2007) The Spatial Politics of Conservation Planning. **In:**

Krueger, R. and Gibbs, D. (eds) (2007) *The Sustainable Development Paradox*. London, Guildford Press.

Evans, J. and Jones, P. (2008) Rethinking sustainable urban regeneration: ambiguity, creativity, and the shared territory. *Environment and Planning A*, **40** (6), pp.1416-1434.

Finch, J. (1993) It's great to have someone to talk to: ethics and the politics of interviewing women. **In:**

Hammersley, M. (ed) (1993) *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*. London, Sage.

Fisher, J. (2002) The impacts of NGOs on governments: the role of NGO autonomy. **In:**

Osborne, S.P. (ed) (2002) *Public Management: Expanding the scope of public management*. London, Taylor and Francis.

Fisher, J. and Sarkar, R. (2006) *The LSP Guide 2006*. London, Urban Forum and the Community Development Foundation.

Fisher, W.F. (1997) DOING GOOD? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, **26** (1), pp.439-464.

Flick, U. (2007) *Managing Quality in Qualitative Research*. London, Sage.

Foucault, M. ([1978] 1991) 'Governmentality'. **In:**

Burchell, G., Gordon, C., and Miller, P. (eds) (1991) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. London, Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Foucault, M. ([1980] 2007) Meshes of Power. **In:**

Crampton, J.W. and Elden, S. (eds) (2007) *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Foucault, M. ([1980] 2007) Questions of Geography. **In:**

Crampton, J.W. and Elden, S. (eds) (2007) *Space, Knowledge and Power: Foucault and Geography*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Freeman, C., Littlewood, S. and Whitney, D. (2001) Local Government and Emerging Models of Participation in the Local Agenda 21 Process. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, **39** (1), pp.65-78.

Friedman, R. (1992) The Culture of Mediation: Private Understandings in the Context of Public Conflict. **In:**

Kolb, D. M. and Bartunek, J. M. (eds) (1992) *Hidden Conflict in Organisations: Uncovering Behind-the-Scenes Disputes*. London, Sage.

Fyfe, N. (2005) Making space for “neo-communitarianism”? The third sector, state and civil society in the UK. *Antipode*, **37** (3), pp.536-557.

Fyfe, N. and Milligan, C. (2003a) Space, citizenship, and voluntarism: critical reflections on the voluntary welfare sector in Glasgow. *Environment and Planning A*, **35** (11), pp.2069-2086.

Fyfe, N. and Milligan, C. (2003b) Out of the Shadows: exploring contemporary geographies of voluntarism. *Progress in Human Geography*, **27** (4), pp.397-413.

Garner, R. (1996) *Environmental Quality of Life Counts*. HMSO, London. **At:**

<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/progress/indicators/qolc99.htm>

Last Accessed: 09:37 (06/03/06)

Gaventa, J. (2004) *Representation, Community Leadership and Participation: Citizen Involvement in Neighbourhood Renewal and Local Governance*. ODPM, July 2004.

Geddes, M. and Newman, I. (1999) Evolution and conflict in local economic development. *Local Economy*, **14** (1) pp.12-25.

Geddes M. (2006) Partnership and the Limits to Local Governance in England: Institutional Analysis and Neoliberalism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **30** (1), pp.76-97.

Gibbs, D. (2000) Ecological modernisation, regional development and regional development agencies. *Geoforum*, **31** (1), pp.9-19.

Gibbs, D. (2002) *Local Economic Development and the Environment*. London, Routledge.

Gibbs, D. and Jonas, A.E.G. (2000) Governance and regulation in local environment policy: the utility of a regime approach. *Geoforum*, **31** (3), pp.299-313.

Gibbs, D. and Jonas, A.E.G. (2001) Rescaling and regional governance: the English Regional Development Agencies and the environment. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, **19** (2), pp.269-280.

Gibbs, D., Longhurst, J. and Braithwaite, C. (1996) 'Moving towards Sustainable Development? Integrating Economic Development and the Environment in Local Authorities'. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, **39** (3), pp.317-332.

Gibbs, D., Longhurst, J. and Braithwaite, C. (1998) 'Struggling with sustainability': weak and strong interpretations of sustainable development within local authority policy. *Environment and Planning A*, **30** (8), pp.1351-1365.

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2008) Diverse economies: performative practices for 'other worlds'. *Progress in Human Geography*, **32** (5), pp.613-632.

Giddens, A. (1984) *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1990) *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1998) *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Giddings, B., Hopwood, B. and O'Brien, G. (2002) Environment, economy and society: fitting them together into sustainable development. *Sustainable Development*, **10** (4), pp.187-196.

Glassman, J. (2002) From Seattle (and Ubon) to Bangkok: the scales of resistance to corporate globalisation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, **20** (19), pp.513-533.

Gonzalez, S. (2006) *The Northern Way: A Celebration or Victim of the New City-Regional Governmental Policy?* ESRC/DCLG Research Programme, Working Paper 28. **At:**

<http://gislearn.org/people/s.gonzalez/workingpaper28.pdf>

Last Accessed: 12:37 (25/03/08)

Goodwin Development Trust (2006) *Website*. **At:**

<http://www.goodwin-centre.org/Default.asp?SeDept=GoodwinandPage=index>

Last accessed 12:13 (17/06/06)

Goodwin, M., Jones, M. and Jones, R. (2005) Devolution, constitutional change and economic development: understanding the shifting economic and political geographies of the British State. *Regional Studies*, **39** (4), pp.421-436.

Goodwin, P. (1998) 'Hired hands' or 'local voice': understandings and experience of local participation in conservation. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **23** (4), pp.481-499.

Goss, S. (2001) *Making Local Governance Work: Networks, Relationships and the Management of Change*. Basingstoke, Palgrave.

Gray, T.S. (1995) Introduction. **In:**

Gray, T.S. (ed) (1995) *UK Environmental Policy in the 1990s*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Haas, P., Levy, M. and Parson, T. (1992) Appraising the Earth Summit: How should we judge UNCED's success? *Environment*, **34** (8), pp.6-11 and 26-33.



- Habermas, J. (1979) *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. London, Heinemann.
- Habermas, J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action. Vol.1*. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Haggett, P. (1972) *Geography: A modern synthesis*. New York, Harper and Row.
- Haggett, P., Chorley, R.G. and Stoddart, D.R. (1965) Scale standards in geographical research: a new measure of areal magnitude. *Nature*, **205**, pp.844-847.
- Hajer, M. (1995) *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernisation and the Policy Process*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Hamnett, C. (2003) Editorial: Contemporary human geography: fiddling while Rome burns? *Geoforum*, **34** (1), pp.1-3.
- Harrison, J. (2008) Stating the Production of Scales: Centrally Orchestrated Regionalism, Regionally Orchestrated Centralism. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **32** (4), pp.922-941.
- Hart, T., Haughton, G. and Peck, J. (1996) Accountability and the Non-elected Local State: Calling Training and Enterprise Councils to Local Account. *Regional Studies*, **30** (4), pp.429-441.
- Harvey, D. (1974) What kind of geography for what kind of public policy? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **63** (1), pp.18-24.

Harvey, D. (1982) *The Limits to Capital*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (1985a) *The Urbanization of Capital*. Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press.

Harvey, D. (1985b) *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Harvey, D. (1989) From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: formation of urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografisker Annaler*, **71B** (1), pp.3-17.

Harvey, D. (1996) *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Blackwell, Oxford.

Harvey, W.S. (2009) *Methodological approaches for junior researchers interviewing elites: a multidisciplinary perspective*. Economic Geography Research Group working paper (01.09). **At:**

[http://www.egr.org.uk/pdfs/egr\\_wp0109.pdf](http://www.egr.org.uk/pdfs/egr_wp0109.pdf)

Last Accessed: 16:17 (1/05/09)

Hastings, A. (2003) Strategic, multilevel neighbourhood regeneration: an outward-looking approach at last? **In:**

Imrie, R. and Raco, M. (eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Haughton, G. and Allmendinger, P. (2008) The Soft Spaces of Local Economic Development. *Local Economy*, **23** (2), pp.138-148.

Haughton, G. and Counsell, D. (2004) Regions and sustainable development: regional planning matters. *The Geographical Journal*, **170** (2), pp.135-145.

Haughton, G., Counsell, D. and Vigar, G. (2006) *Sustainable development and sustainable regions in post-devolution UK and Ireland*. At:

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/geog/research/pdf/GH07d8.pdf>

Last Accessed: 15:05 (04/05/07)

Healey, P. (1997) *Collaborative Planning: Shaping Places in Fragmented Societies*. London, Macmillan.

Healey, P. (1999) Institutional Analysis, Communicative Planning, and Shaping Places. *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, **19** (2), pp.111 -121.

Healey, P. (2006) Transforming Governance: Challenges of Institutional Adaptation and a New Politics of Space. *European Planning Studies*, **14** (3), pp.299-320.

Hempel, L.C. (1999) Conceptual and analytical challenges in building sustainable communities. **In:**

Mazmanian, D.A. and Kraft, M.E. (eds) (1999) *Towards sustainable communities: transition and transformations in environmental policy*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press.

Herod, A. (1991) The production of scale in United States labour relations. *Area*, **23** (1), pp.82-88.

Hirst, P. (2000) Democracy and governance. **In:**

Pierre, J. (ed) (2000) *Debating Governance: Authority, Steering, and Democracy*.  
Oxford, Oxford University Press.

HM Treasury (2002) *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery: A Cross Cutting Review*. London, HMSO.

HM Treasury (2004) *Voluntary and Community Sector Review 2004: Working Together, Better Together*. London, HMSO, November 2004.

HM Treasury (2005) *Exploring the role of the third sector in public service delivery and reform: A discussion document*. London, HMSO, February 2005.

HM Treasury (2006) *The future role of the third sector in social and economic regeneration: interim report*. London, HMSO, December 2006.

HM Treasury (2007) *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration*.  
London, HMSO.

Hollway, W. and Jefferson, T. (2000) *Doing Qualitative Research Differently: free association, narrative and the interview method*. London, Sage.

Home Office (1998) *Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England*. London, HMSO.

Hudson, R. (2003) Fuzzy Concepts and Sloppy Thinking: Reflections on Recent Developments in Critical Regional Studies. *Regional Studies*, **37** (6), pp.741-746.

Hull Biodiversity Partnership (2002). *Hull Biodiversity Action Plan*. Kingston-upon-Hull City Council.

Hull Biodiversity Partnership (2008) *Hull Biodiversity Action Plan*. **At:**

<http://www.hull.ac.uk/HBP/ActionPlan/index.htm>

Last Accessed: 13:01 (03/07/08)

Hull Community Network (2006a) *Network News*. Issue 7, Christmas and New Year, 2005/6.

Hull Community Network (2006b) *Network News*. Issue 8, June 2006.

Hull Community Network (2007) *Engaging Communities, Influencing and Delivering Change: The Work of Hull Community Network*. November, 2007. **At:**

[http://www.hullcommunitynetwork.org/userimages/Information\\_Pack\\_74.pdf](http://www.hullcommunitynetwork.org/userimages/Information_Pack_74.pdf)

Last Accessed: 15:05 (04/07/08)

Hull Community Network (2008) *About Us*. **At:**

<http://www.hullcommunitynetwork.org/about.asp>

Last Accessed: 13:05 (04/07/08)

Hull Council for Voluntary Services (2006a) *Homepage*. **At:**

<http://www.hullcvs.org.uk/>

Last Accessed: 11:29 (17/06/06)

Hull Council for Voluntary Services (2006b) *About Us*. **At:**

<http://www.hullcvs.org.uk/about-us.asp>

Last Accessed: 11:31 (17/06/06)

Husserl, E. ([1936] 1970) *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Evanston, Illinois, Northwestern University Press.

Hutton, W. (1992) 'How Whitehall cut the dole queues.' *Guardian*, 11<sup>th</sup> November, p.13.

Huxham, C. and Vangen, S. (2000) What makes partnerships work? **In:**

Osborne, S. P. (ed) (2000) *Public-Private partnerships: theory and practice in international perspective*. London, Routledge.

Improvement and Development Agency (2006a) *Pooling and aligning funding streams in local area agreements*. **At:**

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/5720688>

Last Accessed: 10:29 (07/04/09)

Improvement and Development Agency (2006b) *Pooling and aligning funding streams in local area agreements: Key points from an IDeA/Shared Intelligence action learning workshop*. **At:**

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/5720683>

Last Accessed: 10:30 (07/04/09)

Improvement and Development Agency (2006c) *Partnerships and Delivery*. **At:**

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=7896244>

Last Accessed: 10:29 (07/04/09)

Imrie, R. and Raco, M. (2000) Governmentality and rights and responsibilities in urban policy. *Environment and Planning A*, **32** (12), pp.2187-2204.

Jackson, T. and Roberts, P. (1997) Greening the Fife economy: Ecological modernization as a pathway for local Economic development. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, **40** (5), pp.615-629.

Jacobs, M. (1999) Sustainable development as a contested concept. **In:**

Dobson, A. (ed) (1999) *Fairness and Futurity: Essays on Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

James, E. (1990) Economic Theories of the Non-Profit Sector: A Comparative Perspective. **In:**

Anheier, H.K. and Seibel, W. (eds) (1990) *The Third Sector Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations*. New York, Walter de Gruyter.

- Jessop, B. (1991) The Welfare State in the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism. **In:** Jessop, B., Kastendiek, H., Nielsen, K. and Petersen, I.K. (eds) (1991) *The Politics of Flexibility*. Aldershot, Edward Elgar.
- Jessop, B. (1994) Post Fordism and the State. **In:** Amin, A. (ed) (1994) *Post Fordism: A Reader*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Jessop, B. (1995) The Regulation Approach, Governance, and Post-Fordism: Alternative Perspectives on Economic and Political Change? *Economy and Society*, **24** (3), pp.307-333.
- Jessop, B. (1998) The rise of governance and the risks of failure: the case of economic development. *International Social Science Journal*, **50** (155), pp.29-46.
- Jessop, B. (1999) The Dynamics of Partnership and Governance Failure. **In:** Stoker, G. (ed) (2000) *The New Politics of Local Governance in Britain*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.
- Jessop, B. (2000) The crisis of the national spatio-temporal fix and the ecological dominance of globalizing. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **24** (2), pp.323-360.
- Jessop, B. (2002a) Liberalism, neoliberalism and urban governance: a state-theoretical perspective. *Antipode*, **34** (3), pp.452-472.
- Jessop, B. (2002b) *The Future of the Capitalist State*. Oxford, Blackwell.



Jessop, B. (2002c) Liberalism, neoliberalism and urban governance: a state-theoretical perspective. **In:**

Brenner, N. and Theodore, N. (2002) (eds), *Spaces of neoliberalism: urban restructuring in North America and Western Europe*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Jessop, B. (2003) Governance and meta-governance: on reflexivity, requisite variety and requisite irony. **At:**

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/papers/jessop-governance-and-metagovernance.pdf>

Last Accessed: 12:42 (25/02/08)

Jessop, B. (2004) Hollowing out the 'nation-state' and multilevel governance. **At:**

[http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/192/01/F-2004e\\_Kennett2004.pdf](http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/192/01/F-2004e_Kennett2004.pdf)

Last Accessed: 10:02 (30/10/06)

Jochum, V., Pratten, B. and Wilding, K. (2005) *Civil renewal and active citizenship: a guide to the debate*. London, NCVO, June 2005.

Jonas, A.E.G. (1994) Editorial: The scale politics of spatiality. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, **12** (3), pp.257-264.

Jonas, A.E.G. (2006) Pro scale: further reflections on the 'scale debate' in human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **31** (3), pp.399-406.

Jonas, A.E.G. and Ward, K. (2007) Introduction to a Debate on City-Regions: New Geographies of Governance, Democracy and Social Reproduction. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **31** (1), pp.169-178.

Jonas, A.E.G. and While, A. (2005) Governance. **In:**

Atkinson, D., Jackson, P., Sibley, D. and Washbourne, N. (eds) (2005) *Cultural Geography*. London, I.B. Tauris.

Jonas, A.E.G. and While, A. (2007) Greening the Entrepreneurial City? Looking for Spaces of Sustainability in the Competitive City. **In:**

Krueger, R. and Gibbs, D. (eds) (2007) *The Sustainable Development Paradox*. London, Guildford Press.

Jonas, A.E.G., While, A. and Gibbs, D. (2004) State modernisation and local strategic-selectivity *after* Local Agenda 21: evidence from three northern English localities. *Policy and Politics*, **32** (2), pp.151-68.

Jonas, A.E.G. and Pincetl, S. (2006) Rescaling regions in the state: the new regionalism in California. *Political Geography*, **25** (5), pp.482-505.

Jones, M. (2001) The rise of the regional state in economic governance: 'partnerships for prosperity' or new scales of state power? *Environment and Planning A*, **33** (7), pp. 1185-1211.

Jones, III, J.P., Woodward, K. and Marston, S. (2007) Situating Flatness. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **32** (2), pp.264-276.

Jones, M. and MacLeod, G. (1999) Towards a regional renaissance? Reconfiguring and rescaling England's economic governance. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **24** (3), pp.295-313.

Jones, M. and MacLeod, G. (2004). Regional spaces, spaces of regionalism: territory, insurgent politics and the English question. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **29** (4), pp.433-452.

Jordan, A. (2008) The governance of sustainable development: taking stock and looking forwards. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, **26** (1), pp.17-33.

Jordan, A. and O'Riordan, T. (1995) The Precautionary Principle in UK Environmental Law and Policy. **In:**

Gray, T.S. (ed) (1995) *UK Environmental Policy in the 1990's*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Jordan, A. and Voisey, H. (1998) Institutions for Global Environmental Change: 'The Rio Process: the politics and substantive outcomes of Earth Summit II'. *Global Environmental Change*, **8** (1), pp.93-97.

Katz, P. (1994) *The New Urbanism: Toward an Architecture of Community*. New York, McGraw-Hill.

Kawulich, B. (2005) Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, **6** (2), Art. 43, May 2005.

Keating, M. (1997) The invention of regions: political restructuring and territorial government in Western Europe. *Environment and Planning C: Government Policy*, **15** (4), pp.383-398.

Kendall, J. and Knapp, M. (1995) A loose and baggy monster: boundaries, definitions and typologies. **In:**

Davis Smith, J., Rochester, C. and Hedley, R. (eds) (1995) *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector*. London, Routledge.

Kendall, J. (2000) The mainstreaming of the third sector into public policy in England in the late 1990s: whys and wherefores. *Policy and Politics*, **28** (4), pp.541-562.

Kendall, J. (2003) *The Voluntary Sector*. London, Routledge.

Kitchin, R. and Tate, N.J. (2000) *Conducting Research into Human Geography: theory, methodology and practice*. Harlow, Prentice Hall.

Kooiman, J. (1999) Social-political governance: overview, reflections and design. *Public Management Review*, **1** (1), pp.67-92.

Kooiman, J. (2000) 'Societal governance: levels, models and orders of social-political interaction'. **In:**

Pierre, J. (ed) (2000) *Debating Governance: Authority, Steering and Democracy*. London, Sage.

Kooiman, J. (2003) *Governing as governance*. London, Sage.

Kramer, R.M. (2002) Voluntary agencies and the contract culture: “dream or nightmare?” **In:**

Osborne, S.P. (ed) (2002) *Public Management: Expanding the scope of public management*. London, Taylor and Francis.

Krueger, R. and Agyeman, J. (2005) Sustainability schizophrenia or “actually existing sustainabilities?” toward a broader understanding of the politics and promise of local sustainability in the US. *Geoforum*, **36** (4), pp.410-417.

Krueger, R. and Savage, L. (2007) City-Regions and Social Reproduction: A ‘Place’ for Sustainable Development. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **31** (1), pp.215-223.

Kythreotis, A.P. (2008) ‘Policy coherence and governance?’ Complexities and issues in rescaling the EU Sustainable Development Strategy into UK local governance arenas: the voluntary sector experience. **In:**

Kovalcik, J., Muránsky, M. and Rochovská, A. (eds) (2008) *‘New’ Europe and Challenges of Sustainable Development: Papers from the 2nd Forum of Social Sciences PhD students*. Bratislava, June 2008, pp.99-116.

Labour Party (1997a) *The 1997 General Election Manifesto*. **At:**

<http://www.labour-party.org.uk/manifestos/1997/1997-labour-manifesto.shtml>

Last Accessed: 11:50 (24/02/2006)

Labour Party (1997b) *Building the future together: Labour’s policies for partnership between government and the voluntary sector*. London, The Labour Party.

Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. (1985) *Hegemony and socialist strategy*. London, Verso.

Lafferty, W.M. (1996) The Politics of Sustainable Development: Global Norms for National Implementation. *Environmental Politics*, **5** (2), pp.185-208.

Lagendijk, A. (2003) Towards Conceptual Quality in Regional Studies: The Need for Subtle Critique - A Response to Markusen, *Regional Studies*, **37** (6), pp.719-727.

Lagendijk, A. and Oinas, P. (2005) Proximity, External Relations, and Local Economic Development. **In:**

Lagendijk, A. and Oinas, P. (eds) (2005) *Proximity, Distance and Diversity: issues on economic interaction and local development*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Langhelle, O. (2000) Sustainable Development and Social Justice: Expanding the Rawlsian Framework of Global Justice. *Environmental Values*, **9** (3), pp.295-323.

Leeds Initiative (2004) *Vision for Leeds 2004-2020*.

Leeds Initiative (2008) *Newsletter*. Spring/Summer 2008.

Legg, S. (2009) Of scales, networks and assemblages: the League of Nations apparatus and the scalar sovereignty of the Government of India. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **34** (2), pp.234-253.

Leitner, H. and Miller, B. (2007) Commentary: Scale and the limitations of ontological debate: a commentary on Marston, Jones and Woodward. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **32** (1), pp.116-125.

Lele, S. (1991) Sustainable Development: A critical Review. *World Development*, **9** (6), pp.607-21.

Lever, J. (2005) Governmentalisation and local strategic partnerships: whose priorities? *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, **23** (6), pp.907-922.

Lewis, G. (2001) *Mapping the contribution of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Yorkshire and the Humber Region*. Yorkshire and Humber Regional Forum, May 2001.

Lewis, J. (2005) New Labour's Approach to the Voluntary Sector: Independence and the Meaning of Partnership. *Social Policy and Society*, **4** (2), pp.121-131.

Liddle, J. and Townsend, A.T. (2003) Reflections on the development of local strategic partnerships: key emerging issues. *Local Governance*, **29** (1), pp.37-54.

Liddle J. (2007) Challenges to scrutiny and accountability in the UK state: new forms of governance and the dilemmas of legitimacy. *Public Administration Quarterly*, **31** (4), pp.397-428.

Local Government Association (2000) *Local Compact Guidelines: Getting local relationships right together*. London, NCVO.

Local Government Chronicle Website (1999) 'Pioneering city leads the way in changing local government.' **At:**

<http://www.lgcplus.com/news/pioneering-city-leads-the-way-in-changing-local-government/1433017.article>

Last accessed 16:40 (14/18/2009).

Local Government Chronicle Website (2002) 'Hull referred for government intervention, following findings of poor corporate governance.' **At:**

<http://www.lgcplus.com/news/hull-referred-for-government-intervention-following-findings-of-poor-corporate-governance/1292029.article>

Last accessed 10:19 (14/10/2009).

Long, F. and Arnold, M. (1995). *The Power of Environmental Partnerships. Management Institute for Environment and Business*. Orlando, Harcourt, Brace and Company.

Lovering, J. (1989) The restructuring debate. **In:**

Peet, R. and Thrift, N. (eds) (1989) *New models in geography*. London, Unwin Hyman.

Lovering, J. (1999) Theory Led by Policy: The Inadequacies of the 'New Regionalism' (Illustrated from the Case of Wales). *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **23** (2), pp.379-395.

Lowndes, V. (2005) Something old, something new, something borrowed... *Policy Studies*, **26** (3/4), pp.291-309.



Lowndes, V., Nanton, P., McCabe, A. and Skelcher, C. (1997) Networks, Partnerships and Urban Regeneration. *Local Economy*, **11** (4), pp.333-342.

Lowndes, V., Stoker, G., Pratchett, L., Wilson, D., Leach, S. and Wingfield, M. (1998) *Enhancing public participation in local government*. London, DETR.

Lowndes, V. and Sullivan, H. (2004) Like a Horse and Carriage or a Fish on a Bicycle: How Well do Local Partnerships and Public Participation go Together? *Local Government Studies*, **30** (1), pp.51-73.

Lowndes, V. and Wilson, D. (2003) Balancing revisability and robustness? A new institutionalist perspective on local government modernisation. *Public Administration*, **81** (2), pp.275-298.

Lucas, K., Ross, A. and Fuller, S. (2003) *What's in a Name? Local Agenda 21, Community Planning and Neighbourhood Renewal*. York, York Publishing Services.

Lucas, K. and Fuller, S. (2005) Putting the 'E' into LSPs: Representing the Environment within Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in the UK. *Local Environment*, **10** (5), pp.461-475.

Luke, T.W. (1999) Environmentalism as Green Governmentality. **In:**

Darier, E. (ed) (1999) *Discourses of the Environment*. Malden, Mass, Blackwell Publishers.

MacLeod, G. (2001) New Regionalism Reconsidered: Globalization and the Remaking of Political Economic Space. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **25** (4) pp. 804-829.

MacLeod, G. and Jones, M. (2007) Territorial, Scalar, Networked, Connected: In What Sense a 'Regional World'? *Regional Studies*, **41** (9), pp.1177-1191.

Maguire, K. and Truscott, F. (2006) *Active governance: The value added by community involvement in governance through local strategic partnerships*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Maloney W., Smith, G. and Stoker, G. (2000) Social Capital and Urban Governance: Adding a More Contextualized 'Top-down' Perspective. *Political Studies*, **48** (4), pp. 802-820.

Mansfield, B. (2005) Beyond Rescaling: Reintegrating the 'National' as a Dimension of Scalar Relations. *Progress in Human Geography*, **29** (4), pp.458-473.

Markusen, A. (1999) Fuzzy concepts, scanty evidence, policy distance: the case for rigour and policy relevance in critical regional studies. *Regional Studies*, **33** (9), pp. 869- 884.

Markusen, A. (2001) The activist intellectual. *Antipode*, **33** (1), pp.39-48.

Markusen, A. (2003) On conceptualisation, evidence and impact: a response to Hudson, Langendijk and Peck. *Regional Studies*, **37** (6/7), pp.747-751.

Martin, R. and Townroe, P. (1992) Changing trends and pressures in regional development. **In:**

Townroe, P. and Martin, R. (eds) (1992) *Regional Development in the 1990s: The British Isles in Transition*. London, Jessica Kingsley/Regional Studies Association.

Marston, S. (2000) The Social Construction of Scale. *Progress in Human Geography* (24) 2, pp.219-242.

Marston, S. (2004) A long way home: domesticating the social production of scale. **In:** Sheppard, E. And McMaster, R.B. (eds) (2004) *Scale and geographic enquiry*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Marston, S., Jones III, J.P. and Woodward, K. (2005) Human Geography without Scale. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 30 (4), pp.416-432.

Martin, R. (2001) Geography and public policy: the case of the missing agenda. *Progress in Human Geography*, 25 (2), pp.189-210.

Massey, D. (1984) *Spatial divisions of labour*. London, Macmillan.

Massey, D. (1985) New Directions in Space. **In:**

Gregory, D. and Urry, J. (eds) (1985) *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Massey, D. (1991) The political place of localities studies. *Environment and Planning A*, **23** (2), pp.267-281.

Massey, D. (1993) Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place. **In:** Bird, J., Curtis, B., Putnam, T., Robertson, G. and Tickner, L. (eds) (1993) *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*. London, Routledge.

Massey, D. (1994) *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Massey, D. (2004) Geographies of Responsibility. *Geografiska Annaler*, **86** (1), pp.5-18.

Massey, D. (2005) *For Space*. London, Sage.

McDowell, L. (1992a) Valid Games? A Response to Erica Schoenberger. *Professional Geographer*, **44** (2), pp.212-215.

McDowell, L. (1992b) Doing gender: feminism, feminists and research methods in human geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **17** (4), pp.399-416.

McGuirk, P. (2007) The Political Construction of the City-Region: Notes from Sydney. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **31** (1), pp.179-187.

Meadowcroft, J. (2004) Participation and sustainable development: modes of citizen, community and organisational involvement. **In:**

Lafferty, W. (ed) (2004) *Governance for Sustainable Development*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar.

Meadows, D.A., Meadows, D. L., Randers, J. and Behrens, W. W. (1972) *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*. New York, Universe.

Mehra, M. (1997) *Towards Sustainable Development for Local Authorities: Approaches, Experiences and Sources*. Copenhagen, European Environment Agency.

Miller, B. (1994) Political empowerment, local-central state relations, and geographically shifting political opportunity structures: Strategies of the Cambridge, Massachusetts, Peace Movement. *Political Geography*, **13** (5), pp.393-406.

Mol, A. (1992) Sociology, environment, and modernity: ecological modernization as a theory of social change. *Society and Natural Resources* **5** (4), pp.323-344.

Moore, A. (2008) Rethinking scale as a geographic category: from analysis to practice. *Progress in Human Geography*, **32** (2), pp.203-225.

Morgan, P. (2007) The Polycentric State: New Spaces of Empowerment and Engagement? *Regional Studies*, **41** (9), pp.1237-1251.

Morison, J. (2000) The Government-Voluntary Sector Compacts: Governance, Governmentality and Civil Society. *Journal of Law and Society*, **27** (1), pp. 98-132.

Morphet, J. (1998) Local Authorities. **In:**

Lowe, P. and Ward, S. (eds) (1998) *British Environmental Policy and Europe: Politics and policy in transition*. London, Routledge.

Mouffe, C. (2000) *The democratic paradox*. London, Verso.

Munton, R. (1997) Engaging sustainable development: some observations on progress in the UK. *Progress in Human Geography*, **21** (2), pp. 147-163.

Murdoch, J. and Marsden, T. (1995) The spatialization of politics: local and national actor-spaces in environmental conflict. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **20** (3), pp.368-380.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2003) *The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery: Encouraging Local Implementation of the Treasury Cross-Cutting Review*. London, NCVO, June 2003.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2006a) *Third Sector Network: Background Briefing - 'defining the third sector'*. **At:**

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/policy/values/index.asp?id=2761>

Last accessed 15:19 (08/05/2009).

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2006b) *The UK Voluntary Sector Almanac 2006: The State of the Sector*. **At:**

[\[vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/Research/AlmanacSummary2006.pdf\]\(http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/Research/AlmanacSummary2006.pdf\)](http://www.ncvo-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

Last accessed 12:04 (08/05/2009)

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2008) *The UK Civil Society Almanac 2008: Executive Summary*. **At:**

[\[vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/What\\\_we\\\_do/Research/Almanac/Civil%20Society%20Almanac%202008%20Executive%20Summary.pdf\]\(http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/uploadedFiles/NCVO/What\_we\_do/Research/Almanac/Civil%20Society%20Almanac%202008%20Executive%20Summary.pdf\)](http://www.ncvo-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

Last accessed 12:04 (11/05/2009)

Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (2001) *Community Empowerment Fund: Preliminary Guidance*. London, DTLR, July 2001.

Neumayer, E. (1999) *Weak Versus Strong Sustainability: Exploring the Limits of Two Opposing Paradigms*. Elgar, Cheltenham.

Newman, J. (2001) *Modernising Governance: New Labour, Policy and Society*. London, Sage.

Newman, J., Raine, J. and Skelcher, C. (2001) Transforming Local Government: Innovation and Modernisation. *Public Money and Management*, **21** (2), pp.61-68.

Newman, J., Barnes, M., Sullivan, H. and Knops, A. (2004) Public participation and collaborative governance. *Journal of Social Policy*, **33** (2), pp.203-223.

Newman, J. (2005) Participative governance and the remaking of the public sphere. **In:** Newman, J. (ed) (2005) *Remaking Governance: Peoples, politics and the public sphere*. Policy Press, Bristol.

North Bank Forum (2006) *About Us*. **At:**

<http://www.northbankforum.org.uk/link01.asp>

Last accessed 11:51 (17/06/06)

Oakley, A. (1981) Interviewing women: a contradiction in terms. **In:**

Roberts, H. (ed) (1981) *Doing feminist research*. London, Routledge.

O'Donoghue, T. and Punch, K. (2003) *Qualitative Educational Research in Action: Doing and Reflecting*. London, Routledge.

Office for National Statistics (2006a) *Kingston upon Hull; City of UA*. **At:**

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages/00fa.asp>

Last Accessed: 11:35 (10/07/2006)

Office for National Statistics (2006b) *East Riding of Yorkshire UA*. **At:**

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pyramids/pages/00fb.asp>

Last Accessed: 11:37 (10/07/2006)



Office for National Statistics (2006c) *Key Figures for Community Well-being/Social Environment - East Riding (local authority)*. **At:**

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadKeyFigures.do?a=3andb=276822andc=East+Ridingandd=13ande=2andg=390682andi=1x3x4andm=0andenc=1>

Last Accessed: 11:58 (10/07/2006)

Office for National Statistics (2006d) *Key Figures for Community Well-being/Social Environment - Kingston Upon Hull (local authority)*. **At:**

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadKeyFigures.do?a=3andb=276821andc=Hullandd=13ande=2andg=389985andi=1x3x4andm=0andenc=1>

Last Accessed: 11:59 (10/07/2006)

Office for National Statistics (2006e) *Indices of Deprivation - Local Authority Summaries - Kingston Upon Hull (local authority)*. **At:**

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3andb=276822andc=East+Ridingandd=13ande=10andg=390682andi=1x3x4andm=0andenc=1anddsFamilyId=724>

Last Accessed: 12:07 (10/07/2006)

Office for National Statistics (2006f) *Indices of Deprivation - Local Authority Summaries - East Riding (local authority)*. **At:**

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do?a=3andb=276822andc=East+Ridingandd=13ande=10andg=390682andi=1x3x4andm=0andenc=1anddsFamilyId=724>

Last Accessed: 12:09 (10/07/2006)

Office for National Statistics (2008) *Key Figures for 2001 Census: Census Area Statistics: Kingston-upon-Hull*. **At:**

<http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadKeyFigures.do?a=3andb=276821andc=hullandd=13ande=16andg=389985andi=1001x1003x1004andm=0andr=1ands=1215166338171andenc=1>

Last Accessed: 11:12 (04/07/08)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2003) *Sustainable Communities: Building for the future*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London, HMSO.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004a) *The English Indices of Deprivation 2004: Summary (revised)*. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London, HMSO.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004b) *Breaking the Cycle: Taking stock of progress and priorities for the future. Social Exclusion Unit Report - A summary*. London, HMSO, September 2004.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004c) *Local Area Agreements: a prospectus*. London, HMSO, August 2004.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005a) *Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future. A consultation paper*. London, HMSO.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005b) *Local Area Agreements Guidance*. London, HMSO, June 2005.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005c) *National Evaluation of Local Strategic Partnerships, Issues Paper: Voluntary and Community Sector engagement in Local Strategic Partnerships*. London, HMSO, December, 2005.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005d) *Safer and Stronger Communities Fund: Taking the agreements forward*. London, HMSO, August 2005.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005e) *Making connections: an evaluation of the Community Participation Programmes*. London, HMSO, March 2005.

Office of the Third Sector (2006a) *About us*. **At:**

[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third\\_sector/about\\_us.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/about_us.aspx)

Last Accessed: 15:23 (14/01/09)

Office of the Third Sector (2006b) *Partnership in Public Services: An action plan for third sector involvement*. London, HMSO, December 2006.

Olesen, V.L. and Whittaker, E.V. (1970) *Role-Making in Participant Observation: Processes in the Researcher-Actor Relationship*. **In:**

Denzin, N. (1970). *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*. London, Butterworths.

One Hull (2006a) *Community Strategy 2006-2011 launch video*. **At:**

[http://www.onehull.co.uk/stream.asp?/community\\_strategy\\_launch\\_2006/](http://www.onehull.co.uk/stream.asp?/community_strategy_launch_2006/)

Last Accessed: 10:34 (10/04/2008)

One Hull (2006b) *Living, Learning and Working: One Hull Community Strategy 2006-2011*.

One Hull (2006c) *City Partnership*. **At:**

<http://onehull.co.uk/oneHullFamily/cityPartnership.asp>

Last Accessed: 12:54 (10/07/2006)

One Hull (2006d) *Delivery Board*. **At:**

<http://www.onehull.co.uk/oneHullFamily/deliveryBoard.asp>

Last Accessed: 12:55 (10/07/2006)

One Hull (2007) *Delivery Board Minutes of (special) Meeting 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2007*.

One Hull (2008) *ONE HULL Governance Arrangements and Diagram (annex b)*. (word document sent by email on 23/05/08 at 16:32)

One Hull (2009) *One Hull Structure and Membership*. **At:**

<http://onehull.co.uk/oneHullStructure.asp#diagram>

Last Accessed: 16:55 (30/05/2009)

Oppenheim, A.N. (1992) *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*.

London, Pinter.

O’Riordan, T. (2000) *The Sustainability Debate*. **In:**

O’Riordan, T. (ed) (2000) *Environmental Science for Environmental Management*.

Harlow, Prentice Hall.

O’Riordan, T. (1996) Environmentalism on the move. **In:**

Douglas, I., Huggett, R. and Robinson, M. (eds) (1996) *Companion encyclopaedia of geography*. London, Routledge.

Osborn, D. and Bigg, T. (1998) *Earth Summit II: Outcomes and Analysis*. London, Earthscan.

Osborne, S.P. (1999) *Promoting local voluntary and community action: The role of Local Development Agencies*. York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, YPS.

Osborne, S.P. (2002) Reformulating Wolfenden? The roles and impact of local development agencies in supporting voluntary and community action in the UK. **In:**

Osborne, S.P. (ed) (2002) *Public Management: Expanding the scope of public management*. London, Taylor and Francis.

Osborne, S.P. and MacLaughlin, K. (2002) Trends and Issues in the Implementation of Local 'Voluntary Sector Compacts' in England. *Public Money and Management*, **22** (1), pp.55-64

Owen, S. (1994) Introduction. **In:**

Roseland, M. (ed) (1994) *From Conflict to Consensus: Shared Decision-making in British Columbia*. Burnaby, B.C., Simon Fraser University, School of Resource and Environmental Management.

Owen, S. (2000) ‘Engaging the public’: information and deliberation in environmental policy. *Environment and Planning A*, **32** (7), pp.1141-1148.

Painter, J. (2002) 'Governmentality and regional economic strategies.' **In:**

Hillier, J. and Rooksby, E. (eds) (2002) *Habitus as a sense of place*. Aldershot, Ashgate.

Painter, J. (2003) 'State and Governance.' **In:**

Sheppard, E. and Barnes, T. J. (eds) (2003) *A Companion to Economic Geography*.

London, Blackwell.

Painter, J. (2008) Cartographic anxiety and the search for regionality. *Environment and Planning A*, **40** (2), pp.342-361.

Pallemaerts, M. (2003) International Law and Sustainable Development: Any Progress in Johannesburg? *RECIEL*, **12** (1), pp.1-11.

Palmer, G. (1992) New ways to make international environmental law. *American Journal of International Law*, **86** (2), pp.259-83.

Parker, J. and Selman, P. (1999) Local government, local people and Local Agenda 21.

**In:**

Buckingham-Hatfield, S. and Percy, S. (eds) (1999) *Constructing Local Environmental Agendas: People, places and participation*. London, Routledge.

Parson, T., Haas, P. and Levy, M. (1992) A summary of the major documents signed at the earth summit and global forum. *Environment*, **34** (8), pp.12-15 and 34-36.

Pattberg, P. and Stripple, J. (2008) Beyond the public and private divide: Remapping transnational climate governance in the 21st century. *International Environmental Agreements: Politics, Law and Economics*, **8** (4), pp.367-388.

Pearce, D.W., Markandya, A. and Barbier, E.B. (1989) *Blueprint for a green Economy*. London, Earthscan.

Pearce, J. (2003) 'From the depths of Hull.' **At:**  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2003/nov/18/localgovernment>  
Last Accessed: 11:10 (14/10/09)

Peck, J. (1999) Editorial: Grey Geography? *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **24** (2), pp.131-135.

Peck, J. (2003) Fuzzy Old World: A Response to Markusen, *Regional Studies*, **37** (6) pp.729-740.

Peck, J. and Tickell, A. (1994) Searching for a new institutional fix: the after-Fordist crisis and the Global-Local disorder. **In:**  
Amin, A. (ed) (1994) *Post-Fordism: a Reader*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Percy, S. and Hands, V. (2002) Mainstreaming Sustainable Development into Local Politics. **In:**

Rydin, Y. and Thornley, A. (eds) (2002) *Planning in the UK*. London, Ashgate.

Perry, J.L. and Rainey, H.G. (1988) The Public-Private Distinction in Organization Theory: A Critique and Research Strategy. *The Academy of Management Review*, **13** (2), pp.182-201.

Pezzey, J. (1992) Sustainability: an interdisciplinary guide. *Environmental Values*, **1** (4), pp.321-362.

Pezzoli, K. (1997) Sustainable Development: A Transdisciplinary Overview of the Literature. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, **40** (5), pp.549-574.

Pierre, J. and Peters, B.G. (2000) *Governance, Politics and the State*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Pike, A. (2004) Heterodoxy and the governance of economic development. *Environment and Planning A*, **36** (12), pp.2141-2161.

Plowden, W. (2003) The Compact: Attempts to Regulate Relationships Between Government and the Voluntary Sector in England. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, **32** (3), pp. 415-432.

Pollard, J., Henry, N., Bryson, J. and Daniels, P. (2000) Shades of Grey? Geography and Policy. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **25** (2), pp.243-248.

Powell, M. and Glendinning, C. (2002) Introduction. **In:**

Glendinning, C., Powell, M. and Rummery, K. (eds) (2002) *Partnerships, New Labour and the Governance of Welfare*. Bristol, The Policy Press.



Pratchett, L. (2004) Local Autonomy, Local Democracy and the 'New Localism'. *Political Studies*, **52** (2), pp.358-375.

Putnam, R. (1993a) 'The Prosperous Community: social capital and public life'. *The American Prospect*, **4** (13), pp.35-52.

Putnam, R. (1993b) *Making Democracy Work: Civil Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press.

Putnam, R. (2000) *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, Simon and Schuster.

Raco, M. (2003a) Governmentality, subject-building, and the discourses and practices of devolution in the UK. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **28** (1), pp.75-95.

Raco, M. (2003b) New Labour, community and the future of Britain's urban renaissance. **In:**

Imrie, R. and Raco, M. (eds) (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, community and urban policy*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Raco, M. (2005) Sustainable Development, Rolled Out Neoliberalism and Sustainable Communities. *Antipode*, **37** (2), pp.324-347.

Raco, M. (2007) Spatial Policy, Sustainability and State Restructuring: A Reassessment of Sustainable Community Building in England. **In:**

Krueger, R. and Gibbs, D. (eds) (2007) *The Sustainable Development Paradox*. London, Guildford Press.

Raco, M. (2008) *From Expectations to Aspirations: The New Politics of Sustainable Urbanism in the UK*. Paper presented at the RGS-IBG Conference, London, 30 August, 2008.

Raco, M., Parker, G. and Doak, J. (2006) Reshaping spaces of local governance? Community Strategies and the modernisation of local government in England. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, **24** (4), pp.475-496.

Redclift, M. (1995) The UK and the International Environmental Agenda: Rio and After. **In:**

Gray, T.S. (ed) (1995) *UK Environmental Policy in the 1990's*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Rhodes, R.A.W. (1997) *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*. Buckingham, Open University Press.

Rodrik, D. (2006) Goodbye Washington Consensus, Hello Washington Confusion? Harvard University, January 2006. **At:**

[http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~drodrik/Lessons%20of%20the%201990s%20review%20\\_JEL\\_.pdf](http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~drodrik/Lessons%20of%20the%201990s%20review%20_JEL_.pdf)

Last Accessed: 13:10 (20/05/09)

Rose, G. (1997) Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*, **21** (3), pp.305-320.

Rose, G. (1999) *Powers of Freedom Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Rydin, Y., Homan, N., Hads, V. and Sommer, F. (2003) Incorporating sustainable development concerns into an urban regeneration project: how politics can defeat procedures. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, **46** (4), pp.545-561.

Salamon, L.M. (2002) Of market failure, voluntary failure, and third-party government: towards a theory of government-nonprofit relations in the modern welfare state. **In:**

Osborne, S.P. (ed) (2002) *Public Management: Expanding the scope of public management*. London, Taylor and Francis.

Schoenberger, E. (1991) The corporate interview as an evidentiary strategy in economic geography. *The Professional Geographer* **43** (2), pp.180-189.

Schoenberger, E. (1992) Self-Criticism and Self-Awareness in Research: A Reply to Linda McDowell. *The Professional Geographer* **43** (2), pp.215-218.

Scott, A. (1999) Whose futures? A Comparative Study of Local Agenda 21 in mid Wales. *Planning, Practice and Research*, **14** (4), pp.401-421.

Scott, A. J. (1998) *Regions and the world economy: the coming shape of global production, competition, and political order*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Seibel, W. and Anheier, H.K. (1990) Sociological and Political Science Approaches to the Third Sector. **In:**

Anheier, H.K. and Seibel, W. (eds) (1990) *The Third Sector Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations*. New York, Walter de Gruyter.

Seidman, S. (1998) *Contested Knowledge: Social Theory in the Post-Modern Era*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Selman, P and Parker, J. (1999) Tales of local sustainability. *Local Environment*, **4** (1), pp.47-60.

Sending, O.J. and Neumann, I.V. (2006) Governance to Governmentality: Analysing NGOs, States, and Power. *International Studies Quarterly*, **50** (3), pp.651-672.

Seyfang, G. (2003) Environmental mega-conferences- from Stockholm to Johannesburg and beyond. *Global Environmental Change*, **13** (3), pp.223–228.

Sharp, L. (2002) Public Participation and Policy: unpacking connections in one UK Local Agenda 21. *Local Environment*, **7** (1), pp.7-22.

Sharp, L. and Connelly, S. (2000) Community Planning: a policy milestone or millstone? *eg*, **6** (8), pp.15-18.

Sharp, L. and Connelly, S. (2002) Theorising Participation: Pulling Down the Ladder. **In:**

Rydin, Y. and Thornley, A. (eds) (2002) *Planning in the UK*. London, Ashgate.

- Sharp, R. (1998) Responding to Europeanisation: A Governmental Perspective. **In:**
- Lowe, P. and Wards, S. (eds) (1998) *British Environmental Policy and Europe: Politics and policy in transition*. London, Routledge.
- Shaw, D. (2004) Local development documents: the missing spatial dimension of community strategies? *Town and Country Planning*, **73** (1), pp.26-28.
- Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, text and Interaction*. London, Sage.
- Simon, J.G. (1990) Modern Welfare State Policy Towards the Non-Profit Sector: Some Efficiency-Equity Dilemmas. **In:**
- Anheier, H.K. and Seibel, W. (eds) (1990) *The Third Sector Comparative Studies of Nonprofit Organisations*. New York, Walter de Gruyter.
- Skelcher, C. (2000) Changing images of the State: overloaded, hollowed-out, congested. *Public Policy and Administration*, **15** (3), pp.3-19.
- Speth, G.J. (2003) Perspectives on the Johannesburg Conference. *Environment*, **45** (1), pp.24-29.
- Smith, C. and Kurtz, H. (2003) Community gardens and politics of scale in New York City. *Geographical Review*, **93** (2), pp.193-212.

Smith, G., Maloney, W. and Stoker, G. (2004) Building Social Capital in City Politics: Scope and Limitations at the Inter-organisational Level. *Political Studies*, **52** (3), pp.508-530.

Smith, N. (1984) *Uneven Development: Nature, capital and the production of space*. Oxford, Blackwell.

Smith, N. (1992a) Geography, difference and the politics of scale. **In:**

Doherty, J., Graham, E. and Malek, M. (eds) (1992) *Postmodernism and the social sciences*. London, Macmillan.

Smith, N. (1992b) Contours of a Spatialized Politics: Homeless Vehicles and the Production of Geographical Scale. *Social Text*, **33**, pp.54-81.

Smith, N. (2000) Scale. **In:**

Johnston R.J., Gregory, D., Pratt, G. and Watts, M. (eds) (2000) *The dictionary of human geography*. Oxford, Blackwell, 4<sup>th</sup> edition.

Smyth, P., Reddel, T. and Jones, A. (2004) Social Inclusion, New Regionalism and Associational Governance: The Queensland Experience. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **28** (3), pp.601-615.

Sneddon, C., Howarth, R.B., Norgaard, R.B. (2006) Sustainable Development in a post-Brundtland world. *Ecological Economics*, **57** (2), pp.253-268.

Social Exclusion Unit (2001) *A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan*. London, Cabinet Office.

Somerville, P. (2005) Community governance and democracy. *Policy and Politics*, **33** (1), pp.63-78.

Sterling, R. (2005) Promoting democratic governance through partnerships? **In:** Newman, J. (ed) (2005) *Remaking Governance: Peoples, politics and the public sphere*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Stewart, M. (1994) Between Whitehall and town hall: the realignment of urban regeneration policy in England. *Policy and Politics*, **22** (2), pp. 133-145.

Stoker, G. (1995) Regime theory and urban politics. **In:** Judge, D., Stoker, G. and Wolman, H. (eds) (1995) *Theories of Urban Politics*. London, Sage.

Stoker, G. (1998) Governance as theory: five propositions. *International Social Science Journal*, **50** (155), pp. 17-28.

Stoker, G. (2004) *Transforming Local Governance: From Thatcherism to New Labour*. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan.

Stoker, G. (2006) *Why Politics Matter: Making Democracy Work*. Basingstoke, Palgrave MacMillan.

Storper, M. (1997) *The regional world: territorial development in a global economy*. New York, Guildford.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. London, Sage.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (eds) (1997) *Grounded Theory in Practice*. London, Sage.

Sullivan, H. (2003) New Forms of Local Accountability: Coming to Terms with 'Many Hands'. *Policy and Politics*, **31** (3), pp.353-69.

Sullivan, H., Smith, M., Root, A. and Moran, D. (2001) *Area Committees and Neighbourhood Management: Increasing Democratic Participation and Social Inclusion*. London, Local Government Information Unit.

Sustainable Development Commission (2004) Shows promise. But must try harder.

April 2004. **At:**

[http://www.sd-](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/040413%20Shows%20promise.%20But%20must%20try%20harder.pdf)

[commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/040413%20Shows%20promise.%20But%20must%20try%20harder.pdf](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/040413%20Shows%20promise.%20But%20must%20try%20harder.pdf)

Last Accessed: 14:00 (13/03/06)

Sustainable Development Commission (2005) *The Next Steps: an independent review of sustainable development in the English regions*. November, 2005. **At:**

[http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/Full\\_report-final.pdf](http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/Full_report-final.pdf)

Last Accessed: 14:30 (13/03/06)



Swyngedouw, E. (1992) Territorial organization and the space/technology nexus. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **17** (3), pp. 417-433.

Swyngedouw, E. (1997) 'Neither Global nor Local: Glocalisation and the politics of scale.' **In:**

Cox, K.R. (ed) (1997) *Spaces of globalisation: Reasserting the power of the local*. New York, Guildford Press.

Swyngedouw, E. (2005) Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-beyond-the-State. *Urban Studies*, **42** (11), pp.1991-2006.

Swyngedouw, E. (2007) Impossible "Sustainability" and the Postpolitical Condition.

**In:**

Krueger, R. and Gibbs, D. (eds) (2007) *The Sustainable Development Paradox*. London, Guildford Press.

Swyngedouw, E., Moulaert, F. and Rodriguez, A. (2002) Neoliberal urbanization in Europe: large-scale urban development projects and the new urban policy. *Antipode*, **34** (3), pp.542-577.

Taylor, M., (2003) Commentary. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, **32** (3), pp.432-436.

Taylor, M., (2006) Communities in Partnership: Developing a Strategic Voice. *Social Policy & Society*, **5** (2), pp.269-279.

Taylor, M. (2007) Community Participation in the Real World: Opportunities and Pitfalls in New Governance Spaces. *Urban Studies*, **44** (2), pp.297- 317.

Taylor, M. and Bassi, A. (1998) Unpacking the State: The Implications for the Third Sector of Changing Relationships Between national and Local Government. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, **9** (2), pp.113-135.

Taylor, M., Craig, G., and Wilkinson, M. (2002). Co-option or empowerment? The changing relationship between the state and the voluntary and community sectors. *Local Governance*, **28** (1), pp. 1-11.

Taylor, M. and Warburton, D. (2003) Legitimacy and the Role of UK Third Sector Organizations in the Policy Process. *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, **14** (3), pp.321-338.

Taylor, P.J. (1982) A materialist framework for political geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, **7** (1), pp.15-34.

Taylor, P.J. (1999) Places, spaces and Macy's: place-space tensions in the political geography of modernities. *Progress in Human Geography*, **23** (1), pp.7-26.

Temple, M. (2000) New Labour's Third Way: pragmatism and governance. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, **2** (3), pp.302-325.

Tewdwr-Jones, M., Morphet, J. and Allmendinger, P. (2006) The contested strategies of local governance: community strategies, development plans, and local government modernisation. *Environment and Planning A*, **38** (3), pp.533-551.

Third Sector Europeans Policy Network (2006) What is the 'third sector'? **At:**

<http://www.lse.edu/collections/TSEP/faqs.htm>

Last Accessed: 11:14 (30/05/06)

Tickell, A., John, P. and Musson, S. (2005) The North East Regional Referendum Campaign of 2004: Issues and Turning Points. *The Political Quarterly*, **76** (4), pp.488-496.

Torre, A. and Gilly, J.P. (2000) On the Analytical Dimension of Proximity Dynamics. *Regional Studies*, **34** (2), pp.169-180.

Trochim, W.M.K. (2001) *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*. Cincinnati, Atomic Dog Publishing.

Trudeau, D. (2008) Towards a relational view of the shadow state. *Political Geography*, **27** (6), pp.669-690.

Tuan, Y.F. (1977) *Space and Place*. London, Arnold.

Turner, B.S. (2001) The erosion of citizenship *British Journal of Sociology* **52** (2), pp. 189-210.

Turner, R.K. (1993) Sustainability: principles and practice. **In:**

Turner, R.K. (ed) (1993) *Sustainable Environmental Economics and Management: Principles and Practice*. London, Belhaven Press.

UK Biodiversity Steering Group (1995) *Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report - Volume I: Meeting the Rio Challenge*. **At:**

<http://www.ukbap.org.uk/Library/Tranche1.pdf>

Last Accessed: 12:45 (03/07/08)

UK Biodiversity Action Partnership (2008) *Biodiversity Action Reporting System*. **At:**

<http://www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/news/whatbars.asp>

Last Accessed: 15:45 (8/01/09)

United Nations Environment Programme (1972) *Stockholm, 1972: Report on the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*. **At:**

<http://www.unep.org/Documents.multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=97andArticleID=>

Last accessed 13:15 (03/02/2006)

United Nations General Assembly (1997) *Programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21. A/RES/S-19/2, 19 September*. **At:**

<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/spec/aress19-2.htm>

Last accessed 17:35 (03/04/2006)

United Nations Sustainable Development (1992) *Agenda 21*. **At:**

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/Agenda21.pdf>

Last accessed 10:05 (09/02/2006)

Unwin, J. (2003) Beyond service delivery. **In:**

Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ed) (2003) *Replacing the State? The Case for Third Sector Public Service Delivery*. London, ACEVO.

Uphoff, N. (1992) *Local Institutions and Participation for Sustainable Development. Gatekeeper Series, no. 31*. London, International Institute for Environment and Development.

Urban Task Force (1999) *Towards an Urban Renaissance: final report of the Urban Task Force*. London, DETR.

Valentine, G. (2005) Tell me about...: using interviews as a research methodology. **In:** Flowerdew, R. and Martin, D. (eds) (2005) *Methods in Human Geography: A guide for students doing a research project*. Harlow, Pearson.

Van Teijlingen, E.R. and Hundley, V. (2001) The Importance of Pilot Studies. *Social Research Update*, (35) Winter 2001. **At:**

<http://www.soc.surrey.ac.uk/sru/SRU35.html>

Last Accessed: 11:14 (19/07/06)

Vigar, G., Healey, P., Hull, A. and Davoudi, S. (2000) *Planning, Governance and Spatial Strategy in Britain: An Institutional Analysis*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Voisey, H., Beuermann, C., Astrid-Sverdrup, L. and O’Riordan, T. (1996) The Political Significance of Local Agenda 21: the early stages of some European experience. *Local Environment*, **1** (1), pp.33-50.

Voisey, H. and O’Riordan, T. (1997) ‘Governing institutions for sustainable development: the United Kingdom’s national level approach.’ *Environmental Politics Special Issue: Sustainable Development in Western Europe: Coming to terms with Agenda 21*, **6** (1), pp.24-53.

Walsh, K. (1995) *Public Service and the Market Mechanisms*. Basingstoke, Macmillan.

Ward, K. and Jonas, A.E.G. (2004) Competitive city-regionalism as a politics of space: a critical reinterpretation of the new regionalism. *Environment and Planning A*, **36** (12), pp.2119-2139.

Ward, K. and Jones, M. (1999) Researching local elites: reflexivity, ‘situatedness’ and political-temporal contingency. *Geoforum*, **30** (4), pp.301-330.

Ward, S. and Williams, R. (1997) From hierarchy to networks? Sub-central government and EU urban environmental policy. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, **35** (3), pp.439-464.

Webler, T., Tuler, S. and Krueger, R. (2001) What Is a Good Public Participation Process? Five Perspectives from the Public. *Environmental Management*, **27** (3), pp.435-450.

Whatmore, S. (2002) *Hybrid Geographies*. London, Sage.

Whitehead, M. (2003) Love thy neighbourhood - rethinking the politics of scale and Walsall's struggle for neighbourhood democracy. *Environment and Planning A*, **35** (2), pp.277-300.

Wilkinson, M. (2004) Campaigning for Older People: A Case Study Approach to the Input of Voluntary and Community Organisations in the Policy Process. *Social Policy and Society*, **3** (4), pp.343-352.

Wilkinson, M. and Craig, G. (2002) *New roles for old: Local authority members and partnership working*. York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Wilks, S. and Hall, P. (1994) Off the agenda. *Town and Country Planning*, **63** (4), p.217.

Williams, C. and Millington, A. (2004) The diverse and contested meanings of sustainable development. *The Geographical Journal*, **170** (2), pp.99-104.

Williams, P. (2002) Community strategies: mainstreaming sustainable development and strategic planning? *Sustainable Development*, **10** (4), pp.197-205.

Wilson, D. (2003) Unravelling control freakery: redefining central-local government relations. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, **5** (3), pp.317-346.

Williamson, J. (1989) What Washington Means by Policy Reform. **In:**

Williamson, J. (ed) (1989) *Latin American Readjustment: How Much has Happened.*

Washington, Institute for International Economics 1989.

Williers, B. (1994) Sustainable Development: a new world deception. *Conservation Biology*, **8** (4), pp.1146–1148.

Wolch, J.R. (1989) The shadow state: transformations in the voluntary sector. **In:**

Wolch, J.R. and Dear, M. (eds) (1989) *The power of geography: how territory shapes social life.* Boston, Unwin Hyman.

Wolfenden Committee on Voluntary Organisations (1978) *The Future of Voluntary Organisations.* London, Croom Helm.

World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) *Our Common Future.* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Woods, N. (2002) Global Governance and the Role of Institutions. **In:**

Held, D. and McGrew, A. (eds) (2002) *Governing Globalisation.* London, Polity Press.

Yamin, F. (2001) NGOs and International Environmental Law: A Critical Evaluation of their Roles and Responsibilities. *RECIEL*, **10** (2), pp.149-162.

Yates, H. and Jochum, V. (2003) *It's who you know that counts: The Role of the Voluntary Sector in the Development of Social Capital in Rural Areas.* London, NCVO, June 2003.



Young, K. (1994) Local Government. **In:**

Kavanagh, D. and Seldon, A. (1994) *The Major Effect*. London, Macmillan.

Zurcher, L.A. (1978) Ephemeral Roles, Voluntary Action, and Voluntary Associations.

*Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 7 (3), pp.65-74.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1: Introductory letter/email to approach sample groups**

Hello,

I am a PhD student at the University of Hull who is researching the activities of local voluntary and community sector groups in this area and how they work with local councils to promote environmental and social issues through sustainable development.

I hope that you can help me by being part of my research. I would like to speak to a range of different groups about their activities, including many of the groups in this network. Please find attached my research brief.

Please contact me at the address below if you would be willing for me to phone or visit you, at a time that suits you, to talk about your group's work. Any information that I receive will only be used for my own research and will be confidential. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time. Yours faithfully,

Andrew Kythreotis

Department of Geography

University of Hull

Hull HU6 7RX

Email: A.Kythreotis@hull.ac.uk

Tel: 01482 466758

Homepage: <http://www.hull.ac.uk/geog/staff/Kythreotis.htm>

## **Appendix 2: Research brief**

My PhD research looks at the activities of local voluntary and community groups in the region and how these groups work with local councils to decide policy and how they use such policies to promote environmental protection, conservation and regeneration.

My key questions are:

- a) What are the main activities of voluntary groups in the regions and how do these promote environmental protection, conservation and regeneration?
- b) How do national/regional/local voluntary groups and local councils work together on these issues, particularly to achieve sustainable development?
- c) What problems may voluntary groups encounter when working with local council on environmental and social issues?
- d) How can voluntary groups be better supported in their work and to reach out to the community?

### **Ethical Issues**

All interviews will be treated with confidence and used only for this PhD research. I will seek permission to use any interview data from the interviewee. I am working to ethical guidelines and understand the interviewee's right to privacy if stated.

### **Appendix 3: Generic topic guide for interviewee**

#### **Ethical Issues**

State: *'All interviews will be treated with confidence and used only for this PhD research. I will seek permission to use any interview data from the interviewee. I am working to ethical guidelines and understand the interviewee's right to privacy if stated.'*

#### **1. Individual and Organisation**

What is your role in your organisation? *In addition, how the interviewee ended up in voluntary work or job-history/background.*

How is your organisation structured? *Also how decisions are made in group/network of group*

Do you have a national affiliate/umbrella/network? What area do you cover?

What are the main aims and activities of your group?

How well do you think your organisation meets its purposes and objectives?

How do you communicate your message/activities to the wider public? (Means)

Do you use volunteers? How do you recruit and train them? Where do they come from (local)?

## **2. Funding**

How is your organisation funded? *Council, national govt, funding bodies.*

Do you experience any problems with funding?

Is the funding you get enough to meet your objectives and activities?

## **3. Sustainable Development**

Have you heard of the term sustainable development?

*If they don't know what it means give Brundtland: 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need.'*

What does sustainable development mean to you/your organisation?

How does your organisation deal with sustainable development issues (if it does at all)?

Are SD policies in place? *In Hull, Beverley etc*

What changes (if any) do you need to make in order to put SD in place?

What do you think are the main achievements of the group so far on SD? Examples?

Do you look to anyone else to give you help in promoting SD in your organisation?

*Develop Contacts*

How do you show the public that your activities emphasise SD?

What SD issues are best handled locally v regionally or nationally?

*With local government- probe them to find out if they think SD issues should be the remit of local government-what help should other scales (e.g. national) contribute?*

*With voluntary groups- see if they have/want support from other national affiliations, or do they prefer their work to be administered at the local level?*

Do you see SD as having some inherent weaknesses or problems in terms of putting it in practice?

Does your group adhere to any directives or laws related to SD?

#### **4. Stakeholder Relationships (for groups; just reverse for council officials)**

How involved are voluntary groups in what the council does? Examples?

Degree of influence?

Do you ever meet? Do you listen to them? Do they listen to you?

Do you set things up together? Like what?

How much influence have groups had on what the council does about sustainable development (and vice versa)? Give me examples?

How important is it for the voluntary sector and the council to work together on issues like this? What are the problems? What needs to change? *Include impact/influence and whether this is reciprocal*

Discuss the role of the city, regional and national governments in relation to your groups' activities?

*For local government- what level of support are they given at regional and national and what are the statutory limits of their governance?*

*For voluntary groups-how do the various levels of government support your groups work?*

## **5. Changes, Challenges and the Future**

How have things changed in your organisation over previous years?

Are you doing anything now that is different to before? Explain what is different?

Is the working relationship between groups and councils better or worse now? How?

Can you give examples?

What do you think the major challenges are that you face in establishing your activities and objectives in the future and possibly involving other groups in what you do?

*Ask about snowballing, i.e. who else/what other organisations/groups should I talk to that could tell me about these kinds of issues?*