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**TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA :
A Study of Local Government Sustainability Planning in the Cape
Metropolitan Area.**

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**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the Degree of Masters of Science in
the Department of Environmental and Geographical Science**

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The popular use of the term sustainability represents a consensus around the fact that society must change its' path towards ecological destruction and the consequent decline in human's quality of life. Sustainability facilitates the integration of environmental issues, previously seen as radical and disruptive, into mainstream political, social and economic discourse. The term therefore represents a transitional tool which will lead society from its current non-sustainable phase to greater sustainability.

At present the most successful action for change is being initiated from the local level through local sustainability planning. Sustainability planning represents an alternative approach to local government decision-making based on the principles of sustainability. Many countries are experiencing success with local sustainability planning initiatives such as Healthy Cities and Local Agenda 21. These initiatives represent generic approaches to sustainability planning. This thesis contends that a more successful approach could be gained through tailoring strategic planning to local contexts. The challenge is to design a framework that meets the needs of the specific socio-economic, legislative and institutional contexts of a given area.

South Africa's discriminatory socio-political history has resulted in major social and environmental legacies, especially amongst the marginalised and poor sectors of society. These legacies must be understood and addressed in order to carry-out successful sustainability planning processes.

Since 1994 sustainability in South Africa has received significant attention in the legislation which has emanated from the democratic government. The legal framework for sustainability is provided by a progressive Constitution [Act 108 of 1996]. The Constitution provides clear objectives for environmental management. Furthering the framework for environmental management set out in the Constitution is the National Environmental Management Act [Act 107 of 1998] (NEMA). NEMA is a key piece of legislation which has far-reaching implications for sustainability. It establishes general

principles which act as a framework within which environmental management in the country will be carried out.

The Constitution [Act 108 of 1996] also sets out clear objectives for local governance. Local government in the CMA, as in the rest of South Africa, is suffering from the effects of the (re)current restructuring period following the country's transition to democracy. This sphere of government is experiencing significant financial and capacity constraints. The situation has been compounded by a lack of civil-sector consultation during this protracted period of change.

Mechanisms for addressing sustainability and incorporating environmental issues within local government planning and decision-making are absent from national legislation. Local government sustainability planning represents such a mechanism. This study researches the current status and future prospects for local government sustainability planning using the Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA) in South Africa as a case study.

A framework for local government sustainability planning is developed based on the current national and local contexts. The proposed framework places the fundamental principles of sustainability at the highest strategic level in the authority. Alongside these principles are key operational themes of sustainability. Each of these should be used to guide and inform decisions and activities carried out within the local government authority.

As we enter the new millennium local government in South Africa has an increasing responsibility to achieve local sustainability and in so doing to elevate its citizens quality of life. A bold response to local sustainability planning is required if this is to be achieved.

Acknowledgements



In undertaking the research for this thesis, I was inspired and supported by many people. I extend my thanks to Darryll Kilian for his invaluable supervision. Your ability to switch between pragmatic and academic issues guided me towards finding a balance between these two areas of my research. I am also grateful to Merle Sowman who provided me with the opportunity to expand my experience in South Africa through the National LA 21 Programme and who inspires me with the amount of work she can get through in a working day. Thank you also to Ron Davies for your guidance on the socio-political aspects of South African history.

Thanks to the Environmental Management Department in the CMC whom I have seen grow from a skeleton staff of five to the thriving department that exists today. Special thanks to Keith Wiseman who has offered numerous valuable insights into this study, and who helped me finalise the more pragmatic issues.

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To Peter and Di, a big thank you for your inspiration, two sharp minds without whom I would have suffered many more hours in frustrated dislocation.

Finally, thanks to my Mum and Dad, despite the 6,000 mile distance your unconditional love has been of great support.



My environmental ethics were shaped in the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, England where my close affiliation with nature was born. In a rural Cotswold stone village I viewed a more traditional way of life. The contrasts I experienced in the more developed areas of England were striking. The consumer culture the pollution and lack of social interactions were all too evident outside my secure village upbringing.

Based on these observations I decided to study the science of the environment. My interests were always raised by the more pragmatic aspects of environmental science. What can we do to change our patterns of consumption, our destruction of the natural environment? How can we avoid a decline on quality of life in the future?

It was during research of my undergraduate (equivalent to Honours in SA) thesis' on an EIA case study in the Cotswolds that I began to grasp the potential that lay within local government. The possibilities for mobilising the community into action towards sustainability seemed an exciting prospect and on completion of my Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science I entered the world of Local Agenda 21.

Chichester District Council offered me vital experience in local governance and importantly in sustainability planning. Here, amongst the rolling South Downs I explored the opportunities and constraints to local sustainability planning in a largely affluent area with an organised NIMBY (not in my back yard!) population.

In 1997 my partners mother and father, recently reconciled with their home country after 25 years of exile, invited us to the sunny climes of Cape Town. After such a stable introduction to the world of sustainability planning, the prospect of facing the challenges within South Africa seemed immensely exciting. A country with a young democracy a local government in the process of transformation. I realised that this was a crucial time in South Africa's development where sustainability planning should become institutionalised.

I was later to discover how fortunate I was to be accepted into the University of Cape Town. Here my supervisor was undertaking exciting work on an Integrated Environmental Management Policy for the Cape Metropolitan Area. This is where my 'South Africa experience began

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Glossary of Terms



The concepts used frequently throughout this study are now defined. In terms of this study:

Action Plan refers to the outcome of planning.

Capacity in relation to a local government authority refers to the ability or faculty to take on a task or tasks. A lack of finances or a lack of human resources may limit capacity

Civil society is a generic term for non-governmental organisations; community based organisations and individuals.

Community¹ refers to a group of individuals living in the same geographical area.

Environment refers to the surroundings within which humans exist and that are made up of: -

- (i) the land, water and atmosphere of the earth
- (ii) micro-organisms, plant and animal life
- (iii) any part of a combination of (i) and (ii) and the relationship among and between them; and
- (iv) the physical, chemical, aesthetic, and cultural properties and conditions of the foregoing the influence human health and well-being

National Environmental Management Act [Act 107 of 1998]

Government institutions includes government departments and their supporting agencies at national, provincial and local level.

Institutionalise, institutionalisation refers to either the act of integrating something (in terms of this study a planning process) into an established organisational structure or the act of placing it within agreed rules of procedure.

Legislation refers to national policies which have legal standing.

¹ Refer to the discussion of 'community' in South Africa in Section 5.2

Local government authority and **local government institution** refer to all local government bodies from Metropolitan Councils to Metropolitan Local Councils to District Councils.

Local sustainability planning is a systematic process by which a community plans for sustainability in their locality through the formulation of a framework for action. Also known as 'Local Agenda 21' or 'participatory local action planning'.

Municipality refers to a metropolitan local council.

Planning refers to strategic planning and specifically to the act of devising a course of action or non-action, the outcome of planning may, for example, be the decision to develop a policy. **Action Plan** refers to the outcome of planning.

Policy refers to an official framework which provides consistency of actions and a mechanism for setting parameters and standards.

Policy process is the formal procedure followed in developing a policy.

Public participation In terms of this study public participation refers to the democratic inclusion of individuals in decision-making.

Sustainability is a process which aims towards supporting human-life at a specific level of well-being throughout current and future generations, and ensuring environmental, social and economic concerns are integrated; all keeping within the carrying capacity of the environment².

Sustainability planning refers to the act of strategic planning using the principles of sustainability

Township: separate areas of generally low standard housing formerly reserved for blacks, coloureds or Asians.

Unicity: term used to describe the local government authority structure in the Cape Metropolitan Area where a single authority governs.

² Refer to theoretical discussion in Chapter 2

Reference is made throughout this study to the population categories of 'White', 'Black', 'Indian' and 'Coloured' as defined by the South African Government during the apartheid era. The history of South Africa necessitates the use of race divisions. Any strategic sustainability planning approach must take into account the status quo. It is only through addressing the inequalities which remain after more than forty years of apartheid governance that a more just, equal and sustainable South African society can be attained. For this reason the aforementioned racial categories are used in this study. The use of these terms should, however, in no way be seen as sanctioning them.

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Abbreviations



BLA	Black Local Authority
CMA	Cape Metropolitan Area
CMC	Cape Metropolitan Council
CSS	Central Statistical Services (CMC)
DCD	Department of Constitutional Development, RSA
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, RSA
DLA	Department of Land Affairs, RSA
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
HFA	Health for All, WHO project linked to Healthy Cities
HC	Healthy Cities
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IMEP	Integrated Environmental Management Policy (for the CMA)
LA 21	Local Agenda 21
LGTA	Local Government Transition Act
LDO	Land Development Objective
MLC	Metropolitan Local Council
NEMA	National Environmental Management Act [Act 107 of 1998]
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RSC	Regional Service Council
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNCSD	United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
WHO	World Health Organisation



Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

This study is underpinned by the notion of sustainability. Sustainability is a derivative of the term 'sustainable development'. Sustainable development was developed by conservationists who were seeking to ensure that nature conservation became a prerequisite to economic development. Sustainable development and sustainability are becoming more widely adopted within environmental, economic and social discourse.

Current thinking around sustainability places the emphasis on institutions at local government level to bring about a democratic process of public inclusion in the production of action plans for the short and long term future of their locality. Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) represents a key example of such a process. LA 21 was first proposed in Agenda 21, the global action plan for sustainability. Agenda 21 originated from United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, 1992. LA 21 is a process whereby a local government authority engages its community in a participatory process of sustainability action planning for the short and long-term.

Since UNCED, there have been a number of different international strategic initiatives based on this method of local level sustainability planning. Arguably the most significant of these is the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives LA 21 Programme and the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities Project, amongst others. Each of these planning processes emphasises the importance of reflecting the local context and of a participatory approach with the local communities.

Not surprisingly local government was cited as the institution responsible for the implementation of over two-thirds of the requirements of Agenda 21 (Van Der Merwe

1994). Agenda 21 and LA 21 were significant as they contained some of the first international mandates to democratise local government decision-making. Local government is the level of governance closest to the people and as such it is ideally positioned to engage communities in participatory action planning. It is estimated that LA 21 is being adopted and implemented in over 2,000 local governments in more than 70 different countries internationally. South Africa is one of these countries and is the focus of this study.

South Africa is culturally varied and complex, its discriminatory socio-political history has had devastating long-term environmental and social consequences. The country is going through an important period in its development as a democracy. One of the most significant changes occurring at this time is a shift in mindset away from the authoritarian approach to urban management. This change is backed by a strong and powerful constitution. In line with this change, local government, the heart of civil society, is being encouraged to become more accountable and efficient as a service provider. In addition, local government has been mandated with social and environmental responsibilities through the Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). These responsibilities, coupled with the international mandate for local sustainability planning are key to South African local government's transformation.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

The LA 21 case studies, compiled by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), reveal that the cultural and socio-economic context of the individual country and regional area affects the manner in which the LA 21 process is applied. LA 21 and Healthy Cities are generic planning processes. Ideally, therefore, a framework for the implementation of sustainability planning would need to be modelled on the specific national and local context - taking into account the social, socio-political, legislative and institutional contexts. This study examines the South African situation to determine an appropriate framework for applying LA 21 or a similar strategic sustainability planning process, within local government country-wide.

Local government in South Africa is going through a stage of reinvention³. The institution is in an important stage in its transformation into a democratic, accountable and integrated institution. Local government restructuring has been through the pre-interim phase, is currently at the end of the interim phase and will shortly be entering the final round of restructuring. At this stage in the restructuring process it is important to ensure that sustainability becomes a central element of the different functions of local government. It is equally important that local government ensures that participatory action planning for sustainability is carried out with local communities. The CMA is used as a case study to explore these developments and to determine a framework for the integration of sustainability planning into metropolitan local government.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

Before embarking on a study of local government sustainability planning in South Africa it is important to establish the overarching aims of the study and the specific objectives of the research. These specified aims and objectives are illustrated in the Research Model in Figure 1.1 and will guide the research and allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

Firstly, this study will establish a working understanding of sustainability by analysing contemporary theory relating to this concept. It will also ascertain a pragmatic definition and set of principles for sustainability which can be used in a framework for local government sustainability planning.

Secondly, this thesis will explore local sustainability planning and identify the key factors which should inform a framework for local sustainability planning. This will be achieved by examining international examples of generic local sustainability planning and using the experiences to help discern important factors which inform local government sustainability planning generally.

Thirdly, this thesis will establish the context for local sustainability planning in South African metropolitan local government. This will involve researching South Africa's broad socio-political context. The country's socio-political history and the implications of the social and

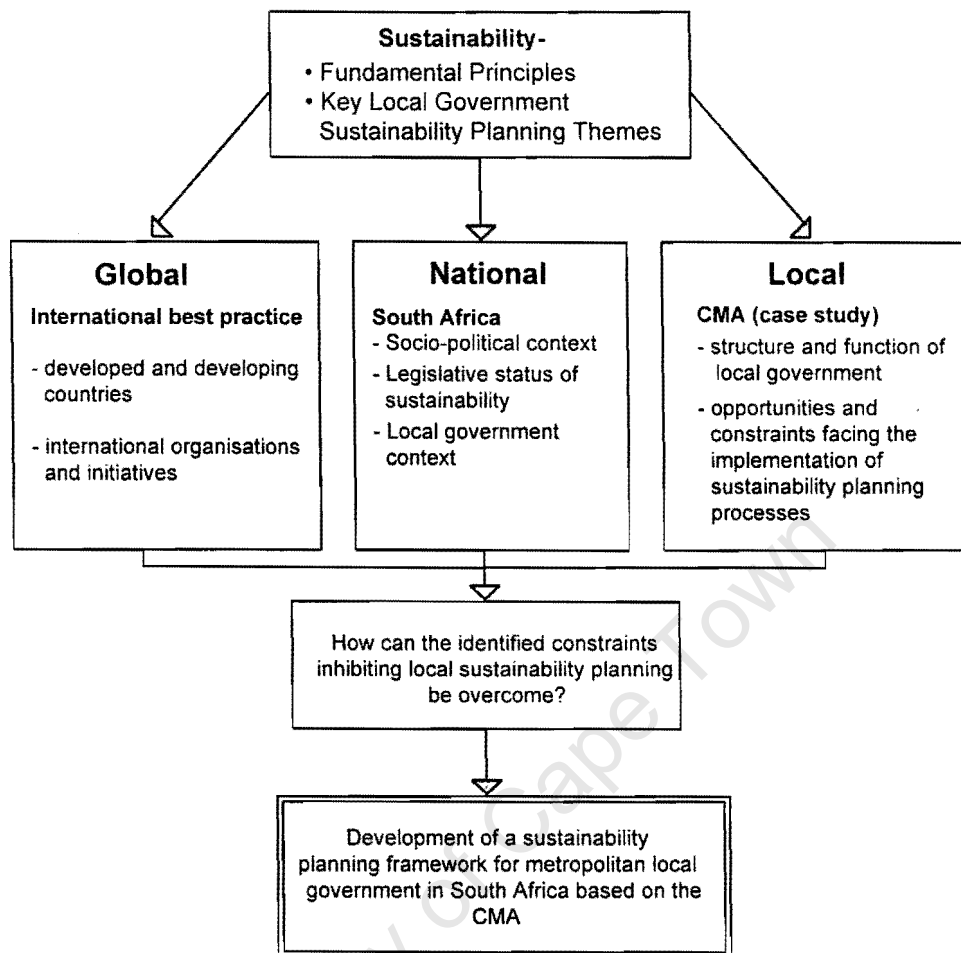
³ Discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6

spatial legacies of apartheid for sustainability in South Africa will be focused on. The legislative context of sustainability in South Africa will be explored through an analysis of the legislative frameworks and sectoral policies which have implications for sustainability in the country. Additionally the institutional context of sustainability in South Africa will be examined. This will be achieved through an analysis of the evolution of local government in South Africa from the apartheid era to today, and an exploration of the challenges facing local government currently.

This thesis will document a case study, using local government in the Cape Metropolitan Area. An analysis of the CMA will allow the researcher to develop a picture of the local context. This will involve examining the impacts of local government restructuring; establishing the importance applied to public participation in decision-making; identifying the barriers to achieving sustainability; assessing the extent to which integration, both policy and sectoral, is understood and carried out; assessing local government officials understanding of sustainability and environment; and identifying the main constraints to implementing sustainability planning. Ultimately, methods of overcoming these constraints will be included in the framework.

Finally the study will draw together and synthesize the lessons learned from the analysis and case study into a framework for metropolitan local government sustainability planning. The framework would aid in guiding the future of sustainability planning in metropolitan local government in South Africa. It would also promote more effective local governance and the integration of the environment into local government planning. More specifically this framework should be employed to inform the future of sustainability planning in the new Unicity dispensation.

Figure 1.1 Research Model



1.4 Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

It is necessary to identify those limitations which arose during the research and the assumptions underlying the research in order to increase the validity of the conclusions. This study worked on the assumption that there was a need for sustainability planning in the CMA. The study assumed that in light of the country's transition to democracy, South African local government would require sustainability planning to successfully address the injustices of the past and to create more effective local government.

The collection of information on environmental and sustainability activities was constrained by a number of factors. Constraints included a lack of networking or information sharing

within and between local authorities in the CMA, and by the restructuring within local government in the CMA occurring at the time of this study. Over the past two years, restructuring has dominated the work of local authority officials often at the expense of project-based work in the field of sustainability.

Following the commencement of this study, new proposals became known regarding the restructuring of local government in the Cape Metropolitan Area. A Unicity structure was proposed which, seemingly, went counter to the decentralised approach to local sustainability processes. Rather than being viewed as a limitation, however, these circumstances were seen as an additional challenge for the researcher. The findings were modified to propose a framework for integrating sustainability into the new local government dispensation.

1.5 Approach to the Study

A detailed research methodology is presented in Chapter 3. The following provides a broad outline of the three phased approach to this research.

Phase one involved background research for the study. This entailed becoming generally acquainted with the political, cultural and institutional context in South Africa and specifically within the CMA through a review of relevant literature, journals, newspapers and other publications.

In order to gain a deeper understanding of local government and environmental structures and organisations within the CMA, preliminary interviews were carried out with relevant stakeholders. Interviewees included local government officials, non-governmental organisations (NGO) employees, and other key players in the environment sector in the CMA. These preliminary interviews also served to inform the formal interview structure finalised as part of phase two. In addition to the interviews, attendance at parliamentary meetings and NGO seminars and workshops relating to local government and environment management legislation served to increase understanding of the CMA context.

Phase Two involved a more thorough literature review to inform the theoretical background to the study. In addition, a review of South African legislation and policies informing environmental management and sustainable development was undertaken. The

formal interview structure used in the third phase of the study was constructed and piloted. The structure of the formal interview was informed by advice from social scientists and finalised following preliminary interviews carried out in the initial phase of research.

Phase Three entailed carrying out formal interviews, using the formal interview structure with key role-players in the areas of sustainability within the CMA. Interviewees included local government officials, NGO employees, members of community based organisations (CBOs) and other key players in the environmental sector of the CMA. Appendix B1 contains a list of the formal interviewees. It was decided later that this phase should include a discussion with key players in the field of environmental management and strategic planning. A list of contributors to this discussion is included in Appendix B2.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The theoretical background to this study is explored in Chapter Two. The concept of sustainability is examined through an analysis of its evolution from the environment-development debate of the nineteen seventies and eighties to its institutionalisation in international conferences and programmes in the eighties and nineties. The chapter proceeds to examine the philosophical discourse surrounding sustainability, from the anthropocentric and economist approach to the more radical ecocentric approach. Directly informing the philosophical debate regarding sustainability are underlying political ideologies. The implications of capitalism for sustainability are examined and the possibility of formulating a new political ideology based on sustainability principles is briefly explored. Finally the fundamental principles of sustainability are identified and the key themes which inform local sustainability planning are set out.

Chapter Three focuses on the research methodology utilised in the study. An appropriate methodological approach for each research method is devised using literature pertaining to the practice of environmental and social science research.

The theory and methodology established, Chapter Four examines local sustainability planning as a tool for achieving a transition to sustainability. The key themes for sustainability planning identified in Chapter Two are applied in this analysis. Key international initiatives based on the local strategic sustainability planning approach are

examined. Sustainability planning in South Africa is analysed focusing, in particular, on the lessons learned from the South African Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Programme.

Chapter Five examines the broad political and socio-economic context in which local sustainability planning operates in South Africa. This chapter provides an overview of the current Acts and other national legislation pertaining to environmental management and sustainability in South Africa. This chapter establishes the context for the case study and for the development of a local sustainability planning framework.

South African local government is explored in Chapter Six. An overview of the historical evolution of local government in South Africa provides the context for the issues and challenges facing local government today. The (re)current restructuring process is examined as well as the opportunities and constraints facing local government which could affect progress towards sustainability.

Chapter Seven focuses on the case study, local government in the Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA). The impacts of local government transformation in the CMA are examined including the impact of restructuring on staff morale and organisational functioning. The study then focuses on sustainability including how the term is understood in local government and what barriers exist to a transition to sustainability in the CMA. The extent to which integrated development planning is increasing the integration of policy formulation and sectoral decision-making, is briefly visited.

Finally, in Chapter Eight the study examines the lessons learned in South Africa in the practical application of local sustainability planning. The findings of the study are used, along with the research results, to develop a framework for sustainability planning in metropolitan local government in South Africa. The framework proposes a pragmatic and realistic approach to integrating sustainability planning into the new metropolitan Unicity structure in the CMA. The framework is context specific for the CMA but is also relevant to other Unicity areas in South Africa.



Conceptualising Sustainable Development

Sustainable development remains the most important challenge facing humanity as it enters the 21st century

UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 1997

2.1 Introduction

Garrett Hardin's essay on the *tragedy of the commons* (Hardin, 1968) offers a compelling critique of modern society's unsustainability. The essay is based on the areas of communal land, present in most countries, to which certain groups of people are permitted to exercise specified user rights, for example, grazing livestock. The essence of Hardin's thesis was that over time commons would become exploited (Selman, 1996). A common has an upper limit of utilisation, beneath which resources are renewable and allow each user to take their own fair share. Gradually there will be a few selfish users who take more than their entitlement and over time the natural human response is for others to follow this example, leading to the eventual over-exploitation of the resource. The general principle of Hardin's essay is also applicable to the problems facing the earth, or the 'global commons' where development and over-use threatens natural resources. Collective misuse will inevitably lead to overexploitation and degradation of the natural environment. This critique is helpful in understanding some of the underlying human characteristics which challenge sustainability in the modern world.

This chapter will conceptualise sustainability using an analysis of the various philosophies and ideologies within sustainability /sustainable development discourse. In seeking to establish a workable iterative process towards sustainability, it is essential to define the theoretical context in which the process will operate.

The chapter begins with a brief analysis of the history of the concept of sustainable development, by following its institutionalisation through various international conferences and agreements. The origins of the term 'sustainable development' are briefly examined. The chapter goes on to analyse contemporary thinking around the concept, in accordance with Elliott's (1994:5) recognition that: 'In order to identify the challenges of implementing sustainable development in practice and to realise the opportunities for sustainable development, it is necessary to understand the changes in thinking and practice from which the concept has developed'. Sustainable development has become a popular phrase and concept within socio-economic and environmental circles. Despite the widespread use of the term, sustainable development is the subject of an academic debate over its true meaning, underlying philosophy and crucially, its credibility. The discourse surrounding the debate is lengthy and varied, leading O'Riordan (1989:2) to assert that 'the refuge of the environmentally perplexed is sustainable development...'

In order to secure a clear understanding of the theory underlying the practical elements of this study, an operational definition and working principles for sustainable development are developed in section 2.9. This definition evolves from exposition of the research into the history and contemporary discourse surrounding the term sustainable development.

2.2 The Institutionalisation of The Concept of Sustainable Development - a Brief History

Karl Marx, one of the greatest thinkers of the nineteenth century, famous for his critiques of capitalism and his theories of social and ideological change wrote about the principles which underlie sustainable development in the late nineteenth century. He envisioned a collective responsibility for the earth which ensures that humans pass the earth on to future generations in an 'improved' state. The following passage was published in *'Capital, Volume III'* (1894: 911):

'...an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the earth. They are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations, as *boni patres familias* [good heads of the household].'

(cited in Reiss, 1997: 70)

Despite Marx's foresight, the international community did not adopt this paradigm until pressing issues necessitated it. International action is being spurred on by what is referred

to by Fischer and Black (1995: xii) as 'the globalisation of the environmental crisis'. The environmental crisis is described by Rees (1999:22) who contends that:

...humankind, thoroughly alienated from nature is set on an unsustainable course which certainly degrades the natural 'environment' and which could plausibly end with the ecological razing of the Earth

There is a growing recognition that this crisis is a global responsibility and that social and economic forces defy national boundaries. This, coupled with the ever increasing growth of multinational companies and the technologies of computers and telecommunication, has resulted in the linking of previously geographically dispersed and once autonomous nation-states (Fischer and Black, 1995). This social and economic shift has aided the realisation that many environmental problems also transcend national boundaries, with resulting international repercussions.

The following sections chart the international initiatives brought about in response to these realities. These initiatives represent 'global milestones' for sustainability. Essentially a chronological analysis of each initiative shows the trend towards sustainability. Cumulatively these initiatives have succeeded in stimulating international recognition of sustainability, providing mandates for action at all levels of government.

2.2.1 United Nations Conference on Human Development, 1972 and World Conservation Strategy, 1980

By the nineteen seventies, it was becoming clear through international conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Human Development 1972, that the environment and development were inextricably linked. This pre-sustainable development era saw the use of phrases and concepts such as "environmentally sound development" (Khosla, 1995) and "eco-development" (Redclift, 1987: 34)⁴. Despite their vague nature, the principle of these terms was adopted as ecological goals to which humans should aspire.

⁴ The United Nations Environment Programme (1975) defined "ecodevelopment" as 'Development at regional and local levels... consistent with the potentials of the area involved, with attention given to the adequate and rational use of the natural resources, and to application of technological styles' cited in Redclift, 1987: 34)

The environment-development nexus⁵ was finally secured with the introduction of sustainable development by the first World Conservation Strategy 1980⁶. Subtitled "Living Resources Conservation for Sustainable Development" the World Conservation Strategy was the culmination of more than twenty years of thinking by conservationists about ways to promote nature conservation on a global scale (Urquhart, 1995). The World Conservation Strategy represented a watershed in challenging the idea that conservation and development were intrinsically opposed. It succeeded in focusing attention on conservation as a prerequisite to economic development. However, with its emergence from the international conservation and development community, the sustainable development concept took an ecological bias. It emphasised the need to raise finance for conservation objectives rather than considering economic development and the environment together (Baker *et al*, 1997).

2.2.2 United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, the Brundtland Report, 1987

Despite being flagged as an important notion, sustainable development was not defined anywhere within the World Conservation Strategy. It remained undefined until 1987 when the Brundtland Commission (United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development) highlighted the concept in its report: 'Our Common Future' (1987). 'Our Common Future' or the Brundtland Report as it has become colloquially known. The Brundtland Report drew up a definition of sustainable development that has become the most commonly used working definition. The Report defines sustainable development as:

...development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

(WCED, 1987:43)

In defining sustainable development the Brundtland Report broke with traditional perceptions and provided a framework for the integration of environmental policies and development strategies. In essence, the Brundtland Report dismissed the notion that environment protection can only be achieved at the expense of economic development.

⁵ Discussed in section 2.3

Within the report, economic, technological, social, and political prerequisites for the realisation of sustainable development were identified (Khosla, 1995). Despite the strength of the political rhetoric within the Brundtland Report which called for radical reform of global political and economic systems, it fell short of suggesting a mechanism to achieve this radical reform (Urquhart, 1995). Despite this, the Brundtland Report represents a defining moment in the institutionalisation of sustainable development and a groundbreaking factor in the development of sustainability.

2.2.3 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the 'Earth Summit', Rio de Janeiro, 1992

After the release of the Brundtland Report, the term sustainable development began to appear in political agendas worldwide as the need for international discussion around pressing environmental issues became evident. The aforementioned (section 2.2) globalisation of the environmental crisis brought environmental issues to the forefront of international agendas. Fischer and Black (1995: xii) summarise this process of international environmental awareness:

Each decade has...brought new and more serious ecological problems to the top of the environmental agenda... the environmental movement of the 1960s concentrated on pesticides, air and water pollution, the 1970s ushered in the over-consumption of energy, over population and the dangers of nuclear radiation. In the 1980s the movement added toxic waste hazards, the ozone hole and the destruction of the rain forests to its list of major concerns. Then the 1990s added some of the most serious environmental problems yet, in particular global warming, biodiversity and a revisitation of the population explosion⁶.

In response to this international concern, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), colloquially known as the 'Earth Summit' was arranged to take place in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The overall aim of the conference was to reaffirm the Declaration of the United Nations (UN) Conference on the Human Environment, adopted at Stockholm on 16 June 1972, and to seek to build upon it (UNCED, Annex I, 1992)

⁶ The WCS was organised by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and financed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and The World Wildlife Fund

UNCED was an international 'landmark' for sustainability and for raising awareness of environmental issues. In addition to this the meeting represented an important example of inter-government decision-making, bringing together more heads of government than any other meeting in history (DEAT, 1997). UNCED was based around a multitude of initiatives aimed at making global functioning more sustainable. In essence, it constituted an operational guide for designing a more sustainable future.

Criticisms were voiced about the political agendas of developed countries at the Summit. Issues such as stratospheric ozone depletion, carbon dioxide emissions and disposal of toxic wastes representing the priorities of developed countries constituted the main agenda (Redclift, 1995: 5). The developed countries who were instrumental in bringing about UNCED blatantly ignored the pressing issues plaguing developing countries. These issues ranged from sanitation and water supply issues to soil erosion problems. Consequently, the meeting weighed heavy with the political and financial burdens of attending countries. In spite of this considerable progress was made in the move towards worldwide sustainable development. UNCED resulted in the production of two International Agreements⁷ and the release of two statements of principles⁸.

At the heart of UNCED was Agenda 21: the United Nations global action plan for socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development. One hundred and seventy nine countries signed up to the Agenda 21 (A 21) programme⁹. A 21 allocates responsibility for directing change towards sustainability to national governments (Common Ground and EEU, 1998). Importantly, the document stresses that the problems and solutions being addressed by A 21 have their roots in local activities. Local authorities in particular were highlighted as having a crucial role to play in achieving sustainability. A 21 states: 'as the level of governance closest to the people, they [local authorities] play a vital role in educating, mobilizing and responding to the public to promote sustainable

(WWF) - now the World Wide Fund for Nature.

⁷ The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity.

⁸ The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and a statement of principles to guide the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests.

⁹ South Africa did not participate officially in UNCED in 1992, due to international sanctions against the apartheid regime. South Africa only participated for the first time in the 1995 Commission for sustainable development meetings (DEAT, 1997a).

development (UN, 1992: Section 3, Ch. 28). A firm mandate to local authorities is detailed in Chapter 28 of A 21 which calls for local authorities to produce a strategy for sustainable development for each of their localities: a 'Local Agenda 21'¹⁰.

Essentially UNCED represented a watershed in the fields of international and national sustainability. In the years since this meeting, a multitude of related international meetings and conventions ensued. Significant examples include: the United Nations Conference on Human Rights (Vienna 1993); the United Nations Conference on Population and Development, Cairo 1994; the Global Forum 'Partnerships for Change', Manchester, England 1994¹¹; the United Nations Conferences on Human Settlements Habitat I, Vancouver 1976 and Habitat II, Istanbul, 1996; the Special Session of the General Assembly to Review and Appraise the Implementation of Agenda 21, June 1997¹²; the United Nations Conference on Social Development, Copenhagen 1995; the World Conference on Women and Development, Beijing 1995.

Aside from the progress made in focusing world attention on sustainability as a global objective, these international conferences, agreements and conventions still remain largely untested and their success cannot be assured. Opinion is divided over the political intentions and potential outcomes of these agreements 'many...believe that these conventions are structured to favour the status quo' (O'Riordan, 1996: 141). Others are of the opinion that these meetings show major foresight and represent at least the emergence of shared responsibility for managing the planet (*ibid.*).

The institutional evolution of sustainable development which occurred through international conferences was paralleled by an emerging theoretical debate around the concept. The following sections examine the theoretical evolution of sustainability.

¹⁰ Refer to Section 4.6

¹¹ Focused on non-governmental organisations role in 'Cities and Sustainable Development';

¹² Drew attention to the work of local authorities and other sectors in delivering LA 21 plans and reaffirmed the UN commitment to LA 21.

2.3 The Evolution of Sustainable Development from the 'Environment-Development' Debate

Early environmental discourse centered on the environment-development debate (Redcliff, 1994). There are multiple notions and debates about what constitutes development and whether environment and development are compatible objectives.

The term development has multiple connotations. In a broad sense it can mean a process of change involving distinct alternatives to the established pattern (Torgerson, 1995). Development is however usually defined in terms of economic growth as countries experience increased growth their productive capacity expands and they develop (Redcliff, 1987). Traditionally development has been measured in economic and quantitative terms, using indicators such as growth of gross national product (GNP), investments and savings¹³. These indicators are crude and restrictive and function purely on an economic level. Schumacher (1973: 162) refers to them as 'vast abstractions which have their usefulness in the study of developed countries but have virtually no relevance to development problems as such'. Schumacher proceeds to denounce the use of quantitative measurements such as GNP, referring to them as 'utterly misleading'. He goes on to assert that using GNP as a criterion for success 'must of necessity lead to phenomena which can only be described as neo-colonialism'.

As a result of the criticism, the Brundtland Commission claimed to use the term development 'in its broadest sense'. This has since been challenged by theorists such as Torgerson (1995: 12) who contends that in effect the use of development within the Brundtland Report 'is actually rather narrow, amounting to no more than a fairly conventional notion of progress'.

In addition to defining and measuring the concept of development, debate has also focused on its promotion and achievement. In the 1960s, the UN led international thought about how best to achieve development. The first UN Development Decade was in the 1960s where the approach to ensuring increasing world-wide development was optimistic and centered purely on economic and materialist solutions. Developing countries were

¹³ This conception is borne out by institutions such as the World Bank, the UN and USAID, who 'have spearheaded development since World War II' (Urquhart, 1995: 16).

viewed as having 'quick-fix' underdevelopment problems. These problems were viewed as easily reversible through applying western philosophies and technologies. Development policy was pursued within a paradigm which assumed that developing countries should adopt the conditions of production and consumption imposed by capitalism (Urquhart, 1995). This prevailing attitude was described by Schumacher (1973: 141) as 'what is good for the rich must also be good for the poor'.

Working within this pro-capitalist paradigm the main approach to overcoming the problems of poverty and 'underdevelopment' was international aid. This approach often proved to be devastating for less developed countries. There were many negative long-term effects of development aid projects. Key among these were: environmental destruction, as countries exploited their natural resources base to generate foreign exchange; the increasing dependence and indebtedness of developing countries (Elliot, 1994); and the reduction of peoples' capacity to manage their own environment on a sustainable productive basis (Redclift, 1987). In addition to these long-term effects, the conditionalities imposed by multilateral development organisations for development aid, have negatively affected the quality of life for millions of people (Urquhart, 1995). These conditionalities include the reduction in social spending and an emphasis on generating foreign exchange in order to meet debt repayments.

Schumacher (1973: 138) rejects the concept of 'western aid' on the basis of its materialist approach. He asserts that:

... the relative failure of aid, or at least our disappointment with the effectiveness of aid, has something to do with our materialist philosophy which makes us liable to overlook the most important preconditions of success, which are generally invisible... we tend to think of development, not in terms of evolution, but in terms of creation.

Schumacher (1973: 140) furthers his argument against the material factors which western society perceives as central to a country's development. He maintains that 'development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organisation, and discipline ... it follows from this that development is not primarily a problem for economists, least of all for economists whose expertise is founded on a crudely materialist philosophy'.

Not surprisingly, difficulties inherent within the development debate began emerging. For instance, Redclift (1994: 20) asserts that 'if human progress could only be achieved at the expense of destroying the environment, and ultimately the resources on which it depends, then a theory of development lacks legitimacy'.

In the decades following the 1960s, it became increasingly clear that there was no single model for achieving global development. Redclift and Sage (1994: 8) pointed out that 'after the global restructuring that followed the debt crisis of 1982, the environment emerged from the shadows of the 'development debate'. With this change of focus came a realisation that development should not only encompass financial and social activities but those related to population, namely the use of natural resources and their resulting impacts on the environment (Elliot, 1994:6). Previous perceptions of global development had neglected to acknowledge the environmental limits to growth and in turn this influenced the current paradigm of sustainable development (Raphele, 1997).

2.4 Introducing Sustainability

The term 'sustainable development' was developed by conservationists who were seeking to ensure that nature conservation became a prerequisite to economic development. The term emerged out of the controversial environment-development debate. Sustainable development is becoming more widely adopted within environmental economic and social discourse.

The change in focus away from development and towards sustainable development did not proceed without criticism. Theorists such as Redclift (1994: 21) saw the incorporation of the concept of "sustainability" within the account of "development" as a move to make development more palatable because of the link with natural limits. Others challenged the move to the use of sustainable development by arguing that, in fact, in order to be sustainable, development must mean something else entirely¹⁴ (Urquhart, 1995).

Initially the focus of sustainable development was on 'greening' economic development. Gradually the concept was broadened to include a more holistic human development element and, therefore, the social and ethical aspects gained recognition. There has also

¹⁴ Discussed further in section 2.5

been a growing realisation that whilst sustainable development remains inevitably concerned with the future it is also inextricably linked with the present.

Much of the critical discourse pertaining to sustainable development has been countered by updating the term with its increasingly popular derivative, sustainability. O'Riordan (1998a: 1) argues that there is merit in replacing 'sustainable development' with the concept of 'sustainability' which represents in his view: '...less of an objective and more of a pathway, or a transition, to a state where nature and humanity have come to terms with themselves in a demonstration of mutual respect and forgiveness'. Munro (1995: 34) supports O'Riordan's assertion that sustainability represents less of a static concept to which society must aspire, instead, it is a continuous process:

Sustainability is not a precise goal but a criterion for positive attitudes and practices; it is a continuous or iterative process, through and throughout which experience in managing complex systems is accumulated.

Barry (1996: 117) provides a clear distinction between sustainability and sustainable development:

Sustainability refers to the ensemble of social-nature relations in general material and moral terms, which is to be distinguished from sustainable development which refers more specifically to continuously productive economic-ecological exchanges, in terms of non-deteriorating capital stock (both natural and human).

He goes on to describe sustainability as a 'set' of which sustainable development is a 'subset' concerned with a much wider set of human relations.

The strength of sustainability, however, lies in its use as a flexible intermediary crossing sectoral and political barriers. The term is further strengthened by its mainstream, international acceptance. Both sustainability and sustainable development are equally applicable throughout the study; however, sustainability will be used in preference to sustainable development. Thus, for the purposes of this study the term sustainability in the context of this research will refer to:

a process which aims towards supporting human-life at a specific level of well-being throughout current and future generations, and ensuring environmental, social and economic concerns are

integrated; all keeping within the carrying capacity of the environment

(adapted from Barry, 1996)

In order to truly appreciate the complexity of the sustainability debate, the discourse surrounding the term must be examined in more depth. This chapter turns to a consideration of the associated philosophies and ideologies of sustainability.

2.5 Sustainability: examining the philosophical discourse of the associated paradigms

The debates and trends around the approach to sustainability are lengthy, absorbing and often controversial. The concept is so abstruse that it is only through evaluating the discourse surrounding sustainability that insight into the term can be found. In this sense, this section becomes a 'metadiscourse', a discourse around discourse (Redclift, 1994: 23). The various approaches to defining sustainability range from etymological¹⁵ to philosophical, economic and neo-classical theory. Each of these approaches has developed in accordance with the differing ideological beliefs about the environment.

The following sections aim to explore, briefly, the enigma of sustainability, analysing its conflicting nature and divides and philosophies. For ease of analysis, issues are grouped into broad categories which should assist in obtaining clarity about the sustainability debate, namely the ecocentric, anthropocentric and economic philosophical approaches. There are a number of key common principles which are constant throughout each of the different approaches to sustainability, these are discussed in the following section.

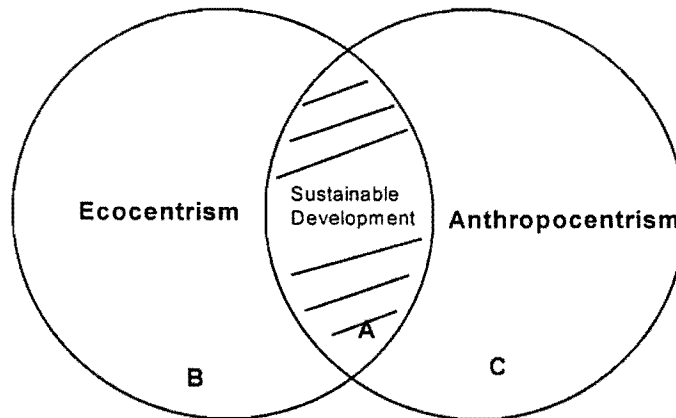
2.5.1 Shared general principles of sustainable development

Numerous paradigms and associated philosophies are applied to sustainability. Within the sustainability debate, there are two major schools of thought: the anthropocentric and ecocentric sustainability paradigms. These paradigms are at opposite ends of the sustainability spectrum¹⁶. Despite their fundamental differences, both have the basic principles of sustainability in common. This is illustrated in the following diagram:

¹⁵ Sustainable derives from the Latin term *sus-tenere* meaning to uphold (Redclift, 1994)

¹⁶ The spectrum of sustainability is illustrated in the sustainability ladder Figure 2.3

Figure 2.1 The Common Ground in the Sustainability Debate



- A Shared General Principles of Sustainable Development**
- B Ecocentric Paradigm**
- C Anthropocentric Paradigm**

The definition of sustainability adopted in this study is included in section 2.4. This definition highlights the fact that sustainability is concerned with the integration of environmental issues with social and economic issues. This more holistic approach must work within the carrying capacity of the earth to ensure that the following general principles of sustainability are adhered to. These principles are intra-generational equity, inter-generational equity and transfrontier responsibility, working within the environmental carrying capacity and the principle of subsidiarity.

The principle of 'intra-generational equity', or social justice within the current generation, states that sustainable development contains within it a principle of human needs, meeting the needs of current generations. 'Inter-generational equity' or 'futurity' refers to social justice between generations. It implies that one generation should pass on the earth to the next generation in the same condition (or better) as which they inherited it.

The ethical argument behind inter-generational equity is that future generations have the right to expect an inheritance sufficient to allow them the capacity to generate for themselves a level of welfare no less than the enjoyed by the current generation.

(Turner, 1993: 7)

At the current rate of consumption and consequent resource depletion, the aims of intra- and inter-generational equity seem potentially conflicting (O'Riordan 1989). In meeting what is perceived as their current needs/wants, the current generation are pushing the limits of the earth to what Torgerson (1995: 13) refers to as, an 'environmental crisis'. Without a fundamental change in societal behaviour involving a modification of values and consumption, inter-generational equity is essentially impossible. The third principle of sustainable development goes some way towards addressing this problem, it states that we must operate within the carrying capacity of our environment. There are environmental limits to human activity. Agreeing amongst ourselves what these limits are and then working within them is a difficult task. This is arguably the most difficult and yet the most crucial principle of sustainable development.

The Natural Step¹⁷ organisation has developed a useful set of factors which it has named 'system conditions'. The first three system conditions are useful parameters to ensure that we limit our actions in keeping with the environmental carrying capacity of the earth. The first three system conditions are:

'for a society to be sustainable nature's functions and diversity must not systematically be subject to:

- 1) increasing concentrations of substances from the earth's crust;**
- 2) increasing concentrations of substances made by society, and;**
- 3) over-harvesting and other forms of ecosystem manipulation'¹⁸**

(TNS, 1999).

The fourth principle of sustainable development has a more pragmatic conception. The principle of subsidiarity deems that decisions should be made by the communities who are closest and most sensitive to local level issues. Adhering to the principle of subsidiarity, policy-formulation, decision-making and administration is taken at the lowest or most local

¹⁷ The Natural Step is a non-profit environmental education organization which has developed a sustainability framework for businesses, communities, academia, government entities and individuals which is based on a scientific consensus from Sweden's top scientists.

¹⁸ The Natural Step has four system conditions, for the purposes of this study the fourth step was considered too vague to be useful in terms of local sustainability planning. The fourth step states that 'resources must be used fairly and efficiently in order to meet basic human needs worldwide'(TNS 1999).

level commensurate with effectiveness. Local government is therefore one of the essential players in subsidiarity¹⁹(Selman, 1996: 15).

The final fundamental principle is 'transfrontier responsibility'. This principle prevents sustainability taking place in one locality at the expense of environmental conditions elsewhere. Again, a major shift in current practice is required. An example of the current absence of international transfrontier responsibility by select developed countries is the accepted routine of shipping excess waste and pollution to less developed countries who are perceived as having more space to deal with it. Whilst financial compensation changes hands, no consideration is given to the environmental consequences for the receiving country.

These principles represent the essence of sustainability. Although the paradigms of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism and the economist approach to sustainability are based on these basic principles, their underlying philosophies and approaches differ.

2.5.2 The Anthropocentric Sustainability Paradigm

The anthropocentric philosophical approach to sustainable development places humans at the highest rank in the hierarchy of life forms. Consequently this approach has served to alienate the ecocentric sector of environmental and sustainable development discourse (Selman, 1996). Anthropocentrists view everything in terms of human value. Nature is viewed in relation to what it can provide in the service of humankind.

The essence of the anthropocentric approach to the natural world is that humankind is above nature and has the right -divine or otherwise - to subjugate it.

(Richardson 1997: 44)

Anthropocentrism is the dominant force within international society. It has been adopted by the traditional political parties, by business and trade union interests, and by government and bureaucracies generally (Richardson, 1997). The Brundtland Report adopted the anthropocentric approach to sustainable development, arguing that 'Our message is, above all, directed towards people, whose well-being is the ultimate goal of all environmental and development policies' (WCED 1987: xiv).

¹⁹ This role for local government is discussed in section 4.4

The anthropocentric philosophical approach to sustainable development is therefore concerned with the fulfillment of human needs and wants. It represents a significantly marginalised version of the ecocentric paradigm. Within the anthropocentric philosophy, the natural environment is seen in terms of its utility to the economic system upon which the dominant capitalist system thrives.

With anthropocentrism, the shift towards sustainability is being approached in an incremental, reformist way. The reformist approach, as opposed to the radical approach advocated by ecocentrics, aims to limit the repercussions on the existing economic and political ideologies. Minimal restructuring of institutions is required and equity and democracy are utilised and encouraged within the boundaries of the status quo so as not to significantly disrupt it. These philosophies are illustrated in the 'treadmill approach' in Figure 2.3.

Using the Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development, the UNCED knowingly adopted the anthropocentric paradigm with its reformist approach. The prevailing anthropocentric paradigm is reflected in the first Principle of UNCED (UN, 1992: Annex 1), which states that:

human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

Richardson (1997) argues that UNCED failed on the biocentric front, concerning itself purely with defence of the power interests and living standards of the developed centres in the Northern Hemisphere. He asserts that:

In ecological or biocentric terms Rio was a failure, doing nothing to reverse the historic process whereby trade-led growth has led to ecological degradation through the overexploitation of natural resources.

(Richardson, 1997: 54)

Richardson (1997: 55) does however concede that in future years we may come to see Brundtland in a better light, by considering the concept of sustainable development not as an end in itself but as a tentative first step which took politicians along the road from anthropocentricity towards ecocentricity.

2.5.3 The Ecocentric Sustainability Paradigm

The ecocentric or biocentric sustainability philosophy is based on a belief that nature and ecology are the central guiding force(s) setting the parameters for social and economic behaviour. Within the ecocentric philosophy, humans are an intrinsic part of nature in contrast to the anthropocentric ideology which places nature under human control. For Richardson (1997: 45), 'the biocentric approach... is anti-materialist, it eschews the pursuit of wealth as a goal itself and seeks to enhance the non-material, or spiritual human dimension'.

There are different schools of thought within the ecocentric philosophy ranging from the extreme deep ecologists who 'seem to come close to rejecting even the sustainable utilisation of nature's assets' (Turner, 1993: 3) to the liberal ecocentrics, described in this section, who adopt a less radical perspective.

One of the underlying concepts of ecocentric sustainability is that of a system's 'carrying capacity'. In general, terms the concept of 'carrying capacity' refers to the upper limit which can be supported before a system deteriorates. This refers to human population, agricultural exploitation, recreational usage, vehicle pollution, and so on. The earth's system has two principal functions, namely as a 'source' or supplier of natural resources, and as a 'sink' for atmospheric, hydrological and other processes which provide essential life support (Dobson, 1995). Sustainable development requires that the earth's carrying capacity is not exceeded, i.e. its 'source' or 'sink' functions are not diminished or exploited. Selman (1996: 8) predicts that 'if this notional upper capacity is transgressed, there may be irreversible effects within a generation'.

Ecocentrics believe that the dominant anthropocentric paradigm is functioning in a way which ignores carrying capacity and is therefore fundamentally responsible for global environmental problems. In this context, achieving sustainable development requires a new moral and ethical view of nature which takes account of the interests and values of all living things (Baker *et al*, 1997). This new philosophy suggests that in order to satisfy the ecocentric ideology, sustainable development necessitates the forging of a partnership based on reciprocity between humankind and nature. Although it opposes a human centered approach to sustainability, the ecocentric philosophy advocates the use of

'appropriate' technology - that is technology in keeping with natural laws, small in scale which maintains a balance between human technology and nature (Selman, 1996). Labelled by Schumacher (1976: 149) as 'intermediate technology', the emphasis is placed on labour-intensive rather than capital intensive industries. This concept is particularly relevant in developing countries as intermediate or appropriate technology is more simple, cheaper to purchase, easily maintained and 'in keeping with the relatively unsophisticated environment in which it is to be utilised' (Schumacher 1976: 151). The use of technology in the ecocentric sustainable world is contained within the ideals of social and natural purposes and values.

Linked to appropriate technology and at the heart of ecocentrism is the principle of 'human scale', an issue which has received much attention over the past three decades (Kohr, 1957; Schumacher, 1976; Sale, 1978, and; Alberly and Kinzley, 1984). The concept became popularised with Schumacher's (1976) seminal work '*Small is Beautiful - a study of economics as if people mattered*'. Central to Schumacher's discourse around human scale is the rejection of the trend towards state centralisation and corporate giantism which he also terms globalism. Today this reflects the contemporary debate around globalisation.

Essentially the current trend world-wide is towards globalisation. A global political economy exists where transnational companies are engaged in a world-wide co-production of goods, and where social and economic forces defy national boundaries. Basic to these global political economies are the new technologies linked with computers and telecommunication such as electronic mail and the Internet. Globalisation has resulted in the linking of previously geographically dispersed and once autonomous nation-states into a coherent giant whole (Fischer and Black, 1995).

According to Schumacher (1976: 133), the 'principle of human scale' requires a reversal in this trend towards 'globalism'. He advocates 'a new direction...that shall lead back to the real needs of man, and that also means: to *the actual size of man*'. Man is small and therefore small is beautiful. To go for giantism is to go for self-destruction' (Schumacher, 1976: 133). To operate within Schumacher's (1976) principles we should be essentially deconstructing, aiming towards decentralisation, localism, community structures, democracy and power-dispersal to the local level.

The Ecocentric paradigm differs from the reformist anthropocentric²⁰ and economist²¹ paradigms in its philosophical approach, as it does not represent a modification of the status quo. Instead, the ecocentric paradigm is based on a fundamental radical shift in political and economic ideology, institutional structures, and prevailing philosophies (see Figure 2.2). Essentially the ecocentric paradigm relies on nothing short of a 'global revolution'. It requires a move away from multi-national companies and capitalist economics. This serves to create wealth disparities and leads to growing environmental costs as pollution accumulates and the natural environment is incrementally destroyed. To achieve ecocentrism requires the mobilisation, empowerment and capacity-building of the ordinary citizen to challenge the current 'unsustainability' of the status quo.

The orientation of the ecocentric philosophical approach to sustainable development with regard to political scenarios and policy implications is detailed in Figure 2.3, the 'ladder of sustainable development'. It may be due to its more radical philosophical approach that the ecocentric paradigm remains the minority approach to sustainability. The following section will discuss a more popular paradigm, a derivative of the anthropocentric paradigm, the economist approach.

2.5.4 The Economist Sustainability Paradigm

Closely allied with the anthropocentric sustainability paradigm is the economist paradigm. An extension of the anthropocentric philosophy, the economist philosophical approach to sustainability places financial resources as a central factor. The economists view the earth's resources purely in terms of financial capital. Pure economists are arguably stoical in their assumption that sustainable development is solely an economic term. For example in his chapter entitled '*defining sustainable development*' Pearce, an economist, (1993: 7) states:

While it is a popular pastime to collect different and incompatible definitions of sustainable development, inspection of the words and of their origins suggests that defining sustainable development is really not a difficult issue...What is being referred to is sustainable economic development. The term 'sustainable' is not open to much dispute: it means 'enduring' and 'lasting' and 'to keep in being'. So, sustainable development is economic development that lasts.

²⁰ Refer to Section 2.5.2

²¹ Refer to Section 2.5.4

No less controversial is the statement by Pearce and Warford (1993: 4) which states that 'if the causes of environmental degradation lie in the workings of the economy, then so does the solution'. The economic approach has a narrow paradigm centered purely on the economy as a solution to environmental and social problems. Economists, like anthropocentrists, advocate a reformist approach to sustainability. Moffat (1996: 48) asserts that: 'the problem with the [economic] ... definitions is that they try to extend the neo-classical economic perspective to embrace sustainable development whilst ecocentrists are searching for a new paradigm of sustainable development'.

The economic philosophy of sustainability revolves around the notion of 'economic development that lasts' or the 'constant capital rule'. Here the current generation must ensure that it leaves the next generation a stock of capital no less than it has now (*ibid.*: 23). In this sense, it is related to the inter-generational principle of the anthropocentric approach. The constant capital rule is divided by different philosophical approaches. The transition to sustainability is viewed as an evolution from weak sustainability to strong sustainability. O'Riordan (1996: 146) depicts this transition as having four stages:

Figure 2.2 Economistic Stages in the Transition to Sustainability

<i>Very weak sustainability</i>	Stock of natural and human-made capital constant over time, but freely substitutable
<i>Weak sustainability</i>	Protection of critical natural capital, but with measures to allow room for ignorance over thresholds of tolerance
<i>Strong sustainability</i>	Precautionary principle ²² applies to safeguarding critical natural capital: all development follows the doctrine of public trust through planned measures of environmental improvement
<i>Very strong sustainability</i>	Steady-state economy; local social, economic and political self-reliance; global citizenship through educational entitlements; redistribution of property rights through burden sharing and paying off legacies of ecological damage

²² The 'precautionary principle' is Principle 15 adopted at UNCED, 1992 (Annex 1). This states that: 'In order to protect the environment, the precautionary approach shall be widely applied by States according to their capabilities. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation'.

The first stage in the transition is the 'weak sustainability' paradigm. Weak sustainability is characterised by indifference to the form of capital stock being passed on between generations. Figure 2.2 distinguishes between 'very weak sustainability' and 'weak sustainability'. In the 'very weak sustainability' stage, the forms of capital being passed on are completely substitutable for one another as long as the net quantity remains the same. For example, natural environment can be substituted for increasing stock of roads or other human-made capital (*ibid*, 15). The natural environment is simply another form of capital and no exemption is applied to those forms of capital which may reduce the quality of life. Maintaining a similar approach, the 'weak sustainability' stage is characterised by the perception of human-made and natural capital as freely substitutable. However, 'weak sustainability' differs from the 'very weak' in that it protects the natural capital which is deemed critical.

In a move towards true sustainability, the 'strong sustainability' approach integrates pure economics with more ecological ideals. 'Strong sustainability' upholds the notion of preserving the overall stock of capital but, in contrast to the 'weak' approach, provides special dispensation for the environment (see Figure 2.2). Natural capital is protected or conserved in the case of strong sustainability due to the belief that the destruction of natural capital may affect the well-being of the next generation. Natural capital assets are finite, once lost it may not be possible to recreate them, and the 'maintenance of well-being is central to [the] strong sustainability' philosophical approach (Pearce, 1993:16). This concept was captured in the UNCED 'precautionary principle' which states that 'where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation'. The precautionary principle is an important part of the 'strong sustainability' economist philosophy. The final economic stage in this transition to sustainability is termed 'very strong sustainability'. This stage represents the aforementioned 'Ideal Model' of a sustainability society and includes a steady-state economy; local, social, economic and political self-reliance; global citizenship through educational entitlements; redistribution of property rights through burden sharing and paying off legacies of ecological damage.

To gain a perspective on the position of modern society within this model, O'Riordan (1996) believes that 'contemporary society is not yet properly on the very weak sustainability mode'. This is evident as in its current mode society is depleting the stock of

natural capital over time, thus, the stock of natural and human-made capital is not constant over time.

The orientation of the weak and strong economist sustainability approaches alongside the anthropocentric and ecocentric paradigms is illustrated in the 'ladder of sustainability' in the following section (Figure 2.3). The 'ladder of sustainability' provides an illustrated example of the orientation of the three sustainability paradigms discussed in Section 2.4, namely, the ecocentric, anthropocentric, and economic approaches to sustainability. It allows clear comparisons to be drawn between the various philosophies associated with each paradigm.

2.5.5 The Ladder of Sustainability

The numerous approaches, philosophies and pragmatic approaches detailed within section 2.4 are effectively illustrated in the 'ladder of sustainable development'. The four approaches to sustainable development within the ladder are not entirely discrete. Instead, they represent broad schools of thought (Baker *et al*, 1997: 18). The approaches represent frameworks for putting sustainable development into practice. Reading across the 'rungs' of the ladder allows identification of the different political scenarios and policy implications associated with each of the philosophical approaches.

The 'treadmill' approach represents the current political scenario in most nations of the world. The prevailing philosophy is anthropocentric; the prevailing political ideology is capitalism. Baker *et al* (1997: 12) elaborate on this approach:

[Here] ...the natural environment is seen in terms of its utility to the economic system. Within this approach sustainable development becomes merely a synonym for sustainable growth where, in its crudest form, development is measured solely in terms of the expansion of gross national product (GNP)... The limitation of this approach in the context of sustainable development is that it focuses on the monetary dimension of economic activity and ignores the environmental impact of this activity.

Essentially this approach epitomises an unsustainable society. The 'weak' and 'strong' sustainability approaches represent the intermediate scenarios on the path to the ecocentric Ideal Model.

Figure 2.3 The Ladder of Sustainability

Approach to sustainable development	Role of Economy and Nature of Growth	Geographical focus	Approach to Nature	Institutions	Policy and sectoral integration	Technology	Redistribution	Public Participation	Underlying Philosophy
Ideal Model sustainable development	Right livelihood: equality; meeting needs not wants; changes in patterns of production and consumption	Bioregionalism; extensive local self-sufficiency.	Promoting and protecting biodiversity	Decentralisation of political, legal, social and economic institutions	Holistic inter-sectoral integration	Labour-intensive appropriate technology	Inter- and intra-generational equity	Bottom-up community structures and control. New approach to valuing work	ECOCENTRIC / BIOCENTRIC
Strong sustainable development	Environmentally regulated market; changes in patterns of production and consumption	Heightened local economic self-sufficiency, promoted in the context of global markets	Environmental management and protection	Some restructuring of institutions	Environmental policy integration across sectors	Clean technology; product life-cycle management ; mixed labour and capital-intensive technology	Strengthened redistributive policy	Open-ended dialogue and envisioning	
Weak sustainable development	Market-reliant environmental policy; changes in patterns of consumption	Initial moves to local economic self-sufficiency, minor initiatives to alleviate the power of global markets	Replacing finite resource with capital; exploitation of renewable resources	Minimal restructuring of institutions	Sector-driven approach	End-of-pipe technical solutions; mixed labour- and capital-intensive technology	Equity a marginal issue	Top-down initiatives; limited state-environmental movements dialogue	
Treadmill approach	Exponential growth	Global markets and global economy	Natural environment is seen in terms of its utility to the economic system	No restructuring	No integration	Capital-intensive production technologies; progressive automation	Equity not an issue	Very limited dialogue between the state and environmental movements	ANTHROPO-CENTRIC

(Table adapted from Baker et al, 1997: 9)

The 'weak' sustainability approach aims to integrate capitalist growth with environmental concerns. It is closely associated with an anthropocentric view of nature, where nature is seen as providing both material and environmental wealth but both forms of wealth have only a social purpose. This approach epitomises the economist approach to sustainability²³ (Pearce *et al* 1993). The environment is seen in monetary terms and not, for example for its spiritual and cultural value, 'it thus leaves the neo-classical paradigm with all its limitations, intact' (Redclift 1993: 13).

In contrast to 'weak' sustainability where economic development is a precondition of environmental protection, strong sustainability places environmental protection as a precondition of economic development. 'Strong' sustainability is the goal of the majority of the international conventions outlined in section 2.2, in particular the Brundtland Report and the UNCED. Brundtland calls for a different kind of economic development which is more focused on the environmental dimension than has been the case in the past (Baker *et al* 1997: 15).

The Ideal Model represents a truly sustainable society, where human kind lives within the finite ecological constraints of the planet. Here growth is measured in qualitative terms through quality of life rather than standard of living, non-human life is seen as valuable in its own right and its intrinsic value is independent of its usefulness to humans. Individual thinkers hold different opinions as to the exact policy implications of the Ideal model. However all are agreed that environmental protection is necessary and will require severe restraints on the consumption of the Earth's resources. This entails a modification of human kinds related economic and other activities.

The discourse around the various philosophies being attached to sustainability is paralleled by the 'ideology debate'. The current global domination of anthropocentrism sustains capitalism: the dominant world economic system. Capitalism is the economic system in which the means of production and distribution are privately owned and operated for profit. The capitalist industrialist ideology and its implications for sustainable development are discussed in the next section.

²³ Outlined in Section 2.5.4

2.6 The Political Ideologies Informing Sustainability

Each of the aforementioned philosophical approaches represents a general trend in the underlying ideology within sustainable development discourse. The underlying ideology of the anthropocentric paradigm relies on the dominant capitalist industrialising model. Although the mainstream dialectic revolves around methods and priorities for achieving sustainability, the political ideology generally remains unchallenged. The environmental crisis has fueled the emergence of various counter-ideologies, resulting in a fundamental paradigm shift in political theory (Eckersley 1992: 127).

Contemporary environmental issues are socially constructed under capitalism (Redclift, 1992). Capitalism has defining characteristics that threaten global sustainability: the private ownership of resources, the need to maximise profits and for capital accumulation, and the competition within a free-market economy. These characteristics have in many cases led to 'the exploitation of environmental resources without sufficient concern for the long-term conservation of those resources or the environmental impact of such activities' (Elliot, 1994: 28). This scenario is represented by the 'Treadmill Approach' on the Ladder of Sustainability in Figure 2.3. Here the natural environment is seen in terms of its utility to the economic system. Consequently there is little or no sectoral integration or policy coordination, equity is not an issue and extreme wealth differentials exist. Baker *et al* (1997: 12) asserts that: 'essentially, the treadmill approach is geared to the production imperative with little or no concern for environmental consequences'. Eckersley (1992: 121) criticises the competitive and expansionary dynamics of capital accumulation, the uneven development it generates (both within and between nations) and the market rationale which gives priority to short-term interests over long term interests through the practice of 'discounting the future'.

Given capitalism's emphasis on accumulation, ever greater numbers of people and places are being absorbed and commodified. Colonisation served to increase the spread of capitalism across the globe into the African continent reaching countries such as South Africa. Within the developing world, capitalism is a major contributor to contemporary environmental and sustainable development problems. Elliot (1994: 28) elaborates:

[within] the capitalist world economy, societies came under the same pressure to raise productivity and sell goods on the competitive market. The nature of these goods however, was dictated by overseas rather than

local needs and tastes. The cumulative effect was substantial change in the ecologies of these regions, the restructuring of social relationships between individuals and groups in society and greater demands on the physical environment.

(Elliot, 1994: 28)

Eckersley (1992: 22) nevertheless asserts that the threat to global sustainability has wider origins than capitalism, stating that: 'the modern ecological crisis is the quintessential crisis of *industrialism* rather than just Western capitalism'.

Contemporary references to 'sustainability' invariably use the reformist anthropocentric paradigm²⁴. Fischer and Black (1995: xv) contend that the anthropocentric sustainability paradigm merely serves to reframe environmental discourse to accommodate industrialism, stating that it 'seeks to subsume environmentalists in a discussion grounded in the interests of business and industry'. Richardson (1997: 58) also rejects the current use of sustainability based on its anthropocentric paradigm. He argues that its' underlying ideology represents a major contributing factor in the problems which it seeks to overcome:

Sustainable development, with its anthropocentric underpinning and inherent contradictions must go. It has no place within the biocentric paradigm since it has been effectively hijacked by the proponents of anthropocentrism.'

Essentially the capitalist industrialist ideology contradicts the fundamental principles of sustainability²⁵. Under this system, environmental costs are growing daily as pollution accumulates and the natural environment becomes incrementally destroyed. A move from present 'unsustainability' towards the 'Ideal Model'²⁶ of sustainable society requires a shift away from anthropocentrism and the dominant capitalist industrialising ideology.

In order to achieve a sustainable society and obtain this 'Ideal Model' a structural change in society is required. Baker *et al* (1997: 6) asserts that 'the promotion of sustainable development must form part of a conscious process of achieving social change'. This notion is supported by Goldsmith *et al* (1972: 6) in *Blueprint for Survival* who assert that the sustainable use of the environment can never be achieved without 'structural changes in society'. This extends beyond changes in individual lifestyles or changes of policy, to

²⁴ UNCED, WCED and subsequent international initiatives (Refer to Section 2.2)

²⁵ Refer to Section 2.5.1

²⁶ See Figure 3

embrace a profound shift in the institutional pattern and/or the cultural matrix of a society (*ibid.* 1972). A more sustainable society entails a move away from the 'treadmill approach' (Figure 2.3) based on capitalism and anthropocentrism. Capitalism has been proved dysfunctional from a sustainability perspective. Thus, many theorists have explored the alternatives to the capitalist industrial ideology and technocratic strategy (Eckersley 1992, Doherty and de Geus 1996, Dryzek 1996, Torgerson 1995). These counter-ideologies extend across the political spectrum ranging from 'eco-Marxism' (Dryzek, 1996: 114), to 'ecosocialism', 'eco-feminism', 'deep ecology', and more recently 'ecocentrism' (Fischer and Black, 1995: xiii). Evidence suggests that even in its most anthropocentric form, sustainability can only be achieved if there is a shift in philosophy from a narrow human-centered approach to a more ecocentric philosophy. Each of the aforementioned counter-ideologies is rooted in the ecocentric philosophy. However, none of these has been put into practice on a significant scale, and their practical application remains untested. The majority of these ecocentric counter-ideologies are radical in nature, requiring extreme and fundamental changes to societal structures, and economies. Naess (1989: 156) considers the dilemma between a radical and a reformist approach to a new political ideology:

Reform or revolution? I envisage a change of revolutionary depth and size by means of many smaller steps in a radically new direction. Does this essentially place me amongst the political reformists? Scarcely. The direction is revolutionary, the steps are reformatory.

(Cited in de Geus, 1996: 188)

Sustainability represents a facilitatory tool to guide these reformatory steps towards a sustainable society. However the question arises, can sustainability fulfill a role as a consensus building tool?

2.7 Sustainability - a Consensus Building Tool

Having examined the origins of sustainability, the various approaches to sustainability and the political ideologies informing sustainability, this section will analyse the value of the term 'sustainability'. It assesses the true importance of the term and considers its many weaknesses and strengths.

Theorists argue that sustainable development is devalued by the inherent contradictions which exist with the construction of the term. The terms 'sustainable' and 'development'

are in essence conflicting and aimed at reconciling two contradictory processes, namely economic development and environmental protection (Baker, 1997). The conventional view of development is infused with the idea of progress and economic growth, which in turn implies the use of resources. Conversely, sustainability implies limits on resource consumption (Goulet, 1995: 44).

Linked to this disparity is the absence of a definitive understanding of sustainable development. Despite increasing popularity and support for the concept, it remains ambiguous and elusive. Redclift (1994: 8), asserts that:

'sustainable development', although a useful overarching term to describe normative objectives, has little explanatory power. In this sense it is hardly a concept at all.

This ambiguous nature leaves the term open to misinterpretation and abuse. The absence of definition causes the term to fall short of proposing a method of revolutionary reform and has resulted in the concept being embraced by both conservatives and radicals alike (O'Riordan 1998a), as the following two quotes denote:

[sustainable development] is sufficiently vague to allow conflicting parties, factions and interests to adhere to it without losing credibility. It is an expression of political correctness which seeks to bridge the unbridgeable divide between the anthropocentric and biocentric approaches to politics.

(Baker *et al*, 1997: 5)

Everything these days is supposed to be sustainable... In practice, lip service is being paid to some sort of environmental protection.

(O'Riordan 1998a: 2)

The lack of a precise definition for 'sustainable development' is seen by some as the concept's greatest weakness. It is argued that this will, in time, lead to discrediting the term, stripping it of its usefulness. Conversely, some current thinkers contend that the very strength of sustainable development lies in its nebulous nature (Munro 1995, O'Riordan 1998a, Baker *et al* 1997). These theorists contend that the term's ambiguity serves to stimulate discourse in areas previously ignored. Baker *et al* (1997: 7) state that because of the perceived conflicts 'it has... allowed groups with different and often conflicting interests to reach some common ground upon which concrete policies have been developed'. Torgerson (1995: 11) proposes that the vague and conflicting

characteristics of sustainability allow it to operate much like other objectives in public discourse:

The meanings are multiple and conflicting because the plurality of political actors wants 'many things' and 'different things'. The meanings are vague because the vagueness allows for a coalescence of potentially opposed actors to work together for an apparently common end; they can do this without generating the antagonisms that would be sure to arise from an effort to establish a comprehensive strategy to attain a precisely delimited objective.

Fischer and Black (1995: xiv) go so far as to contend that this ambiguity is the explicit purpose behind the conception of the term:

That sustainable development should paper over crucial environmental disagreements is no accident. Indeed the Brundtland Report explicitly introduced the term as a conceptual bridge to bring together environmentalists and industrialists... Formulated in this way, the approach is a concrete expression of corporate environmentalism²⁷.

Whether the reasoning behind the use of the term sustainable development is 'green' capitalism, human centered development or purely biocentric conservation, the overriding fact that these sectors are finding unity is itself a commendable phenomenon. Baker *et al* (1997: 7) uphold this argument, stating that 'the strength of sustainable development lies in its ambiguity and its range'. In this case, to find a definition which is conclusive for sustainable development is to deny the concept of the very essence which makes it successful and widely used.

O'Riordan (1996: 144) puts forward a further explanation for the international acceptance and adoption of the principles of sustainability:

sustainable development...has staying power because most people want to believe in it. It sounds comforting - human well-being and ecological security in a world of peace, goodwill and cultural tolerance- not brought to heel by ecological collapse, militaristic anarchy or debilitating greed. It is an article of faith, similar to other goals of freedom and justice'

It can therefore be argued, that one of the most important facets of sustainability is its use as a consensus building tool. It allows previously conflicting parties to find common

²⁷ Corporate environmentalists are defined by Fischer and Black (1995: xiv) as 'looking for solutions within the parameters of established western institutions, free-market capitalism and liberal democracy in particular... advocating a *reformist* rather than a *radical* environmental strategy.'

ground. It facilitates the integration of environmental issues, previously seen as radical and disruptive, into mainstream political, social and economic discourse. As a consensus building tool sustainability has the potential to lead society from its current phase onto a more a sustainable path²⁸. Additionally sustainability represents a set of principles and an alternative approach to decision-making which is conducive to a transition to sustainability, Rees (1999: 24) contends that:

...planning for ecologically sustainable economic development requires revisiting many of the assumptions upon which prevailing planning and development models are based.

Sustainability in its purest form will require a new ideology and philosophy. This movement is now gathering momentum. There is now conclusive scientific evidence which shows that the current capitalist-led society is not sustainable. The popularity of the term 'sustainable development' represents the growing consensus that things must change.

2.8 Features of a Sustainable Society

There is an abundance of scientific evidence which highlights the unsustainability of society as it currently operates. In order to achieve a more sustainable society an alternative paradigm and prevailing ideology is needed which can fulfill the requirements of the 'Ideal Model' on the Ladder of Sustainability²⁹. The Ideal Model represents a utopian ideal; an ideal based on a sustainability transition, which according to O'Riordan (1996: 140) involves:

a profoundly radical combination of ecological imperative, social redistribution and political empowerment which will involve global management regimes, the limitation of national sovereignty and greatly enhanced local involvement and self-reliance

Essentially the following factors together comprise the Ideal Model of a sustainability society: promoting and protecting biodiversity; decentralising political, legal, social and economic institutions; inter-sectoral integration; inter- and intra- generational equity; bottom-up community structures and control, participatory decision-making, a new approach to valuing work; and utilising a full range of policy tools. Also included are the

²⁸ Represented by the Ideal Model, Figure 3.

²⁹ Figure 2.3

sophisticated use of indicators extending to social dimensions; using appropriate technology with emphasis on the labour-intensive; the geographical focus is on bioregionalism with extensive local self-sufficiency; where the role of the economy and the nature of growth involves meeting needs and not wants; and, changes in the patterns and levels of consumption.

This ideal can be used to develop criteria for evaluating sustainability mechanisms and processes. Local Agenda 21³⁰ (LA 21) represents one of the most significant sustainability planning processes. Crucially LA 21 cites that responsibility for action lies at the local level. LA 21 mandates local government to set in place participatory processes to develop sustainability action plans with their communities. The resultant action plan should then guide local sustainability initiatives.

The twenty seven sustainability principles which guide Agenda 21 and LA 21 were adopted by the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development at the UNCED in 1992.

Many international organisations have developed principles and or criteria for moving towards a sustainable society. These principles include themes similar to those listed above (IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1991, WCED 1987, ICLEI 1995).

2.9 Conclusion

Sustainability has emerged from a global necessity for change. This necessity can be seen from a human perspective as improving quality of life for the present and into the future. Alternatively, the necessity for change can be seen from an ecological perspective based on the threat of the loss of our natural environment.

The threat to our environment³¹ is a global problem. As such, it requires action from all sectors of society, ranging from economists and politicians to corporations and environmentalists. Societal sectors with historically opposing views are having to bridge barriers and discuss the possibilities for action. Sustainability represents the most important example of such a bridge. The ambiguity of the term allows it to represent different things to different people.

³⁰ Introduced in Section 2.2.3

³¹ See definition, Section 1.5

From a pragmatic perspective sustainability represents an alternative approach to decision-making which involves integrating social, economic and environmental issues so that each has equal priority and equal consideration. A transition to sustainability can be achieved through adhering to a series of fundamental principles which are arbitrating in terms of maintaining a quality of life equal to, or greater than, that we experience today.

The fundamental principles of sustainability are based on the ecocentric approach, they are: the principle of inter- and intra generational equity, the principle of transfrontier responsibility, the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of environmental carrying capacity³².

Based on these fundamental principles of sustainability there a number of key themes which directly influence local government sustainability planning. These themes are, the decentralisation of political, legal, social and economic institutions; effective public participation, namely a democratic approach to decision-making and policy formulation, and finally, effective institutionalisation. This final theme, effective institutionalisation, is key to the practical application of the principles of participatory democracy and decentralisation. This theme has two aspects; firstly, there is a need for national legislation which ensures that sustainability processes become statutory requirements³³. Secondly, although linked to the first aspect, is the need for effective local government to undertake these requirements. Effective local government requires greater sectoral and policy integration.

These key local government sustainability planning themes are examined in greater depth in Chapter Four.

The fundamental sustainability principles are referred to throughout this study, for this reason they are summarised for easy reference in the table on the following page:

³² Detailed in greater depth in Section 2.5.1

³³ This first issue is crucial in terms of avoiding joining the plethora of unfunded local government mandates, currently emanating from central government. Mandates remain low priority, largely due to resource constraints, and are therefore neglected and generally ignored. This issue is discussed in greater depth in chapter 7.

Figure 2.4 Quick Reference Table of Sustainability Principles

The fundamental principles of sustainability are:

- inter- and intra- generational equity (ensuring that a good quality of life is enjoyed by all whilst maintaining the resource base so that the quality of life of future generations is not diminished);
- keeping within environmental limits (environmental carrying capacity).
 - ⇒ The Natural Step states that 'for a society to be sustainable nature's functions and diversity must not systematically be subject to:
 - 1) increasing concentrations of substances from the earth's crust;
 - 2) increasing concentrations of substances made by society, and;
 - 3) over-harvesting and other forms of ecosystem manipulation'¹
- subsidiarity (participatory decision-making at the most local level); and,
- transfrontier responsibility (responsibilities for our neighbours as well as ourselves).

(TNS, 1999).



Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical conceptions of this study, discussed in the previous chapter, are rooted in sustainability and more specifically a pragmatic approach to creating a transition to a sustainable society. This chapter proceeds to establish a methodological and philosophical approach for the study. The choice of methodology is vital in determining the quality of research undertaken.

The research paradigm for this study must be sensitive to the social and philosophical context. This study crosses the boundaries between social and natural science, for this reason it draws on methodologies from both these disciplines

3.2 The Research Process

A key objective of this research is to generate realistic and practical recommendations for the implementation of the findings within the case study area. Prinsloo *et al* (1996) assert that 'over the past few years the question of usability and implementability of research findings has been a major point of debate'. This is particularly relevant in South Africa where the acceptance of the RDP³⁴ has intensified the debate on the potential contribution of research that is directed towards national development. For this reason, the findings of the research may contribute to the design of the new metropolitan Unicity structure in the Cape Metropolitan Area.

³⁴ Discussed in detail in Chapter 5

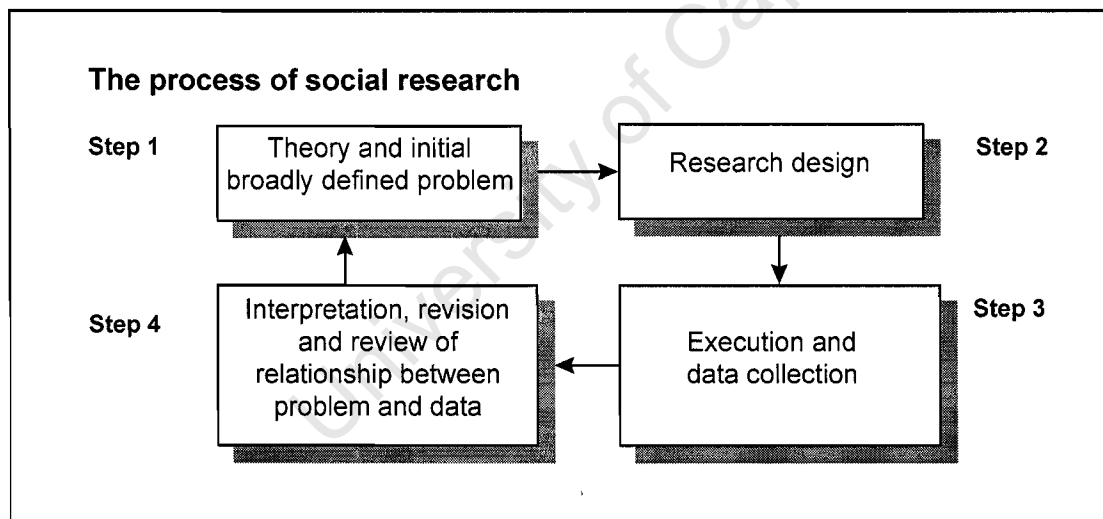
Social research in the human sciences requires a large amount of involvement and familiarisation by the researcher. This serves to heighten the validity of the study. This assertion is supported by Schlemmer (1996: 261), who states that:

[there are] real benefits of two-way or even multi-way communication with serious stakeholders in the research process. Such communication not only confirms the credibility of the findings, but can also significantly enhance the insights and content of the research. In certain fields researchers dare no longer work in academic isolation.

The participatory approach to research is particularly relevant in South Africa. The country is going through a major period of change. For this reason, the research context is often dynamic and the researcher must play an active role to maintain an understanding of the study field.

The process of social research is cyclical with each step in the process informing and guiding the next. Smith interprets the steps in the process of social research in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Smith's Research Cycle



(cited in Garbers 1996: 250)

The methodological approach to this study is based on this cyclical research process.

3.3 Methodological Approach

Due to the nature of this study the research methodology must be largely responsively-inclined and allow for the multi-faceted characteristics of the subject area. The quantitative methodological approach with its structured, rigid data collection techniques and uniform,

formal enquiry method and its precise quantification with estimates within defined limits and representative results, was deemed highly inappropriate for this study. Rather the qualitative research paradigm is more appropriate. Qualitative research is characterised by less structured data collection techniques and in-depth enquiry methods. This approach to research is innovative with many varied research techniques and with an exploratory analysis process. The results gained are subjective and the researcher's perception and initiative is key.

The qualitative research approach allows the researcher to investigate subjects outside traditional areas of enquiry and gain insights and understanding of prescriptive value (Bulmer and Warwick, 1993). Van der Merwe (1996:283) states that the benefits of qualitative research lie in its ability 'to promote better self-understanding and increase insight into the human condition'. This type of research is subjective and steers away from the scientific and objective. An appropriate methodological approach must, therefore, be sensitive to the philosophical and theoretical context whilst being directed by the qualitative research paradigm.

Babbie (1995:41) sees social science methodology as a combination of analytical and empirical, he states that a methodological approach to qualitative research 'should be based on an analytical approach with conceptual and categorical methods of explanation from evidence gathered "on the ground" '.

This study draws on numerous methods of complimentary data collection. The methodological approach will be directly guided by the qualitative paradigm whilst drawing from a diversity of data collection techniques. Based on the above analysis, the research design for this study must be evolving and flexible.

3.4 Research Design

In order to ensure reliable and valid findings it is important that the research design for the study is adequately researched and planned in the preliminary stages of the study. According to Gordon (1975: 177) 'in making strategy decisions we must specify the design of the research as clearly as possible since the selection of the cast and scenes depends upon the plot'.

The triangulation strategy, first proposed by Denzin (1970), informed the development of the design for this research. The triangulation theory works on the premise that multiple sources of data, and multiple methods and perspectives leads to a more comprehensive research strategy. This theory is supported by Phillips (1971: 159) assertion that '...a combination of several research methods gives rise to a more complete understanding of the phenomena under investigation'

The research design consists of four distinct research methods. These were research orientation, participant observation, interviews and group discussion work.

Research orientation is crucial in allowing the researcher to understand the context of the study. Sabela and Reddy (1996: 3) stress the need for experience in the field to gain a closer personal understanding of the research topic, in particular 'the local government environment needs close personal observation for an understanding unobtainable from secondary sources'. This was especially relevant for this study as the author is from the United Kingdom (UK) and had minimal knowledge or understanding of the South African context. The South African local government system is partially based on the UK system and the researcher's experience working in local government in the UK proved useful.

Research orientation, therefore, required a period of familiarisation with the South African context, and more specifically the Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA). It also necessitated carrying out general fieldwork observations. This was achieved by attending meetings relating to local government environmental management as well as non-governmental organisation meetings. An important part of the research orientation phase of the research was the literature review. This provided a sound understanding of the current discourse on the political, legal, cultural and institutional context in South Africa and specifically within the CMA. The review of relevant literature included academic texts, academic and political articles, journals, newspapers, Internet Websites, local government internal reports and committee reports and other pertinent publications. In addition, a review of South African legislation and policies informing environmental management and sustainable development within the CMA was undertaken forming a comprehensive picture of the status of current progress towards sustainability in South Africa.

The key aspects of the research include participant observation, interviewing and the group discussion methods; these require a more in-depth analysis.

3.5 Participant Observation

Phillips asserts that observation is useful in directly informing the setting of the context of the study as well as providing a basis for the development of interview schedules:

...observation has often been found to be highly productive both in the development of theory which applies to the setting and in the construction of interview schedules and other research tools...

(Phillips, 1971: 160)

The role of the observer ranges from a non-participatory form to a highly participatory approach. Van der Merwe (1996:284) contends that participation in the political and social culture of the research area is particularly relevant in South Africa where 'political rhetoric is characterised by expressions such as involvement, participant decision-making, collaboration, consensus, grass-roots level involvement, and redressing the imbalances of the past...', he continues:

...This means that the more traditional orientations of the researcher as either an insider or outsider will have to be broadened to accommodate the concept of researcher and research subject being partners in the research process.

For this study, therefore, the researcher carried out participant observation in addition to a partnership research approach.

Participant observation was utilised as a means of familiarising the author with the parliamentary, local government, non-governmental and community processes within the CMA context. This research method required attendance at a cross-section of parliamentary, local government; non-governmental organisation (NGO) and community based organisation (CBO) meetings. These encounters also allowed the author to become personally acquainted with the key players in the environmental and sustainability fields in the CMA. The observations from these experiences aided the researcher in developing an understanding of the social, political and cultural context of South Africa and contributed to the construction of an appropriate research design and interview schedules.

A partnership research approach was adopted with the researcher's involvement in a strategic policy development process, the Integrated Environmental Management Policy (IMEP), being undertaken by the Cape Metropolitan Council. The researcher compiled a report documenting the various local government and NGO sustainability projects that were taking place across the CMA. For each project, the implications for the IMEP were examined. This research provided an invaluable background to this study as it offered important insights into the sustainability initiatives currently being undertaken or planned within the CMA. Participation in this project allowed association with the six Metropolitan Local Councils (MLCs) in the CMA, the relevant departments in the Cape Metropolitan Council and several of the major environmental NGOs in the CMA. Where necessary, informal interviews were undertaken as part of the information gathering process.

The researcher worked for six months with the National Local Agenda 21 Awareness Raising and Capacity-Building Programme based in the Environmental Evaluation Unit at the University of Cape Town. Experience and knowledge gained through this work was applied, indirectly, during the final phases of this study. The Programme is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is being carried out in conjunction with the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). It represents one of the most significant sustainability initiatives in the country. As part of this programme, the researcher was invited to Denmark to participate in a National LA 21 Workshop organised by the Danish Society for Nature Conservation. The initial research results emanating from this research were presented in conjunction with the outcomes of the work carried out on the National LA 21 Programme.

These experiences informed the research and provided a basis for later discussions regarding strategic planning initiatives, with various key players from areas outside the CMA. Importantly this work provided the researcher with an opportunity to apply knowledge gained during the course of the study and to contribute to the country and city that had been her host for over two years.

3.6 Interviewing

Interviewing, the most popular method of research for social science investigations was used as the primary data collection tool for this study. 'Some estimate that ninety per cent of all social science investigations rely on interview data' (Briggs, 1986: 1). Interviewing as

a methodology provides invaluable insights into the perceptions of key players in a chosen field. Interviewing allows the researcher to draw on the knowledge of the respondent often gaining an insight into specific details which are not available through any other means of research.

There are numerous approaches to interviewing including in-depth and survey style questionnaires. Survey style interviewing requires wide dissemination in order to gain representative results and requires a more quantitative evaluation of results. A survey style approach was not considered appropriate for this research. Instead, In-depth Interviewing was deemed the most suitable research method for the study. In-depth interviewing involves targeting a small number of key-respondents followed by a qualitative evaluation of the responses. In-depth interviews can be structured, semi-structured or non-structured, as well as standardised or non-standardised.

The sections that follow focus on the selection of suitable respondents and the formulation of an appropriate interview schedule guided by the research agenda.

3.6.1 Informal and Formal Interviewing

Preliminary interviews were informal in nature. For this reason a semi-structured, non-standardised interview schedule was developed. The semi-structured schedule allowed divergence from the interview schedule during the interview. The schedule was non-standardised so that it could be altered according to the specific experiences and subject areas of the respondents. The flexible structure to the discussion at this early stage in the research allowed the author the freedom to identify those subject areas where respondents showed knowledge and strong opinions. This could then be explored freely, uninhibited by a highly structured interview schedule.

The informal interviewing research method allowed the author to gain an insight into current projects underway which are relevant to sustainability in the case study. Additionally this research method provided the researcher with an understanding of the perceived opportunities and constraints which exist for sustainability processes in local government. This phase in the methodology was equally important as a method of piloting

the questionnaire in order to discover the most appropriate questions and respondents for use in the formal interviews.

Following a short pilot phase, and based on the information gathered in the previous phases of the research process, a formal interview schedule was developed. This interview schedule was designed to be semi-structured and standardised. This differed from the informal interview in that the question schedule was the same for each group of respondents. The interview questionnaires are included in Appendix **A1**, **A2** and **A3**.

In order to understand the context in which sustainability processes would operate within local government, the formal interview questionnaires aimed at local government officials were structured to allow respondents to express their attitudes and perceptions.

Additionally, the local government questionnaire was designed to gain an understanding of the skills and capacity of local government officials. The key players and stakeholders, including NGO and CBO workers, within the field of environmental sustainability provided further insights into the opportunities and constraints facing sustainability planning within the CMA. It draws on the information gained from interviewees. Responses diverged widely; the quotations allow specific opinions to be illustrated within the context of the general trends. An underlying condition of the interview research process was the preservation of the identity of interviewees. A list of Formal Interview Respondents is included in Appendix B1.

3.6.2 Respondent Selection

A targeted non-random sampling strategy was adopted to guide the respondent selection for the interview process. Interviewees were selected according to the information required for the study. Bulmer and Warwick (1993: 9) recognise the constraints and benefits of non-representative interviewing in that 'in terms of coverage, such methods are more limited than a representative social survey for example, but their proponents argue that they gain in greater richness of data and depth and penetration of analysis'. Holstein and Gubrium (1995: 74) contend that 'the idea is not so much to capture a representative segment of the population as it is to continuously solicit and analyse representative horizons of meaning'. Although the respondents selected do not necessarily constitute a representative sample they do provide intensive rather than extensive information. Non-

representative selection has advantages over representative selection as it captures the finer details such as the texture of perceptions.

Both the informal and formal interviews were conducted with a cross-section of the key players within the environmental sector and local government in the CMA. This included local government officers within the Cape Metropolitan Council, the metropolitan local councils, personnel within the relevant NGOs and CBOs, and other relevant stakeholders. Two MLCs were selected from the six MLCs in the CMA. South Peninsula Municipality and the City of Tygerberg were chosen due to their contrasting social and political characteristics³⁵.

The informal interviews took place with approximately twenty key informants including government officials, at provincial, metropolitan and local levels, as well as environmental consultants, researchers and personnel from NGOs and CBOs. The key informant according to Gordon (1975: 187) is any person who gives information relevant to any of the strategy problems of the study. He states that:

In this role the person does not give information directly related to the objectives of the interview. Instead they help by supplying information on the local field situation...'

Formal interviews were carried out with sixteen special targeted respondents. The special respondent according to Gordon (1975: 188) is any person who gives information directly relevant to the objectives of the study and who is elected because they occupy a unique position in the community, group or institution being studied.

Respondents were chosen according to their particular position of employment, role in society, or knowledge of the research area for this study. Information gained during the first phase of research aided the selection of special respondents. These formal interview respondents are listed in Appendix B1. The respondents can be divided into four categories, Groups A, B, C and D. Group A included senior CMC members of staff from the Environmental Management, Health and Trading and Economic Development Departments. Group B consisted of senior MLC officials from Environmental Management and those responsible for developing municipal IDPs. Group C respondents were Local

³⁵ Refer to Section 7.4

Government Councillors. CMC councillors were chosen from the executive committee and the urbanisation and planning committee. For the MLCs, councillors were interviewed from committees relating to the environment.

Group D respondents were drawn from the NGO and CBO sectors, and included other relevant stakeholders. The CMA has an active environmental sustainability NGO sector, with a small number of key NGOs. The NGOs chosen for this study were the Fairest Cape Association (FCA), Fair Share, Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF), the Environmental Monitoring Group and the Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa. These organisations were chosen as they were deemed to represent a cross-section of social, environmental and economic interests. Key staff members from these NGOs were formally interviewed. Additional key stakeholders within the environmental sector were identified during the initial phases of the research. These respondents were interviewed because of their valuable experience and knowledge within the field of study.

3.6.3 Questionnaire Schedule Formulation

According to the above categorisation the interviews for this study were standardised and designed for the specific respondent group. The standardised approach was chosen to ensure that each respondent was asked the same questions, thus making comparison easier. In addition the questions were open-ended or semi-structured, where the range of possible answers was not specified. The schedule was based on the in-depth style of interviewing to allow respondents the opportunity to provide additional information relating to each question. This is important as '...a different type of information may be obtained from each special respondent since their unique perspective is their chief contribution to the study' (Gordon, 1975: 188). The structure and consistency of the questionnaire schedule allowed a deeper insight to be gained for each question and for comparisons to be drawn between respondents leading to results that are more reliable.

Questions were open-ended to allow sufficient opportunity for the respondent to express his/her knowledge and opinions. Briggs (1986: 47) elaborates on the non-standardised interview, advocating a more creative, interactive style, the '*active interview*':

Rather than the tightly restricting interviewer participation as the standardised model prescribes, active interviewers may judiciously engage the respondent, working interactionally to establish the

discursive bases from which the respondent can articulate his or her relevant experiences.

The interview process remained focused on the research using narrative guidance, 'the active interviewer sets the general parameters for responses, constraining as well as provoking answers that are germane to the researchers interest.' (Briggs, 1986: 39). It was often necessary to include prompts or probes into the structure of certain questions; the intention of this was to encourage elaboration or detail in the response gained.

The questions were guided by the research agenda of this study, which in turn were structured by the study's theory. The interview content and structure alters according to the individual respondent, for this reason a different schedule was used for each special respondent group.

The question order was determined using guidance from Phillips (1971:141). He recommends that general questions should precede the more specific ones, that the sequence of questions should follow a logical order and that contentious questions should be posed near to the end of the interview once a relationship of trust has been fostered. The interview schedules are included in Appendix 1.

The identification of appropriate questions highlighted the main topic areas for the research. The topic areas are: restructuring, the effects of transformation processes on local government; exploring sustainability and environment in local government; policy integration, sectoral integration and integrated development planning; public participation in local government decision-making; and finally, local sustainability planning

3.7 Group Discussion

In the latter stages of the research it became clear, from the information gained through the interviewing and participant observation, that there were fundamental contradictions in local government strategic planning. These contradictions have major implications for the research. Numerous strategic planning initiatives are currently being carried out in local government in the CMA, each of these initiatives has the principle of integration at their core. Each initiative is, however, proceeding with little or no integration. In practice, this is causing greater fragmentation in local government. From interviews it became apparent

that local government officials and councillors were confused over the exact roles of each of the existing strategic planning initiatives. This research revealed three initiatives which appeared to be the main source of confusion: Integrated Development Plans (IDP)³⁶, Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) and the Healthy Cities Programme³⁷. IDP is a statutory requirement of local government, whereas LA 21 and Healthy Cities are mandatory. Each of these initiatives has policy and sectoral integration as one of their core themes. Nonetheless, they are mostly progressing independently with little progress being made integrating policy or sectors.

To increase the applicability and usefulness of this research a workshop was convened to discuss how this problem could be overcome. The workshop included representatives from different sectors and fields. The attendees included representatives from local government in the fields of Environmental Management, Healthy Cities, Environmental Health and IDP, together with representatives from academia, consultancy and from the national LA 21 programme³⁸. This forum proved useful as it was able to discuss possibilities, in terms of both local government structure and policy, on how to integrate the various strategic planning initiatives. Additionally the workshop raised suggestions on how to strengthen the usefulness of the research for this thesis. Following this discussion and based on the results of the discussion and the research, a framework for sustainability planning was developed which attempts to engender integration.

3.8 Conclusion

Through analysis of the philosophical and theoretical background to the study, it has been possible to formulate an appropriate research methodology. A qualitative research methodology has been developed that is comprised of multiple research methods and perspectives to ensure a more comprehensive research design. The greater the application of methods, the greater confidence the researcher can have in her or his findings. This methodological approach includes four key research methods, these are, research orientation, participant observation, informal and formal interviewing, and group discussion work.

³⁶ IDP is discussed in more detail in Section 6.4

³⁷ Local Agenda 21 and Healthy Cities are discussed in more detail in Sections 4.5 and 4.6

³⁸ The list of attendees is included as Appendix B2

The formal interview process represents the most significant method of data collection. The interview schedule and the respondent selection were informed by experience gained during the informal interviews and fieldwork observation. In addition, the formal interview schedule was developed through an analysis of the various approaches of different social scientists to the formulation of interview schedules and the selection of respondents.

Having established the methodology, the study turns to an analysis of local sustainability planning. The chapter which follows focuses on an in-depth examination of the key themes informing local sustainability planning which arose from the theoretical review in Chapter Two.

University of Cape Town



Defining Local Sustainability Planning: Trends in National and International Experience

4.1 Introduction

Local sustainability planning is widely recognised as a means of achieving the transition to sustainability. Urquhart (1995: 36) states that:

it seems evident, however, even tautological, that true environmental sustainability must, in the long-term be a win-win situation. Ecocentric sustainability on a global scale is daunting, the incremental progress of smaller, local scale processes is similarly difficult yet immensely more manageable. [Sustainability could be achieved] using local level sustainability processes coordinated by local government, such as... Local Agenda 21.

Local sustainability planning is the process whereby local communities participate in formulating local action plans designed to increase the sustainability of their locality in the short and long term. The key themes informing local sustainability planning were identified through an exploration of sustainability in chapter two. These are the decentralisation of political, legal, social and economic institutions to the local level; effective public participation to ensure a democratic approach to decision-making, and, effective institutionalisation. Due to the integrated nature of local sustainability planning these key themes interlink and overlap. Despite the divisions within the following analysis, the subjects are not mutually exclusive.

This chapter will analyse the key themes informing local sustainability planning in depth. Local government is singled out as the most appropriate facilitator of local sustainability planning. It is in a key position to formulate local sustainability plans, to increase awareness of sustainability and to encourage the participation of the local community in the sustainability planning process.

The international sustainability movement has produced numerous examples of different methods and processes in local sustainability planning. The lessons learnt from these examples can be used in formulating a framework for local government sustainability planning. The key flagship networking initiatives which are particularly significant are the International Council for Local Environmental Initiative's (ICLEI's) Local Agenda 21 Programme and the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities Programme.

4.2 Understanding Local Sustainability Planning

Planning is the act of devising a course of action or non-action. The outcome of planning may be, for example, the decision to develop a policy. Gordon (1993: 8) defines planning within local government as 'a systematic process by which a community anticipates and devises actions for its future'. Thus planning, in the context of this study, is the process from which policy arises and should not be confused with spatial or land-use planning which is a statutory requirement of local government.

O'Riordan (1982) asserts that policy 'may refer to a set of guidelines or principles against which possible courses of action may be evaluated, or it may relate to a declared statement of intent to something, backed up by the provision of an enabling budget' (cited in EEU and Common Ground, 1998: 11). In a study which examined the links between health and environment in Cape Town local government (MNR, MRC, 1998:11) the views of local actors on the nature of policy were examined. It was found that:

within the local government context, policy was felt by both councillors and officials to be a means of providing a broad framework for consistency of actions and a mechanism of setting parameters and standards.

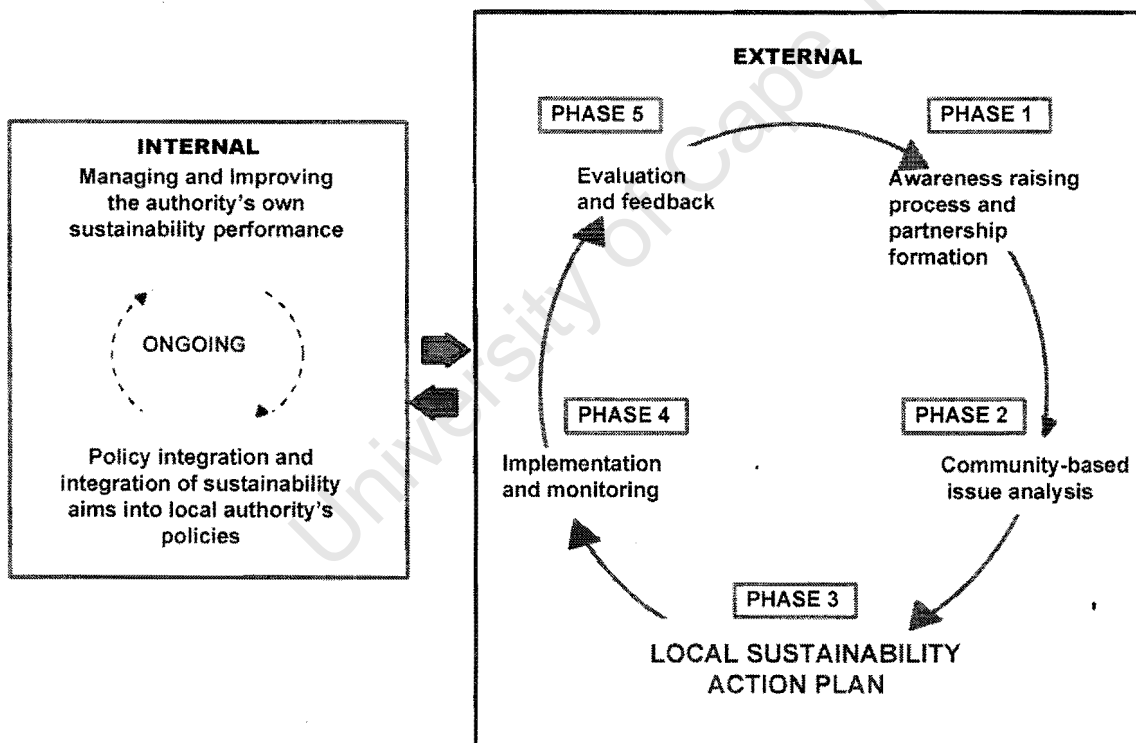
The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (Government of RSA, 1997c) describe national policy as 'a statement of the government's guiding principles and intentions with regards to dealing with an important public issue'. Policy provides the means by which government prioritises problems which need to be addressed, sets objectives and allocates resources in order for these to be achieved'.

Local sustainability planning is, therefore, a systematic process by which a community plans for sustainability in their locality through the formulation of a framework for action.

Local sustainability planning is used in this study as a generic term for processes including ICLEI's' Local Agenda 21 and the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities planning. These two initiatives represent international mandates for local governments to undergo consultation with their communities and formulate strategic plans for sustainability with the emphasis on 'quality of life'³⁹.

The local sustainability planning process is based on the classic policy cycle. The process is designed to be coordinated by a local government authority and should be carried out in partnership with non-governmental organisations and community based organisations. The planning process can be divided into two parts, action which takes place within the local government authority, namely 'internal action' and that which takes place within the wider community or 'external action'.

Figure 4.1 Local Sustainability Planning Process



Internal action involves the management and improvement of the local government authority's own sustainability performance, through, for example, the formulation of a corporate sustainability plan. Importantly sustainability planning within the authority

³⁹ For a more detailed analysis of these initiatives refer to section 4.6.

requires a new approach to decision-making where environmental, economic and social aspects are integrated and are given equal importance. Integration should extend throughout the workings of the authority to include policy integration and sectoral integration.

There are generally five phases to the external component of local sustainability planning. The phases are cyclical and are illustrated in Figure 4.1. Phase one involves awareness raising and partnership formation between stakeholders. This can be approached through awareness raising events, presentations and talks, supporting environmental education in schools and colleges and press releases. The awareness raising process can, and should, have a threefold effect. Firstly it should inform stakeholders about the local sustainability planning process specifically and the functions of local government in general. Secondly this phase should inform stakeholders of the issues involved allowing them to have an effective contribution to the decision-making process. Finally, the awareness raising phase should inform stakeholders about the impact of their own actions, allowing them to make connections between sustainability issues and their own lifestyles. This phase is particularly important in areas where there are disenfranchised sectors in the community.

The second phase in the local sustainability planning process is community-based issues analysis. This can be carried out using a number of techniques including fora, focus groups, visioning exercises, planning for real exercises and local community mapping. The various community-based approaches to issue analysis and priority setting should be distinguished from one-way, extractive information-gathering in which peoples' opinions and views are simply gathered with no exchange or dialogue between the community and officials. At the end of this phase, the council should have a prioritised list of sustainability objectives which have been identified and agreed upon by the local community.

Phase three involves the technical assessment of the information gathered in order to compile an action plan. This phase is usually carried out by officials from the relevant local government authority. Importantly the action plan includes short-term and long term aims and incremental objectives to meet these overall aims. The long-term focus is key to sustainability planning.

At the completion of this phase, the council should have a full structured local sustainability plan. The plan should include incremental objectives to meet overall aims, target dates for the objectives, parties responsible for meeting the objectives and sustainability indicators which allow progress to be monitored.

The penultimate phase, phase four, involves the implementation of the strategy and monitoring the progress of the strategy. Implementation is key and care should be taken to ensure that the majority of the resources allocated to the process are invested in this phase. Monitoring requires measuring two different aspects of the sustainability plan. Firstly, the inputs should be monitored to ensure that actions have been carried out. Secondly, the outputs and outcomes should be monitored to measure the degree of success of the actions, to measure the sustainability implications, and to ensure that the results of the action are in line with the objectives outlined in the plan. Using the results from the monitoring phase, an evaluation should feedback lesson learned in order to improve the process in the future. The process is cyclical and should continue with a return to phase one.

Local sustainability planning holds numerous advantages for local government. It bridges the gap between local government and the community. It allows the community to have a meaningful role in decision-making, specifically influencing the priority local sustainability concerns. The strategic action plan allows specific parties to be held accountable and ensures that these parties are responsible for meeting the specified target date. The internal aspects, especially policy and sectoral integration will, in the short-term and long-term, lead to efficiency gains. Both the internal and external actions will heighten the authority's public image and will serve to win the trust of the community.

Local sustainability planning is informed by the key themes identified in Chapter 2. It requires democratic participation and awareness raising, the decentralisation of decision-making and effective institutionalisation. Each of these themes require further analysis to fully understand their implications for local sustainability planning.

4.3 Democratic Participation

Democratic participation involves the equal entitlement of every person in a community to become involved in decision-making processes. Baker *et al*, (1997: 23) state that

'participation in the decisions which affect one's own life is a central political value of democracy'. The word democracy is derived from the Greek words *demos* meaning 'the people' and *kratos* meaning 'to govern'. It therefore describes a political system in which the community has a role to play in their own government (Kendall, 1991: 59). A democratic participation process involves discussion and awareness raising, collective deliberation and rule-governed decision-making procedures.

In his research into democratic decision-making processes, Fiorino (1996: 200) develops a 'participatory ideal' which can be used to evaluate participatory mechanisms. He states that a mechanism or process promotes democratic participation to the extent that it 'allows for the direct participation of amateurs; enables citizens to participate with administrators and experts on a more equal basis; creates a structure for face-to-face interaction over time; and allows citizens a share in decision-making Fiorino (1996: 200).

Figure 4.2, over the page, illustrates the levels of participation, from thorough participation where the participant has a high degree of control over decision-making, to low participation where the community is not involved in decision-making. The amount of community control depends upon the mode of participation adopted by the organisation in each approach.

Figure 4.2 Ladder of Community Participation

Control	Participant's action	Examples
	Has control	Organization asks community to identify the problem and make all key decisions on goals and means. Willing to help community at each step to accomplish goals.
	Has delegated authority	Organization identifies and presents a problem to the community. Defines limits and asks community to make a series of decisions which can be embodied in a plan which it will accept.
	Plans jointly	Organization presents tentative plan subject to change and open to change from those affected. Expects to change plan at least slightly and perhaps more subsequently.
	Advises	Organization presents a plan and invites questions. Prepared to change plan only if absolutely necessary.
	Is consulted	Organization tries to promote a plan. Seeks to develop support to facilitate acceptance or give sufficient sanction to plan so that administrative compliance can be expected.
	Receives information	Organization makes plan and announces it. Community is convened for informational purposes. Compliance is expected.
	None	Community told nothing.

(Source: adapted from Brager & Specht, 1998 :39)

The lowest participation approach illustrated in this figure represents decision-making procedures of the past. Accepted policy formulation procedure was top-down, closed and technically based around an objectively determined public interest. This approach is outdated. Contemporary theorists advocate a more bottom-up approach. Baker (1997: 99) asserts that 'bottom-up involvement is now seen as a defining feature of sustainability rather than as a mere means of implementation'. Similarly, Dryzek (1996: 108) states that:

If two or more decades of political ecology yield any single conclusion, it is surely that authoritarian and centralised means for the resolution of ecological problems have been discredited rather decisively.

Democratic participation has therefore become a core component of the official discourse of sustainability⁴⁰ (Jacobs and Macnaughton 1997: 5). Theory therefore supports a 'natural' congruence between democratic decision procedures and sound substantive

⁴⁰ Democratic participation is listed as a necessary component of a sustainable society in the sustainable development ladder presented as Figure 3, Section 2.5.5.

environmental policy outcomes. In both theory and practice states Paehlke (1996: 18), 'the environmental movement has been self-conscious and single-minded in seeking to involve directly the public in governmental decision-making regarding the environment'. Lafferty and Meadowcroft (1996: 2) assert that:

Democracy and enhanced environmental protection have been taken to be self-evidently mutually reinforcing, a perspective which is particularly marked in the emphasis on 'participation' to be found in the large body of documentation emerging from international bodies such as UNCED, UNDP, UNEP and UNESCO.

As an integral part of local sustainability planning public participation allows the subjective and value-laden sustainability objectives of the local community to be included in decision-making. Participation has a number of recognised benefits. Numerous theorists argue that the involvement of ordinary citizens in a democratic, participative policy formulation process is conducive to more effective implementation (Baker *et al* 1997, Dryzek 1996, Jacobs and Macnaughton 1997, EEU & Common Ground 1998, O'Riordan 1998, Selman 1996). For example, research into trends in metropolitan environmental management policy show that 'for environmental policies to be more widely accepted by key metropolitan stakeholders, it is essential that policy development facilitates broad based public participation' (EEU & Common Ground, 1998: 27).

Public participation is regarded as necessary in order to ensure that policy takes account of the needs, cultural diversity and the economic aspirations of those involved. In addition it allows area specific focus and incorporates local concerns. Wisner (1995:163) contends that 'citizens have local knowledge and the intense motivation to improve their lives and environments'. Thus, a key benefit of involving citizens in decision-making is the resultant sense of community ownership which in turn ensures that the resultant strategies are more widely accepted and effectively implemented.

Further benefits of public participation processes include the establishment of important networks and partnerships between stakeholders reinforcing community spirit. Community gatherings and meetings with local authorities can encourage the gap between citizens' expectations and political reality to be narrowed. It can allow citizens to witness the influence they have over the actions of administrative officials and technical experts. According to Fiorino (1996: 199):

participation can engender civic competence by building democratic skills, by overcoming feelings of powerlessness and alienation, and by contributing to the overall legitimacy of the political system.

Public participation also offers benefits in terms of involving the community in monitoring procedures, 'since they [citizens] are on the ground, they provide vital continuity and the ability to monitor and evaluate actions that have been taken' (Wisner, 1995:163). Public participation should ideally coincide with efforts to raise public awareness around the issues concerned. Awareness raising can empower stakeholders. It can build the capacity of participants to ensure an informed participation and mediation and has often served to mobilise communities into action (LGMB, 1995). Fiorino (1996: 200) asserts that 'debate and discussion help citizens to recognise their own political interests; to create and reveal common interests; and to maintain peace and stability'.

The literature on participation suggests numerous methods of bringing citizens into decision-making. Participatory mechanisms range from the more imaginative 'citizens juries' or citizen review panels' to the traditional public hearing. Building these into the design of policy programmes and plans from the outset 'would improve prospects for more democratic participation in policy decisions (Baker *et al* 1996: 24).

The ICLEI case study of the city of Santos, Brazil illustrates how democratic participation is a key ingredient in local sustainability planning. The country has 'a history of military dictatorship and the accompanying curtailment of civil rights, economic crises and environmental degradation'. The City of Santos Municipality has institutionalized an extensive process of public participation through the formation of sector specific councils. The objective of the programme is to 'ensure the participation of all citizens in all aspects of local government for an economically, socially and environmentally viable and sustainable Santos'. Case study documentation states:

The objective of the Citizens Councils for Public Participation is to involve service users in the definition, management and implementation of municipal services. Furthermore, it is also a means of including marginalized members of society into public politics. Councils are the municipality's primary method of engaging the public in its programmes.

(ICLEI, 1999a)

The creation of councils, operating under the fundamental principle of a popular democratic administration, has increased public participation in municipal affairs.

Additionally, it has resulted in the further self-organization of some sectors of society to involve them in the planning of municipal service priorities. Furthermore 'these channels of participation have also assisted in conciliation between the defined interests of various segments of society as well as enhanced their capacity for shared solutions to problems and joint strategies for the attainment of their proposed goals' (ICLEI, 1999a).

Participatory democracy is, however, a double edged sword. Although offering the advantages detailed above, it also presents several limitations. It could be argued that public participation processes often merely reflect the petty self-interests of those strong, articulate and mobilised parties involved⁴¹. Another much voiced concern about public participation is the lack of motivation and/or capacity of the ordinary citizen to join in.

To be effective, large amounts of preparation, information sharing and public awareness raising must preempt the participation event in order to ensure informed and representative responses. Fiorino (1996: 202) suggests that 'we learn to participate by participating, ... feelings of political efficacy are more likely to be developed in a participatory environment'.

In practice, therefore, participation is very resource intensive, particularly in those areas where a participatory environment does not exist⁴². Following the participation event, data synthesis and analysis as well as feedback for the review and monitoring of the policy are amongst the time-consuming and costly ongoing tasks involved. In developing a model for effective sustainability planning these constraints should be addressed⁴³.

A truly participatory democracy would experience every citizen having a valuable input into the decision-making process. However, the utopian ideal is not instantly applicable or practical in contemporary society⁴⁴. In keeping with the reformatory approach to sustainability advocated in section 2.6, a practical approach to policy formulation must be based on a balance between 'bottom-up', democratic participatory methods and traditional

⁴¹ This is a key consideration when comparing developed and developing countries realities.

⁴² South Africa exemplifies this situation, years of authoritarian rule over the country have left a legacy of disempowerment and suspicion of authority. The implications of this are discussed further in Section 5.3

⁴³ Refer to Section 8.3

⁴⁴ As discussed in Section 2.8

technical, official-led, 'top-down' techniques. Cobb and Elder (1982) advocate this 'elite democratic theory' which they consider an effort to reconcile the distance between an ideal concept of citizenship and a more flawed reality. They base their theory on social science research which revealed the public's limited knowledge of, and capacities for, government (cited in Fiorino 1996: 199). Closely aligned with the theme of participatory democracy is the second key theme informing sustainability, the decentralisation of government.

4.4 Decentralisation

Decentralisation of government refers to the deconcentration of government functions to the local level. In terms of this study, decentralisation specifically refers to the devolution of decision-making authority to relatively autonomous local governments. This provides them with the power to make decisions in the execution of central policies (also referred to as administrative decentralisation) and provides them with decision-making powers including local policy formulation (also referred to as political decentralisation) (UN, 1962 cited in Sabela and Reddy, 1996: 7). Decentralisation invariably necessitates the need for strong macro-policies at the national level to coordinate, support and work in conjunction with micro-policies at the local level.

Since 1992 there has been a significant shift in political thinking across the globe towards decentralisation (UN, 1997). Maharaj and Ramballi (1998: 133) state that:

Throughout the Western world, and more recently in the Third World, global economic restructuring, local dependence and competition between localities have shifted the responsibility for economic development from the central state to the local state.

There are numerous recognised benefits resulting from the decentralisation of government. Amongst the perceived benefits is greater efficiency and accountability. When power is devolved to a number of different local authorities, there is a greater knowledge of local conditions. This local knowledge allows more efficient provision of services. The work and actions of government officials becomes more traceable and, consequently, the authority is more accountable. Localised power can also allow more innovation and flexibility to reflect and cater for local needs. Thus, the decentralisation of government administrations can reduce bureaucracy (Kendall, 1991: 15).

Sabela and Reddy (1996: 6) researched the effects of decentralisation in African Countries, concluding that 'most people and governments favour the concept of decentralisation as it implies opening the blockages of an inert central bureaucracy, curing management constipation, giving more direct access the government by the people, and stimulating the whole nation to participate in national development plans'.

A further perceived benefit of the decentralisation of government is the positive effect it has on social equity. This is closely to with the benefits of democratic participation discussed earlier. Decentralisation can encourage the participation of all individuals within the jurisdiction of each local government authority. Often middle class people can cope with documentation and officials and have knowledge of procedure. They also tend to have the ability to participate in large centralised bureaucracies (Kendall, 1991). However, as in the classroom where reduction in class size allows attention that is more individual for each pupil, a smaller authority allows the needs of individual community members to be heard and met.

The World Bank (1989, cited in Sabela and Reddy, 1996: 7) states that 'it could be argued that locally financed and produced services will cost less'. Kendall (1991: 15) champions the benefits of decentralisation by critiquing centralisation:

The sheer volume of work created by centralisation results in competing and overlapping spheres of jurisdiction and bottlenecks in the flow of information. The overall result is "planned chaos".

Smith (1985: Ch. 10) also lists the perceived benefits of decentralisation for successful development, he includes 'effectiveness in planning to meet local needs, including the needs of the poor; improved access to administrative agencies and opportunities for grass-roots participation; improved speed and flexibility in decision-making; and the role decentralisation plays in enhancing national unity'.

An ICLEI case study of the Provincial Municipality of Cajamarca, Peru illustrates the success of decentralisation policies. The Provincial Municipality planned to undertake an extensive Local Agenda 21 planning effort for the Province. In the past decision-making at the local government level in Cajamarca was highly centralized and undemocratic (ICLEI, 1997b). The first stage in the LA 21 planning process, involved the 'dramatic decentralization of the provincial government, so that local government decisions would

reflect the needs of the Province's many small and remote communities' (ICLEI, 1997b: section C1). As a result, twelve urban neighborhood Councils and 64 rural "minor populated centers" were created, each with their own elected Mayors and Councils. The decentralisation of the local administrative structure and the delegation of power to the newly created local jurisdictions has 'allowed a more democratic sustainability planning process to be undertaken' (*ibid.* 1997b).

An ICLEI (1997b: section C3) report which explores 'building local government capacity for sustainable development' states 'decentralisation and the reorganization of municipal jurisdictions is often a prerequisite to addressing sustainability issues'. An example of decentralisation leading to successful sustainability planning is found in Mexico City, Mexico and Quito, Ecuador. The local governments in each of these cities tackled their extensive pollution problems through special legislation. The legislation provided their local governments with increased administrative, political, and fiscal powers. As a result, the respective cities achieved dramatic improvements in environmental conditions. (ICLEI, 1997b: section C3)

Decentralisation also has its shortcomings. Walzer (1997: 36) argues that 'self-government is a very demanding and time-consuming business...and when the organs of government are decentralised so as to maximise participation, it will inevitable become more demanding still'. The term 'demanding' implies resource consuming -in terms of financial and human resources. Many local authorities are small in size and revenue and consequently fall short of adequate personnel and technology to execute their activities to an acceptable standard (Sabela and Reddy 1996: 4). This drawback is evident in the Cape Metropolitan Area⁴⁵. Here local authorities such as South Peninsula Municipality are suffering with financial difficulties. These difficulties can be attributed to, amongst other factors, the small size of the municipality, and its attendant small revenue base. According to Kendall (1991: 41) for decentralisation to work successfully, local government requires 'the power to raise money and enjoy some degree of autonomy...'.

Decentralising government can bring about greater efficiency and accountability, it can reduce bureaucracy, make democratic participation more achievable, lead to improved

⁴⁵ Refer to the case study in chapter 7

speed and flexibility in decision-making and have positive implications for improving the local environment. At the same time the realities of the specific context must be considered in order to avoid situations where, for example, a local government authority is too small to carry out its functions successfully. Whilst decentralisation of government is desirable there should be strong national policies supporting and framing the local level action.

The issue of decentralisation is particularly relevant in South Africa. Current debates that are surrounding the contentious plans to centralise government using a metropolitan government structure⁴⁶.

4.5 Institutionalising Sustainability at the Local Level

The issue of decentralisation versus centralisation in local sustainability planning is closely allied to understanding the institutional issues involved. The term institution is effectively conceptualised by O'Riordan (1998a: 4):

The term institution has many definitions in the sociological, political science, economic, legal and philosophy literature. In essence however, institutions are both organisational structures (with internal mandates, bureaucracies, client support and inter-organisational positioning struggles) as well as agreed rules of procedure.

Effective institutionalisation is key to the practical application of the principles of participatory democracy and decentralisation and therefore central to local sustainability planning. There are two aspects to the institutionalisation of sustainability. Firstly, there is a need for national legislation which ensures that sustainability processes become statutory requirements. Secondly, and linked to the first aspect, is the need for effective local government to undertake these requirements. Each of these aspects will be discussed in a little more detail.

Appropriate legislation at the national level is a method of ensuring that local sustainability planning requirements are met. The ICLEI Model Communities programme was brought to a close in 1997, the South African examples are detailed below in section 4.6. Numerous

⁴⁶ Refer to section 6.6 and Section 7.5

important recommendations resulted from this research. One of the key recommendations for national governments was that they should:

take responsibility for the implementation of Agenda 21 and Local Agenda 21 by providing financial and technical support to the national associations of local governments in their efforts to create national LA 21 campaigns.

(ICLEI, 1999b)

Statutory requirements are necessary because often local governments must operate within strict budgets. New unfunded mandates are often neglected because they are optional and finances are allocated as a priority to statutory requirements from national government.

As the indicated earlier, national support is particularly necessary in countries such as South Africa where local government is experiencing financial and transitional pressures⁴⁷. South African national legislation informing sustainability at the local government level is examined in detail in chapter five.

The successful institutionalisation of sustainability is equally dependent upon the effectiveness of local institutions. Local government has a particularly important role in the transition to sustainability given its areas of legal competence. Local government manages ambient environmental quality, applies tools for modifying behaviour, shapes land-use planning, stimulates economic development, deals with waste disposal, transport, urban renewal, and the provision of education, health, housing and welfare services. These qualities led O'Riordan (1996: 154) to label local government as 'the most promising and exciting prospect in the democratic sustainability transition'. Selman (1996: 85) supports this assertion:

...central government is rarely in a position to instigate direct change at the local level. With regard to individuals and communities, therefore, it is likely that local government will be of greater significance.

In addition to its areas of legal competence, and discussed in the previous sections, local government represents the level of governance closest to the community and therefore in the most appropriate position to consult with and involve them. In this respect, local

⁴⁷ Discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7

government is ideally positioned to coordinate democratic development and take the lead in local sustainability initiatives.

England's Royal Commission on Local Government (1969) highlighted the democratic importance of local government:

Local government is...by its nature, in close touch... with local conditions, local needs, local opinions, it is an essential part of the fabric of democratic government. Central government tends, by its nature, to be bureaucratic. It is only by the combination of local representative institutions with the central institution of Parliament, that a genuine national democracy can be sustained.

(cited in Merrington, 1993: 2)

The role of local government as key players in public participation and local level strategic planning was largely neglected until the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development (UNCED), 1992. Prior to UNCED, local government received little recognition within the major international initiatives. International institutions rarely involved local governments in their discussions and programmes (ICLEI 1998b). In fact, local government was not even recognised as a governmental institution within the United Nations system at this time.

UNCED (1992) was based on the principles of sustainability. Principle 10 of Agenda 21 is the principle of subsidiarity. It states 'environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level' (UN, 1992). Thus, Agenda 21 emphasised the importance of local government. Indeed over two-thirds of the proposals and guidelines set out in Agenda 21 require commitment and cooperation from local government (DEAT, 1998a: 57). Section 3, Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 (UN, 1992) introduces Local Agenda 21 (LA 21). The chapter is entitled Local Authorities' Initiatives in support of Agenda 21, and begins:

Because so many of the problems and solutions being addressed by Agenda 21 have their roots in local activities, the participation and cooperation of local authorities will be a determining factor in fulfilling its objectives.

(UN, 1992, section 3 Ch. 28)

Seven years after UNCED there has been a significant shift in political thinking across the globe (UN, 1997). The international community has recognized that major responsibilities for sustainable development lie with local government. During this period, national governments in more than 60 countries have been decentralizing public sector

responsibilities for environmental protection and social development to the local governments level (ICLEI, 1998a).

Maintaining the responsibility for local sustainability planning within local government may also serve to institutionalise a particular set of policies and establish a bureaucratic routine. However, the benefits seem to outweigh this risk. Selman (1996: 86) lists the reasons why he views local government as keyplayers in sustainable development:

1. **They are reckoned to be close to many of the major issues, such as land-use planning and solid waste disposal.**
2. **They have substantial potential for 'capacity-building', namely, providing people with the knowledge, powers and resources to undertake sustainable development.**
3. **They are the source of local democracy, thus providing 'local choice' as well as a 'local voice', and a basis for citizen participation.**
4. **They are well placed to be sensitive to local identities and can therefore accommodate local differences, diversity and innovation.**
5. **Councils also have an understanding of the scope for local initiatives, and the impacts development may have on particular areas.**
6. **They can try to create the conditions in which local action can commence and flourish, and may themselves be a starting point for new initiatives.**
7. **Finally, local government has a statutory responsibility to implement various areas of legislation which have direct and indirect environmental consequences such as planning, economic development, housing management, highways and transport, waste management and education.**

To undertake the local sustainability planning responsibilities local government requires certain fundamental characteristics. The value of an effective local government system lies firstly in its pluralism, or the dispersal of state power. Local government also has an advantage in terms of public participation, specifically the contribution it makes to local democracy. In addition, local government holds an advantage in its responsiveness, or its ability to provide for local needs through the efficient and effective delivery of local services. Finally, it has unique strategic direction, a capability of seeking structures and processes that effectively combine and coordinate pluralism, participation and responsiveness (Good Hope Alliance, 1993). To fulfill this ideal, effective local government must be accountable and accessible with routes to consult and include their communities.

This assertion is supported by Fitzgerald *et al* (1995: 11), who state that 'we now live in a world where close partnership is required between local levels of government, civil society and the private sector'. Additionally local government officials must have the capacity to take on strategic planning objectives, and there must be adequate financial resources to undertake the task. To achieve this local government should have effective boundaries ensuring that their size is:

large enough to command the skill, financial and material resources needed for the efficient provision of services and for effective representation and participation in the metropolitan and wider governmental system, on the other hand, local authorities must not be so large that serious managerial problems arise; that elected representatives cannot keep in touch with constituents and that the potential for effective public participation is inadequate.

(Good Hope Alliance, 1993:1)

Within local government authorities there must be greater integration of policies and cross-sectoral coordination. Achieving sustainability 'cannot be done without greater integration at all policy-making levels and at operational levels, including the lowest administrative levels possible' (DEAT, 1997: 9). Finally, effective institutionalisation of sustainability requires the integration of the principles of sustainability into the workings of each sector and department in the authority. The following statement by Liberatore, (1997: 107) emphasises the importance of integration:

The relevance of integration for moving towards sustainable development is straightforward: if environmental factors are not taken into consideration in the formulation and implementation of the policies that regulate economic activities and other forms of social organisation, a new model of development that can be environmentally and socially sustained in the long term cannot be achieved.

Traditionally local government is structured in a sectoral manner, approaching service delivery through sectoral line functions. As a result, directorates such as: water and waste, transport, urbanisation and planning often exist with their own agendas and responsibilities. Too often, and particularly in larger bureaucracies, departments and directorates become removed from the other functions of the local government authority (Kendall 1994). This scenario is sometimes referred to as the 'silo effect'. The following statement from Baker *et al* (1997:22) supports this argument:

Successful implementation of policies aimed at shifting to a sustainable development path also requires institutional innovation and reform. This poses a challenge to local government, which includes the introduction

of reform aimed at the elimination of administrative barriers to policy integration as well as a reduction in institutional fragmentation.

Greater coordination and integration between line departments within each local government authority can serve to increase efficiency by avoiding duplication and contradiction. Selman (1996: 30) states that 'the collective contribution of local government to sustainability must...be approached on a corporate basis'. Ensuring that the workings of the authority adhere to the principles of sustainability⁴⁸ serves to improve its environmental performance.

Internationally various schemes and programmes aimed at establishing environmental management systems in local authorities have been drawn up. These include the International standard, ISO 14001, the European Community's Eco-Management, and Audit Scheme for Local Government (EMAS), amongst others. Essentially these voluntary programmes provide a framework for environmental management which allows local authorities to manage their environmental impacts in a systematic and considered way (DOE, 1995). The EMAS scheme was developed by the Department of the Environment, United Kingdom in partnership with the Local Authority Associations and the Local Government Management Board⁴⁹. The scheme is designed to aid in describing and quantifying an authority's direct and service effects on the environment on a corporate basis, and to help it to continuously improve its' performance. The first stages in the EMAS process involve the preparation of a local environmental/ sustainability policy. Experience has shown that following these environmental management systems can be a successful method of integrating sustainability concerns into the working of the authority.

The most systematic attempt to integrate environmental decision-making into local government [in the United Kingdom] has been through 'internal audit' procedures, in particular the Eco-Management and Audit Scheme for Local Government (EMAS)

Selman (1996:93)

In the UK authorities such as Sutton Borough Council and Hereford City Council have received EMAS verification. Within these authorities, the Environmental Management Systems have led to environment and efficiency gains. In addition the Systems have served as a structured framework within which the authoritys LA 21 processes could

⁴⁸ Refer to Section 2.5.1

⁴⁹ The LGMB became the Improvement and Development Agency in April 1999

proceed (DOE, 1996). Internationally numerous lead initiatives propose frameworks for strategic sustainability planning in local government. Some of the more significant initiatives are discussed below.

4.6 International Initiatives Based on the Local Strategic Sustainability Planning Approach

There have been numerous international programmes based on the local sustainability planning approach. Each of these initiatives has fundamental similarities. They have a similar holistic vision of the future rooted in radical change. They share a global United Nations context which also seeks to encourage regional and national action. They are underpinned by shared principles, such as social justice, sustainability, participation and decentralisation and they focus on the same broad agenda, highlighting quality of life and human development and embracing interconnected social, environmental and economic concerns. Finally, each of the international initiatives uses common processes and methods, such as community development, capacity building, strategic planning, policy development, mediation and consensus-building, and highlight the centrality of local authorities in developing new approaches to governance (WHO, 1998b).

Baker *et al* (1997: 19) argue that international and local levels of government are the most critical areas of governance with crucial roles to play in the path towards sustainability:

While it is recognised that the role of central government is an important one, it is also now widely recognised that much of the implementation of policies aimed at shifting economies to a sustainable development path will have to take place not at the level of national government, but above and below that at the international and local level respectively.

A brief history of those international meetings and initiatives which represent 'global milestones' for sustainability was provided in section 2.1. Cumulatively these initiatives have succeeded in stimulating international recognition of sustainability, providing mandates for action at all levels of government. As a direct and indirect result of these international meetings various international programmes have arisen, most of which advocate action at the local level and rely on local government as the facilitating institution. These institutional programmes have played a critical role in documenting and analyzing growing local experiences, and in facilitating the exchange of 'best practice' approaches and tools. The most significant of these networking initiatives is the International Council

for Local Environmental Initiatives, Local Agenda 21 and World Health Organisation, Healthy Cities Programme, these are explored in more depth below. It should be acknowledged that there are numerous other initiatives which are carrying out commendable work progressing sustainable cities worldwide. One such initiative is the Sustainable Cities Programme, this is a joint programme coordinated by the United Nations CH Settlements and the United Nations Environment Programme. It works towards the development of a sustainable urban environment, building capacities in urban environmental planning and management, and promoting a broad-based participatory process. Within Africa, the European Union and the World Bank project, Managing the Environment Locally In Sub-Saharan Africa (MELISSA) is a good example of a networking initiative based on local sustainability planning.

The International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) is the international environmental agency for local governments. ICLEI was established in 1990 through a partnership of the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), and the Center for Innovative Diplomacy (ICLEI, 1998b). The purpose and mission of ICLEI is to serve as an advocate for local government before national and international governments to increase their understanding and support of local environmental protection and sustainable development activities. In addition, ICLEI serves as an international clearinghouse on sustainable development and environmental protection policies, programmes, and techniques being implemented at the local level by local institutions. The organisation initiates international programmes and research and organises training programmes and guidance reports.

ICLEI members include more than 300 local governments of all sizes from around the world, all of whom share a common purpose, namely to take a leadership role in identifying and implementing innovative environmental management practices at the local level. (ICLEI, 1998b). ICLEI is currently involved in numerous projects which are collectively aimed at promoting sustainability⁵⁰ around the world.

⁵⁰ The following is a list of some of ICLEI's current projects:

- Local Agenda 21 Initiative
- Local Agenda 21 Charters Program
- Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Program
- The European Sustainable Cities & Towns Campaign
- Local Agenda 21 Guidance & Training Programme
- Business Partners Program

One of the most significant international ICLEI initiatives for local government drawn up for the United Nations Committee on Environment and Development, 1992⁵¹, is Local Agenda 21. Local Agenda 21 reflects the principles of Agenda 21(A 21)⁵² at the local level.

Chapter 28 of A 21 was drawn up by ICLEI and includes the following mandate:

Each local authority should enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organisations and private enterprises and adopt "a local Agenda 21". Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organisations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues. Local authority programmes, policies, laws and regulations to achieve Agenda 21 objectives would be assessed and modified, based on local programmes adopted.

(UNCED, Chapter. 28, 1992)

The essential components of Local Agenda 21 are specified by ICLEI as:

- **The commitment of the Council** - this needs to be demonstrated by a clear commitment to be involved in a Local Agenda 21 process, and to respond to the issues and priorities which emerge.
- **Partnership between the Council and the community** - especially those organisations and groups which have a major influence on the local area, or which represent an 'interest group' which collectively has a big influence.
- **Widescale community participation** - every individual should have the opportunity to get involved, and sufficient breadth of involvement should be obtained to provide a good picture of the main issues of local concern.
- **Focus on sustainable development** - the scope should cover the social, economic and environmental issues to do with improving local quality of life.
- **Setting long-term, environmentally sustainable goals** - a key difference between Local Agenda 21 and other planning/decision-making processes is that LA 21 must consider what will be sustainable in the long-term.
- **Monitoring progress** - the results of Local Agenda 21 initiatives must be monitored, so that action programmes can be changed if they are not having the desired effect.

-
- The International Training Centre
 - ECO-PROCURA ICLEI's European Environmental Procurement Initiative
 - Environmental Budgeting Project
 - The Cities for Climate Protection (CCP) Campaign
 - Sustainable Transportation Program
 - Green Buildings Program
 - European Green Fleets Program
 - Green Fleets Program
 - Local Sustainability The European Good practice Information Service
 - Collaboration in The UNCHS Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme

⁵¹ Refer to **Section 2.2.3**

⁵² The sustainability action plan which emerged from UNCED, 1992. Refer to **Section 2.2.2**

To aid the adoption of truly participatory LA 21 processes aimed at sustainability by local authorities, ICLEI established a Local Agenda 21 Initiative. The Initiative has three elements, namely: the *Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Programme*, the *Local Agenda 21 Communities Network* and the *National Local Agenda 21 Campaigns* (ICLEI, 1996).

The *Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Programme* was a four year research and development project designed to aid local governments in implementing Chapter 28 of Agenda 21. The goal of this programme was to jointly design, document and evaluate local strategic planning processes for sustainable development. The programme was undertaken from October 1993 to April 1997. Fourteen municipalities were chosen to design, test, and evaluate planning frameworks for sustainable development⁵³. The *Local Agenda 21 Communities Network* has been established to recognize municipalities who are implementing Local Agenda 21 processes consistent with certain basic criteria. The third element of the Initiative is the organization of *National Local Agenda 21 Campaigns*. ICLEI is urging national governments and national associations of local governments to establish national LA 21 Programmes, and is providing technical support to interested parties on the design of these Programmes (ICLEI, 1996). LA 21 has been heralded 'the Trojan Horse of democracy' (Bishop 1997:10). Since 1992 it has been widely adopted worldwide in both developed and developing countries. In 1996, a LA 21 survey was carried out by ICLEI in collaboration with the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD). The study revealed that more than 1,800 local governments in 64 countries were involved in LA 21 activities (ICLEI and UNDPDPCSD, 1997).

The World Health Organisation (WHO) Healthy Cities Project (HCP) was launched in 1987. The initiative is a long-term international development project which aims to integrate health into decision-making agendas and to emphasise the importance of a holistic approach to health and sustainability at the local level (WHO 1998a). The project represents the operational arm of the World Health Organisation's 'Health for All by 2000 Strategy'. The HCP is currently in phase 3, which is expected to run until 2002. The Healthy Cities Programme now involves more than 1,000 municipalities and 17 national campaigns (ICLEI, 1999).

⁵³ Refer to Section 4.7

The WHO Health for All initiative and the sustainable development agenda have much in common. Their ultimate goal (from an anthropocentric perspective) is 'quality of life'. Phase 3 of the HCP emphasises the similarities and the strong link between this and other sustainability initiatives such as Agenda 21. Healthy Cities networks are useful vehicles for promoting ideas and engaging cities in action partnerships geared for urban development. Figure 4.3 on the following page, constitutes a brief diagrammatic overview of the evolution of HFA and Agenda 21 movements and illustrates the gradual convergence that has taken place.

Increasingly the HCP and LA 21 are being linked in practice. This is fortuitous given that the principles and numerous stages in both processes are virtually identical. The main divergence between the HCP and LA 21 emerges from their conceptual roots, HCP roots lie in medical health and LA 21 has its roots in the concept of environmental sustainability.

Smaller scale initiatives of a similar nature to LA 21 and Healthy Cities are proceeding within the African continent. Managing the Environment Locally in Sub-Saharan Africa (MELISSA) is supported by the European Union, the World Bank and the Governments of Sweden and Norway. The programme aims to support and encourage local authorities, as well as local communities in improving their living conditions and environment. It also aims to network local expertise and best practices in the areas of local environmental management policy. To this end, MELISSA supports pilot operations for Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) and develops capacity and knowledge for better LEAPs preparation, implementation and monitoring. Again, the focus is on achieving sustainability through local level planning and action. A key initiative of MELISSA is the development of a Knowledge and Expertise Resource Network (KERN) that aims to document and disseminate lessons learnt on LEAPs.

4.7 Local Sustainability Planning in South Africa

South Africa has only recently become a democracy⁵⁴. Following the entitlement of each citizen in the country to vote is a wave of new legislation encouraging public participation in decision-making⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ The implications of South Africa's political history on public participation in the country are explored further in Section 5.3 and briefly in Section 6.3

⁵⁵ Examined further in Section 5.3

Figure 4.3 Healthy Cities and Agenda 21: Origins and Developments

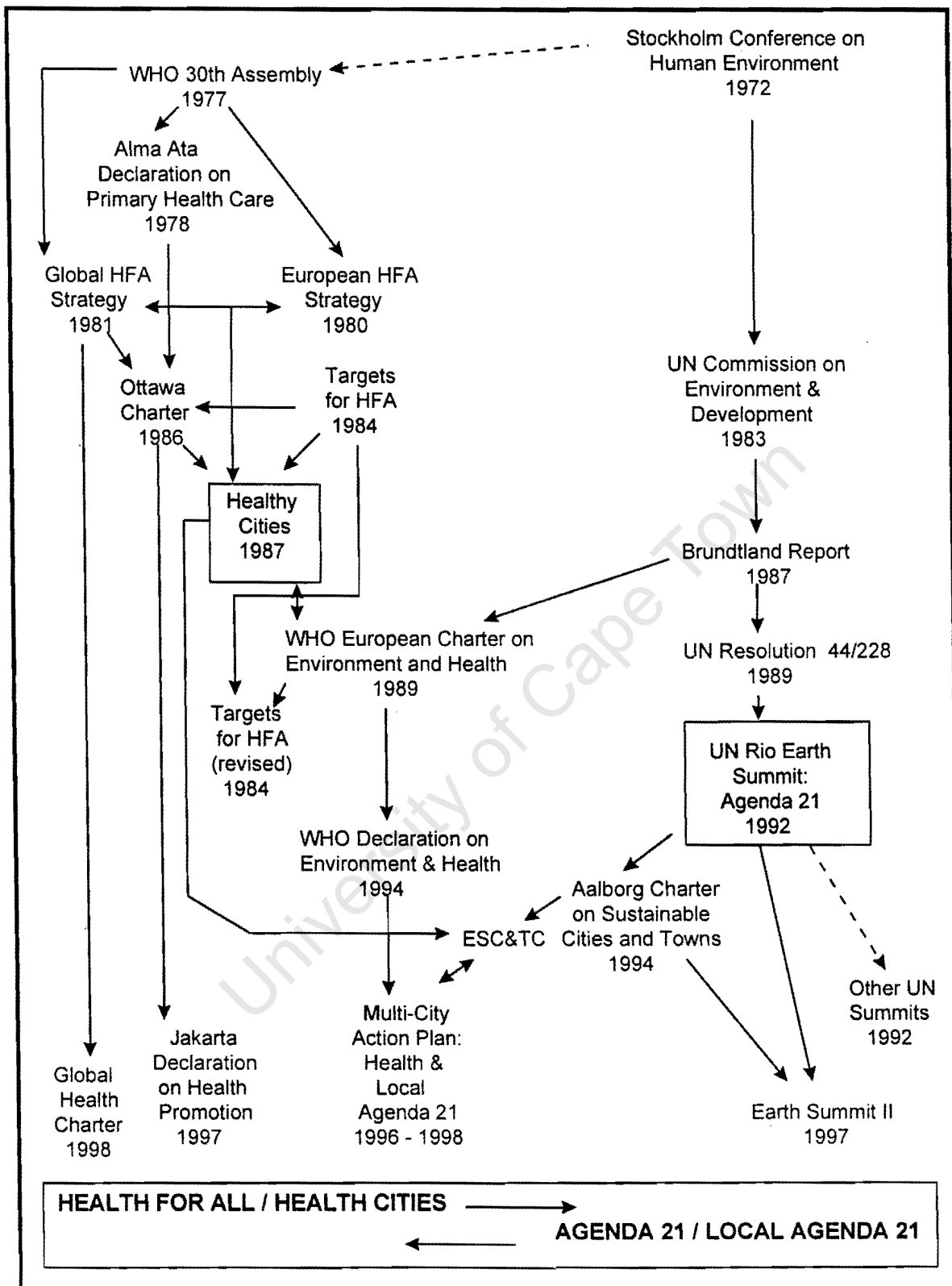


Figure 2 adapted from (WHO, 1998b)

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)⁵⁶ makes the connection between democracy and participation:

Democratisation means that all South Africans have access to power and the right to exercise their power - to participate in the process of reconstructing our country. Democracy is more than electing representatives to power once every few years. It means enabling people, especially women, to participate in decision making at all levels of their lives - through people's forums, negotiating forums, work place committees, local development committees and referendums. Democracy also requires that our people are well informed so that they can participate fully in decisions which affect their lives.

(GNU, 1994)

Since 1997, ICLEI have been overseeing the Local Agenda 21 African Sustainable Cities Network (ASCN). The ASCN is a regional network that provides the coordinating structure and mechanisms for a more effective implementation of ICLEI's Local Agenda 21 activities in Africa. It administers a training scheme to support the implementation of Local Agenda planning processes and development projects. The programme is in its second phase, which involves using decentralised cooperation to increase the environmental planning and management capacity of African local governments.

South Africa was absent from the UNCED in 1992 due to economic sanctions. The readmission of the country to the international community has resulted in South Africa's involvement in a plethora of international conventions, meetings, programmes, and agreements. In the sustainability field the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) has assumed responsibility 'for some 20 international conventions ranging from CITES, RAMSAR, BONN and the CBD, to the Antarctic Treaty, IWC and the Law of the Sea' (DEAT, 1998a).

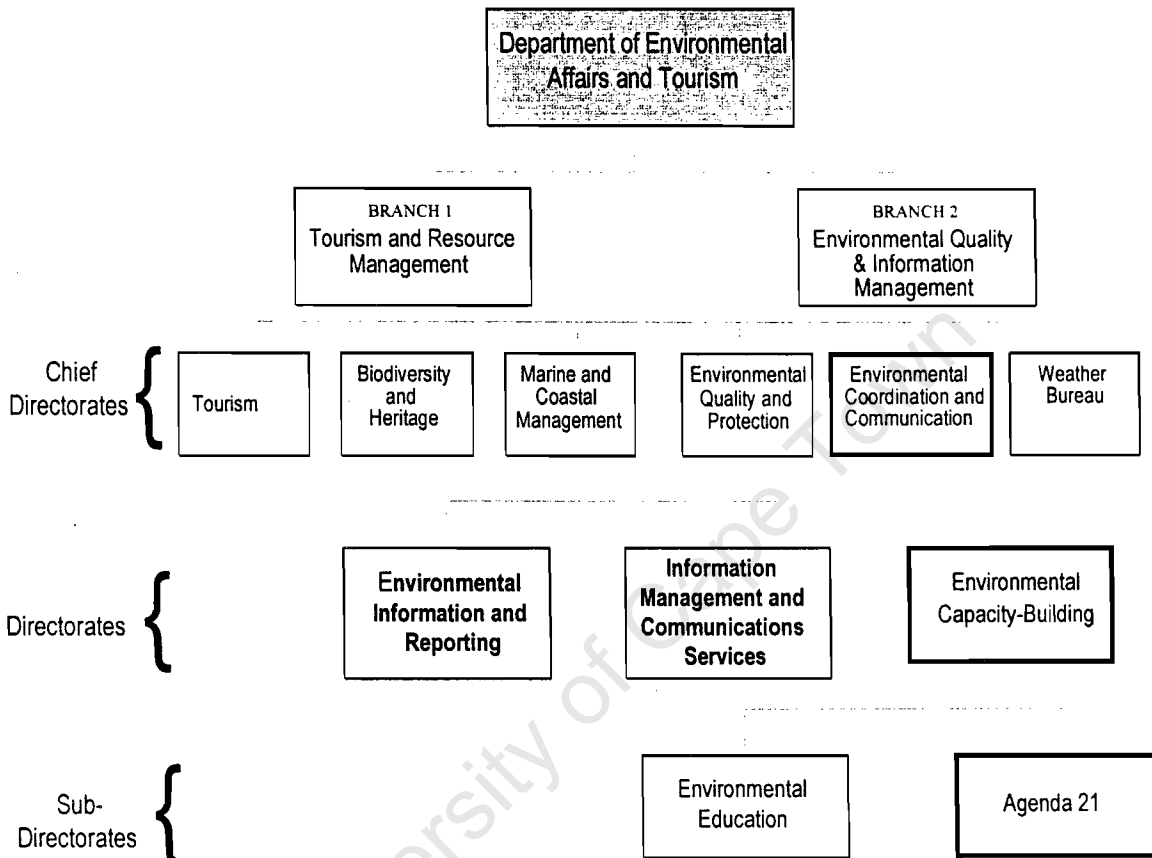
At the UN General Assembly Special Session in June 1997- known as 'Rio plus five'- South Africa became one of the global partners in Agenda 21. As a direct result of this commitment, Minister Pallo Jordan⁵⁷ committed South Africa to developing a national strategy on sustainable development by the year 2002 (DEAT, 1998a: 57).

⁵⁶ Discussed in depth in Section 5.3.2

⁵⁷ Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism from 1994 to 1999.

To date there is no national legislation in place for LA 21 implementation in South Africa although progress is being made in this area (DEAT, 1998a: 58). LA 21 has become the responsibility of a sub-directorate in the DEAT. The following diagram illustrates the position of Agenda 21 and LA 21 in the Department:

Figure 4.4 Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Structure



Functions of the Agenda 21 Sub-Directorate:

- To develop a national strategy for sustainable development.
- To monitor progress with the implementation of Agenda 21 in all spheres of government through the co-ordination of sustainable development initiatives in close consultation with all major groups.

The DEAT itself is one of the less powerful and smaller Departments in government⁵⁸. By delegating this responsibility for sustainability policy formulation to the sub-directorate level in a weaker government department, the national government is effectively undermining the significance of sustainability planning.

To date, little progress has been made in the development of a national strategy for sustainable development. Various options are being considered including the possibility of bringing in consultants from another country with experience in sustainability strategy development in various countries across the world. This option is not ideal however it may be necessary due to the relatively small budget of the A 21 sub-directorate.

In 1998 DEAT established a Committee for Environmental Coordination. In late 1998 this Committee created a further Interdepartmental Committee on Sustainable Development. The Interdepartmental Committee on Sustainable Development is an interim national coordinating mechanism for Agenda 21 in South Africa whose responsibility is to '*interalia*, initiate the Implementation of Agenda 21 in South Africa' (DEAT, 1998a: 58).

In 1999 USAID provided funding⁵⁹ for a national sustainable development awareness raising and training programme targeted at local government and politicians under the auspices of a Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) process. The funding was directed through DEAT who have a minor coordinatory role in the programme. The Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town is the implementing agency. The Local Agenda 21 Awareness Raising and Capacity-Building Programme targets politicians and senior government officials at national provincial and local levels. The programme is collaborating with selected universities and technikons in South Africa, with whom courses will be designed and delivered in the field of concepts and tools for sustainable development. Other activities planned for the two year programme duration are 'a presentations to members of executive committees and various parliamentary committees, production of a video, and LA 21 publications and information packages' (EEU, 1999).

In 1998, O'Riordan (1998b: 6) stated that:

⁵⁸ Refer to discussion of the implications of this in Section 5.8

⁵⁹ The grant totaled R4,2 million (\$700,000 USD).

Local Agenda 21 is just about alive in South Africa. It is most active in Durban, it is emerging as a creative force in the new metro-lead government of Cape Town, and it has a precarious toe-hold in Johannesburg and Pretoria.

Since this time there has been progress made towards establishing LA 21 in the country. Additionally there has been minor progress towards addressing and integrating sustainability within national government.

In South Africa, the Cape Metropolitan Council is planning to carry out both LA 21 and the Healthy Cities project in close conjunction. The Medical Research Council recently examined the environment-health nexus in local government in the Cape Metropolitan Area. Their report found that there is a strong awareness of the need to make links between environmental conditions and health impacts thereby highlighting the need to increase integration between environment management, environment health and health departments (MNR and MRC, 1998: 55). Despite this awareness, however, adequate linking structures are not in place or operationalised and administrative systems do not appear to be structured to facilitate coordination (*ibid.*: 55)

The most documented LA 21 initiatives in South Africa are the cities which participated in ICLEI's LA 21 Model Communities Programme⁶⁰ (MCP). Three South African cities, namely Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, agreed to undertake a LA 21 process for their areas (CTCC, 1997, Patel, 1996: 12, ICLEI, 1999d). In order to facilitate the sharing of information and networking between these cities the 'Three Cities Network' was established. Each of these cities is included in the list of ten 'core' municipalities in the ASCN⁶¹.

The MCP was a four year research project in which a select group of municipalities designed, tested, and evaluated planning frameworks for sustainable development using ICLEI guidance. The Model Communities Programme sought to 'develop and test the various instruments and procedures required for sustainable development planning; draw conclusions about the means, methods and requirements for local sustainable

⁶⁰ Refer to section 4.6

⁶¹ African Sustainable Cities Network

development; and to generate informed recommendations to local government worldwide about the design of local sustainable development planning processes (ICLEI, 1999b).

Cape Town⁶² was a participant in this programme. The Cape Metropolitan Area is currently undergoing a renewal in its LA 21 process. Following the transition staff have been established at the metropolitan level who are responsible for the implementation of LA 21 and associated environmental management responsibilities. LA 21 in the past was coordinated by one of the Metropolitan Local Councils. The City of Cape Town (then Cape Town City Council, CTCC) piloted their LA 21 programme using Hanover Park as their first project focus area. The Programme commenced in June 1995. The main objectives of the MCP were:

- **to establish a system of planning that promotes democracy, partnerships, involvement and participation**
- **to link public expenses to sustainable strategies which are guided by a vision and by priorities which are jointly determined by all partners**
- **to change from an ad-hoc and piecemeal approach to an integrated approach to development planning**
- **to ensure paid delivery of programmes and of projects associated with the RDP**
- **to monitor, evaluate and provide feedback, and improve performance on current projects.**

Moderate progress was made, particularly in the areas of community partnerships and participation. However, numerous factors led to the LA 21 programme at Hanover Park drawing to a premature close in December 1997 (CTCC, 1997). The factors which led to the failure of the programme included a lack of managerial commitment. Responsibility for the programme was delegated to lower ranking officials with little political influence. In addition, the city officials were expected to carry out the LA 21 initiative as an add-on to their existing full-time workload.

In a report by the CTCC the following useful conclusions were drawn from the Hanover Park experience:

⁶² A case study examining the potential for local sustainability planning in the Cape Metropolitan Area is carried out in Chapter 7

Administrative restructuring, constraints to strategic planning and capacity problems together raise important questions about the viability of initiating development projects during the early stages of transition when the process of restructuring can potentially undermine the objectives or plans of a project. Nevertheless the attempt to implement a project of this nature provides a particularly useful illustration of the range of issues that relate to *establishing joint decision-making partnerships* - issues which need to be taken into account, at an appropriately high tier of the administrative hierarchy, before one can expect partnerships to begin the complex task of prioritising development needs.

(CTCC, 1997:15)

The Hanover Park LA 21 initiative is particularly relevant to the case study area of this study, providing important lessons and experience for future initiatives. As will be addressed in Chapters Seven and Eight. Many of the challenges which arose through the Three Cities Network experience still exist today and need to be addressed in formulating a framework for local sustainability planning.

In contrast to the Hanover Park experience, Durban's LA 21 programme thrived. Initially the programme focused on the presentation of the concepts and rationale behind LA 21 to stakeholders and interest groups (Patel, 1996: 12). Phase One of the process involved the preparation of an Environment and Development Study for the Durban Metropolitan Area. This led to the completion of a State of the Environment and Development Report for the metropolitan area (*ibid.*: 26). In the Phase One report emanating from the Durban LA 21 initiative, the key lesson learned was the need for a full time member of staff to oversee the project. In addition to this the report highlighted the need for broad scale participation; the need for commitment from stakeholders to bring their resources to the table; the need to build capacity for participants to participate meaningfully; the need for an intersectoral approach; the need to align with key metropolitan programmes to have maximum impact, and; the need for sustained high level political commitment (Patel, 1996: 40).

The Local Agenda 21 Programme in Greater Johannesburg was aligned to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and integrated with the environmental Land Development Objectives (LDOs), formulated in 1997 in terms of the Development Facilitation Act [No. 67 of 1995]. This approach was chosen 'due to the fact that Local Agenda 21 and the LDOs have the same underlying principles of pro-active and interactive stakeholder participation as well as achieving a sustainable urban environment' (ICLEI,

1999d). The process commenced with the formulation of an Environmental Management Committee in the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council. This Forum makes provision for city politicians, officials and civil society to participate in the decision-making process with respect to the city's environment. This Committee is responsible for driving and coordinating Johannesburg's Local Agenda 21 planning process. Strong emphasis was placed on getting Local Agenda 21 to be accepted as a process which adds value to other processes and functions of local government instead of a separate and additional mandate. The challenges faced by the Greater Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, included 'integrating Local Agenda 21 into existing local government processes, sustaining stakeholder involvement and general stakeholder accountability' and overcoming the 'limited human and financial resources' which exist as a result of 'environmental management being a newly acquired task of local government' (ICLEI, 1999d).

Several lessons were learned from the Johannesburg LA 21 Programme. Their experience reflected many other ICLEI case studies around the world. They found that it is essential to integrate the LA 21 process into existing environmental management, development and overall local government processes. It is important to ensure that there is interactive stakeholder participation to ensure sustainability and acceptance of delivery. The LA 21 process should be grounded in the decision making processes of local government to ensure support and allocation of resources. Partnerships should be created with other organisations (local, national, international, NGO's, businesses etc.). Finally, it is important to obtain effective stakeholder involvement. This final point is very time and resource intensive, and requires dedicated capacity to sustain.

The varying approaches to LA 21 planning presented by the three cities in South Africa offer an interesting learning opportunity based on a comparison of approaches and programme outcomes. However, despite the continuing success of both the Durban and Johannesburg LA 21 initiatives, numerous problems and conflicts were experienced in the process. The experience gained through each of these initiatives is examined in chapter seven where the lessons learned will aid in the formulation of recommendations for the case study⁶³.

⁶³ Refer to Section 7.14

In developing a framework for local government sustainability planning the lessons learned from the South African Model Communities Programme should be taken into account. Chapter Seven analyses the experience gained from these pilot projects

4.8 Conclusion

Local sustainability planning is traditionally a cyclical, systematic process by which a community plans for sustainability in their locality, sets targets for action, monitors progress using indicators and reviews the plan. Importantly the process is participatory, democratic and decentralised. There are two main international initiatives based on this general approach, ICLEI's Local Agenda 21 and WHO's Healthy Cities Programme. These represent mechanisms for achieving local sustainability planning.

LA 21 and Healthy Cities have proven to be effective local sustainability planning initiatives in many countries around the world. However, the generic formulas for successful sustainability planning would ideally be built around context specific factors. For this reason in developing a South African framework for local government sustainability planning it is important to understand the context in which local sustainability planning would operate in the country. South Africa has a very specific institutional, legislative and socio-economic context⁶⁴; this would ideally directly shape the integration of sustainability planning into local government in the country.

The following chapter will examine the socio-economic and legislative contexts in South Africa which will inform sustainability planning at the local government level. Based on this context, and using the CMA as an example, a framework based on the aforementioned local sustainability planning mechanisms is developed in Chapters Seven and Eight. The local government sustainability planning framework is specifically tailored for the CMA and is relevant across South Africa.

⁶⁴ The socio-economic, and legislative context is outlined in chapter five and the local government institutional context is outlined in chapter six



The Socio-economic and Legislative Context for Sustainability in South Africa

Experience in South Africa indicates that effective ecological protection will not be achieved without democracy and an equitable distribution of power... Ending the exploitation of both people and the environment involves the total transformation of South African society.

Rampele (1991:11, cited in Cole, 1994: 235)

5.1 Introduction

Garbers (1996: 257) asserts that 'policy research is normally multi- or interdisciplinary and that the policy-maker usually needs to have an integrated picture of a situation and also to understand the background and history of a problem'. In order to gain an integrated picture of the case study it is vital to understand the socio-economic and socio-political context in which the research is taking place. The social complexities, spatial inequalities as well as the economic, environmental and political problems which confront South Africa today cannot be understood without reference to the past. The country has a unique history; the legacy of this history has significant implications for sustainability in the country today.

This chapter examines the broad political and socio-economic context in which local sustainability planning operates in South Africa. The chapter sets the context for the local government sustainability planning framework developed in Chapter Seven. This requires insight into the country's political evolution from racial segregation during the apartheid era to the democratic government of today. The socio-political context of the country is examined through a brief analysis of the racially-based social characteristics which exist in the wake of apartheid. The legacies of the previous regime range from spatial to social,

each have significant implications both environmentally and in terms of sustainability planning.

Equally important in setting the context for the case study, and specifically local government sustainability planning, is the policy and legislative frameworks that inform sustainability in South Africa. The legislative context operates within a legal framework set out in the Constitution [Act 108 of 1996]. Beneath this, there are numerous key pieces of framework legislation which directly inform and shape sustainability. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Strategy and the National Environmental Management Act (1998) represent the current national legislative sustainability frameworks. Working within these frameworks there are various sectoral policies which promote sustainability in the country. It is useful in setting the legislative context for sustainability, to examine the sustainability implications for each of these pieces of legislation.

5.2 A Brief Glance at South Africa's Socio-political History

To fully understand the context in which this study is set the historical framework must first be established. The current socio-economic climate has its roots in the social system which predated 1994. Establishing the socio-economic context is important to understand the challenges the country faces in its transition to sustainability. It is not the intention of this study to provide a comprehensive account of the socio-political and socio-economic history of South Africa. Instead, this study represents a summary of the events which are most significant in terms of sustainability in South Africa today.

South Africa has a long history of racial segregation and discrimination. The country was colonised from the mid-seventeenth century, first by the Dutch and from 1795, until 1806 by the British. The racial subjugation of indigenous peoples was instigated at this time.

Following the Anglo-Boer War in 1910 the politically and economically dominant British and Afrikaaner people were reconciled. South Africa was liberated from colonial rule and became an independent state. Unlike other post-colonial countries in Africa in more recent times, political relations from the colonial period were transferred into the new state. Colonisation aimed to subjugate the black population to maintain control and to extract labour. Within the new state, the functional relations of inequality between the white

population and the black and marginal populations were maintained. To separate the functional relations of "racial" groups it became necessary to instigate a geography of racial segregation. Two pieces of legislation which illustrate the attempt to gain white control over access to land capital and the economic and social mobility of the black population in the new state were the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923. The point being made is that from the earliest stages in South Africa's history peoples access to resources was being forcibly restricted. At deeper level, South Africa was directed towards a path away from sustainability.

As time went by the control of the state became increasingly intense. Inequalities between the white and black population became more powerful and repressive. In the years approaching the introduction of apartheid in 1948 segregation became more formalised and structured.

In 1948, the Afrikaner led Nationalist Party established apartheid as official national policy. Apartheid is an Afrikaans word meaning 'apartness', it was later euphemistically termed 'separate development'. Like all potentially contentious discourses, the architects of apartheid tried to conceal its specificity and present the subsequent policies as practical and just instruments for coping with the unique realities of South African society (Williams, 1998: 568).

From the mid-1940s and in particular from 1948 control over the relationship between races was intensified. The legislation designed to maintain the functional and geographical relations of people was wide ranging. For example, three key pieces of urban legislation promoting apartheid were the 1945 Native Urban Areas (Consolidation) Act, the 1950 Population Registration Act and the 1950 Group Areas Act. Under the 1950 Acts black people were required to carry passes in the cities. The 1950 Group Areas Act did not provide for the accommodation of the black population in cities, instead the black township areas were controlled under the 1945 Native Urban Areas (Consolidation) Act. Further legislation was designed to control peoples' access to, amongst other things, transport, the health system, cultural facilities, education and economic mobility.

Gradually the oppressed majority became mobilised into mass protests against the ruling regime. Numerous protests took place. One particular incident which represents a watershed in political protest was the 1976 Soweto riots. This bloody confrontation

between black protesters and the police force, placed an international spotlight on South Africa. Following this, many countries intensified economic sanctions and political pressure on the state to change.

Apartheid had many critics; Satre (1966) described it as a 'cancer' which threatened to spread across Africa. During the 1980's the apartheid regime suffered under international condemnation. It started to become clear to the apartheid leadership that the system was ethically, socially and economically not viable. These were arguably desperate times for the apartheid leadership. Desperation led to politically inspired decisions being made which had extremely serious environmental implications. Sanctions threatened industry in the country. In an attempt to prevent an exodus of industry from the country, the state turned a blind eye to many restrictions. There was abuse in the form of wasteful use of resources as the government was unwilling to increase the problems being experienced by industry.

The break down of apartheid was most apparent at the end of 1989 when F.W. de Klerk's National Party government made a decision to open negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC) over a democracy, and unbanned political organisations. Some of the reasoning behind this decision has its' roots in the years leading up to 1989. Gilomee (1995: 83) charts the events which underpinned the move towards the negotiations. He states:

In the general election of September 1989 the ruling NP lost support to both left-wing and the right-wing opponents and was facing a pincer threat to its forty-year dominance of white politics. The economy was stagnating, and there was little chance of sanctions being rolled back. Negotiations with black leaders within an apartheid framework had come to a dead end.

It was a complex combination of catalysts which resulted in the events leading up to the transition. Gilomee (1995: 83) continues to identify many other factors involved in the National Party's decision to enter into negotiations. These included a change in National Party leadership in the same year from P.W. Botha to F.W. de Klerk, a weakening demographic base, economic pressures and a changing ideological and external environment. The legal basis of apartheid was largely repealed in 1991–2. Finally, negotiations led to a political transition which, in April 1994, culminated in South Africa's first democratic elections.

In spite of the decades of division, separation, dislocation and inequality South Africa has thus far negotiated a successful transition to democracy. However, the legacy of the apartheid regime has serious implications for a transition to sustainability within the country. The legacy includes political, economic, social, spatial and environmental problems which must be addressed. The sections that follow will examine a number of key remaining problems, caused by apartheid policies, which have implications for sustainability in the country.

5.3 The Implications of Apartheid's Social Legacy for Sustainability

In South Africa the apartheid policies of racial separation have been instrumental in corroding the country's very social fabric. The legacies of this socio-political history have major implications for sustainability in the country. Numerous factors will need to be addressed in order for a transition to sustainability to take place. Particularly important in terms of the case study in the final chapter of this study, are the repercussions of the apartheid legacies for local sustainability planning in the country. These are specifically the social legacies, namely the disempowerment of the majority of the population, the breakdown of the community, and the factors leading to increasing crime levels. These social problems include those which have specific remedies, such as the illiteracy of over a quarter of the adult population of South Africa, as well as cultural and language barriers cultivated by the previous regime. These can be tackled directly through education programmes (The Economist, 1997: 20). Less easy to address are the more abstract social problems, such as the inherent distrust of authority structures retained by a large proportion of the population, and the lack of a cohesive community within South Africa.

The general distrust of authority largely stems from the authoritarian approach that was adopted by the previous regime. Institutions such as the police force were largely unaccountable, unjust, racist and working to the agenda of central government. Local government⁶⁵ was also seen to be a local embodiment of the racist apartheid regime. Consequently, local government became the focus of protest and payment boycotts⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Local government is analysed further in the following chapter, Chapter 6.

⁶⁶ The protest against local government is discussed further in Section 6.2

This legacy of distrust represents a major barrier to local government led participation programmes⁶⁷ (Swilling and Boya, 1995).

A legacy of apartheid which has crucial implications for sustainability in South Africa is the breakdown of the community. In order to explore this phenomenon it is necessary to understand the meaning of the term community. As part of her analysis of democratic theory and local government, Hill (1974: 215) sees the community as 'a social interaction: the common bonds of neighbour, friend, kin, which form the actual pattern of behaviour and which people see as important in their lives'. Similarly, community is defined by Byran and McClaughy (1991:7) as:

people who interact at a personal level, have a shared identity, values, traditions, sense of organic bond to each other, possess the power to make decisions about their common lives and feel responsible for extending mutual aid to their fellow humans in need

This notion of 'community' in South Africa is fraught with problems. Communities have been fragmented both geographically and socially through the policies of the apartheid regime. For this reason, O'Riordan (1998a: 7) warns against the traditional use of the term as defined by Byran and McClaughy (1991). He states that:

In South Africa the notion of "community" needs to be approached with much caution. The Northern conception of the term is some sort of homogenous notion of a group of like-minded interests in a relatively confined space. In South Africa, the term is linked to ethnic, cultural and historically discriminatory episodes where community life was all but destroyed.

(O'Riordan, 1998a: 7)

The concept of 'the community' however, is fundamental to social inclusion. Citizenship throughout national government legislation is generally expressed through 'community'. Khan (1998: 32) states that "'community" not society, serves as the institutional building block for a new spatialisation/territorialisation of government'. Thus, South Africa lacks social cohesion. This lack of "community" in the country is likely to impact on a key aspect of this study, namely the participation of the public in local government decision-making.

⁶⁷ Discussed further in Section 6.3

The lack of social cohesion and hence sustainability in South Africa is being exacerbated by a rise in crime levels (O'Riordan 1998b). Violent crime is on the increase, with murder rates ranking amongst the highest in the world, about seven times that in the United States (The Economist 1997: 20). Criminal violence is therefore, arguably, one of the greatest threats to the country's stability. At this time, crime in South Africa is generally small-scale and opportunistic (O'Riordan 1998b). If crime becomes institutionalised and syndicated it poses a major threat to social order. Analysing evidence in the form of crime statistics, O'Riordan (1998b) suggests that this has begun to happen.

Closely linked to the social implications of the legacies of apartheid, are their spatial implications.

5.4 Spatial Apartheid and it's Sustainability Implications

Space was central to the racial segregation of peoples in South Africa. The apartheid era saw a conception of space as 'homogenous, divisible, empty, able to be filled with social content, to be demarcated and sub-divided in short to be ordered, as well as being the very source of order' (Robinson, 1996: 335). The manipulation of space at this time was a tool for ordering, managing and dividing society. Thus apartheid spatial management at the time was a 'powerful metaphor of political power' (*ibid.* 335).

An example of a community uprooted and relocated under the proviso of the apartheid laws is found in Cape Town in the former District Six. During the 1970s and 80s the people of District Six were 'evicted from their homes, removed from their places of employment and had their community destroyed' (DLA, 1999: 19). In his study of the inshore fishing community in Cape Town's Waterfront, Kilian (1994:135) states:

By forcing whole communities to move from the areas they occupied for generations and thus severing the bonds between people and their place (or effective space), the group areas legislation had a severely traumatising effect.

As with other cases around the country the people of District Six were 'forced to move to under-resourced and under-serviced suburbs which bore no resemblance to the place from whence they came' (DLA, 1999: 19). An excerpt from the Department of Land Affairs newsletter, highlights some of the impacts of forced removals:

Not only did the people from District Six suffer from the physical demolition and relocation, but they also had to bear the emotional and

financial costs of attempting to re-establish their lives. The people of District Six fought to keep the dispossessions and removals in the mind of the public, in the City of Cape Town, nationally and internationally.

(DLA, 1999)

Black workers were located on the periphery of urban centres. Only those holding the necessary labour permits were allowed to reside within urban areas. Such permits often did not include the spouse or family of a permit holder, contributing to the breakup of family life. Robinson (1996: 336) describes the effect of relocation on black and coloured South Africans:

...[S]patial manipulation under apartheid has been widely understood to have had distressing effects especially where tight-knit communities were dispersed or where the impacts of spatial engineering resulted in serious material deprivation and long commutes

Compounding the damage to community development caused by the fragmentation of black and coloured communities, was the conditions of the space in which these communities were forced to reside. Millions of black South Africans lived in shacks in densely populated urban settings where the average living area is four square metres per person. Millions more live in poorly constructed and over-crowded formal housing where the average living area is nine square metres (McDonald 1998b: 4). The contrast is effectively illustrated when this is compared to the average living area of white South Africans which is thirty three square metres (Gilomee 1995: 85). These statistics create a clear picture of the spatial inequalities created by apartheid.

The urban context in South Africa therefore represents the most striking visual illustration of the legacy of apartheid. The policies of separation have left a complex mixture of developed and developing world contexts. Affluent areas with established infrastructure, large houses and high standards of living juxtapose informal urban settlements with high densities, weak infrastructure, poverty and high unemployment (Ngobese and Cock, 1995). Townships have been chronically short of economic means for investment in infrastructure, and the locus of planning control has lain outside these communities.

Municipal services within townships are woefully inadequate.

Racially based urban planning, meant that black townships were placed on the most undesirable areas of land, usually on the periphery of cities and often next to the most

polluted and unsightly industrial areas. For example in the Cape Flats to the southeast of Cape Town, formal and informal housing was situated on a large aquifer with the consequent problems of flooding and damp. The damp conditions weaken structures and combine with the cold, wet winter weather brought by the southeastern gales to create respiratory disease (Wisner, 1995: 164).

Serious environmental degradation has also resulted from apartheid planning. Khan (1990: 59) states that:

Severe, sometimes permanent damage has been done to the environment...in pursuit of the separate development dream. Bleak uniform townships have been built, with little, if any, attention given to environmental planning. Within the environmental sphere, therefore, the consequences of the apartheid system have been far-reaching.

These consequences include a host of environmentally and socially degrading features inherent in townships. The features include land erosion, where insufficient planning measures lead to flooding and mass wastage of slopes within the township areas. Air pollution where a lack of electricity has forced the use of wood and coal as fuel for cooking and warmth. Polluted urban waterways due to the disposal of solid and liquid waste, providing areas where disease vectors can breed (Wisner, 1995: 262). Wisner describes the environmental degradation as a 'crisis of environmental health', caused by:

a gross imbalance between human needs and activities and geographical and ecological conditions such as topography, drainage, surface and ground water, micro-climate, soil fertility, etc.

Both the 'dislocation' experienced by the majority of South Africans and the inequality and injustices of the apartheid era have direct implications for sustainability. Inherent within sustainability is the notion of ownership and continuity. The history of forced removal and re-allocation experienced by non-white South Africans has often led to a general lack of long term understanding and disconnection with the land upon which they reside (Sparks, 1999: 66). Khan (1990: 60) asserts that the policies of separation 'have resulted in an increased sense of physical and spiritual alienation' of black and coloured South Africans.

Also integral to the concept of sustainability, as discussed in Chapter Two is the notion of inter- and intra-generational equity. Whilst sustainability is inevitably concerned with the

future, it must also be concerned with the present - and be committed to achieving equity and justice both within and between generations⁶⁸:

the ethical argument behind inter-generational equity is that future generations have the right to expect an inheritance sufficient to allow them the capacity to generate for themselves a level of welfare no less than that enjoyed by the current generation.

(Turner, 1993: 7)

In South Africa, the present generation of the majority of South Africans has been subject to gross injustices and inequalities. Thus, intra-generational equity is absent on a wide scale. As a result of this, many of the other fundamental principles of sustainability have been disrupted on a large scale in South Africa. For a transition towards sustainability to take place there must be a focus on redressing this imbalance. In light of all of these challenges and in the context of the country's history, how did the sustainability paradigm evolve in South Africa?

5.5 The Route Towards a Sustainability Paradigm in South Africa

Due to its unique socio-political history, South Africa displays a different historical pathway to adopting a sustainability paradigm than most countries world-wide. In the 1970's, the academic debate in South Africa mirrored the developed world with discourse around development, modernisation and dependency theories. However the escalating struggle against apartheid and increasing repression in the country pushed the environment-development debate to the bottom of South Africa's concerns during the 1980's (Munslow *et al*, 1995: 3). Indeed the environment debate at this time had major political connotations. McDonald (1998a) contends that the disinterest in environmental debates and issues at this time stems from the fact that 'at best ecology was seen to be a white, suburban issue of little relevance to the anti-apartheid struggle, at worst, environmental policy was seen as an explicit tool of racially based oppression'. McDonald continues:

Under apartheid thousands of black South Africans were forcibly removed from ancestral lands to make way for game parks, and billions of Rand were spent on preserving wildlife and protecting wild flowers while people in the townships and the homelands lived without adequate supplies of clean water, food or shelter.

(McDonald, 1998a).

⁶⁸ Refer to the fundamental themes of sustainability, Section 2.5.1 and 2.9

Thus, environmentalism bore a heavy political stigma at this time. Black and coloured people were alienated from environmental issues. Political and economic marginalisation of black people in the country resulted in 'hostility and antagonism towards environmental issues, as bitter and resentful communities perceived conservation measures to be wasteful and purposeless' (Khan, 1990: 59)

Cole (1994: 235) supports the assertion that the 'environment' bears a heavy stigma of conservation and protectionism for the benefit of the minority⁶⁹, stating:

In a country where decent housing, adequate medical provision, and a living wage are denied to the majority, with 5 per cent of the population owning 80 per cent of the wealth, it is not surprising that the essentially conservative environmental politics of the white elite, focusing on conservation, are not a priority for the black majority.

The conservation ethic which dominated during the 1970s and 80s reflected white privilege and power which Khan (1990:23) perceives as a 'manifestation of the subordinate status of blacks⁷⁰ within society'. Any challenge to environmental policies was viewed with suspicion and was received by central government as a challenge to their authority (Khan, 1990: 62). For many, environmentalism was an issue which could galvanise sentiment. At this time 'environmentalists' were categorised by the ruling regime as radical. They were perceived as representing a direct threat to the government. This perception is discernible in the following quote from the Minister of the Environment in 1989⁷¹. He declared that environmental pressure groups represented 'the extreme left of the political spectrum' (Argus 1989: 5, cited in Khan 1990:62).

Supporters of an environmental movement were associated with the politically 'far left' and were thus discriminated against. Additionally the plight of environmentalists was reduced by the government to issues solely concerning the natural environment. By narrowing the paradigm through the exclusion of any human element, the environmental debate at this time was effectively sanitised. Apartheid policies contained no foresight in terms of

⁶⁹ These associations and connotations still plague issues of the environment in South Africa, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) is struggling to overcome the stigma.

⁷⁰ Khan (1990) uses the term black to refer to all those people who were classified as non- white under the apartheid regime. This includes those classified as African, coloured, Indian etc.

⁷¹ This response was evoked by the opposition of environmental groups to the St Lucia dune mining controversy.

sustainability and in fact grossly undermined it. In fact, a brief revision of the fundamental principles of sustainability contained in Chapter Two reveals that apartheid policies contradicted every principle.

In the long term, the constriction of the environmental debate served to reduce black and coloured support further. Khan (1990: 62) asserts that the sanitisation of environmentalism 'had serious repercussions for the environmental movement as a whole, resulting in further alienation of black South Africans'.

As the wheels of transition began turning in the 1990's, the environmental debate was taken up by those wanting to effect change. With the liberalization of South African politics, attention switched to the negotiated transition. Linked to debate over the transition were issues concerned with sustainable development. Non-governmental organisations which were suppressed under the former government gained freedom of expression at this time. An influx of foreign funding to aid the transition process flowed into the country. Globally the debate had, however, moved on. Contemporary discourse world-wide was now centered around the notion of sustainability⁷² (Munslow *et al*, 1995: 3). A multitude of different NGOs and CBOs with sustainability related aims were established over a short period of time. The popularity of environmentalism amongst the NGO sector is reflected in the four hundred and fifty organisations who have become allied to the Environmental Justice Networking Forum (EJNF) (McDonald, 1998a: 5).

The popularisation of the sustainability movement can largely be attributed to its close alignment with the objectives of the new South Africa, including redistribution, reconstruction and development. McDonald (1998a: 2) asserts that once 'the environment is redefined to include the working and living space of black South Africans it quickly becomes apparent that environmental initiatives are akin to other post-apartheid, democratic objectives'.

With the popularisation of sustainability, the environmental paradigm in South Africa is widening to encompass a human element. Contemporary environmental theoretical debate in the country is gradually becoming based on the sustainability model which

⁷² Refer to chapter 2

places environmental, social and economic elements as equally important and interlinked⁷³. Country-wide there is generally a growing awareness that development influences the environment and the environment involves people. In terms of practical implementation, there is a growing understanding that the natural environment is an important part of social and economic systems. Section 5.4 examines how government frameworks and legislation are beginning to work within a sustainability paradigm.

The Legislative Context of Sustainability in South Africa

5.6 The Evolving Sustainability Paradigm in South Africa

Historically environmental legislation in South Africa has been fragmented and designed to reinforce white control, reflecting the social and spatial policies discussed above. The previous section discussed the narrow conservation paradigm in which environmental management occurred in South Africa. The approach was reactive rather than proactive and was spread over various Acts and between different national government departments. Prior to 1973, a government department with responsibility for issues relating to the environment did not exist. In 1973, the environment was placed on the national agenda when the Department of Planning became the Department of Planning and the Environment. This department's environmental duties were limited to the 'control of pollution and the conservation of natural resources' (Schwella and Muller, 1992: 73).

During the 1980s, progress was made on a national policy for environmental conservation, the policy centered on 'green' environmental issues. Schwella and Muller (1992: 73) list the limited scope of the White Paper which covered 'soil conservation, noise pollution, marine pollution, radiation pollution, and solid waste management'. Gradually, however, the scope of the environment began to expand to include a human dimension. South Africa passed its first environmental statute in 1982, namely the Environmental Conservation Act [No. 100 of 1982]. Glazewski points out that this policy was 'not particularly effective, its stated purpose being to coordinate environmental matters within government and did not include any substantive provisions regarding environmental management'. In 1989 it was repealed and replaced by the Environmental Conservation Act [No. 73 of 1989]. Following the introduction of this policy, a more holistic approach to

⁷³ Refer to Chapter 2

environmental management began to take form. Also in 1989 the Presidents council was requested by the State President:

... to investigate and make recommendations on a policy for a national environmental management system, with specific reference to the ecological, economic, social and legal implications of such a policy.

(Schwella and Muller, 1992: 74)

In 1997, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulations were promulgated in terms of the Environmental Conservation Act. These regulations require that certain listed activities be subjected to formal EIA procedures.

Eventually the National Environmental Management Act [No 107 of 1998] (NEMA) was passed⁷⁴. This Act largely supersedes the Environmental Conservation Act; it repeals some, but not all, of its provisions.

Today, environmental management in South Africa remains the responsibility of various government institutions. At central government level, the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) is the central policy-formulating and coordinating body⁷⁵. Other organisations involved at this level include the departments of Agriculture; Water Affairs and Forestry; Minerals and Energy, and Health.

A wider understanding of the term environment is increasingly recognised in national government. NEMA defines the environment as the 'natural environment and the physical, chemical, aesthetic and cultural properties of it that influence human health and well being'.

The transition to a new democratic government has led to a total re-examination and reformation of almost every aspect of social, environmental and economic policy. This process is still underway. New legislation has started to tackle the fragmentation of environmental management. Numerous emerging pieces of legislation embrace the principles of sustainability; these are examined in the following sections.

⁷⁴ Refer to Section 5.8.

⁷⁵ The DEAT is discussed in more detail in Section 4.7.

The national framework for sustainability is given affect through three macro-policies, namely the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) Strategy and the NEMA. A legal force guiding legislation in the country is the new South African Constitution which establishes an overarching framework for the supreme law of the country.

5.7 Setting the Legal Framework for Sustainability

One of the first tasks of the democratically elected government of South Africa was to establish a national constitution, based on the interim Constitution [No. 200 of 1993]). The legislation was drafted through a public participation process involving ordinary citizens, civil society and political parties represented in and outside of the Constitutional Assembly (Government of RSA, 1996). The resultant Constitution [No. 108 of 1996] has been hailed 'one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world' (MNR and MRC, 1998: 4).

The 1996 Constitution 'sought to coordinate and to rationalise structures of law, policy, implementation and participation which beforehand were highly fragmentary, deeply discriminatory, economically wasteful, bureaucratically torturous, and largely unmonitored' (O'Riordan 1998a: 7). Important in terms of this study are the sections relating to environmental sustainability and local government. Section 152 (1) of the Constitution provides clear objectives for local government, it is stated that local government must 'provide democratic and accountable government for local communities' and 'promote a safe and healthy environment'. Section 24, part (a) provides a constitutional right for all citizens to 'an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being'. The rights are extended in part (b) of this clause to ensure that the environment is protected for the benefit of present and future generations through the prevention of pollution and ecological degradation, the promotion of conservation, and through securing ecologically sustainable development and natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development. Clearly, the intention is noble, however the precise effectiveness of the constitutional rights are as yet unclear.

O'Riordan (1998a: 7) warns that 'whilst it is important that these environment rights are recognised this is a broad declamatory statement that is yet to be tested in law'. The White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable use of South Africa's Biological Diversity,

1997 (DEAT) extends to open criticism of Section 24 part (b). The White Paper claims that it:

represents more of a directive principle than a right and in many ways underscores the status quo. Although it imposes a positive obligation on the state to pass legislation which supports environmental protection, an individual would not be able to use the clause to claim any rights. Thus... the clause is limited.

The NEMA [No.107 of 1998] sets out *locus standii* (rights of standing), through which individuals are afforded legal rights relating to the environment. NEMA is discussed in more detail below.

5.8 Towards Improved Integration, a Legislative Sustainability Framework

RDP, GEAR and NEMA represent the three macro policies which represent a framework for sustainability in South Africa. The RDP is a policy on socio-economic development in South Africa. It represents a broad framework designed to guide the country away from the inequalities of apartheid.

The **RDP** was originally produced as a party political programme by the ANC in the run up to the elections in 1994. The RDP was developed pre-Constitution and represented a policy framework around which the Government of National Unity could coalesce. Furthermore, the RDP was proclaimed to be 'a document which would hold the government to its promised mission' (Munslow and Fitzgerald, 1995: 42).

The RDP represents a holistic social reconstruction programme and, as such, is an ambitious piece of legislation which broadly aims to build a sustainable approach to development management in South Africa. A corresponding RDP fund was set up to provide grant allocations for suitable and deserving developmental projects. The RDP has been described as 'a development vision for the country...' (Fitzgerald and Munslow, 1995: 53) given that it purports to provide a strategic vision which sets the agenda for government in trying to meet the basic needs of the population and at the same time begin to redress inequities of the past. The White Paper on the RDP (GNU, 1994 section 1.1.1) defined the RDP as:

an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework. It seeks to mobilise all our people and our country's resources toward the final eradication of the results of apartheid and the building of a democratic,

non-racial and non-sexist future. It represents a vision for the fundamental transformation of South Africa.

Debra Roberts (1996: 279) describes the RDP as 'a South African framework for sustainable development'. Sustainability principles have an integral role in the RDP. The programme 'places sustainability concerns at the heart of the policy process and tries to combine macro-economic and fiscal prudence with genuine efforts to redress the inequalities of the past' (Fitzgerald and Munslow, 1995: 60). Yet the RDP falls short of representing a framework for sustainability as it 'does not integrate environmental concerns into socio-economic development' (UN 1996). Despite this, integration and sustainability are identified within the legislation as one of the five basic principles⁷⁶ upon which the RDP is based.

Emerging from the five basic RDP principles are five key programmes, these are entitled: meeting basic needs, developing our human resources, building the economy, democratising the state and society, and implementation. It is significant that implementation has been singled out as a specific principle. Too often policies are written which are weak on implementation⁷⁷. Unfortunately, it is the implementation of the RDP that has been largely undermined and remains unrealised. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly it lacked institutional mechanisms to support implementation, and secondly the Programme has received increasingly less government support over recent years. The closure of the RDP national government department has compounded the decline in the progress of the RDP and has left the programme 'floundering with the lack of an established lead ministry' (O'Riordan 1998b). In addition to the increasing lack of central government support, the RDP proved to be weak in outlining the processes required to achieve its 'strong and courageous' targets (Munslow and Fitzgerald 1995: 41). The legislation, therefore, is replete with admirable aims and objectives yet it is significantly weaker on the institutional mechanisms and the supporting funding for implementation.

Despite its weakening, the principles of the RDP appear to remain close to the heart of government policy. New legislation often refers to it. For example, in the written guidance

⁷⁶ The five basic RDP principles are: integration and sustainability, a people-driven process that aims to bring peace and security, coordinated nation-building to meet basic needs and improve infrastructure and all based on the principles of democracy and accountability

⁷⁷ This phenomena is explored within a local government context in Section 7.13.1

for the Integrated Development Planning⁷⁸ (Department of Constitutional Affairs, 1998) it is stated that:

Municipalities need to be familiar with the Reconstruction and Development Programme when preparing their integrated development plan, and should ensure that their development goals and strategies are consistent with the aims of the Reconstruction and Development Programme.

Funding was removed from the RDP macro-economic policy in 1996 to make way for the Growth, Employment and Redistribution or GEAR Strategy (1996). The GEAR strategy justifies the removal of RDP funding:

The RDP Fund has now been abolished in recognition of the ability of the normal budget process to allocate resources to priority areas.

(GEAR, 1996: Appendix 7)

GEAR is one of the most criticised of all the policies emerging from the post-apartheid government. GEAR is South Africa's macro-economic strategy for rebuilding and restructuring the economy. It is largely aimed at enabling South Africa to effectively compete in the global market. GEAR is designed to bring about an economic growth rate of six per cent per year and job creation of four hundred thousand jobs per year by the year 2000 (Urquhart, 1999: 3). As the successor to the RDP macro-economic policy GEAR should follow the RDP principles of sustainability and integration. If sustainability were an underlying principle, GEAR would aim to integrate social economic and environmental issues. Instead, there is no mention of sustainability or integration in the GEAR legislation. The key elements guiding the GEAR strategy are listed in the legislation as: an export driven economy; free-flow of money, goods and services in and out of the country avoiding high import taxes; use of advanced technology which saves on labour costs; and finally, strong state involvement to encourage investment by international corporations.

Sustainability therefore plays a very minor role in the GEAR Strategy. The elements of GEAR that relate to sustainability and more specifically local government sustainability planning include: promotion of initiatives to enhance private sector involvement in

⁷⁸ IDP is discussed in Section 6.4

development through investment; broader investment in infrastructure; more effective local spending and reprioritising of budgets, and rationalisation of local government personnel.

Without entering into an in-depth critical analysis of the GEAR Strategy, there are a number of contradictions within the strategy which have led it being criticised. One of the key elements of the strategy is promoting the use of advanced technology to save on labour costs. Reducing available jobs is in direct contradiction with the job creation and employment and redistribution aims of the Strategy as well as the political rhetoric emerging from the government at this time⁷⁹. These contradictions reflect the competing interests and tensions in government currently. The country is striving to achieve growth, growth is interlinked with new technology, and new technology competes with employment.

Despite the policy of redistribution, evident in the title of the strategy, there are no specific plans within the text for reducing inequality or promoting redistribution (Fair Share, 1997). The policy relies on redistribution through growth, favouring the unreliable 'trickle-down' method (Urquhart, 1999: 3). Hein Marais (1997:37), however, argues that linking job creation with redistribution is unjustified:

...there exists no examples internationally where economic programmes such as GEAR have produced socially progressive outcomes.

Rather, it is argued that, based on the experience of other countries, 'economic policies such as GEAR increase hardship for the country's poor rather than minimising inequality' (Urquhart, 1999: 3). In addition, the legislation falls short of reaffirming a sustainability paradigm for the country. No specific reference to sustainability or the link between social, economic and environmental aims is made within the GEAR strategy. The legislation states:

The focus of this document is the overall macroeconomic environment. Social and sectoral policy development cannot be outlined comprehensively here, but a few key linkages between growth, redistribution and new policy directions are highlighted...

The ultimate test for policy lies in the results of its implementation. Unfortunately the implementation results do not support GEAR 'since the introduction of GEAR employment has decreased and the income gap is widening' (Urquhart, 1999: 3)

Arguably the most significant piece of framework legislation influencing sustainability in the country is the recently promulgated **NEMA** [No 107 of 1998]. NEMA came into force in January 1999. It is 'effectively the flagship statute of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism as constituted under the new democratic government' (Glazewski, 1999: 83). NEMA was developed to address the problems associated with environmental management in the country. These problems include 'fragmentation, poor co-ordination, a lack of control, jurisdictional conflicts, an overlap of functions, a disunity of purpose amongst institutions, and clashes of interest' (Schwella and Muller, 1992: 80).

The White Paper⁸⁰ on Environmental Management which pre-dated the Act, states that this new legislation is 'introducing a paradigm shift from narrow conservation to sustainable development' and in doing so the White Paper contends that 'the new policy has unsettled mindsets both within and outside the public sector' (DEAT, 1997). Through NEMA, traditional perceptions of the environment as a purely 'green' issue are being modified to include the 'brown' element.

NEMA was developed through a comprehensive participatory process known as the Consultative National Environmental Policy Process (CONNEP). The purpose of the CONNEP process was to give all stakeholders in South Africa the chance to contribute to developing the new environmental policy. The process spanned three years⁸¹ and was hailed as the first fully democratic policy process in South Africa, involving millions of people (DEAT, 1997c). McDonald (1998a: 7) states that: 'CONNEPP was arguably one of the most open and accessible policy-making initiatives that the new government has undertaken'.

⁷⁹ For example the South African Government Website (Government of RSA 1998) states: 'An integral part of the GEAR strategy...[is] a process of industrial restructuring aimed at expanding employment opportunities'.

⁸⁰ The policy procedure in South Africa involves the production of a Green Paper, which is a discussion document on policy options and is published for comment and ideas. This document forms the basis for a White Paper which is a broad statement of government policy. Comment may again be invited from interested parties. Once these inputs have been taken into account, the Minister and officials within the department concerned may draft Legislative Proposals. At this stage the proposals are also considered by the Cabinet. Occasionally this document may be gazetted as a Draft Bill, for comment by a defined date. Once verified by the State Law Advisers the document becomes a Bill. This then goes through Parliamentary committee. It is then published in the Government Gazette as an Act and becomes a law of the land.

⁸¹ The CONNEP process took place between May 1995 and May 1998.

NEMA seeks to replace the greater part of the Environment Conservation Act, 1989 [No. 73 of 1989]. After its partial repeal, the Environment Conservation Act will chiefly provide for various kinds of protected area as well as the recent amendments covering Environmental Impact Assessment regulations. NEMA establishes general principles which act as a 'framework within which environmental management and implementation plans shall be formulated' and apply to 'any statutory provision or law concerning the protection or management of the environment. The principles include an integrated approach to environmental management 'acknowledging that all elements of the environment are linked'. The Act is also based on the principles of participation, sustainable development, precaution, capacity building and empowerment as well as inter-governmental co-ordination and harmonisation of policies, legislation and actions relating to the environment. Urquhart (1999: 7) states that 'the Act ... makes it quite clear that people and their needs are at the forefront of environmental management'.

NEMA is progressive in terms of broadening the concept of *locus standii* which was introduced in the Constitution [No.108 of 1996]. It allows legal action to be taken in terms of NEMA or any other statute that deals with the protection of the environment or the use of natural resources.

NEMA has a strong institutional element; it aims to strengthen institutions that manage the environment. Foremost among the bodies to be established as part of the NEMA is the National Environmental Forum. This includes representatives from business, NGOs and CBOs and organised labour. This Forum will 'allow interested and affected parties to inform the Minister on the application of the [NEMAs underlying] principles' (Glazewski, 1999:86). A further institution created under the Act is the Committee for Environmental Coordination, the purpose of this body is to 'promote the integration and coordination of environmental functions by organs of state and in particular to promote the application of environmental implementation plans'. Environmental *implementation* plans must be formulated by all provincial governments and national government departments listed in Schedule 1 of NEMA⁸². Schedule 1 of NEMA lists those government departments who

⁸² Schedule 1 of NEMA lists the Departments of Agriculture, Housing, Trade and Industry, Transport and Defence, The Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism Department of Water Affairs and Forestry and the Department of Land Affairs appear in both schedules.

exercise functions which 'may affect the environment'. Schedule 2⁸³ of NEMA lists those national government departments who exercise function that 'involve the management of the environment'. These departments have to prepare environmental *management plans*. Those departments which appear in both schedules have to prepare a consolidated implementation and management plan.

Despite this forward-thinking approach to integrating sustainability into national government, NEMA falls short of tackling sustainability at the local level. Local government is conspicuously absent from NEMA. This is surprising as the Act was formulated at the same time as a new wave in local strategic planning initiatives were being developed in national legislation. Fakir (1998: 40) picks up on the neglect of local government within the legislation, he contends that:

Perhaps its [NEMAs] main weakness is that it focuses on national and provincial government, and has not brought local government to the centre stage.

A further institutional challenge which must be addressed in the wake of the promulgation of the Act involves speculation over the abilities and capacity of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT). The DEAT is one of the weaker departments in government⁸⁴. It has low capacity and status resulting in it being labelled 'a Cinderella department' (O'Riordan 1998) because of its perceived subservience to the other governmental departments. Lorraine Lotter, chairperson of Business South Africa's task team on environmental management, contends that 'in many instances the Bill [sic] is beyond the scope of the Ministry of Environmental Affairs and Tourism' (Fakir, 1998:40). This sentiment is mirrored by Fakir (1998: 40) who sees the success of the policy as 'dependent on how fast the department [DEAT] is able to develop a cadre of dedicated staff to push the ideals of the Bill [sic] through'.

Thus, despite the wide consultative process during its' formulation, objections have arisen to the content of the various drafts of the policy as it evolved from Green Paper to Act. Environmental activists argue that the government has missed a vital opportunity to bring

⁸³ In addition, Schedule 2 of NEMA lists the Departments of Minerals and Energy and Health and Labour.

⁸⁴ Refer to section 4.7 and Figure 4.4

South Africa into line with international standards and business fears its negative impact on economic development (Sulcas, 1998).

The RDP, GEAR and NEMA therefore represent overarching frameworks for sustainability in South Africa. Within these key frameworks are pieces of legislation which in some way strengthen sustainability in the country, these are examined in more detail below.

5.9 Legislation Operating Within the Sustainability Framework

Operating within the three key pieces of framework legislation informing sustainability are a number of policies which in some way strengthen the transition to sustainability. Each of these pieces of legislation has at least some of the principles of sustainability⁸⁵ at their core. The following analysis begins by examining the spatial aspects of South African legislation affecting sustainability.

The Department of Land Affairs recognised the importance of addressing the spatial legacy of apartheid planning in realising the reconstruction and development goals of the country. For this reason, they began developing a comprehensive land reform programme. This programme forms part of the 1997 White Paper on **South African Land Policy**. The Policy states that the land reform programme aims to 'redress the injustices of apartheid; to foster national reconciliation and stability; to underpin economic growth; and to improve household welfare and alleviate poverty' (Government of RSA, DLA: vi). It aims to reduce poverty, diversify sources of income and allow people more control over their lives and their environment, relieving land pressure without extending environmental degradation over a wider area (Government of RSA, DLA: vii).

The programme is based on three principal components which are designed to aid implementation of the Land Policy. Firstly, land restitution which involves returning land lost since 19 June 1913 because of racially discriminatory laws. The second component involves land redistribution, making it possible for poor and disadvantaged people to buy land with the help of a Settlement/Land Acquisition Grant. The final component of the land reform programme is land tenure reform. This is the most complex part of the of land

⁸⁵ The fundamental principles of sustainability are discussed in Section 2.9

reform programme. It aims to bring all people occupying land under a unitary, legally validated system of landholding.

The Department of Land Affairs offers a number of financial grants to support the Land Reform Programme. These include a Community Facilitation Fund to assist NGOs and CBOs as well as the aforementioned Land Acquisition Grant. Clearly, the Programme has sustainability principles at its core. The arrangements for implementation⁸⁶ emphasise the importance of an integrated approach to the delivery of land and support services requiring the development of close working relations with the departments and levels of government. In addition the White Paper advocates partnership arrangements with the private sector, NGOs and community based organisations; and a monitoring and evaluation system that can track the progress of land reform (Government of RSA, DLA, 1997).

The policy makers see local government as an important player in the implementation of this legislation. The policy states that in order to proceed effectively, land development requires a coherent and integrated institutional, financial and legal framework. There must be clearly defined responsibilities, roles, and powers for land development planning and regulation at all levels of government. There should be a national land use planning and management system coordinated between departments and between tiers of government. Finally effective land development requires the capacity to involve the people affected in planning and implementation of the actions required to satisfy their needs and facilitate development' (Government of RSA, DLA, 1997: xiv). The Development Facilitation Act [No. 67 of 1995] is seen as the legal means of achieving these conditions.

The **1995 Development Facilitation Act (DFA)** [No.67 of 1995] represents one of the most singularly powerful pieces of legislation aimed at transforming the spatial legacy of apartheid. The Department of Land Affairs has been the lead department responsible for revising the legislation governing the development of land in the Government of National Unity.

The DFA is based upon the principles of 'sustainable development'. The Act describes sustainable development as development that 'is within the fiscal, institutional and administrative means of the country, that establishes viable communities, protects the

⁸⁶ Described in Section 6 of the White Paper.

environment, ensures the safe use of land and meets the basic needs of all citizens in an affordable way' (Government of RSA, 1995: Ch. 1).

The legislation has three important aspects. The first is the clear purpose of the DFA, namely to provide a mechanism for the rapid delivery of land for historically disadvantaged communities (Parnell and Pieterse, 1998). Secondly, the DFA requires the formation of a Planning Commission whose task is to review the legislative and institutional framework of planning in South Africa. Amongst the terms of reference for the Commission is a requirement to establish the mechanisms against which the acceptability of local governments' 'integrated development plans' (IDPs) will be measured. The DFA also requires that in certain provinces municipalities submit 'Land Development Objectives' (LDOs) to the provincial government for approval. All provinces in South Africa with the exception of KwaZulu Natal and The Western Cape have adopted this. These two regions have not adopted the DFA legislation because they had each approved a Planning Act before the 1995 DFA

LDOs are specifically focused on overcoming apartheid injustices. For example, the DFA stipulates that LDOs must ensure compact cities (Section 3.c. vi), encourage environmentally sustainable land development practices (Section 3.c.viii) and ensure the safe utilisation of land (Section 3.h.v). Within the wider remits of sustainability, the LDO legislation stipulates that local government meet the basic needs of all citizens in an affordable way (Section 3.h.iv) and must develop the skills and capacities of disadvantaged communities (Section 3.c.e). The DFA divides the subject matter of land-development objectives into four main areas: 'services, urban and rural growth and form, development strategies, and objectives relating to targets' (Government of RSA, DCD, 1995). Each LDO application will be monitored by Development Tribunals. In turn the 'LDOs will be used as the blueprint for Development Tribunals to approve or amend specific integrated development planning (IDP) proposals' (Parnell and Pieterse, 1998).

The DFA was the first piece of legislation to introduce the concept of IDP; it sets out a proposed strategy for the implementation of IDP. The IDP proposal was later reiterated in the Local Government Transition Act Second Amendment Act [No, 97 of 1996], and the Local Government White Paper (1998) and later given effect through the Municipal Systems Bill (DCD, 1999: Ch. 5). Thus, the DFA principles are the basis for integrated

development planning⁸⁷ (including land-development objectives) and for all decisions taken by a municipality which relate to the development of land.

The DFA has, nevertheless, been criticised over its complexity. Khan (1998: 31) argues that 'instead of the Act being a short enabling piece of legislation, it is lengthy and complex which may be difficult to administer in view of the capacity constraints at national and provincial government levels'.

The White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biological Diversity, [Notice 1095 of 1997] is the country's response to the requirements of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for signature in June 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Although present at UNCED the Republic of South Africa did not actively participate due to political sanctions. The Convention on Biological Diversity was eventually ratified by South Africa in November 1995. Once South Africa became a party to the treaty it took on an obligation to ensure that the agreement is implemented in accordance with the specified objectives. The implementation involves the development of national biodiversity strategies, plans or programmes, or adapting pre-existing ones. The theme of integration is again in evidence. The treaty requires that participating countries integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity into sectoral and cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies (Government of RSA, DEAT, 1997d).

South Africa's White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity gives effect to the Conventions requirements and has particularly significant implications for sustainability. In particular the White Paper is concerned with one of the most important sustainability principles identified in Chapter Two, namely the principle of environmental carrying capacity. The ecological importance of legislation conserving biodiversity in a country such as South Africa is evident from the following statement:

South Africa hosts an estimated 5.8% of the world's total of mammal species; 8% of bird species; 4.6% of the global diversity of reptile species; 16% of the total number of marine fish species in the world; and

⁸⁷ IDP is discussed in detail in Section 6.4

5.5% of the world's described insect species. In terms of the number of mammal, bird, reptile and amphibian species which occur only in this country ('endemics'), South Africa is the 24th richest country in the world, and the 5th richest in Africa.

(Government of RSA, DEAT, 1997d: section 1.2.1)

The White Paper is based on a vision for South Africa as 'a prosperous, environmentally conscious nation, whose people are in harmonious coexistence with the natural environment, and which derives lasting benefits from the conservation and sustainable use of its rich biological diversity' (Government of RSA, DEAT, 1997d).

There is a focus on the institutional role in implementing the objectives of biodiversity conservation. The role of each of the key players is outlined in the White Paper. Unlike NEMA it recognises local government as a key player. Local government has certain specified responsibilities. These include:

'ensuring that biodiversity considerations are effectively integrated into local strategies, plans and programmes; instituting and participating in public education, awareness and training programmes; developing management plans for local resources that are under pressure; ensuring that biodiversity considerations are integrated into land-use planning procedures for rural and urban areas; and encouraging and preparing municipal open space systems which play a positive role in conserving and using biological resources sustainably'

(Government of RSA, DEAT, 1997d: section 4.2.1)

The White Paper on Conservation and Sustainable use of Biodiversity is one of the few pieces of legislation that recognises the constraints to implementation. The White Paper states that the effective implementation of this policy by local government is dependent upon 'local circumstances and capacity'. It states that there may be 'particular difficulties for local government in implementing this policy...in rural areas especially minimal capacity, infrastructure, or resources' (Government of RSA, DEAT, 1997d: section 4.2.1). In recognising these constraints, the White Paper is better able to ensure effective implementation. It is, therefore, potentially a forward thinking piece of legislation which should influence and inform policy development in other government sectors.

Another of the more innovative pieces of South African legislation is the **1998 Draft White Paper on Integrated Pollution and Waste Management for South Africa: A policy on Pollution Prevention, Waste Minimisation Impact Control and Remediation**. This is a

subsidiary policy of the overarching NEMA and is the most recent addition to the environmental legislation. The policy was produced by the DEAT and Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. As a collaborative piece of work, the policy illustrates the integration that is increasingly occurring in national government.

The Draft White Paper is centered on the principles of integration and recognises that waste and pollution are inextricably linked. The intention of the proposed policy is to move from a previous situation of fragmented and uncoordinated pollution control and waste management to integrated pollution and waste management and waste minimisation (1999 Government of RSA). Integrated pollution and waste management requires a holistic and integrated system and process of management. This process aims to prevent and minimise pollution at source, to manage the impact of pollution and waste on the receiving environment and to remediate damaged environments (DEAT and DWAF, 1998).

The Draft White Paper aims to ensure the integrity and sustained "fitness for use" of all environmental media i.e. air, water and land and to ensure the remediation of any pollution of the environment by holding the responsible parties accountable. Finally the policy aims to ensure environmental justice by integrating environmental considerations with the social, political and development needs and rights of all sectors, communities and individuals. The policy is significant in terms of sustainability in numerous ways. Firstly, it is a groundbreaking example of how different government departments can collaborate in producing a piece of legislation across sectors. In addition, it represents a forward thinking approach to integration, where the policy content successfully includes related issues from different sectors.

Another South African policy that cites sustainability as one of its central guiding principles is the **National Water Act** [No. 36 of 1998]. The Water Act was developed by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. The Act largely deals with operational issues such as powers, duties, and directives concerned with the management of water, authorisations to use water, licenses, water use charges, government waterworks and the safety of dams. However, It has important connotations for sustainability in the country.

With regard to more strategic issues, the Act requires the 'progressive development of a national water resource strategy'⁸⁸ based on public consultation. This national water resource strategy should:

provide the framework for the protection, use, development, conservation, management and control of water resources of the country as a whole. It also provides the framework within which water will be managed at regional or catchment level, in defined water management areas.

(Act No. 36 of 1998: 21)

At the local level, the Act requires every catchment management agency (usually a local government authority) to progressively develop a catchment management strategy for the water resources within its water management area. Catchment management strategies must be in harmony with the national water resource strategy. The catchment management agency must 'seek co-operation and agreement on water-related matters' from various stakeholders and interested persons in process of developing the strategy.

A further policy with significant sustainability implications is the **White Paper on the Energy Policy of the RSA, 1998**. This legislation was developed by the Department of Minerals and Energy. The energy sector contributes around 15% of the country's GDP and employs about 250 000 people (Government of RSA, DME: 8). The objectives that underlie the energy policy are, 'increasing access to affordable energy services, improving energy governance, stimulating economic development, and managing energy related environmental impacts and securing supply through diversity' (*ibid.*: 9).

In terms of environmental sustainability the aims within the White Paper are fairly ambitious. One of the most significant policy proposals that the White Paper raises is the concept of integrated energy planning (IEP). IEP is a more holistic approach to described as a process which entails various technical functions including: interpreting the requirements of national economic, social and environmental policies for the energy sector, and analysing energy needs in terms of how their fulfillment will contribute towards attaining national economic and social goals. The IEP objectives are accompanied by key institutional aims including establishing appropriate structures and systems to carry out IEP functions.

⁸⁸ Part 1 of Chapter 2 in the National Water Act (No.36 of 1998)

The policy priorities are divided into short, medium and long term priorities. They range from managing energy-related environmental impacts include improving residential air quality; to investigating options for the use of coal discards and investigating an environmental levy on sales to fund the development of renewable energy, energy efficiency and sustainable energy activities. However, the policy priorities are not supported by any definite, proactive mechanisms for implementation and as such are in danger of remaining nothing more than rhetoric.

Over the past decade, Tourism has played a relatively small role in the South African economy⁸⁹. However the **1996 White Paper on Development and Protection of Tourism** states that South Africa 'has the potential...to grow its tourism industry, to triple its contribution to national income and to at least double its foreign exchange earnings by the year 2000' (DEAT: 1996:3). If tourism in South Africa grows to contribute 10% to the GDP, as it does in the United States, the industry will generate some R 40b annually and create 2 million jobs (DEAT 1996). The potential impact on sustainability in the country is therefore probably significant. The White Paper is an attempt at reconciling the divide between realising South Africa's tourist potential and avoiding the environmentally and socially damaging mistakes that other countries have made. Sustainable tourism development is central to the White Paper and is defined as 'tourism development, management and any other tourism activity which optimise the economic and other societal benefits available in the present without jeopardising the potential for similar benefits in the future' (DEAT 1996).

Specific principles and policy guidelines for environmental management in the tourism industry are included in the White Paper. The guidelines state that 'sustainable and responsible tourism development should be promoted and encouraged *inter alia* by means of incentives to private enterprises and communities' (*ibid.*). At the time of writing, the White Paper the country had no formal requirements for environmental and social impact assessments to be carried out. The White Paper therefore includes the mandatory conduct of Integrated Environmental Management procedures for all new tourism projects. Again, the principle of integration is evident. Sustainability is further supported through the policy in the form of guidelines to promote ecotourism. Ecotourism is a sustainable

⁸⁹ Kessel Feinstein and SATOUR estimate that in 1995, tourism's contribution to GDP was in the vicinity of 4%, which is 'very low by any standard' (DEAT 1996 :3).

approach to tourism activities. The policy also focuses on implementation; a role for all of the key players is outlined in detail. The implementation recommendations include a key role for local government as both a strategic and operational player.

The intention to promote sustainability is clear, however the statutory requirements are weak. Without firm requirements the vision of sustainable 'ecotourism' which runs throughout threatens to remain unfounded rhetoric. The strength behind the White Paper may lie in the subsequent implementation strategy, which the DEAT proposes will contain a clear action plan and identify a number of priority actions to be implemented (DEAT, 1996: Section 7.4).

5.10 Conclusions

In accordance with its' cultural and historical context and its developed / developing world dichotomy the challenges facing sustainability in South Africa are unique. With the transition to democracy in South Africa, both functional inequality and segregation were removed, as requirements. However, in a society which was designed to be predisposed to inequality these mindsets are very deeply entrenched. In addition, the material inequality is extensive. Generally the economic status of white people is high and the black people, generally, are living in poverty. In a sustainable society, equality can not involve raising black people to this level of material wealth. It is clearly not sustainable for the whole population of South Africa to be as resource consuming as the more affluent sectors are currently.

The legacies of the apartheid regime have shaped the socio-economic and socio-political situation in South Africa. The impact of the social and spatial legacies for local government sustainability planning is manifold. South Africa displays a lack of societal cohesion and subsequent lack of appropriate channels through which community participation in decision-making processes can be sought. Hill (*ibid*: 215) asserts that whilst the geographic definition of community 'may or may not provide some grass roots base for local democratic government', it is the definition of community as neighbour interaction 'which forms a natural base for encouraging greater citizen involvement' (*ibid*: 215).

Additionally the spatial legacies have served to compound social problems, such as dislocation and cultural and racial barriers, which are pervasive in previously disadvantaged communities. The sense of dislocation caused by forced removal has direct implications for the concept of sustainability; the notion of ownership and continuity has been fundamentally disrupted. Spatial apartheid also had serious environmental implications with poorly planned townships degrading and polluting land which is not suitable for high density settlements.

In order to address the legacies of the previous government, the South African Government has three overriding priorities in its new wave of legislation. These priorities are 'the eradication of poverty; the sustainable development of its economy; and the social development of its people' (DEAT 1997d). New legislation is emerging which places the environment amongst these priorities. The NEMA is a key framework piece of legislation which addresses the integration of the environment into these overriding priorities.

In many pieces of legislation, there is recognition of the need for community involvement in decision-making. This has important repercussions for the case study as local government sustainability planning has public participation at its core. Generally, South African legislation is based on the principles of sustainability and to a large extent articulates the appropriate aims and objectives in terms of sustainability. However the legislation is weak in identifying the means to operationalise and implement the objectives. In a pattern that is often repeated at the local level⁹⁰ implementation is neglected.

Linked to implementation is the theme of institutionalisation. Institutionalisation is present in many pieces of legislation and conspicuous in its absence in others. Significant in terms of this study is the recognition of the importance of local government as a key player in implementing policy at the local level. Local government is identified in numerous Policies and Acts as an important player in implementing many of the objectives. A number of pieces of legislation do not recognise the important role of local government. In terms of sustainability, the most notable of these is NEMA. Within the legislation where local government is recognised, the role of the institution ranges from strategic to operational. Local government's new role as a strategic force in the new South Africa has significant implications for this study. The following chapter enters into an in-depth analysis of local

⁹⁰ Refer to Section 7.13.1

government in South Africa, the new challenges the institution faces and its role in the country's transition to sustainability.

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Local Government and Sustainability in South Africa

South Africa is a country of almost forty million people, constituted of heterogeneous cultural and political groups. The need for effective, democratic local government as a vehicle for development and national integration is imperative.

(Sabela and Reddy 1996: 3)

6.1 Introduction

Key to any theoretical research into policy is the question of implementation, Garbers (1996: 257) states that in the past researchers have neglected this aspect which in turn has led to 'abundant evidence of excellent researchers and scientific information being overlooked by policy-makers'. Both this chapter and the following chapter will analyse the possibilities for the implementation of local sustainability planning in local government in South Africa.

In South Africa, local government has been sighted throughout the new wave of national legislation⁹¹ as a key institutional mechanism for achieving sustainability. Both the recognition of the importance of local government and the focus on public consultation and participation is consistent with the principles of sustainability. Local government is identified throughout the various Acts and White Papers as an important player in implementing legislation. The role of local government ranges from strategic to operational. This chapter enters into an in-depth examination of local government in South Africa, the new challenges its institutions face, and its role in the country's potential transition to sustainability.

⁹¹ Analysed in Sections 5.6 to 5.9

An understanding of the historical role of local government in South Africa provides the context for the issues and challenges facing local government today. The chapter commences by establishing this context.

6.2 Tracking the evolution of today's local government

To understand the characteristics of local government and to address the challenges which the institution currently faces, we must first look back into the history of modern local government in South Africa. It is important to determine the trends which have led to the evolution of local government today.

As a function of South African national government, local government prior to 1990's played a key role in creating and implementing policies aimed at achieving apartheid.

Kendall (1991: 29) asserts that:

Under apartheid South Africa developed one of the most highly centralised political systems in the western world. Both white and black (but especially black) local governments [had] almost no powers of their own. They have been administrative bodies whose main purpose has been to carry out national plans and to provide local services subject to central control.

The entire structure of apartheid local government was governed by the racial regulation of urban space through the Group Areas Act [No. 41 of 1950]. This Act empowered urban administrators to divide areas into racial segments reserved exclusively for White, Black, Coloured and Indian people respectively. Over the ensuing decades each of these areas were governed individually by a multitude of bodies. Consequently a different body of planning, municipal and administrative law developed for each area. The fragmented and extraordinarily complex management and bureaucratic system which evolved throughout this time became a 'peculiar mixture of centralisation and racial/regional deconcentration and devolution' (McLennan, 1995: 103).

The ruling white minority resided in designated white areas which represented the most desirable residential areas. Under the apartheid government, white local authorities were financially affluent, administering areas which were fully serviced and infrastructurally complete. In juxtaposition, other groups were confined to largely impoverished areas with few services and little or no infrastructure. The government 'established a variety of structures in quick succession to try to deal with the "problem" of African local government'

(Driver, 1992: 3). Initially, under apartheid, White municipalities administered neighbouring non-white townships. The White councils had no Black, Coloured or Indian representatives.

In those areas inhabited by black people 'Black Advisory Boards' were established in order to play a minimal role in decision-making, as determined by the white councils. In 1961, the black advisory boards were offered the chance of becoming Urban Bantu Councils. The Urban Bantu Councils were given minimal administrative and executive powers but the majority of power, including taxation and finance remained with the white municipalities. A decade later, in 1971, administrative power over the black townships was handed over to Bantu Affairs Administration Boards (BAABs). The Bantu Affairs Administration Boards were unelected local government institutions and were seen as the embodiment of apartheid government. Consequently, they became the focus of civil unrest and protest against apartheid⁹².

In an effort to prevent further unrest, Urban Bantu Councils were replaced by Community Councils. Also unelected and equally unsuccessful, these bodies were effectively extensions of Bantu Affairs Administration Boards. The Community Councils were expected to collect higher rents and service charges to finance township upgrading programmes, this contributed to their speedy demise. Gradually the apartheid ideal of a white South Africa in which black and coloured people had no political rights began disintegrating. A new ideal began to emerge 'where all races would be governed jointly and matters pertaining to any one group would be managed by separately elected bodies' (Kendall, 1991: 31).

In 1982 the Black Local Authorities Act (1983) was passed in which black townships were given control of their own affairs. In theory these Black Local Authorities (BLAs) had similar powers and functions to White Local Authorities. In practice, however, they were drastically curtailed by fiscal inequalities and political illegitimacy (Reddy, 1996b: 54). The BLAs were expected to be self-financing with funds derived from rents and service charges. The poverty of the inhabitants of these areas, however, prevented them from

⁹² For example, the Soweto massacre in 1976 emerged from frustrations and grievances with the political system and importantly from contempt for the Urban Bantu Councils and hatred for the BAABs

paying these bills. In order to upgrade township areas the BLAs would have needed to raise rents and rates. They soon found that this task was unpopular, as the Community Councils had previously discovered.

Instead of serving to defuse the growing grievances in the townships, therefore, as the government had hoped, the BLAs became the targets of a series of violent protests⁹³ (Swilling and Boya, 1995; Driver, 1993; Kendall, 1991). Years of disorganised urban management over this period of time, led to these institutions being described as an embodiment of 'oppression, illegitimacy, inefficiency and fragmentation' (Reddy 1996b: 55)

Urban areas inhabited by Indians and Coloured people had a similar history to the Black areas. They were governed by white local authorities until the 1950 Group Areas Act [No.41 of 1950]. The 1962 Amendment of this Act made provision for three phases in the evolution of Coloured and Indian local government. The first stage towards allowed for the establishment of a Consultative Committee comprised of nominated members with advisory powers only. The second stage led to the creation of a Management Committee which was intended to have slightly wider powers, and which was to be partly elected and partly nominated. The third and final stage in the evolution was fully fledged municipality status. No coloured management committee ever evolved into an autonomous local government authority. Encountering the same difficulties as the BLAs, the coloured and Indian local authorities which emerged were financially and administratively weak and 'politically controversial due to a lack of revenue, management expertise and a weak political base' (Reddy, 1996b: 55).

The next successive local government initiative devised by central government was the introduction of Regional Services Councils⁹⁴(RSCs). Derived from the Regional Services Council Act, 1985 [No. 109 of 1985], RSCs were multi-racial, and comprised of representatives from all local government structures within their jurisdiction. RSCs represented a reversal in the government's self-sufficiency principle. The new structures were designed, in theory, to 'transfer resources for capital development from well-off areas

⁹³ These included: the Vaal rent uprising in September 1984, the Uitenhage revolt against Councillors in March 1985, the Duncan Village Uprising in August 1985, the Crossroads Vigilante bloodbath of July 1986, and the rent-related White City Massacre of September 1986 (Kendall, 1991: 32)

⁹⁴ known as Joint Service Boards in Natal.

to the areas of greatest need' (Reddy, 1996b: 55). Kendall states that RSCs were developed to:

deal with local general affairs (local own affairs being the task of White, Indian, Coloured and Black local authorities). Their main role [was] to maintain and improve regional infrastructure, to increase efficiency and lower costs of services by spreading their provision over a larger area, and to redistribute wealth from richer to poorer areas to relieve the beleaguered BLAs.

(Kendall, 1991: 33)

Reddy (1996b: 55) contends that 'instead of providing a sound basis for urban financing the RSCs were merely attempting to make BLAs viable'. The direct links between the racially segregated local authorities and the new RSCs lead to the RSCs being attacked as symbols of apartheid. Ongoing systematic protests throughout the 1980s against the way human settlements were spatially and economically distorted contributed to the total collapse of the apartheid local government system in the early 1990s.

6.3 Post-apartheid Local Government

The continuous efforts to mend the flawed design of local government throughout the apartheid era resulted in a disorganised and flawed institution. As a result, the institution of local government emerged from the apartheid era in a state of fragmentation and disorganisation, which was both unaccountable and plagued by inequalities. Munslow and Fitzgerald (1995:17) described local government at the point of transition, as:

fragmented, unnecessarily duplicative and poorly coordinated, riven with strong racial and ethnic divisions and highly politicised at the senior levels. There is some corruption and mismanagement of resources; more generally, problems include poor and outdated management unresponsive to citizens needs, a regulatory bureaucratic culture lacking accountability and transparency, poorly trained staff and a deskilled job hierarchy

Munslow and Fitzgerald, 1995: 17

The legacies of apartheid are manifold. A key legacy is the presence of apartheid mindsets in many local government officials, namely an authoritarian and highly racialised perspective. In general, the personnel in local government were structured on racial and gender lines. Mc Lennan (1995: 102) states that 'senior level management positions were largely held by white males, while senior bureaucrats in the former self governing

territories⁹⁵ were black...women were noticeably absent from the higher echelons of these systems'.

Many of the apartheid legacies have major implications for sustainability⁹⁶. Throughout the apartheid era, local government was essentially top-down, undemocratic and unaccountable. Decisions were based on the perceived technical expertise of local government officials. Local government 'tended to make its presence felt in communities by controlling or regulating citizens actions' (DCD 1998:18). Thus, local government has been removed from the people. Civil society arguably maintains a general distrust of the institution of local government. Kendall (1991: 17) contends that 'most black South Africans (and many whites as well) think of government in terms of control, discrimination and suppression. Ordinary citizens have had almost no opportunity to make decisions...'.

The apartheid legacies are also structural. As the country entered the transition to democracy a plethora of local government institutions existed, each area had its own unique local government system, urban planning system, housing delivery and ownership system (Swilling and Boya, 1995: 170). McDonald (1998b: 4) asserts that as South Africa entered the transition to democracy local government was suffering with 'no metropolitan level coordination of any kind'.

The lack of uniform procedure and organisation within each authority accentuated the confusion of structures. Administrative and service functions were duplicated for each area and between local, provincial and national levels of government which 'resulted in fragmentation in terms of legislation, policy, programmes and led to inefficient and wasteful operations' (MNR, MRC, EEU, 1998:2). Similarly, there was little inter-authority integration or coordination. Local government was also plagued with a lack of financial capacity, a problem which still exists today. This is discussed in more depth in section 6.7.

Historically, local government was geared to the implementation and maintenance of urban and rural apartheid. The challenges which face South Africa today are akin to Mabin's assertion that:

⁹⁵ See section 6.2 for detail on the self-governing territories

⁹⁶ And more specifically for local sustainability planning, see recommendations in Section 2.9

...The narrative of contemporary change in ... southern African cities is partly about the problems of finding a means to handle, politically, waking up in a postmodern era while equipped only with the politics and planning practices of a modernist past.

(Mabin, 1995 cited in Khan, 1998: 30)

Consequently, in many cases, modes of decision-making, administration, delivery and interaction with local communities are inappropriate in the current context. Transformation of the entire local government sector is a massive logistical exercise, involving the restructuring of a bureaucratic culture locked into regulation and control. The first step towards local government transformation was legislative.

6.4 A Legislative Response to the Problems in Local Government

The formation of a new political dispensation in South Africa has created an agenda of reform for local government that encompasses legal/constitutional, administrative, political and financial transformation. Local government is a key focus of reform.

Olivier (1997:10) identifies the four broad priority areas that underpin the transformation of local government as 'the need to create racially integrated administrations; the need to reconceptualise the role of the state in relation to society; the need for financial viability and equity in service provision, maintenance and expansion, and; metropolinisation'.

The first challenge which was addressed by the new government was the confusion of local government structures. National debate about the restructuring of local government took place alongside the national negotiating process. The debate drew extensively upon global trends in urban planning, policy and governance. 'In any reconstruction process governments draw on available and dominant discourses to interpret, package and advance their agendas' (Parnell and Pieterse, 1998: 18).

In response to the need for local government restructuring the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA) [No. 209 of 1993] was developed. The LGTA provides for 'revised interim measures with a view to promoting the restructuring of local government' (LGTA, 1993: Part III 1). The LGTA represented the first phase in the considerable task of reforming South Africa's local government into an ordered, non-racial, inclusive, financially viable institution with single local government administration. The LGTA set out the ground

rules for transition. Among these was a requirement to include all political players in preparations for elections and establishment of appointed transitional councils in the pre-interim phase (IDRC, 1995: 2). The LGTA stipulated that new local authorities should be appointed in the months before the election. Local negotiating forums were formed to decide what form the transition should take in their areas. Despite past animosities of the historical struggles between the groups of people represented within these forums, the negotiations were remarkably successful and represented a landmark in terms of nation building. Boraine (cited in IDRC, 1995: 2) said of this aspect of the Act:

Communities who hadn't spoken to each other for 40 years had to sit down together and negotiate to put in place appointed transitional councils. This worked well, contrary to everyone's expectations. It was a bottom-up approach and only a few times did government have to step in.

The second amendment of the LGTA provided for revised interim measures with a view to: promoting the restructuring of local government; establishing appointed transitional councils in the pre-interim phase; de-liniating areas of jurisdiction and the election of transitional councils in the interim phase.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa⁹⁷ [No. 108 of 1996] (hereafter referred to as 'the Constitution') provides the primary, over-arching framework within which local government in the country must be contextualised. In a move to break down the former hierarchical structures of the past, the Constitution introduces two new inter-related concepts, 'co-operative government and spheres of government'. In terms of the latter, local government is viewed as a distinct sphere of government described in Section 40 as 'interdependent and interrelated with national and provincial spheres of government'. The constitutional mandate calls for local government to 'provide democratic and accountable government for all communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; to promote a safe and healthy environment and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government' (Section 152, Government of RSA, Act No. 108 of 1996). Thus, the Constitution charges local government to employ sustainability planning approaches. This constitutional mandate contains elements of the

⁹⁷ Discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.1.

sustainability principles explored in Chapter Two⁹⁸. This is discussed further in Section 8.3.2.

In addition, local government is allocated a new expanded developmental role (Chapter 7 Section 153). The Constitution (Chapter 7, Section 153) states that:

A municipality must structure and manage its administration and budgeting and planning processes to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote social and economic development of the community...

In line with this mandate, the LGTA, 1996 Section 4 (b)(i) stipulates that local government shall '...formulate and implement an integrated development plan (IDP) for its area of jurisdiction...'. According to the LGTA (1996), IDPs must aim at integrating the development and management of municipal areas in terms of the municipalities' powers and duties, and where applicable, having due regard to the subject matter of land development objectives as contemplated in Chapter 4 of the Development Facilitation Act [No.67 of 1995]. The legislation governing IDP is broadened in the Local Government White paper which preceded the Local Government Act (1998). IDP is examined in more detail in Section 6.5

With a view to formalising the developmental role of local government and to reversing legacies of the past, an intensive eighteen-month policy development process was initiated. The process culminated in the White Paper on Local Government, which was published in March 1998. The White Paper on Local Government explored the process of 'capacitating and transforming local government to play a developmental role' (DCD 1998:17). The White Paper lays the foundations for a new approach to local governance, named 'Developmental Local Government' which is:

committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives.

(Government of RSA, DCD 1998:17)

Building on these foundations the Municipal Systems Bill (1999) gives effect to the country's vision of "Developmental Local Government" as envisaged in the Local

⁹⁸ Refer to Figure 2.4 for a quick reference table of sustainability principles.

Government White Paper. The Municipal Systems Bill (1999) extends the definition of municipality to include residents and communities within the municipal area, working in partnership with the municipality's political and administrative structures. It makes provision for the 'development of a culture of public participation' (Municipal Systems Bill, 1999: Ch. 3). Making allowances for the idealistic rhetoric upon which the following statement is founded, the Municipal Systems Bill (1999) aims to:

establish a framework for support, monitoring and intervention by other spheres of government in order to progressively build local government into an efficient, frontline development agency capable of integrating the activities of all spheres of government for the overall social and economic upliftment of our communities.

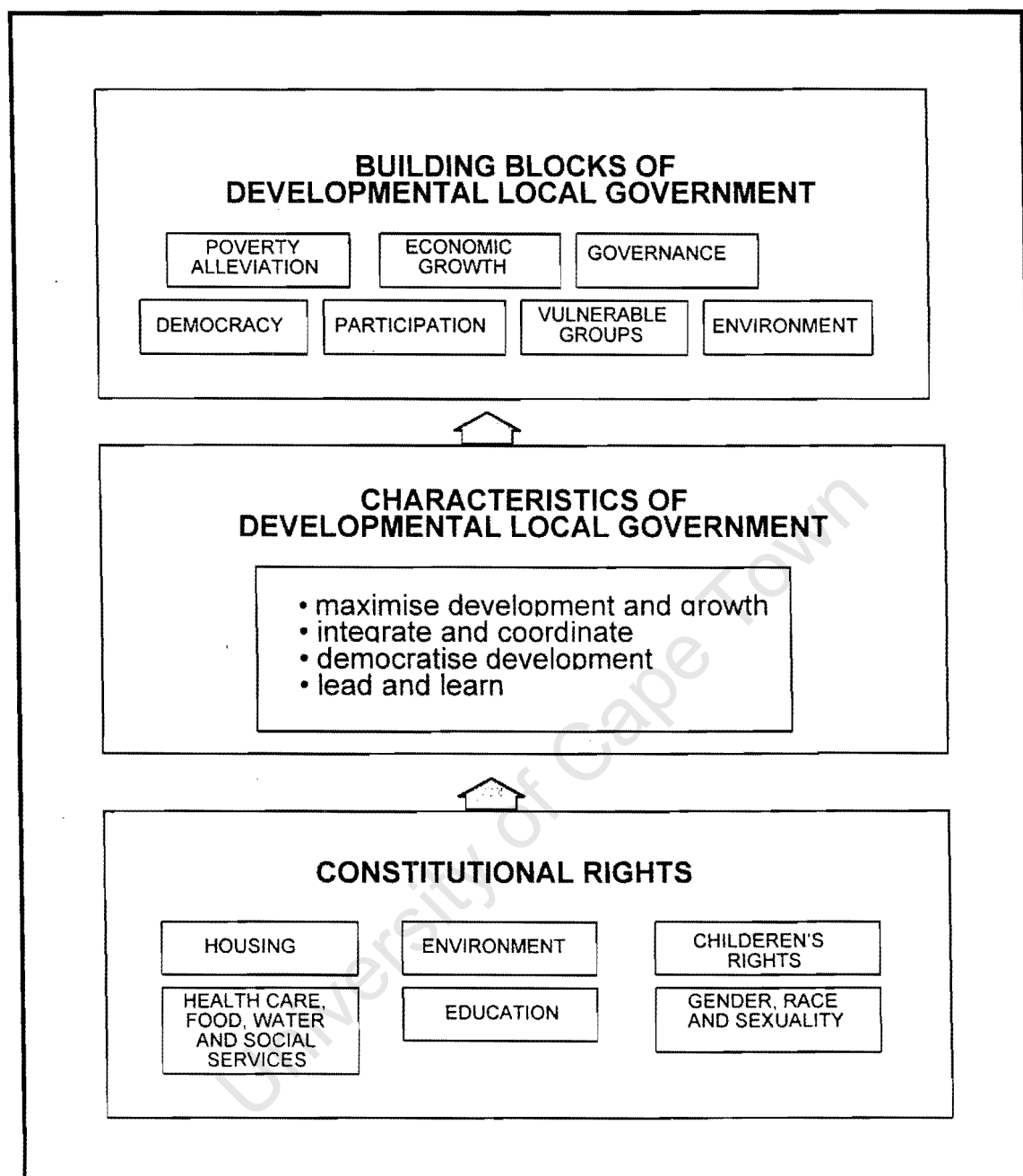
The diagram on the following page effectively illustrates the basic constitutional rights of the community, the role of Developmental Local Government and the factors which it can influence (See **Figure 6.1**).

Developmental Local Government is supported by three inter-related approaches: integrated development planning and budgeting, performance management, working together with local citizens and partners.

Developmental Local Government is therefore a forward-thinking institutional arrangement where local government becomes accountable, democratic and integrated. Interestingly Developmental Local Government will be tested in practice with local government on the ground rather than in academic or decision-making forums.

Developmental Local Government is the ideal towards which this sphere of government across the country is required to strive. Today local government in South Africa is far from this ideal. If the goal is to be reached, incremental and pragmatic approaches must be put in place. Numerous tools have been developed with this in mind. These tools are evident in numerous pieces of local government legislation. The main tools are Integrated Development Plans (IDPs). IDP is also closely linked to local sustainability planning and, as such, requires further exploration in the following section.

Figure 6.1 Developmental Local Government , Building Blocks, Characteristics and Linkages with Constitutional Rights



(USN, 1998)

6.5 The Institutional Approach to Developmental Local Government

Wallis (1995: 86) argues that one of the key issues facing the various South African bureaucracies 'is undoubtedly the need for strategies to bring about institutional capacity

for development planning and management in ways that also promote sustainability'. In theory, integrated development planning (IDP) represents such a strategy.

IDP is a key institutional mechanism for local government to meet its developmental challenges. Integrated development plans (IDPs) are planning and strategic frameworks through which municipalities gain an understanding of the various dynamics operating within their area. They also assist in developing a concrete vision for the area supported by strategies for realising and financing that vision in partnership with other stakeholders (Government of RSA, DCD, 1998). Within the government guidance publication IDP is hailed as:

central to realising the Developmental Local Government vision. It is seen as a mechanism to enable prioritisation and integration in municipal planning processes and to strengthen the links between the developmental (external) and institutional (internal) planning processes.

(CSIR/DCD, 1998: Section A)

IDP requires a fundamental shift in local government planning methods and skills. As such, IDP, in theory at least, has been hailed as 'both a visionary and innovative approach' (Parnell and Pieterse, 1998: 21).

From a pragmatic perspective IDP is

'a single, integrated planning process to satisfy the requirements of all the different laws. This will result in several products or plans. For the sake of simplicity, this is referred to as the IDP process, although it will include the LDO process and output. It also attempts to include the planning processes and products for a range of other line departments and sectors such as water, transport environment and housing, which require municipal planning'

(CSIR/DCD, 1998: Section A).

IDP represents a single, comprehensive five-yearly planning cycle linked to the political term of office of councils, but subject to annual monitoring and review. IDPs have been adopted by municipal councils as their core planning and management instrument. Importantly IDPs, which will include any applicable national and provincial plans and strategies, will override and replace all the statutory "guide plans" and "structure plans" inherited from the apartheid era (Olver, 1999).

IDP is therefore a very powerful management tool; it is given weight by various pieces of legislation. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) details the process of formulating IDPs. It involves a close assessment of the current reality of the total municipal area; a determination of community needs; an audit of available resources; the prioritisation of needs; the development of frameworks and goals to meet these needs; the formulation of strategies to achieve goals within specific time frames; the implementation of projects and time frames to achieve key objectives; and the use of performance monitoring tools to measure impact and performance. Thus IDP, like the local sustainability planning process, is based on the classic policy cycle⁹⁹. Significantly, these two processes diverge on one key element, the issue of futurity. Local sustainability planning has a long term focus, with short-term objectives, whereas IDP is geared to meeting short-term aims, and contains no requirement for a longer-term focus. As such, it falls short of meeting the futurity element of sustainability.

The Municipal Systems Bill (DCD, 1999: ch.5) strengthens the overarching ideas for IDP put forward in the Development Facilitation Act (1995) and the LGTA Second Amendment (1996). The Municipal Systems Bill (1999) requires that within the first year of its elected term each municipal council must:

adopt a single, inclusive plan for the development of the municipality which, links, integrates and coordinates plans, schemes and proposals for the development of the municipality; aligns the resources and capacity of the municipality for the implementation of the plan; forms the policy framework and general basis on which annual budgets must be based; and is compatible with national and provincial development planning requirements binding on the municipality in terms of legislation

(DCD, 1999: ch.5)

Both partnership and participatory principles are key to the IDP legislation. The Municipal Systems Bill (1999) states that municipalities 'must seek to develop a culture of municipal governance that shifts from strict representative government to participatory governance'. The Local Government White Paper (1998) highlights the benefits of local government working together with local citizens; Section 3.3 focuses on the inclusion of local residents in development of local government policies. It states that:

⁹⁹ The local sustainability planning process is outlined in Section 4.2.

Municipalities should develop mechanisms to ensure citizen participation in policy initiation and formulation, and the monitoring and evaluation of decision-making and implementation.

(DCD, 1998: 33)

In theory, IDP not only makes provision for public participation in decision-making, it also represents the primary tool for communication and interaction between the different tiers of government and spheres of governance. In practice, however, there seems to be confusion over the current strategic planning situation in local government in South Africa. The Development Facilitation Act [No. 67 of 1995] requires municipalities to produce Land Development Objectives¹⁰⁰ which are subject to national and provincial regulations. The DFA contains a footnote (Number 10) which requires that IDPs and LDOs be rationalised into one process. The White Paper on Local Government, however, suggests that LDOs be considered as a component of IDPs, with IDPs at the forefront. This has significant implications for strategic planning in local government across the country¹⁰¹.

A guidance publication has been produced by the Department of Constitutional Development in conjunction with the CSIR titled the 'Integrated Development Planning Manual' (1998). Detailing some thirty-six steps, the Manual is long, detailed and not user-friendly, and has therefore received much criticism. The steps are divided into six phases; these are illustrated in Figure 6.2 over the page.

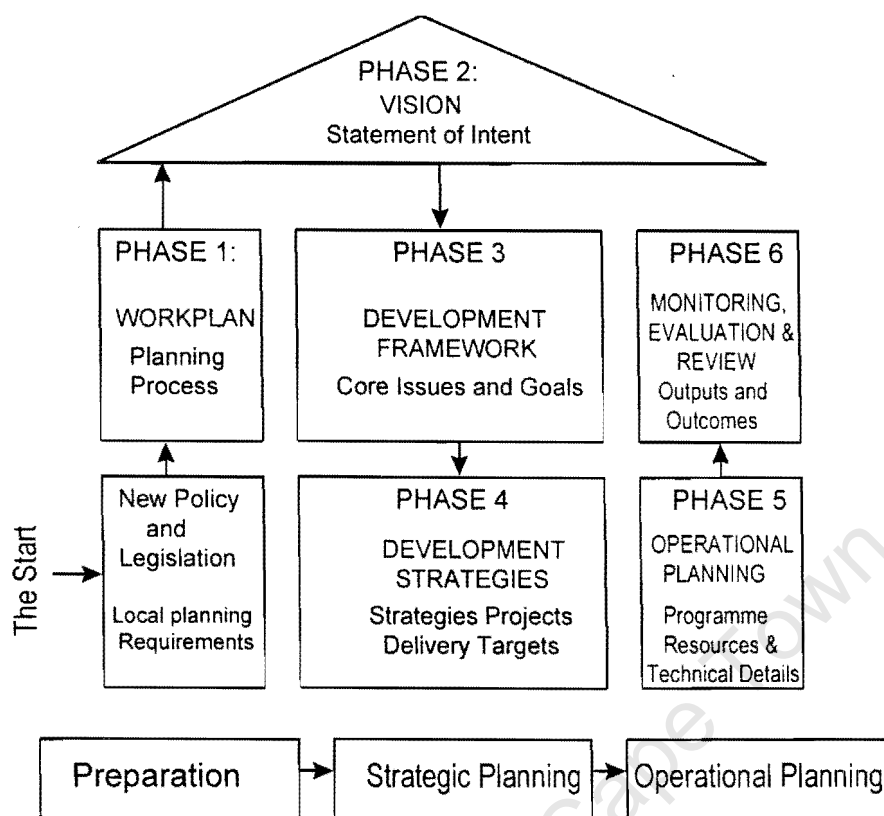
They include preparing a workplan; a vision; a development framework; development strategies; operational planning for implementation, and finally a process of monitoring, evaluation and review.

Each of the steps within the six phases is complex and time-consuming; for example, phase one alone involves eleven steps. In response to criticism, amongst other factors, there are moves to rewrite the guidance publication to make it user-friendly and based on the current realities in local government.

¹⁰⁰ Refer to Section 5.9, within the paragraph analysing the Development Facilitation Act [No.67 of 1995]

¹⁰¹ This does not directly affect the case study in Chapter 7, as LDOs do not apply in the Western Cape because this region (along with KwaZulu Natal) has a planning act which predates the DFA (1995).

Figure 6.2 Diagram Illustrating the Phases in the IDP Process



The criticism of IDP, nevertheless, extends beyond the guidance manual. Khan (1998:30) identifies a disjuncture between the diachronic nature of urban development and the synchronic nature of administrative planning processes, such as IDP. Khan (1998: 30) describes IDP as a linear or synchronous planning intervention 'commencing from survey and then moving from plan to action'. He asserts that:

Under conditions of rapid household decompression, circulatory/oscillatory migration, grinding poverty and homelessness, the IDP process is not easily reconciled with the diachronic nature of development which moves through contradictory leaps and fusions.

In addition, and arguably one of the key constraints to fulfilling the requirements of IDP, is the lack of local government financial capacity¹⁰². This could potentially cause a breakdown in IDP as it is restricting inter-departmental coordination and limiting the public

¹⁰² Refer to section 6.3

participation process. Indeed it can be argued that 'without appropriate budget a planning process as lengthy and complex as IDP is doomed to failure' (Meyer, 1998: 13). Khan (1998: 32) also predicts a negative impact from the 'very restrictive financial regime on local government's capacity to deliver in a developmental manner'. He foresees a situation whereby:

resources of a locality are exploited purely for profit and revenue maximisation. This is a far cry from the IDP's emphasis on building territorial integrity (generally bottom up planning), in terms of which a locality's resources are developed for the benefit of the local population.

Conversely, Parnell and Pieterse (1998: 15) argue that limited finances may well represent the 'the arbitrating mechanism for deciding on municipal priorities, thus forcing intersectoral or inter-departmental assessment of local needs for the first time'.

Stevens (1999) carried out an 'initial review' of selected IDP processes across the Metropolitan areas in South Africa. He criticised the 'lack of a pre-determined methodology of framework for the incorporation of environmental issues into the IDP process' (Stevens, 1999:39). His study revealed that environmental issues have not been adequately addressed in IDPs and are largely treated as a separate section rather than an integral concern throughout the process.

The theoretical legislative requirements for IDP are, nevertheless, admirable. It remains to be seen how successfully it will be applied across the country. The process is, however, still very new. The utility of IDP is being tested in practice within local government rather than in academic and political forums. The practical implementation of the IDP process within the Cape Metropolitan Area is examined in the following chapter¹⁰³.

6.6 The Spatial Approach to Transforming Local Government

Spatial restructuring is fundamental to the transformation of local government. The eradication of apartheid boundaries and the demarcation of new spatial geometries is a symbolic act in the new democracy. The local government restructuring legislation is based on the aforementioned requirements of the national Constitution. The Constitution establishes local government as a distinctive sphere of government, interdependent, and

¹⁰³ Refer to Section 7.10

interrelated with national and provincial spheres of government (Section 40). It is stated that:

national government and provincial governments, by legislative and other measures, must support and strengthen the capacity of municipalities to manage their own affairs, to exercise their powers and to perform their functions.

Local government in South Africa is presently comprised of 843 municipalities. These municipalities include 6 Transitional Metropolitan Councils (TMCs) and 24 Transitional Metropolitan Substructures (MSSs). All municipalities are the products of the second phase of the transition to democratic local government. The first phase involved the establishment of appointed 'pre-interim' municipalities. The 1995/96 municipal elections led to the establishment of the current 'interim' municipalities (Sutcliffe, 1998 introduction)

The final local government structures, following the interim phase, were put forward in the Local Government White Paper (1998). The White Paper on Local Government proposes that municipalities in South Africa be divided into two broad types: metropolitan and non-metropolitan. Non-Metropolitan local government would consist of two tiers: a district tier which would focus primarily on ensuring the implementation of an IDP for the district as a whole and administering bulk services. The second tier of government in non-metropolitan areas would allow for urban, rural or urban-rural municipalities. These municipalities would have functions and powers devolved to them depending on their capacity to administer such functions and powers.

The White Paper puts forward proposals regarding two types of metropolitan government and raises certain suggestions regarding how these might be applied in different metropolitan areas. These proposals will be legislated by provincial government as to which types should be established in each province (Sutcliffe 1998: introduction).

The two types of metropolitan government put forward in the Local Government White Paper (1998: 64) are 'Metropolitan government with Ward Committees' and the 'Metropolitan government with Metropolitan Substructures'. In the first option with Ward Committees, the Metropolitan government exercises the complete range of (legislative, executive and administrative) municipal powers and duties. The Ward Committees have

no original powers and duties. Instead, their powers and functions are delegated from the metropolitan level. Ward Committees have a purely advisory role.

Within the second option with Metropolitan Substructures, the Metropolitan government has original powers for all municipal functions. The powers and functions of Metropolitan Substructures are devolved from the metropolitan level. The Substructures have a wider role than the aforementioned Ward Committees, with supervisory, decision-making and advisory powers. However, the proposed Substructures have greatly reduced powers in comparison to the current Metropolitan Local Councils. The Substructures have no original decision-making powers and the devolved powers will be decided by the Metropolitan Council. The White Paper (1998) lists the key roles of Metropolitan Substructures as 'representative forums to enhance local democracy', and 'facilitate the effective oversight, management and coordination of municipal functions within part of a metropolitan municipality's area of jurisdiction. This option has been adopted in the Cape Metropolitan Area, and is therefore presented in the following chapter.

There are numerous pieces of legislation, which give effect to the local government structures outlined in the Local Government White Paper (1998). The spatial restructuring is governed through the Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998 (Act No. 27 of 1998), the Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998) and the Municipal Systems Bill (1999). Each of these pieces of legislation will direct the final phase in the local government transition process.

The Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998 (Act No. 27 of 1998) specifies the territorial extent of local government in the final stages of the restructuring. The Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998 (Act No. 27 of 1998) has come under heavy criticism from NGOs. Khan (1998: 33) elaborates:

criteria for the demarcation of new local government boundaries is vague and that many are not quantifiable and can therefore be applied subjectively in each municipal case.

(Khan, 1998: 33)

In addition the Municipal Demarcation Act makes provision for municipal boundaries to be determined by a Municipal Demarcation Board. The process makes no provision for the

public to be involved in prioritising criteria for demarcation. The public is invited to comment on the decisions after the event. Part 3 of the Act states that:

Before the Board considers any determination of a municipal boundary in terms of section 21, it must publish a notice in a newspaper circulating in the area concerned stating the Board's intention to consider the matter; and inviting written representations and views from the public within a specified period (which may not be shorter than 21 days).

Yet, there is no written undertaking within the Act to ensure that boundaries will be changed or amended in response to lodged objections. In fact, the practical implementation of the Act is to a large extent undermining local IDP processes due to a lack of consultation with the players involved¹⁰⁴.

The Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998) details the types of municipalities to be established in accordance with the constitutional requirements relating to categories and types of municipality. The Act establishes the criteria for determining the category of municipality to be established in an area. It deals with the division of the powers and functions between categories of municipality and attempts to regulate internal systems structures and office-bearers of municipalities in-line with the Local Government White Paper.

The IDP component of the Municipal Systems Bill (1999) has already been discussed¹⁰⁵. The Bill essentially gives effect to the vision of Developmental Local Government put forward in the Local Government White Paper (1998). It provides the details of the internal systems of local government. These systems range from municipal services to performance management and public participation. The Bill however represents another idealistic mandate for local government. It appears that there is little recognition of the barriers which must be overcome in achieving these ideals. Chapter Five the Bill sets out the ideal for public participation by recommending the 'development of a culture of public participation'. Within the Bill, this mandate is given effect through capacity-building as well as the inclusion of vague outlines for mechanisms, processes and procedures for public participation. The Bill also recommends the establishment of a 'Performance Management

¹⁰⁴ The effect of this legislation on local government in the CMA, including the implications for IDP processes, is discussed in depth in the case study in chapter 7

¹⁰⁵ Refer to Section 6.5

System', another resource-consuming mandate with admirable principles. One again there is little recognition of the status quo of local government.

To be of practical significance, legislation such as the Municipal Systems Bill (1999) must therefore give more recognition to the problems which exist in local government today. Instead it seems that local government legislation such as the Municipal Systems Bill (1999) expound the ideals towards which local government must aim, yet there are no concrete means to achieve these.

6.7 The Challenges Facing Local Government Today

Following the interim transitional restructuring and after two official years of IDP, local government has changed significantly from its post-apartheid state. Arguably, many of the changes have improved the role of local government in the country. However, the ability of local government country-wide to ensure good governance and urban sustainability is constrained by a number of factors.

It is still early in the transformation process and civil society appears to retain a distrust of authority structures¹⁰⁶. Successful democratic public participation in local government decision-making is directly influenced by public perception of these institutions (Fiorino 1996:198). Public participation is therefore dependent on the establishment of a high level of confidence and trust in local government. Pravin Gordhan emphasises the need for a proactive and innovative approach to this challenge:

Our democracy must be political, social, and economic; it must be transformative. It must embrace development and, vice versa, development must embrace democracy. This means participation is the crucial link. Municipalities and all local governments can not be passive; we must be proactive and innovative to capture the maximum synergy between role-players at the local level and available resources.

(Gordhan 1998)

One of the most significant problems is the chronic financial and capacity difficulties which plague the institution as a whole. Countrywide, 'approximately one third of all municipalities are facing serious financial difficulties and /or administrative problems' (CSIR, DCD, 1998: Section A). The financial problems are compounded by the fact that

'local authorities lack creditworthiness and relations with capital markets and bond markets' (Government of RSA, 1999c).

The restructuring process has exacerbated the financial difficulties in local government. In the Cape Metropolitan Area alone it has been estimated that restructuring has cost in the region of 600M Rand, 500M Rand of which has been attributed to loss of productivity (Olivier, 1998). Many of the local government monetary problems stem from the inherited culture of non-payment and non-collection in many municipalities. In April 1997, the Mail and Guardian Newspaper reported the following:

Latest figures released by the constitutional affairs department show moneys owed to municipalities increased from the 6,02-billion recorded last August to a current R6,5-million, suggesting that the crisis in local government is deepening, not easing.

The statistics referred to in this quote are part of the findings of the Department of Constitutional Development's 'Project Liquidity'. The study was introduced in order to monitor the monetary status of South African local authorities. The results revealed that of the 843 municipal councils in South Africa, one third are financially sound, one third "financially stressed" and the remainder are financially unviable.

A further factor compounding the financial problems is the reduction in grants being allocated to local government by national government. If central government is serious about fulfilling the Developmental Local Government mandate in the Constitution and supported in local government legislation, then it should be increasing, and not decreasing the grants it provides to them. Additionally local government should be improving its service invoicing and payment collection system and raising awareness in communities so that the culture of non-payment is altered.

Accompanying the financial problems are widespread capacity difficulties. During the 1999 Budget Speech the former Minister for Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development, Valli Moosa stated:

We have also seen failures on the part of councillors and their administrations, largely due to their inexperience or lack of capacity, leading to the effective collapse of some municipalities. Local

¹⁰⁶ Mentioned previously in Section 6.3

administrations have also not been transformed, and stay locked in old bureaucratic models of delivery.

Wallis (1995: 91) describes local government officials in the transition as 'overloaded'¹⁰⁷.

He states that

Called upon to be transparent, accountable, slim, committed to affirmative action, incorruptible, politically correct and developmental all at the same time, bureaucrats are inevitably going to experience stress and other pathologies.

There is sustained reference to capacity building and support throughout the Local Government White Paper (1998) yet few programmes to support local government officials have been put into action. Because the IDP process has been designed to be far removed from the previous functioning of local government it, in a sense far removed from the responsibilities with which local government officials are familiar. From the national level, there has been very little in the way of training and support to help officials and councillors to grasp the new concepts and functions and to deal with the stresses accompanying the legislative and institutional changes. This, despite the fact that the IDP Guidance Manual states that:

Often poorly-resourced local government bodies need to contend with a severe lack of skills and capacity in fulfilling their new role as the agent for growth and development. Newly elected councillors are new to the operations of local government and have limited experience in meeting the demands of their constituencies.

(CSIR/ DCD, 1998 Section B: introduction)

The capacity issues have been further fueled by the controversial local government restructuring¹⁰⁸. Over the protracted period of restructuring, many staff have become disillusioned and low staff morale is often commonplace. Capacity varies between authorities based on the legacies of past structures.

Capacity variations between municipalities are substantial. Some lack a pre-existing institutional base on which to build. In the past, municipalities were geared for the implementation of urban and rural apartheid. In many cases modes of decision making, administration,

¹⁰⁷ This issue is examined in more detail in the case study study, Section 7.4

¹⁰⁸ It is not the intention of this study to examine the restructuring debates in detail, instead an overview of the situation will provide the background necessary to understand the context of the case study.

delivery and interaction with local communities are inappropriate in the new context.

(CSIR, DCD, 1999, section A part 1)

As identified in section 6.3, infrastructural inequalities between areas are considerable. Years of neglect of those areas inhabited by Black, Coloured and Indian people have caused resentment which has manifested itself in the form of long term rent and service boycotts. This scenario has been compounded by 'continuing high capital and ongoing costs for quality facilities in white areas and an inadequate revenue base for attaining greater parity in services' (EEU, 1997, cited in MNR/ MRC, 1998:2).

The local government restructuring process has been lengthy and complex. When one considers the polemic language that is adopted in governmental documents, it is significant that the Municipal Structures Act acknowledges that the restructuring process has been 'protracted, difficult and challenging'.

The Unicity structure for metropolitan government has received much attention since its conception in the Local Government White Paper. The criticism of the proposed Unicity focuses on local governance being removed from the community level, thus hindering democratic participation. There are fears that a 'mega-bureaucracy' will result with reduced autonomy and local innovation¹⁰⁹.

The Unicity contradicts several of the recommendations for attaining sustainability put forward in Chapter Two and discussed in Chapter Four. Section 2.9 recommended four key themes necessary for attaining sustainability. One of these key themes was the decentralisation of government institutions. The Unicity clearly repeats a move away from decentralisation and arguably removes local government from the community level. The Unicity structure contradicts Kendall's (1991:26) vision for South Africa:

When we in South Africa reconstruct our political, economic and social welfare systems we can also learn from the world's great, failed experiment with centralisation and recover our vitality, creativity and humanity in community power.

¹⁰⁹ Refer to Section 7.5

A further key sustainability theme guiding this study is effective public participation and in particular a democratic approach to decision-making and policy formulation¹¹⁰. In removing local governance from the most local level, the Unicity structure, arguably, could hinder effective participation of local communities.

Research into the Unicity structure option has revealed conflicting results. The following report put forward by the Good Hope Alliance entitled 'Objectives for the Reform of Local Government in South Africa' concluded that the larger Unicity option was not conducive to more effective local governance. The paper states that:

Institutional experience is that the size of local government units does not bear any direct relationship to their 'strength' or their capacity to manage effectively their autonomy; paradoxically, smaller, more cohesive units are often stronger than larger units as they can act with greater unity of purpose and solidarity, whilst many larger units often represent areas of administrative convenience which lack community cohesion and thus experience great difficulty in mobilising effective political interest.

(Good Hope Alliance, 1993: 9)

In contrast other researchers have supported the Unicity, Dr Micheal Sutcliffe (1998: Conclusions) asserts that:

A very important advantage of a single city is that all councillors become locked in to all decisions, which is not the case in a two-tier system. In the latter, there is a tendency for those councillors not serving on the metropolitan council to remain unaware of key financial tariffing and other decisions taken at a metropolitan level but which have very severe impacts locally.

However, Sutcliffe (1998: Conclusions) warns that the Unicity must be accompanied by effective supporting structures. He asserts that care must be taken to ensure that 'there is proper accountability in all structures created within metropolitan areas, be they functional committees, executive committees or substructures' and that attention must be given to developing 'central data bases and mechanisms to develop and strengthen co-operative governance'.

¹¹⁰ Refer to Section 2.9

Local government traditionally operates on a sectoral basis. Often similar functional areas will be managed by two separate bodies of staff with little integration¹¹¹ between the two. The departmental areas of planning and transport, for example, have many overlapping functions. Yet in the Cape Metropolitan Area, CMC the Department of Transport is housed in a building at the opposite end of the City of Cape Town to the Department of Urbanisation and Planning. This is clearly not conducive to integration.

With all of the CMA decision-making functions within one structure, the potential for integration is much greater than within a fragmented two-tier system. If the Unicity includes appropriate structures to facilitate cross-sectoral coordination and appropriate lines of communication are established, it is likely that the Unicity will lead to enhanced integration in local government. Integration is another of the recommended four key themes necessary for attaining sustainability¹¹² because 'stronger forms of sustainable development require a more holistic approach based on inter-sectoral integration, which in turn requires a reduction in the autonomy of different units within a local government authority' (Baker *et al*, 1997: 22).

6.8 Conclusions

The legacies of apartheid have significant implications for sustainability and more specifically for local government sustainability planning. The outdated mindsets of officials, the distrust of authority structures and the confusion of structures all currently impact on the institution. Coupled with these factors are new challenges which local government must overcome to become an effective player in the local community. Arguably one of the most significant challenges is the financial problems which affect over two thirds of local government authorities in the country.

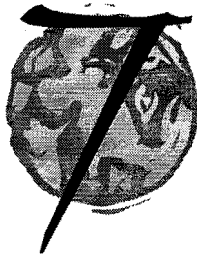
Contributing to local governments' financial difficulties is the (re)current restructuring. Restructuring has resulted in over six years of disruption and further reorganisation is underway. The restructuring process has over-exceeded financial predictions. Apart from enhancing difficulties in local government, it has had a negative impact on staff morale.

¹¹¹ Integration in relation to sustainability is examined in Section 8.2.2

¹¹² Recommended in Section 2.9

These realities must be recognised if implementing local sustainability planning processes within the institution of local government in South Africa. Developmental Local Government is national governments vision for the institution. The concept of DLG is, in theory, an effective institutional vehicle for sustainability. It encompasses the principles of democratic decision-making through public participation necessary in local sustainability planning. IDP is the tool designed for achieving Developmental Local Government. There is potential for IDP to be modified to embrace local sustainability planning. The two processes have much in common and the resource implications of such an amalgamation are relatively small. The visions and ideals for local government are established and the legislation is in place. The challenge now is to effectively apply the legislation in practice.

The following chapter uses analyses the status of local government in the CMA with particular focus on the effects of restructuring, and the opportunities and constraints to local sustainability planning. Using the results of this research, a local government framework is devised to effectively implement local sustainability planning in the CMA. The framework is based specifically on local government in the CMA, but it is applicable to each of the South African metropolitan areas.



Local Strategic Sustainability Planning in the Cape Metropolitan Area: A Case Study

...[in South Africa] for success, development must be not only innovative and research-based, but locally conceived and initiated, flexible, participatory and based on a clear understanding of local economics and politics...

(Chambers cited in Cole, 1994:236)

7.1 Introduction

Debra Roberts (1996: 272) states that 'the greatest challenge facing local authorities in South Africa during its period of reconstruction and development is the need to safeguard health, productivity and quality of life of all urban dwellers by managing the interaction between urban populations and the built and natural environments that surround them in a sustainable and integrated manner'. This is the essence of local sustainability planning. This chapter takes a pragmatic look at how local sustainability planning can be effectively institutionalised in South Africa, using the Cape Metropolitan Area as a case study.

Chapter Four concluded that whilst programmes such as LA 21 and Healthy Cities have led to effective local sustainability planning initiatives in many countries around the world, South Africa has a very specific institutional, legislative and socio-economic context¹¹³ which would benefit from an area-specific framework based on these generic programmes.

This chapter focuses on the Cape Metropolitan Area using local government in the metropole as a case study in developing a framework for local government sustainability planning.

¹¹³ The socio-economic and legislative context is outlined in chapter five and the local government institutional context is presented in chapter six

The following analysis is based on the empirical findings obtained using the methodological approach detailed in Chapter Three. The later sections of the case study will focus on the issues raised in the discussion¹¹⁴, such as integration and strategic planning in CMA local government. In addition, the study will draw on the lessons learnt in applying local sustainability planning initiatives in South Africa. This information will be used to develop a framework for sustainability planning in local government in the Cape Metropolitan Area¹¹⁵.

7.2 The Cape Metropolitan Area in Context

South Africa has a population of over 40 million people spread over nine provinces (see Figure 7.1). The Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA) lies within the Western Cape Province. It is the southern most metropolitan area in South Africa and the African continent. With the final phase of transitional restructuring the CMA will become one of only six metropolises in the country¹¹⁶.

The CMA has an abundance of natural and cultural qualities. It has been shaped by numerous cultures through the centuries, from the nomadic San and Khoi, to the explorers, settlers and traders.

The CMA covers an area of 2156 square kilometres (CMC, 1998). The area has a population of approximately 3 million people. Like most developing world cities Cape Town is experiencing rapid rates of urbanisation. Greater Cape Town grew from 200,000 in 1982 to more than 900,000 in 1992 (Cooper *et al*, 1994: 101). According to one estimate, the urban population is expected to double between 1990 and 2010, reaching approximately 5 million people (Sewell, 1998, Schreiner, 1994).

The Cape Metropolitan Council consists of 60 councillors and is chaired by an elected Metropolitan Mayor. It directs the affairs of the CMC by making policy and programme decisions, raising revenue and approving budgets for its own functions and for distribution to metropolitan local councils.

¹¹⁴ Refer to Section 3.8

¹¹⁵ The model is applicable in any of the metropolitan areas across South Africa

¹¹⁶ The other five metropolitan areas are Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Kyalami and Port Elizabeth

Figure 7.1 Map Locating the Cape Metropolitan Area in South Africa

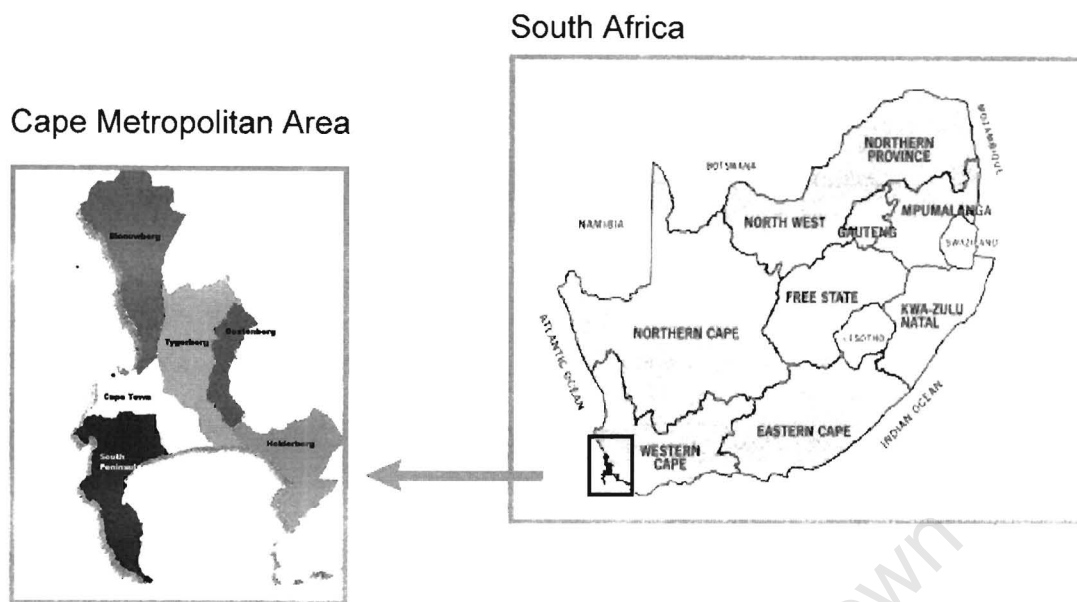
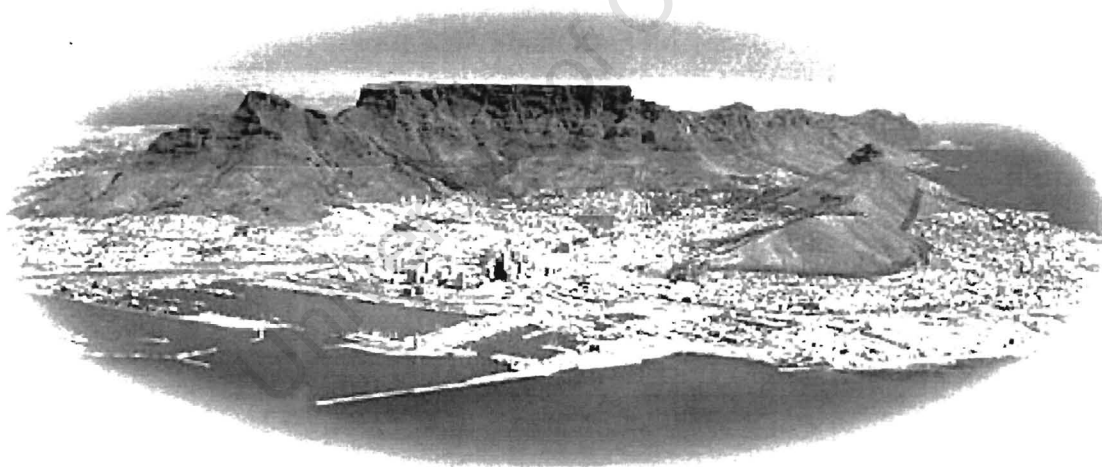


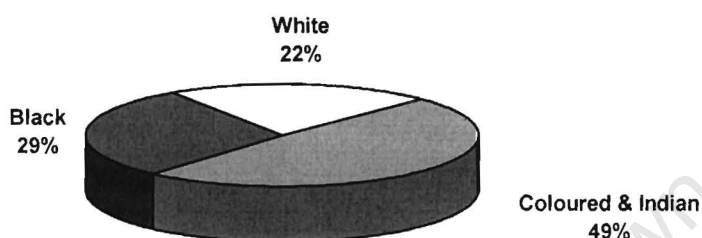
Figure 7.2 Photograph Showing Cape Town and Table Mountain



The CMA is located within an area of rare and important biodiversity and conservation value. The Cape Floristic Region, within which the CMA lies, is one of six floral kingdoms in the world. This region is comprised of a number of unique habitats, which collectively make up the Fynbos Biome. To the south of the CMA, the Cape Peninsula is one of the key centres of indemism containing some 2 256 indigenous plant species. 160 of these species are endemic and 141 are listed as Red Data Book species (CMC, 1998).

The population of the CMA is most effectively analysed using racial groupings, as these relate directly to socio-economic inequalities which must be addressed in the area. There are three main population groupings in the CMA, Afrikaans and English speaking white people, coloured people who are predominantly Afrikaans speaking and, a largely Xhosa speaking black population. The State of the Environment Report for the Cape Metropolitan Area (CMC, 1998:165) estimates the population by racial grouping as follows:

Figure 7.3 Graph Illustrating CMA Population Construction



(Figures from the Central Statistical Services (CSS), 1996, cited in CMC, 1998)

Approximately half the black population in the CMA live in shacks, in shack settlements, only 25% live in formal housing (CSS, 1996, cited in CMC, 1998). Between 93% and 97% of coloured and white people live in formal housing (CSS, 1996, cited in CMC, 1998).

Approximately 30% of CMA households live under the poverty line of 800 Rand per month (CMC, 1998). In spite of the poor economic conditions of nearly a third of the CMA population, 95% of the CMA population are literate. This is significantly more than the national average of 75% and represents the highest literacy rate in the country for a given area (CMC, 1998)

The CMA like the rest of the country is a place of contrasts. Established affluent settlements lie next to high density informal settlements; extreme beauty is contrasted by the persistent air pollution problems; established road transport infrastructure exists in contrast with the inadequate public transport network. The urban sprawl that characterised apartheid spatial planning compounds the transport problems in Cape Town. These socio-spatial distortions and the unequal distribution of resources are illustrated in the following photographs taken around the CMA..



Figure 7.4 The City of Cape Town

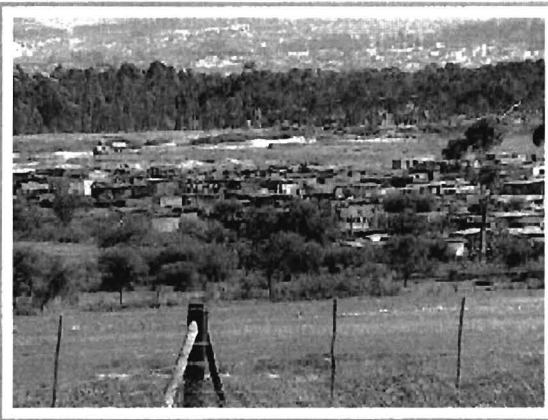


Figure 7.5 Informal Settlement

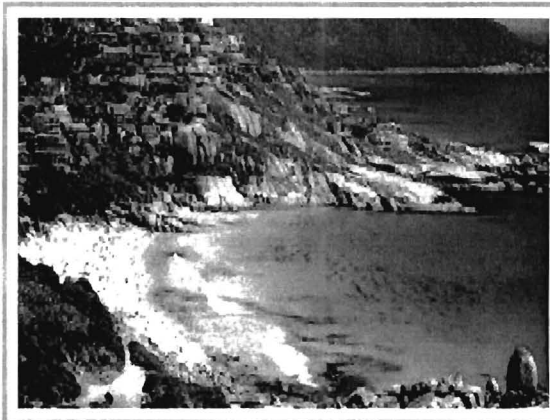


Figure 7.6 Llandudno Beach, Cape Town



Figure 7.7 Brown Haze Sitting Over The Cape Flats

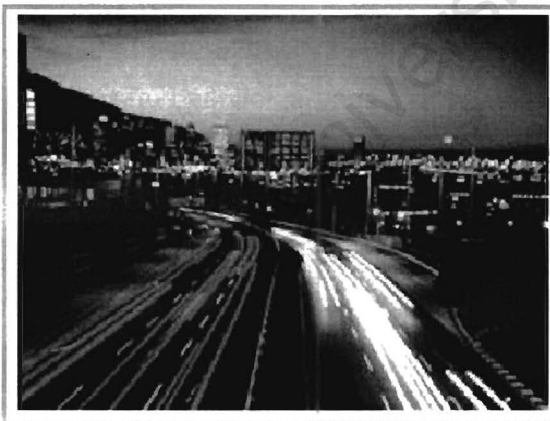


Figure 7.8 The M3 Motorway into Cape Town



Figure 7.9 Overcrowded and Outdated Train Service

Local government faces the challenge of dealing these problems. It must manage the redistribution of resources to redress social, economic and environmental inequities.

7.3 Local Government in the CMA

The plethora of different local government structures as South Africa entered its transition to democracy was identified in the previous chapter as one of the legacies of apartheid which has significant implications for sustainability, and more specifically for local government sustainability planning¹¹⁷. The CMA was no exception. In 1990 there were 64 local government structures in the Greater Cape Town Region (now CMA). The area was managed by some nineteen white local authorities each with their own administration, seven black local authorities with administrations, a management board with local authority status, three branches of the Regional Services Council, twenty nine management committees (for the coloured and Indian populations) serviced by white local authorities and/or the Regional Services Council and six local councils without full municipal status generally serviced by the Regional Services Council. A number of 'non-status' areas, mostly informal settlements, also existed and were serviced in a rudimentary fashion by the Province administration or their agents (Driver, 1992; Schmidt, 1998: 106). There was no metropolitan structure at this time and metropolitan wide functions were largely the responsibility of the Cape Town City Council and, to a lesser extent, the former Western Cape Regional Services Council.

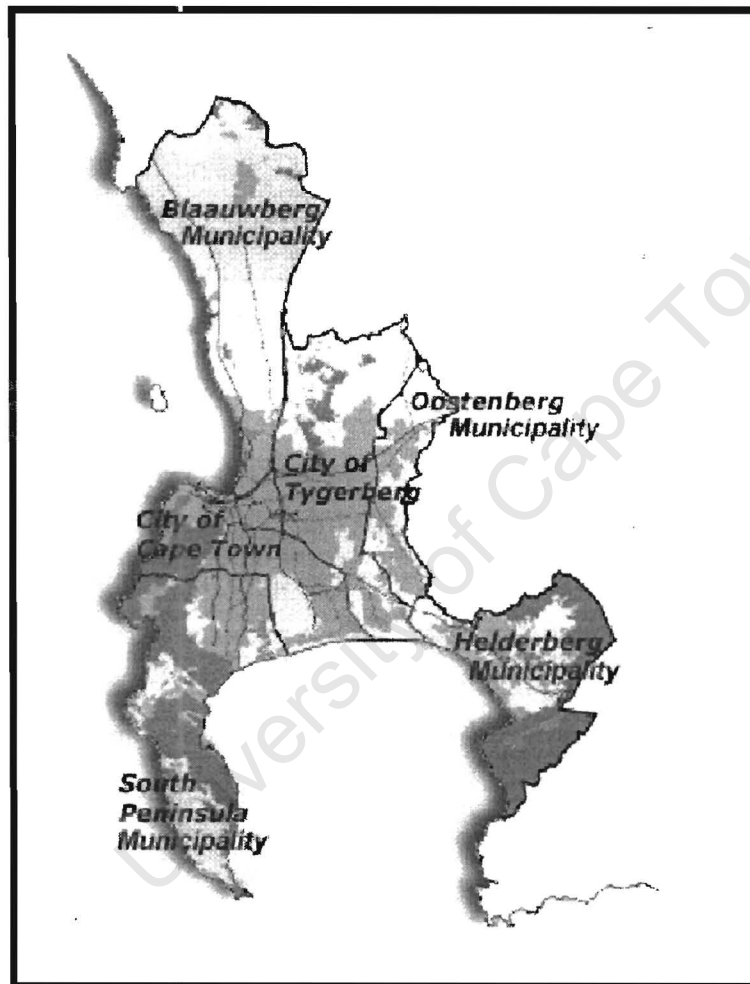
The current transitional government came into being after the local government elections in May 1996. The CMA elections were delayed due to disputes over the current 'co-ordinating two-tier' system of metropolitan government. Whilst there was broad consensus that the CMA constituted a metropolitan area, as defined in the Local Government Transition Act (LGTA), the boundaries were contested. The disputes focused on external and internal boundaries and over powers, functions and duties. The discrepancies were largely political. The National Party dominated the Provincial Government and they had recently suffered a major defeat in the national elections. There was a need for the party to maintain control over local government as well as provincial government in the Western Cape. The negotiation process eventually spanned over eighteen months. As a result local government elections in the CMA took place one year after the rest of the country.

The negotiation process led to the current transitional local government structures, municipal boundaries, powers and duties, staff and assets were all reorganised at this

¹¹⁷ Refer to Section 6.3

time¹¹⁸. The current local government dispensation consists of the Cape Metropolitan Council (CMC) and six Metropolitan Local Councils (MLCs). The MLCs are the City of Cape Town, the City of Tygerberg, South Peninsula Municipality, Oostenberg Municipality, Helderberg Municipality and Blaauwberg Municipality (see Figure 7.11). These structures replace the previous 64 local authorities and 19 administrations.

Figure 7.10 Map Illustrating the Six MLCs in the CMA



(CMC, 1998)

The CMC is constituted through proportional (60%) elected representation of councillors from MLCs, with the balance appointed by political parties. The macro-organisational

¹¹⁸ A list of the division of local government powers and duties between metropolitan council and metropolitan local councils is provided in **Appendix C: CMA Local Government Powers and Duties Agreement**

design of these councils includes several functional directorates, each headed by an Executive Director (CMC, 1998).

The policy decisions in the CMC are made by standing committees, the Executive Committee and full Council; the procedure is the same for the MLCs. A number of standing committees are drawn from the ranks of metropolitan councillors.

These committees are empowered to make decisions on matters relevant to their areas of expertise or to make recommendations to the 10-councillor Executive Committee or to full Council. These committees are Financial Services; Economic and Social Development; Water and Waste Services; Planning, Environment and Housing; Transportation and Traffic; Human Resources and Protection, Health and Trading (CMC, 1998). Together, the Cape Metropolitan Council and the six metropolitan local councils employ approximately 33 000 people from across the socio-economic spectrum (Sewell, 1998: 19).

The CMC and the MLCs entered into an agreement of the re-allocation of Powers and Duties Agreement on the 9 December 1996 (see Appendix C). Under the transitional local government structures, this agreement established the policy, coordinating and redistributive roles of the CMC. It was agreed that the CMC *inter alia* should provide bulk water, bulk waste water treatment and manages refuse disposal sites. The allocation of powers and duties provided a strong role for MLCs who are responsible for delivering the range of basic municipal services to their communities (Schmidt, 1998)¹¹⁹. The agreement was based on the understanding that the CMC and the six MLCs constitute two equal components of local government, with different functions.

Environmental management is the responsibility of both the CMC and the MLCs, on a metropolitan and local scale respectively. The Powers and Duties Agreement states that: 'The CMC shall ensure the preparation of and compliance with an Integrated Metropolitan Environmental Management Strategy' (Province of Western Cape, 1997: Schedule A). The CMC's Integrated Environmental Management Policy is being prepared in fulfillment of this requirement. The agreement goes on to state that MLCs 'may prepare, manage and implement integrated environmental programmes' (Province of Western Cape, 1997:

¹¹⁹ For full details of the responsibilities of the CMC and the MLCs in terms of the Provincial Proclamation Gazette No. 5152 dated 30 June 1997, see Appendix C

Schedule B). There is, therefore, an overlap of environmental management functions. To be efficient and effective MLC environmental management policy must reflect the framework of the Integrated Metropolitan Environmental Management Policy (IMEP) - carrying through the principles of IMEP to the most local level.

Agreement has been reached between the seven councils in the CMA on a financial framework which aims to ensure a clear sustainable and integrated fiscal relationship. The CMC derives its income from a number of sources: 27% of total income is provided by business levies; 34% comes from tariffs charged for bulk services; 23% is derived from contributions and subsidies, and; the remaining 16% is sourced in various miscellaneous incomes. Using this income the CMC fulfills its' resource distribution role by providing capital and operational assistance to the metropolitan local councils. Apart from this source of funding MLCs are largely dependent on income generated through rates and tariffs in respect of services. This has proven to be problematic as fiscal disparities exist. MLCs such as South Peninsula Municipality and Helderberg Municipality have a small population and, therefore a weak tax base.

The CMC also has an additional operational income from levies such as the Regional Establishment Levy and a Regional Services Levy. These funds are used to cover the CMC's functions including the Integrated Development Plan and various infrastructural grants.

7.3.1 Urban Management Challenges for Local Government in the CMA

Local government in the CMA has its own specific urban management challenges. Both the CMC and the MLCs must overcome certain factors which act as constraints to good governance and sustainability. These factors are identified in the CMC's State of the Environment Report for the CMA. These include major infrastructure and service backlogs in informal settlements and costly maintenance and operation costs for high quality facilities in affluent suburbs. Pressure on existing resources such as land, water and energy due to the high rate of urbanization and population growth is also a significant challenge. Arguably, the major challenge in attaining sustainability in the CMA is the need to address the inadequate levels of shelter and access to services in parts of the region. In addition the high levels of poverty in certain locations has associated problems with significant sustainability implications such as the breakdown of community, health

problems and increasing crime levels¹²⁰. Poverty is being compounded by a number of factors 'namely a lack of access to resources, a lack of access to social amenities and services, limited capacity and training, and a lack of access to economic opportunities' (CMC, 1998)

In addition to the external challenges to local government there are various internal issues which also act as constraints to effective service delivery and ultimately to sustainability. These challenges are examined in detail in the second half of this chapter. The CMC State of Environment Report for the CMA (1998) identifies the following challenges facing local government in the CMA:

- **Limited cooperation and coordination of local government activities within and between councils resulting in duplication and undermining of development and implementation of policies, strategies and plans.**
- **Lack of information and communication within institutions.**
- **Pressures on the tax base of local authorities brought about by problems such as non-payment for services and inadequate collection of service levies.**
- **Limited local capacity brought about partially due to the restructuring of local government, a process begun following the introduction of the Local Government Transition Act in 1993. The CMA experienced major changes in the period leading up to the democratic local elections held in 1996. Among the more significant changes were the dramatic reduction in the number of Councils and local government administrations from 60 to 7 and 19 to 7 respectively and the redeployment of thousands of employees.**
- **Weak and fragmented policies have been further undermined by uneven and ineffective enforcement of legislation.**

7.4 Exploring Local Government in the CMA

Before entering into an analysis of the research findings, it is important to gain a sense of the specific contexts of the local authorities chosen for study in this research. The Cape Metropolitan Council and two Municipalities, namely South Peninsula Municipality and the City of Tygerberg were identified for further investigation. These Municipalities's were chosen for their contrasting socio-economic characteristics. Together they represent both ends of the socio-economic spectrum in the CMA. The following introductions to the characteristics of each locality illustrate this.

¹²⁰ Discussed in Sections 5.3 and 5.4

South Peninsula Municipality covers 19%¹²¹ of the total area of the CMA. It has an estimated population of 350,000 residents (Schmidt, 1998:128) representing 12% of the total population of the CMA. As a result, the municipality has a low gross population density of 8.6 people per hectare. The levels of living in South Peninsula Municipality are high in comparison with the CMA average. The South Peninsula Municipality has a small industrial and business component and a correspondingly low levy base. Consequently the municipality is suffering from debt and to compensate the rates are high.

The City of Tygerberg is an effective juxtaposition to the South Peninsula Municipality. It covers a similar area to South Peninsula Municipality, 19.6 per cent of the CMA, yet it has a much larger population. The total population of the City of Tygerberg is 1.2 million residents with a population density of 21.9 people per hectare. Unlike South Peninsula Municipality, it is one of the fastest growing cities in the country, with a relatively high economic growth rate of 4 per cent per annum. The City of Tygerberg has an extensive area of informal settlements. The average income per capita for residents in the City of Tygerberg is R7 154 per annum. This is proportionately under half the average income per capita of R18 411 for the Western Cape Province. This is influenced by a relatively high percentage of residents being unemployed, 26 percent in the City of Tygerberg compared to 18 percent in the Western Cape.

Interviews carried out with officials and councillors within these two municipalities, coupled with interviews with CMC staff allowed the researcher to develop a broader picture for local government in the CMA.

7.5 Insights into Sustainability Planning in the CMA

A number of fundamental principles which underpin sustainability were identified in Chapter Two¹²². These principles are based on the ecocentric approach¹²³, namely: the principle of inter- and intra- generational equity, the principle of transfrontier responsibility, the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of environmental carrying capacity¹²⁴.

¹²¹ Consisting of 40,800 Ha

¹²² Section 2.5.1

¹²³ Refer to Section 2.5.3

¹²⁴ Detailed in greater depth in Section 2.5.1

Chapter Two concluded that there are a number of key themes which directly influence local government sustainability planning. These key themes indicate the conditions required for successful sustainability planning in local government. Decision-making should be decentralised to the community level, thereby providing the conditions for the second theme, effective public participation. Effective public participation involves a democratic approach to local government decision-making and policy formulation. Local sustainability planning also requires successful institutionalisation. This is key to the practical application of the principles of participatory democracy and decentralisation. Successful institutionalisation has two aspects; firstly, there is a need for national legislation which ensures that sustainability processes become statutory requirements¹²⁵. Secondly, although linked to the first aspect, is the need for effective local government to undertake these requirements, which in turn requires greater sectoral and policy integration.

These key themes directly inform the analysis of the research findings. The findings were gathered through interviews with important players in the field of sustainability and local government in the CMA. They provide an indication of the status of sustainability and, more specifically sustainability planning within local government in the CMA. Several issues emerge from the analysis. These issues are of importance to sustainability and local sustainability planning. For purposes of clarity, research findings are divided into subsections; each subsection deals with an important issue.

7.6 The Impacts of Local Government Transformation in Cape Town

One of the most disruptive factors affecting the functioning of local government over the last seven years has been the ongoing restructuring process. Within the CMA local government restructuring involved 'the transfer of some 10,000 people and effect[ed] a total of some 30,000 staff in the sector' (MNR and MRC, 1998: 38). A senior official involved in corporate management explained that the impact of restructuring, so far, has been:

¹²⁵ This first issue is crucial in terms of avoiding joining the plethora of unfunded local government mandates from central government, which currently exist. These mandates remain low priority, largely due to resource constraints, and are therefore neglected and generally ignored. This issue is discussed in greater depth in chapter 7.

“... incredible, massive - far exceeding predictions, both logistically, administratively and politically it has been huge. So far restructuring in the CMA alone has cost 600M Rand (500M of which has been through productivity losses) if you consider that the total metropolitan budget is only 5.2 billion Rand this is really very significant.”

Clearly, the impacts of local government restructuring have had significant implications for sustainability. The previous section highlighted that the successful institutionalisation of sustainability planning requires effective local government. Restructuring has severely disrupted local governments' capacity to function effectively and therefore has significant implications for local sustainability planning.

The research findings reveal that the main impacts of restructuring can be categorised as follows: the impact on staff morale and staff work ethos, and the impact on organisational functioning. To ascertain the extent of these impacts we need to explore this in greater depth.

The morale of local government officials is very low as a direct result of the protracted restructuring process. Restructuring has placed extra burdens on officials. There are high expectations of staff that have created pressures that staff are often unable to deal with. One official stated:

“Morale is very low, after two years of restructuring process the micro-structure still isn't in place, staff have been working very hard on the restructuring many are overworked and we are not seeing any positive results, it is demoralising.”

There is also a sense of insecurity about the future of staff positions which is compounding the current situation. A local government official elaborates:

“Many of us feel insecure about the future of our positions, the whole process has been so disorganised that no one really knows what is around the corner, it is bound to affect your day-to-day work.”

This phenomenon is being termed 'restructuring fatigue' or 'transformation fatigue'. There has been little or no training or counselling to aid and guide local government officials through the upheaval during this stressful time. A number of officials commented on the absence of support during restructuring:

“The council was trying to get used to the new structure and layout and the new responsibilities, the whole country had been through a huge upheaval and instead of giving employees time, training and support throughout the whole process, staff have been expected to just adapt.”

The stresses associated with restructuring have been further constrained by the nature of some local government officials. Many staff in the local government sector have been carrying out the same tasks in the same way for many years, leading to established, often bureaucratic, mindsets. For this reason, restructuring is particularly stressful for local government staff. A local councillor stated that:

“the employees in local government in South Africa are rule orientated and conservative. They are stressed by these changes and their psychological trauma is being ignored. As a result this is affecting the way they do their jobs.”

Further compounding the stress felt by local government personnel are perceptions of neglect. Officials complained that they have received little or no consultation on the restructuring process. For a government which is newly democratised, there appears to have been little in the way of democracy in the local government restructuring process. As a result officials are experiencing feelings of alienation. This was recognised by an IDP Manager who stated:

“The next round of restructuring... must take into account the staff viewpoint. Previously the staff were largely ignored, they had no input, they felt put upon and alienated from the whole restructuring process.”

No transformation can occur if the key players in the process are not undergoing change. This seems to be a fundamental flaw in the local government transformation process. Changing the structure of an institution does not lead to a change in the attitudes and mindsets of the staff within it.

For many, the alienation caused by a lack of inclusion in the restructuring process has exacerbated feelings of insecurity. Many officials assert that the lack of staff involvement or consultation has led to decisions being made which have little or no grounding in the realities of local government. The top-down approach to restructuring is seen by officials as having negative implications ‘on the ground’:

“Just as we [local government officials] are really finding an effective established structure, national government turns around and says we

must restructure again. I think that they haven't actually looked at how much this extra restructuring is really needed, and what effect it is going to have on us [staff], and what effect it's going to have on the work we do, on service delivery."

A number of councillors voice similar concerns about the level to which restructuring has taken into account what is happening in practice. A councillor explains:

"Decisions are made ideologically and are not necessarily for the good of the people. There is too much political rhetoric. The whole sector is undergoing a major political struggle which is bringing local governance to a virtual standstill."

The instability, caused largely by restructuring, has led to an exodus of experienced employees from local government. For instance, between the months of July and December 1998 the City of Cape Town Municipality saw the resignation of 620 staff ¹²⁶. In many cases, it is the experienced and skilled employees who are moving to the private sector. As a result local government in the CMA is often being left with an underskilled and undercapacitated workforce. During this time recruitment was frozen, preventing the inflow of staff and compounding local government's capacity problems.

The disruptions caused by restructuring have also had a major impact on organisational functioning. The upheaval has led to local government becoming very focused on its inner workings. Service delivery has suffered and as a result, local government/community relations are being negatively affected. Efficiency has been disrupted on a large scale, an issue of concern for both officials and councillors. One councillor states that:

"the impact has meant that they [local government] have been totally engrossed in getting the new structures settled. There has been major conflict around the different systems, conditions of service agreements between merged units etc... It has most definitely had a negative impact on service delivery."

In addition, local government restructuring has led to the breakdown of many innovative and productive projects which aimed to develop more sustainability urban management. The change in structures led to staff being relocated, often information was lost and valuable networks were broken. A CMC official recognised this fact and stressed that the

¹²⁶ Many more resignations were expected after the staff collected their Christmas bonus.

upheaval could have been avoided if restructuring had been carried out "in a more staged manner to avoid this".

Restructuring involved reworking the organisational structure of each MLC. Individual structures are only now becoming established and settled. These structures will be changed shortly, once again to make way for the latest and final round of reorganisation. It seems likely that the impact of this final round of restructuring will further compound the plethora of negative impacts experienced in the pre-interim and interim phases of restructuring.

As alluded to earlier, organisational functioning has also suffered due to the funds that have been committed to restructuring. As a result, funds that should have been financing local government workings are not available. An official elaborates:

"If you consider that the restructuring process in the Cape Metro Region has already cost in excess of 500 Million Rand, the question of short-term financial sustainability becomes a mitigating issue when considering further restructuring".

This has significant implications for the financial sustainability of local government in the CMA, especially when combined with the other financial stresses on local government discussed in Section 6.7.

Another local government official predicts 'major institutional disruption for at least 5 years or more' with the further round of reorganisation. Even if the final process spans a minimum period of two years, an optimistic time-scale when set against the six years of local government change that has already taken place, this represents a hugely protracted process. Overall, local government restructuring has been a major operation which has consumed vast amounts of money, has led an exodus of skilled staff and the neglect of service delivery. Ironically, this change in local government has come at a time when national legislation is promoting efficient and effective Developmental Local Government.

This disruption has direct implications for sustainability and local sustainability planning. The lack of financial sustainability and skilled workforce in local government will inhibit various aspects of local sustainability planning, such as the use of public participation and the implementation of sustainability initiatives at the project level. Public participation in

local government decision-making is also inhibited by the poor public image of local government, a situation compounded by the neglect of service delivery.

7.7 Unicity Sentiment

The final round of restructuring in the CMA will see the formation of a Unicity¹²⁷. In general, opinion around the Unicity debate amongst those officials and councillor interviewed was mixed. Despite the criticism surrounding the protracted nature of restructuring many officials are in favour of the ultimate goal, namely the creation of a Unicity (or Megacity).

Those respondents with a pro-Unicity sentiment allude to the positives that may result from the final round of restructuring. A municipality official highlights some of the potential benefits that would arise from a Unicity dispensation:

“It could remove weaknesses [in local government], such as those local councillors who are not viable; it could improve the currently inequitable distribution of land-use planning; it could remove the current fragmentation of service delivery, such as waste collection and disposal which is currently carried out completely separately; and, eventually it should lead to improved integration”.

The Unicity has the potential to increase integration of functions. Integration is key to effective local governance and, therefore, has positive implications for sustainability. Section 7.3 identified an overlap in functions such as environmental management in the current local government dispensation. This overlap is problematic for sustainable urban management as it reduces efficiency. This could be overcome with the Unicity structure. Additionally, placing the responsibility for policy formulation and implementation with one authority could ensure that policy is adhered to. One CMC official in the field of environmental management states:

“The 'Megacity' will have better capacity to implement policy. Currently the CMC sets policy and the MLCs have to implement them. There is no guarantee that the policy will be followed properly or even that they will adopt the policy”.

¹²⁷ Refer to the discussion of the Unicity option Section 6.7

The issue of achieving greater parity was raised by one municipal official. He foresees the Unicity dispensation improving financial equity by eliminating the inequalities between MLCs in terms of funding and capacity:

“Some aspects of the [Unicity] proposals are very effective and will facilitate a shift towards more effective local government especially in disadvantaged communities, it should result in greater equity”.

One of the issues which were raised by the majority of the respondents is the issue of keeping local government at the community level. This is central to local sustainability planning. Keeping local government local helps to maintain a link with citizens. It also increases public participation in decision-making processes. The fear that the Unicity will distance local government from the communities they govern was repeatedly raised in the press. Respondents voiced concern that within the Unicity provisions should be made to maintain local level community links:

“Whilst it will definitely lead to a more efficient use of resources, the model needs a process for local decision-making built into it. The CMA is such a diverse area that you need local contact to understand the different needs.”

Councillors interviewed were wary of the Unicity structure. This sentiment may be attributed to the fact that councillors' fear for their positions as the Unicity dispensation will significantly reduce the number of local councillors. Yet, as representatives of the local communities they are of the opinion that the Unicity will remove government from the people. One councillor explains:

“The job of the councillor will be much harder because of the large areas. It will be difficult to represent a group of people as the wards will be large and less likely to be a group of homogenous people.”

This sentiment is also reflected by another councillor who stated that within the Unicity it 'will be much harder for councillors to play an involved community role if they are expected to play an increased role in local councils business - it is all too much'.

The issue of subsidiarity was the most frequently raised and most strongly emphasised concern about the Unicity amongst respondents. It seems that the greatest fear concerning the Unicity structure is that local government will loose contact with the basic needs of the community and therefore undermine attempts to address service backlogs.

The following response by a municipal official is indicative of the general sentiment on this issue:

“The impacts of the Unicity will take decision-making further away from the people, it will degrade existing service delivery and prevent further new improvements.”

One CMC official was of the opinion that local government in South Africa has a role building the capacity of residents and encouraging their inclusion in local government decision-making. This metropolitan official fears that the Unicity is not conducive to the mandates of local government:

“For the Unicity the vastness of the metropolitan scale, the size of the population, which is currently around 3 million, will make participation at the household level difficult. In addition the population is very stratified with the majority living in very poor conditions, it will be difficult to reach these people with the new structure.”

The negative experiences of restructuring thus far are fueling concern over further change. A municipal official elaborates:

“The Unicity reorganisation will just prolong the mayhem of the last 2 years, the more qualified members of staff are leaving because they are disillusioned. In the end the same thing could happen that has occurred in Tygerberg, more employees and more inefficiencies.”

It would appear that sentiments towards the Unicity have improved in the past year. A study carried out by the Medical Research Council early in 1998 into the status of health and the environment in local government in Cape Town, found that respondents were 'emphatically opposed to changes which might result in further restructuring' at this time.

7.8 Perceptions of Sustainability and the Environment

Section 5.6, in Chapter Five, detailed the traditional perceptions of the environment in the South African Government. In the past, the environment was seen as a purely 'green' conservation-focused issue. Conservation was traditionally viewed as the major solution to environmental problems. The environment paradigm has expanded internationally over the last two decades to include the 'brown' issues in addition to green issues. Brown environmental issues include pollution, the built environment and a human element. The South African government sector is only now reflecting international opinion and the

concept of the 'environment' has expanded to become more holistic. Conversely, the concept of 'sustainability' is completely new¹²⁸. Sustainability is a fairly complex concept to grasp, this is illustrated in the analysis of the associated philosophies and ideologies in Chapter Two. Yet within local government, a thorough understanding of the terms 'environment' and 'sustainability' is required before local sustainability planning can be implemented. The research sought to ascertain local government official and councillors' perception and understanding of these concepts.

All of the officials interviewed possessed a holistic understanding of the term environment. There was a strong awareness that people are part of the environment. The officials within the corporate management field had a similar understanding to those in the environmental field. The councillors and the NGO representatives had the same perspective. The definition of one IDP manager illustrates this broad understanding

"[The environment is..] the full context in which people live, including both natural and built, and all the systems within them."

Many respondents acknowledged that limited and narrow definitions of the environment prevailed in the recent past. A municipal official explained how this narrow definition defined the workings of local government "[in the past] municipal management limited the environment to the green issues only, water conservation, nature conservation, management of open spaces etc...".

These findings differ significantly from McDonald's (1998b) research into 'Municipal Bureaucrats and Environmental Policy in Cape Town, South Africa' carried out in 1994. At this time McDonald found that the environment was viewed, by local government officials, as :

... an abstract concept of nature, somehow detached from human beings, where wildlife conservation and the protection of wetlands and other natural areas constitute the biggest problems.

Respondents were, however, less informed about sustainability, proffering a wide range of different definitions. Officials, in particular, perceived sustainability in terms of their specific field of work and did not have a grasp of the wider meaning of the concept. For example,

¹²⁸ Both 'environment' and 'sustainability' are defined in the glossary of terms on page xii.

one IDP Manager understood sustainability and financial sustainability to be synonymous, he stated:

“Financial sustainability of local government is to provide affordable long term services. At local government level this requires generating funds to deliver services, at the community level it is the ability to survive over the long term without degradation of the infrastructure.”

Similarly, officials in the field of environmental management have a development oriented opinion, as the following quotes illustrate:

“...[sustainability is] development which maintains the resource base.”

“...[sustainability] is the need to ensure that the resources which are needed to keep a balance between development and the environment, are no more for future generations as they ought to be/are now.”

None of the respondents understood sustainability to require integration of social economic and environmental issues.

In general, the councillors and NGO employees interviewed had a wider perception of sustainability, understanding it to encompass broader quality of life issues. A councillor stated:

“We have finite resources. The less care we take the more money must be thrown at the resultant problems from exploiting these resources and the more problems occur with this reactive approach. Therefore we need more organisation and forward planning in order for everyone to live a balanced and happy life into the future. The key is for everyone to have a good quality of life.”

At the metropolitan level, it seems that environmental considerations are beginning to become integrated into the corporate strategic level. A local government official in the field of environmental management was optimistic that the CMC are “moving away from traditional delivery mechanisms to new forms of delivery where efficiency and sustainability are becoming key considerations”. Whilst the CMC is making advances in this area, it appears that many MLCs are not as advanced. One municipal official in the field of environmental management states:

“Most people within the Council do not know what sustainable development is. It is written into almost every strategy across the council but when it actually comes to putting it into practice nothing is done. The term is misused and misinterpreted.”

This lack of understanding and knowledge of the term sustainability is a major constraint to applying its principles in practice. This is one of numerous constraints to local sustainability planning in local government in the CMA, which were identified by interviewees. Further constraints are identified in Section 7.13.

7.9 Public Participation - opportunities and constraints

Democratic participation in decision-making is one of the key themes of local government sustainability planning. Section 4.3 highlighted that whilst public participation has many valuable advantages it also has numerous disadvantages in practice it has several limitations. It is important to identify the opportunities and constraints for public participation, which are perceived by those involved in local government public participation processes.

The constraints to effective public participation in decision-making which were raised by the respondents included a lack of legitimate structures and functioning networks, and a wide disparity in understanding of what public participation involves. A lack of financial capacity was seen as a major barrier to effective public participation by the majority of respondents. One official expressed this collective sentiment as follows:

“... either we carry out participation exercises with the small element of the community who are interested in participating, which is what is happening currently, or we spend a lot of time and money gaining input from... a larger section of the community. The money to do this is just not available...”

Another key obstacle which was raised by all respondents involved the issue of community capacity. The capacity of individuals to take in information or to participate in discussions varies significantly from area to area in the CMA. This makes it difficult to carry out formulaic public participation processes in different areas. Compounding the problem of community capacity is a lack of understanding of the basic functions of local government. An understanding of the role of local government is required for individuals to contribute to local government decision-making. One councillor added that within his constituency it is not uncommon for residents to be unaware of which municipality they reside in. This lack of understanding is compounded by the poverty in which some people in the CMA reside. One councillor highlight the problem surrounding this issue when he states:

“the population is very stratified with the majority living in very poor conditions, they distrust authority structures and are not concerned with local government and participating in decision-making.”

Previous chapters¹²⁹ have highlighted that in order to gain a meaningful input into local government decision-making, comprehensive capacity-building should ideally precede the public participation process. This approach was applied by the CMC in formulating their Integrated Environmental Policy. Yet, as this particular public participation process showed capacity-building effectively doubles the workload and the staff time. The smaller MLCs are unable to follow such an ideal, for reasons outlined by a municipal official:

“We should really start the whole process by building community knowledge and understanding of the issues which we are going to consult them on. To do this across the municipality, in addition to the public participation process, is really not feasible, we’d have to have more staff and have a much bigger budget to do this...”

Those officials with practical experience of public participation all revealed that ‘politics interferes with and complicates the process’. It was suggested that once political issues are brought into the participation fora the whole emphasis of the process changes. With the introduction of politics into a public participation process, the focus changes from the opinions of the community to the opinions of the political parties. Two local government officials explain:

“Constraints to public participation include the politicization of local politics, a new phenomenon in local government. Umbrella groups, NGOs and CBOs are all becoming politicized with their own political agendas which brings community participation to a virtual standstill.”

“There are many organisations across the CMA with their own specific agendas, each one claims greater legitimacy than the other, public participation fora are often seen as political platforms.”

Similarly very localised issues often cloud the wider issues during any public participation process. A councillor explained that ‘people often seems to have their own individual issue that they feel is most important...’. One IDP official with experience in carrying out participation processes was of the opinion that “input at the macro-corporate level is difficult as people are micro-focused, concerned with very local level micro focused input.”

¹²⁹ Refer to Section 4.2

A further obstacle to effective public participation is the phenomenon which many respondents referred to as 'participation fatigue', where the community is over consulted:

"There is participation fatigue, there are so many different participatory meetings in communities currently that they are confused and becoming more and more apathetic to it. I am particularly seeing this in Khayelitsha¹³⁰ which has meeting after meeting."

One official related the fatigue specifically to one factor in particular:

"[T]he community don't see results, if we [local government] are going to consult them then we should be showing that what they are telling us is being implemented, that their input makes a difference."

The participation of NGOs and CBOs in local government decision-making is easier to ensure. The CMC seems to have the most formal relationship with NGOs and CBOs. This could be attributed to the fact that the CMC have more formal networks and procedures for the participation of these organisations, whereas the local metropolitan municipalities deal with them on a more *ad hoc* basis.

Section 6.7 highlighted the fact that successful democratic public participation in local government decision-making is dependent on a high level of confidence and trust in local government. It is clear from this study that restructuring is serving to internalise the focus of local government in the CMA. Service delivery is suffering and, as a direct result of this, there is no confidence or trust being engendered amongst communities in the CMA. Public participation is being fundamentally undermined by the very process that is being put in place to encourage it, namely restructuring.

7.10 Perceptions of Local Government

It is clear that public participation is influenced by the local community's perception of local government. It is, therefore, important to understand how the interviewees viewed the public image of local government. There was a fairly uniform response from those local government officials interviewed, when asked about the public perception of local

¹³⁰ Khayelitsha is a planned settlement allowing a mix of housing from shack settlements to formal housing.

government. The general opinion is illustrated by the following two statements from local government officials:

The general public has a shockingly bad opinion of local government. They are completely disillusioned [with local government]. They still see local government as a political institution. The civil education role is not as developed or as resourced as it should be.

There is a generally poor perception [of local government]. It is also historical, the image of local government as a bureaucratic, inefficient government institution. However, the efficiency is improving, it takes time to change perceptions.

Those councillors interviewed were also of the opinion that the community generally has a poor view of local government. One councillor representing a traditionally affluent municipal area had the following response:

"I think that the general public sees local government as very effectual as a general view. Although there seems to be a genuine lack of understanding firstly around what local government is meant to do and secondly how the community fits in with government as a whole."

In many cases, legacies of the past still impact on the current perception of local government. Some agree that the years of neglect and authoritarian rule have engendered a sense of general apathy towards governance at any level¹³¹. This is particularly evident amongst those individuals who were discriminated against. An NGO worker elaborates:

"In the previously disadvantaged communities public participation is most difficult, the people living here are often too passive, they have a reputation for rising up and revolting against the political system, but in my experience they accept the unacceptable. The CMC could say, we're building a polluting industry on your doorstep and there would be very little opposition... it's a historical thing."

Numerous officials were aware of the poor image of local government. Yet, they acknowledged a change in perception. This can be attributed to the increase in public participation. A local government official elaborates:

[local government has a very, very negative [perception] historically due to the previous top-down approach to service provision. However, when we engage with them [the community] you readily see the perceptions change. There is a growing realisation that local government is a

¹³¹ Discussed in section 5.3

significant player in the role of reconstruction and development. This perception is currently not entrenched in people's minds but is changing.

Other respondents offered some idea as to how the poor image of local government could be improved. One interviewee suggested that:

To overcome this we must have a sustained period of stability with effective service delivery and to consolidate the good work that is now occurring.

The local government officials and councillors interviewed acknowledged a lack of understanding of the functions of local government by the community. In addition, these respondents were of the opinion that the legacies of the previous government regime are still influencing the communities' perceptions of local government. It was felt that these negative factors could both be addressed through awareness raising and capacity-building amongst the community.

7.11 Policy and Sectoral Integration

One of the key 'internal' elements of local government sustainability planning is colloquially termed 'putting you own house in order'. A transition to sustainability requires the integration of social, economic and environmental issues so that each has equal priority when making decisions. Within local government, this involves both sectoral coordination and the integration of policies¹³².

In the past government policies were developed on a largely *ad hoc* basis (MNR, MRC, 1998). Most policies were developed in isolation from each other, and consequently, inefficiencies, duplications and inconsistencies prevailed. Policy formulation at this time was reactive rather than proactive, responding to problems and situations rather than preempting them as an official explains:

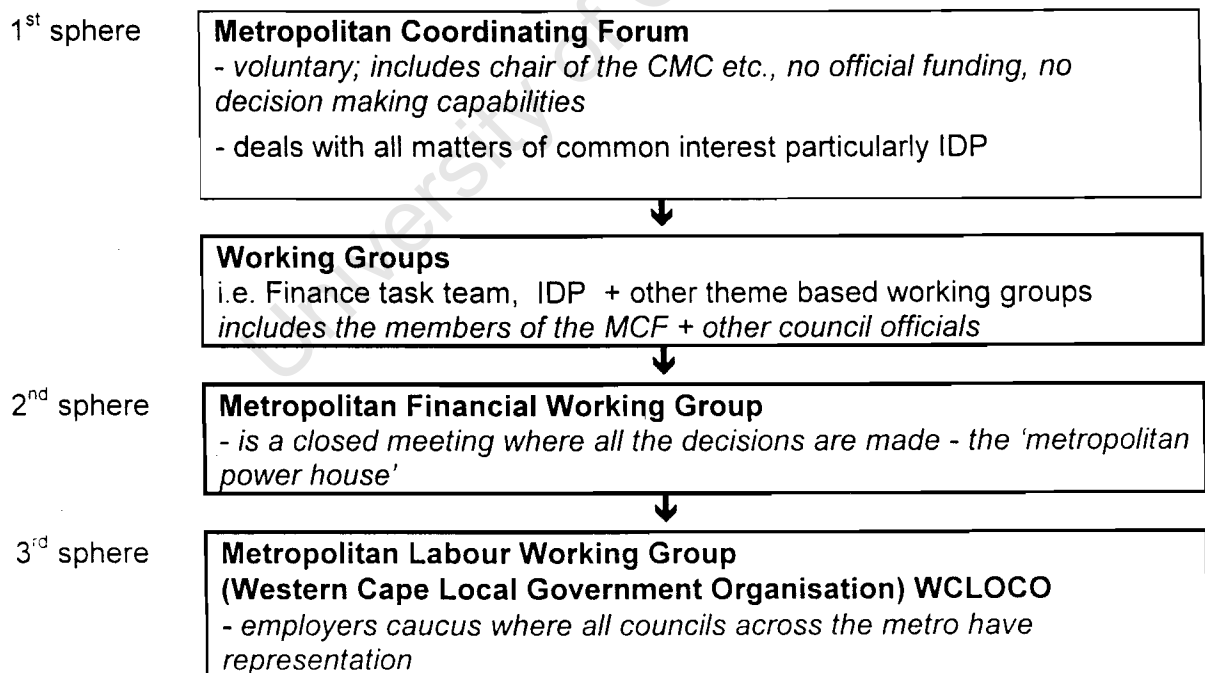
"...that isn't to say that they [the policies] were adapted to the relevant situation. Often they were reactive and top-down which meant they didn't take into account the local situation."

¹³² Refer to Section 4.5

There is evidence that this situation is improving. One of the most progressive examples of this is being undertaken within the CMC as part of the Integrated Environmental Management Policy (IMEP) for the CMA. One of the essential principles of IMEP is the need to rely on a comprehensive public participation process, based on a continuous dialogue within and between different related local government departments. Despite this stated goal, the results have not been as successful as envisaged. Turnouts to public participation events were disappointing. The main reasons for this can be attributed to the policy process establishing new structures and forums for participation rather than utilising existing structures. In hindsight, one of the local government officials involved explained that the public participation element would have been more successful if existing structures had been utilised.

Within the CMA, increased sharing of information and networking is occurring around integrated development planning. In order to engender increased integration between authorities across the metropole, defined formal structures have been created. Figure 7.12 illustrates the formal metropolitan IDP structure :

Figure 7.11 Metropolitan Integrated Development Planning Structure



On a metropolitan level structures are in place which aim to increase integration. At the metropolitan local council level, this structural organisation is not always in evidence. A recent study into Environment and Health Policy in Cape Town (MRC, MNR, 1998: 16) states that a '...major constraint in the dynamic of the South African policy environment is the lack of coordination and consistency across the multitude of policies currently under development'. The study also cites a lack of capacity, capability, experience, resources and time as constraining factors to integration and coordination. A significant factor which mitigates against integration is the competitive mindset in local government. Between different departments, and even within departments, there is competition for budget. One local government official elaborates by saying that "territoriality and ownership act as barriers to integration within local government and overcoming this is realistically not a short process."

Unfortunately, to date, it would appear that the IDP process is failing to overcome these problems. Whilst it aims to create one holistic plan which encompasses all sectors, this is not necessarily being implemented. Instead of creating an arena where each department is in constant communication with other departments, in practice each department formulates their own sectoral plan which is added to a non-integrated corporate plan. The integration of sectoral decision-making and policy formulation is one of the key themes of sustainability. It would appear that these are not being instigated by IDP at present.

A further weakness in the IDP requirements in its present form, is its complexity¹³³. Many interviewees stressed that IDP is generally too complex. This was elaborated upon by one official:

"When the new IDP policy arrived I made sure I was aware of what it entailed. I read the instruction document that was produced by government, it's very lengthy and I can't see how we can manage on our budget to complete everything within it. One thing I can't understand is why there are five different plans which result from this one process which is supposed to be integrated!"

Despite the weakness of the IDP process in integrating the work of local government, most officials spoke highly of the way IDP assists them in aligning their work with budgets. One official said the following:

¹³³ This issue is discussed in depth in **Section 6.5**

“Yes it [IDP] will effect my work, it will find a balance between goals, targets and budgets. This will be tough and it has largely not been done before, usually projects left ‘til the end of the budget year were not carried out because no resources were left.”

In theory, therefore, IDP remains an admirable local government corporate management tool which aims to facilitate integration. It has numerous weaknesses, the most significant of which seems to lie in it's complexity. Section 6.5 highlighted the changes to the IDP guidelines which are being instigated by the Department of Constitutional Development. These changes will aim to make the process more 'user-friendly'. Following this remedial action, IDP should represent a useful mechanism to facilitate corporate integration of functions and effective budget allocation. As such it will fulfill one of the key requirements of local government for sustainability planning, namely, greater sectoral and policy integration. The local government sustainability planning framework, developed in the following chapter, presents a framework that includes IDP.

7.12 Local Sustainability Planning

It is important to ascertain the level of understanding of the principles of local sustainability planning within local government. During the interviews, Local Agenda 21 was used as a specific example of local sustainability planning. LA 21 represents an international programme based on the sustainability planning approach¹³⁴.

Previously in this chapter, a weak understanding of the term sustainability amongst interview respondents was highlighted. Respondents showed a similar poor understanding of LA 21.

It is useful at this point to reiterate the key themes of local sustainability planning. These are: the integration of social, economic and environmental issues so that each has equal priority when making decisions, includes policy integration and sectoral integration; democratic participation, based on awareness raising and capacity-building; staff and councillor training and awareness raising; priority setting and a long-term focus; equal focus on implementation, and; monitoring and feedback mechanisms.

¹³⁴ discussed in-depth in Section 4.6

The CMC has a LA 21/Healthy Cities Steering Committee which is a recognized Multidisciplinary Steering Committee and has been registered with the Unicity Commission. It is regarded within CMC as one of the few official Local Government and Civil Society partnership committees dealing with Health and Development. The committee is made up of representatives from each of the MLCs and CMC (one councillor and one official). Also included are representatives, who come from the following sectors; business, education, research, the environmental justice networking forum, the disability network, the metropolitan development forum, and environmental health. These representatives are elected to serve for a two year period. In addition, representatives from different directorates within CMC may be co-opted for expertise on specific issues.

Many local government officials understood the general tenets of LA 21, understanding it to be an international mandate concerning the environment. They were, however, mostly unaware of its sustainability focus or the fact that it is a strategic planning process.

Those in the environmental field were better informed. One municipal environmental management official defined LA 21 as follows:

"[LA 21 is] ...a plan of action which addresses economic, environmental and social development issues accounting for the environment and balancing it with different needs."

Officials and councillors who had a good knowledge of LA 21, believed it to be beneficial for local government for a number of reasons. The first reason which emerged was LA 21's international linkages which allow international recognition and provide international examples of best practice. A CMC official explained that he understood that "the label LA 21 is important because it signifies an international link and allows national coordination."

A particularly troubling finding was the misconception that existed amongst officials involved in IDP. These officials were of the opinion that LA 21 does not promote integration, and they did not have knowledge of the action planning element of the LA 21 process. They stated that:

"In South Africa the IDP brings it all together, however this differs from LA 21 as it can occur at horizontal streams without integration ."

"The trouble with LA 21 is that all the wheels are spinning on their own it doesn't necessarily lead to greater integration and nothing gets priority."

There were, nevertheless, a number of councillors and officials who were aware of the close relationship between LA 21 and IDP. One official warned that if LA 21 were to be considered it must be in conjunction with strategic planning that is already taking place as “duplication must be avoided”. Each of the IDP Managers interviewed were of the opinion that LA 21 could be successfully carried out in conjunction with IDP, provided no extra resources were entailed.

Interviews also revealed that although councillors are familiar with the term Local Agenda 21, having heard it raised at various council meetings, none could give any details as to what it entails or the underlying principles. This is problematic because councillors are the driving forces behind the success of local government activities. An in-depth understanding of local sustainability planning by councillors and politicians is a pre-requisite to successful implementation in local government.

The current lack of understanding by councillors and officials outside the field of environmental management should be addressed in a local sustainability planning framework for local government. Further constraints which must be addressed in the local sustainability planning framework are discussed in the section that follows.

7.13 Perceived Barriers to Implementing Local Government Sustainability Planning in the CMA

It is important to understand the barriers which must be overcome before sustainability and local sustainability planning can be implemented in local government in the CMA. Respondents were asked to offer their perceptions of the main barriers to achieving sustainability and implementing local sustainability planning.

Officials perceived one of the main problems which could affect the implementation of sustainability processes in the Cape Metropolitan Area to be a lack of understanding of sustainability issues. This was borne out by findings highlighted in Section 7.8 above, and was highlighted by a number of local government officials and councillors. A municipal official explains:

“The main factor holding us back from making progress in sustainable development is a lack of understanding about what the concept really means... neither the councillors or the officials have really grasped how useful the idea is.”

Organisational barriers were also seen as a major constraint to implementing local sustainability planning. Among the organisational problems identified were a lack of resources in local government. A lack of financial capacity, in particular, was cited by many local government officials as a barrier to achieving goals such as sustainability. This sentiment is captured by an IDP Manager who states :

“The key to sustainability initiatives happening is resources, in the form of money and skills. What needs to happen is for environmental costs to become a budget item or a project cost so that they do not get ignored - at the moment this is always seen as an add on. Similarly the absence of the environment from the political agenda and its restriction to marginalised fringe groups lessens the priority. Money always comes first.”

The importance the support of politicians and councillors was raised in the previous section. It was highlighted that a thorough understanding of sustainability a local sustainability planning was necessary for its successful implementation. A local government official in the field of environmental management stressed the importance of political will in establishing new ideas:

Ultimately the driving force behind any new decisions are the politicians. For a proposal to be useful, you need political endorsement. In fact in practice political endorsement, should extend to political enforcement.

Section 7.15 below explores the Hanover Park LA 21 case study in Cape Town. This study highlights the importance of political support in maintaining a successful project.

7.14 Integration and Local Sustainability Planning

During the course of the interviews, it became apparent that the issue of policy and sectoral integration in local government and the issue of local sustainability planning are inextricably linked.

Local government across South Africa is subject to numerous mandates, both statutory and voluntary. Several of these mandates are based on a strategic planning approach, these include, amongst others, IDP, Healthy Cities and LA 21. These strategic planning initiatives have a number of fundamental similarities. Each uses common processes and methods, such as community development/ capacity building, strategic planning/policy development, mediation and consensus-building. They also highlight the centrality of local

authorities in developing new approaches to governance. These mandates are underpinned by shared principles and values such as social justice, sustainability, community participation and empowerment, and inter-sectoral co-operation. Significantly, each has the principle of policy and sectoral integration at its core. Despite their integratory aims, each of these strategic planning initiatives is generally progressing independently in the Cape Metropolitan Area. Given that these initiatives share common aims, it is significant that they currently compete for budget.

Clearly, further clarification is required on the issue of the integration of local government strategic planning initiatives. In response, the author organised a discussion group with representatives from local government in the fields of Environmental Management, Healthy Cities, Environmental Health, and IDP together with representatives from academia, environmental consultancy and from the national LA 21 programme. The following results are based on the interview responses and subsequent discussions with the group of specialists¹³⁵.

Contributors to the discussion agreed that a method which gives strength to integration whilst focusing on the principles of sustainability, is required. There needs to be consensus on an approach which provides the political and institutional strength to integrate. It was also suggested that a new approach should draw on the experience of international programmes, that they must be sensitive to national requirements and above all must be directly informed and shaped by the local context. Support for a national initiative to promote a sustainability planning approach in local government must come from national government. Ideally, requirements should be statutory. As a statutory requirement across the country, the implementation within each local government authority would be ensured as well as maintaining some uniformity between local government authorities.

There was consensus amongst contributors to the discussion that in the past policy, and in particular strategic planning initiatives, have focused too much on process and have neglected the importance of implementation and overseeing evolving projects on the ground. This was a point borne out by the MRC study (MRC, MNR, 1998:17) which

¹³⁵ See section 3.6 for details of the discussion group

discovered that 'in the past policy making ventures had allocated inadequate thought to implementation mechanisms'

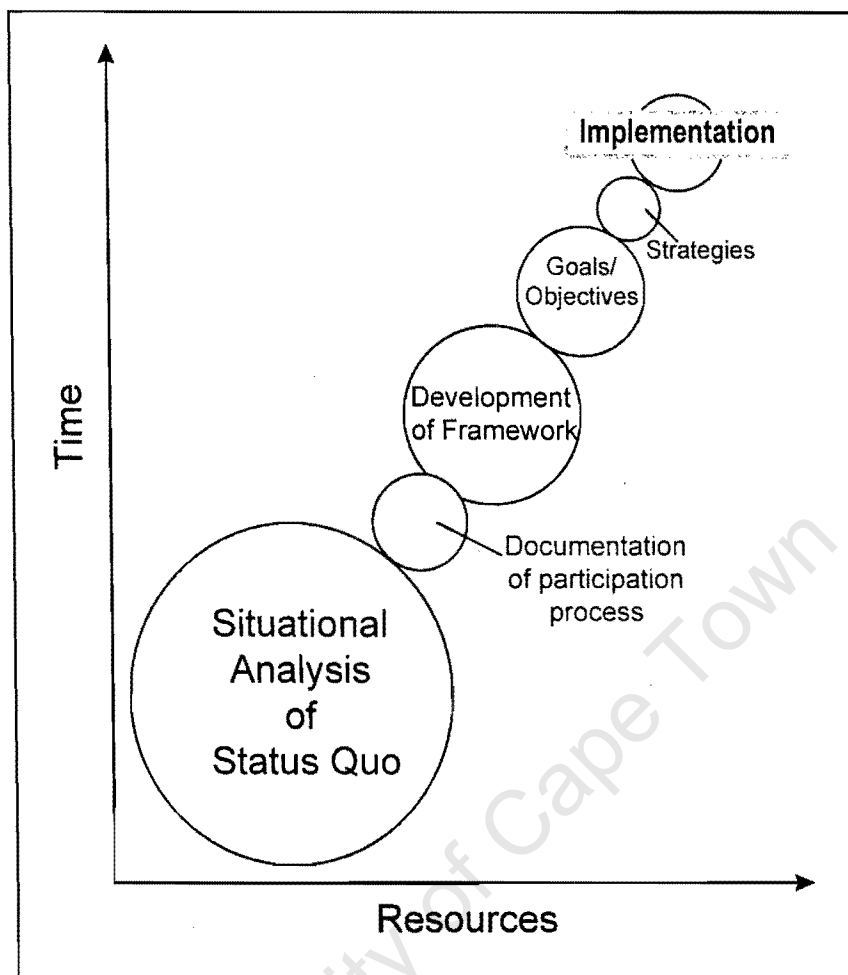
This phenomenon was identified as a major constraint in applying sustainability in the CMA. A municipal council employee in the field of environmental management concurred:

When it comes to writing strategies they take up too much staff time and in a department which is under staffed and has a huge workload the priority should lie with the operational and practical projects rather than sitting down to write a strategy about what is going to be done.

Figure 7.13, on the following page, is adapted from work carried out by Marrian (1998) and illustrates the proportionate amount of resources in terms of staff time and money normally invested in each activity along the local government policy formulation chain. It shows that over time each policy formulation activity receives less and less investment in terms of resources. Ultimately implementation is allocated an inadequate fraction of the total resources allocated to the policy process.

Sustainability should, therefore, focus on attaching equal amounts of resources to both the strategic aspect of policy formulation and the implementation of the policy. The principles of sustainability, outlined in Figure 2.4, in Chapter Two should directly inform each policy and its implementation. Were this to happen, projects on the ground could display how integration and sustainability work in practice. Additionally policies should be based on the realities of implementation and not based on ideals. Haughton (1999: 76) highlights that too often policies are framed 'which are too ambitious relative to the resources and instruments available to implement them. For this reason, it is useful to gain feedback from the level of implementation to the strategic planning level. This should be addressed in the framework for local government sustainability planning in Chapter Eight.

Figure 7.12 Diagram Illustrating the Proportion of Resources Over Time Invested in the Different Phases of Policy



(diagram adapted from Marrian, 1998)

Any aspirations to restructure local government in accordance with international recommendations for local sustainability planning¹³⁶ are unrealistic. Any such new approach must link with existing structures. As has been shown earlier in this chapter¹³⁷, local government is too fatigued by current restructuring to take on further change.

A new approach must, out of necessity, therefore, work to ensure that the other local government policies, programmes and planning initiatives are based on the general

¹³⁶ Particularly the Local Agenda 21 and Healthy Cities Programmes

¹³⁷ Refer to Section 6.7

guiding sustainability principles. These sustainability principles should be enshrined in all local government functions.

It was argued earlier in this chapter that any fundamental change in local government functioning must focus attention on changing attitudes, process and political will rather than solely amending structures. Strategic planning initiatives in the past have neglected this factor. Consequently, staff are not aware of their contribution to the success of the initiative, and councillors are less likely to support the new initiative. It was emphasised throughout the discussion that new initiatives need the support of key politicians. Similarly, for the approach to carry weight within the authority itself it must be endorsed and carried out at the highest strategic level. This is clearly needed in the CMA, attention must, therefore, be given to the training and awareness raising of staff and councillors within a new approach.

7.15 Practical Lessons Learned in Local Sustainability Planning in South Africa

In developing a framework for sustainability planning it is important to draw on the lessons learned in the practical application of local sustainability planning. Numerous councils across South Africa have attempted and/or succeeded in implementing Local Agenda 21 at the metropolitan and municipal level. Chapter Four¹³⁸ analysed the successes and failures of the South African participants in the ICLEI Model Cities Programme (MCP), namely Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Durban's MCP represents a relatively successful example of sustainability and Cape Town's MCP represents a failed example, important lessons can be drawn from each.

The Cape Town City Council (now City of Cape Town) piloted their LA 21 Programme using Hanover Park as their first project focus area. The Hanover Park LA 21 Project spanned 20 months, from April 1996 to December 1997¹³⁹. The most significant areas of progress were in the areas of community partnerships and participation, namely:

the establishment of a democratic and accountable decision making body which could influence the planning and delivery of services for the local

¹³⁸ Refer to Section 4.7.

¹³⁹ The programme was initiated in June 1994 however it was delayed due to in-fighting over which area should be used as the pilot study.

community and the creation of opportunities for people from previously marginalised communities to interact with the local authority and other stakeholders in a formal structure on a long-term basis

(City of Cape Town , 1997: 12)

This success can largely be attributed to community organisation and the fact that the council utilised existing RDP forums and other established community groups. Additionally the Hanover Park Project, albeit for a short time, displayed how integration of council functions and services can lead to improved efficiency. This project resulted in:

...the facilitation of improved service delivery system for the municipality, through the creation of an integrated local authority team that co-ordinates local area planning as it brings various departments and branches together to work towards a common goal

(City of Cape Town , 1997: 13)

The Hanover Park Project drew to a premature close in December 1997 (CTCC, 1997). The experiences gained from this project can provide valuable lessons for future local sustainability planning. The major factor which led to the projects' failure was identified by the lead coordinator as a lack of managerial and political commitment. Responsibility for the project was delegated to lower ranking officials in the Environmental Planning Unit of Cape Town City Council following the resignations and redeployments of the more senior officials responsible for the programme. These lower ranking officials had little political influence. In addition, the lead officials were expected to carry out the LA 21 initiative as an add-on to their existing full-time town planning workload. Other factors which the council recognised as contributing to the failure of the project included the lack of capacity building of all stakeholders, a lack of better integration of the MCP into all tiers of the municipality, and a poor understanding of the MCP across the council.

Unlike the Cape Town experience, Durban's LA 21 MCP has shown a steady growth and continues to be implemented today. The reason Durban succeeded where Cape Town failed, rests on three major factors. Firstly, the programme had a full time LA 21 coordinator. In addition, the coordinator was at a sufficiently high level and was particularly strong and motivated, and thirdly, the coordinator made it her priority to gain high level political support from the start and ensured that this commitment was sustained. Once she had ensured that key councillors understood and supported LA 21 her motions to council were more readily approved.

An additional factor contributing to the success of Durban's LA 21 project was a small stakeholder group who jointly took ownership of the programme and provided input over a sustained period of time. This group played an integral role in the planning and implementation of the project. This proved an important asset to the project as it made the stakeholders accountable for their decisions (Patel, 1996: 40).

7.16 Conclusions

There are a number of challenges to achieving sustainability in the CMA. There seems to be concern, generally, among the respondents interviewed that the Unicity dispensation in the CMA will centralise local government and remove it from the community level. The Unicity dispensation threatens to remove government from the local level and therefore contradicts one of the fundamental principles of sustainability, namely the principle of subsidiarity. Whilst there is potential for this to occur there is also a possibility that the Unicity ward structures will act as local level representatives of the metropolitan authority. The Unicity could also hold the advantage of improving integration with local government.

The main lesson which can be drawn from the local government restructuring process is that solely altering structures is not an effective method for change. In order for a change in working modes to be effectively achieved, equal attention must be paid to altering attitudes and process and to gaining political support. This is an important which should be acknowledged when developing a framework for sustainability planning.

In spite of a good holistic understanding of the term environment by local government officials and councillors in the CMA there is a general lack of knowledge of the concepts of sustainability and sustainability planning. This has major implications for sustainability planning in local government. Without a fundamental understanding of the concepts or the processes involved in sustainability planning local government cannot proceed to implement the proposed framework for implementation in the following chapter.

A key theme of sustainability planning is public participation. There are numerous key constraints which must be overcome to ensure democratic participation in local government decision-making. These constraints range from the lack of community capacity, a general lack of enthusiasm on behalf of the community and a lack of trust and

understanding of local government to a lack of financial and staff resources in local government. These issues must be addressed in the local sustainability planning framework.

One of the most promising local government tools for sustainability is the IDP process. Work is currently being carried out on a national scale to address the weaknesses inherent in IDP. This will mitigate the complexity of the process in particular. IDP in a less complex form could represent a useful mechanism to facilitate greater integration and priority setting in a local government sustainability planning framework.

Finally, the interviews revealed that there is limited financial and staff resources available to support a new approach. The framework developed in the following chapters should be shaped by this observation. The following chapter draws on these findings together with the theory from the previous chapters to develop a framework for local government sustainability planning in the CMA.

University of Cape Town



Developing a Framework for Sustainability Planning in Local Government in the Cape Metropolitan Area

... we in South Africa can learn from the world's great, failed experiment with centralisation and recover our vitality, creativity and humanity in community power.

(Kendall, 1991:26)

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a framework for sustainability planning in metropolitan local government, based on the information gathered during the course of this study and presented in the previous chapters. Any proposed framework must, out of necessity, be realistic and pragmatic. The framework must take into account the current pressures and existing realities in local government and respond proactively to these. The framework developed in this chapter is based on local government in the case study area, namely the Cape Metropolitan Area. Given that the CMA is currently in its final phase of restructuring, the framework is designed to inform the new Unicity dispensation. The framework is, however applicable in any of the metropolitan areas across South Africa.

In addition to presenting the framework, this chapter discusses those factors that need to be taken into consideration if local government sustainability planning is to be successfully implemented in South Africa.

8.2 Factors Informing the Development of a Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework in South Africa

The development of a Metropolitan Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework in South Africa is directly influenced by various factors including the socio-political status of

the country, the national legislative context for sustainability and the institutional context for local government sustainability planning. The implications of these factors for a local government sustainability planning framework in South Africa are examined in the sections that follow.

8.2.1 Strengthening Legislative Conditions for Sustainability in South Africa

The constitutional mandate in South Africa calls for local government to 'provide democratic and accountable government for all communities; to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; to promote social and economic development; to promote a safe and healthy environment and to encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in the matters of local government' (Government of RSA, Act No. 108 of 1996). The Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) charges local government to employ sustainability planning approaches. This requirement contains elements of the sustainability principles explored in Chapter Two¹⁴⁰. However the constitutional mandate for local government diverges from the principles of sustainability in that 'a safe and healthy environment' required by the Constitution does not necessary extend to the sustainability principle 'keeping within environmental limits'.

Currently national legislation is loosely based on the principles of sustainability, in many cases the aims and objectives support a transition to sustainability. However, as shown in Chapter Five, the legislation neglects certain important areas of sustainability planning. For instance, the issue of integration has been neglected in national legislation. Increasingly, however, the notion of cross-sector collaboration and the integration of different policy fields are receiving attention. Forward-thinking policy that promotes integration such as the 1998 Draft White Paper on Integrated Pollution and Waste Management for South Africa combines related issues from different sectors. Other national legislation should attempt to emulate this. Integration should become key to policy development and implementation. In addition, national legislation generally does not provide sufficient attention for implementation. This pattern, where implementation is neglected, is often repeated at the local level¹⁴¹. National legislation also needs to acknowledge that implementation is key to success. The White Paper on Conservation

¹⁴⁰ Refer to Figure 2.4 for a quick reference table of sustainability principles.

¹⁴¹ Refer to Section 7.14

and Sustainable Use of South Africa's Biological Diversity [Notice 1095 of 1997] is a key piece of legislation which successfully acknowledges this, it recognises constraints to implementation and recommends methods to overcome them.

National legislation could also benefit from another key theme of sustainability planning, namely priority setting. Priority setting involves determining the areas which need particular attention and within these areas distinguishing the most readily achievable targets for action. It is useful to draw from strategic planning initiatives such as LA 21 which recommends that the targets for action are accompanied by the parties responsible for the action and a date for completion. This in particular could aid implementation of policy.

The National Environmental Management Act [Act 107 of 1998] will have far-reaching implications for environmental management in the future. This Act 'provides an overall framework for general law reform in the environmental management field and provides an enabling context for environmental management to take place in a more pro-active, co-operative and conciliatory manner' (Sowman, 2000). It is encouraging that throughout national legislation there is a strong recognition of the need for community involvement in decision-making. This is particularly important in a country such as South Africa where democracy is still so young.

8.2.2 Institutionalising Sustainability Planning in Local Government

In order to successfully institutionalise sustainability in South Africa a transition to sustainability must have national support. Currently the responsibility for coordinating sustainability policy has been assigned to the DEAT. Section 4.7 highlighted that the DEAT is one of the weaker national government departments and therefore, is not in an ideal position to undertake the coordination of sustainability policy. Within the DEAT a small sub-directorate has been assigned Agenda 21 related tasks, thus serving to compound the lack of power being assigned to sustainability in national government. Sustainability should be approached at the highest strategic level in national government.

It is the premise of this thesis that local government is the most important facilitator of sustainability planning. Local government, as the level of governance closest to the

community, is a key player in bringing about a democratic process of public inclusion for decision-making in the short to long term future of their locality.

Nevertheless, the conditions necessary for effective sustainability planning must emanate from the national level. A national framework should be developed which makes sustainability planning a statutory requirement of local government. It is important that sustainability planning becomes a legal requirement of local government because, as one IDP Manager articulated: 'local government is statute driven, therefore, any new proposals or ideas must be backed up by legislation or a statute'. Ideally national government should have sustainability principles at the core of its workings and responsibility should lie at a sufficiently high level to ensure that sustainability legislation is backed by the power to drive it.

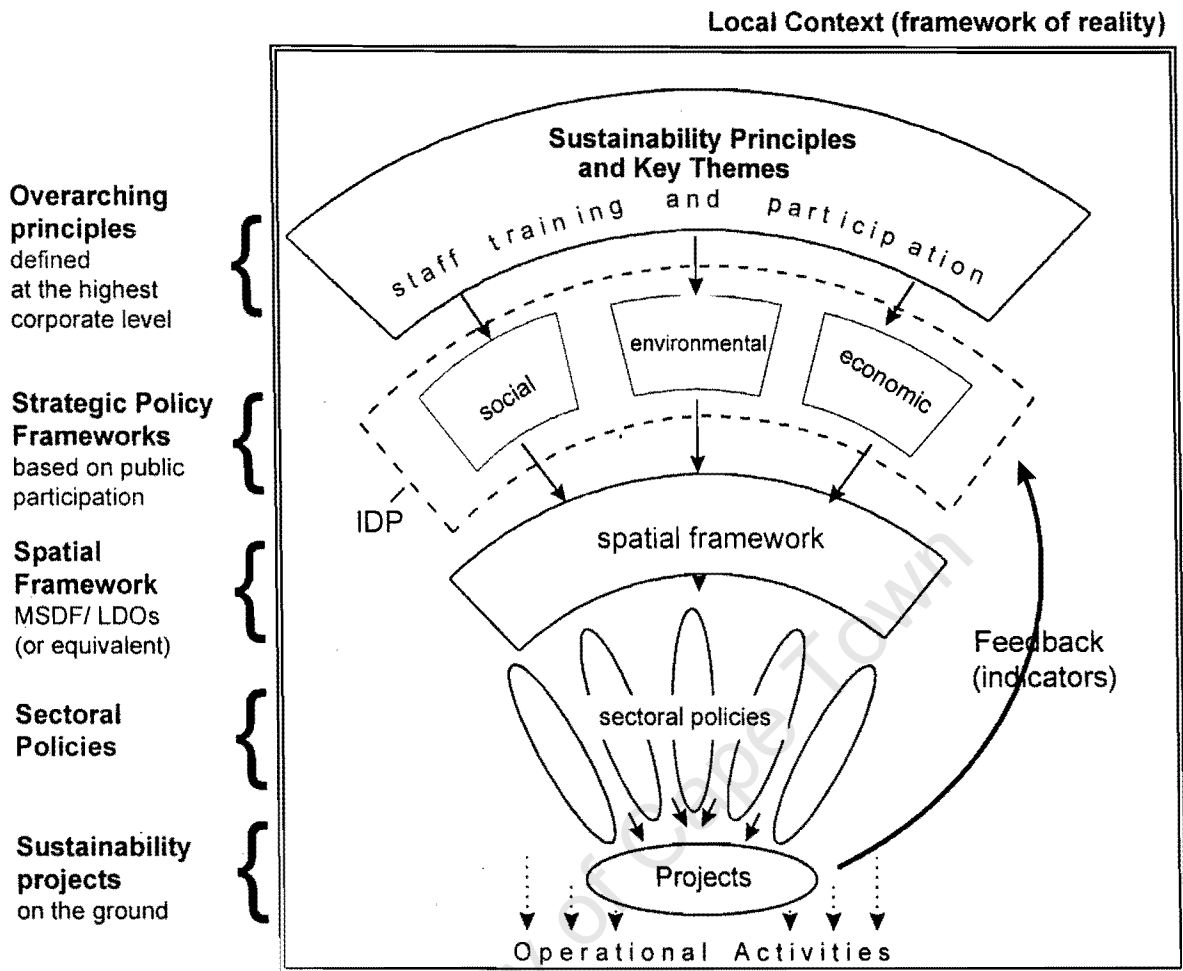
This lack of priority given to sustainability planning is also reflected at the local government level. Ideally, sustainability should be integrated at the highest strategic level in each local government authority, this would ensure that there is commitment in terms of resources and decision-making power, for sustainability to influence the workings of the whole authority. Sowman (2000:12) contends that in order to ensure sustainability is considered at the highest strategic level in local government 'the most effective strategy for inserting the environmental dimension into local government activities would be to incorporate environmental issues into the key economic development policies guiding local council activities'.

8.3 Understanding the Components of the Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework

Figure 8.1, below, depicts a Metropolitan Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework. The framework is informed by the socio-political, legislative and institutional contexts discussed previously in this study. Although relevant to the CMA it is also applicable to local government in South Africa as a whole.

The sections that follow will analyse the principles and workings of the Framework.

Figure 8.1 Metropolitan Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework



Index:

- MSDF = Metropolitan Spatial Development Framework (developed in the CMA)
- LDOs = Land Development Objectives (legislation applicable country-wide except in Kwa Zulu Natal and Western Cape)
- IDP = Integrated development planning

8.3.1 The Fundamental Sustainability Principles and the Key Operational Themes

Within the framework, the fundamental sustainability principles and the key sustainability operational themes are overarching. The framework illustrates that the sustainability

principles should be positioned at the highest corporate level¹⁴² and inform each of the strategic policy frameworks, and, in turn, the sectoral policies and projects on the ground. Where an activity is seen to contradict one of the principles or themes, action should be taken to mitigate or eliminate the contradiction so that, as far as is feasible the principle is not violated. By responding in this way the principles of sustainability become fundamental to each of the policies and functions throughout the local government authority.

The fundamental principles of sustainability are understandably intrinsic to any sustainability planning framework and for this reason, it is necessary to reiterate them here. They are based on the ecocentric approach that draws on the following: the principle of inter- and intra- generational equity, the principle of transfrontier responsibility, the principle of subsidiarity and the principle of environmental carrying capacity¹⁴³.

Placing these overarching sustainability principles at the highest strategic level holds advantages over other established strategic initiatives for sustainability planning¹⁴⁴ in that it does not entail a separate policy formulation process. Instead, it informs all policy and operational activities undertaken by the local government authority. The less favourable traditional generic approach to strategic sustainability planning¹⁴⁵ is complex and time consuming and would essentially involve replacing established policies with one overarching sustainability plan. This also holds a strong risk of becoming unfavourably marginalised, and seen as an add-on activity, within a local government authority. It was indicated in Section 6.7 that local government in South Africa and in particular the CMA, is not in a position to take on another strategic planning process¹⁴⁶. For this reason, the sustainability principle approach was deemed appropriate.

Sustainability planning, however, represents more than the principles of sustainability; it is an alternative approach to decision-making. This approach must be integrated into the functions of local government in the same way that it is proposed the fundamental principles of sustainability be integrated. It could be useful, therefore, to translate this

¹⁴² Within the CMC the highest strategic level is the Corporate Services Directorate.

¹⁴³ For a more detailed description of the principles refer to **Section 2.5.1**

¹⁴⁴ Such as the LA 21 Programme and Healthy Cities Project

¹⁴⁵ Refer to the details of local sustainability planning in **Section 4.2**

¹⁴⁶ Refer to **Section 7.13**

approach into a pragmatic set of themes which work alongside the fundamental sustainability principles. These themes should be derived from the fundamental sustainability principles and, in turn, should inform the operational aspects of local government. These key operational themes are summarised in Figure 8.2, below.

Figure 8.2 Summary of the Key Operational Themes of Sustainability Planning

Sustainable planning is an alternative approach to decision-making that involves the following key themes:

- the integration of social, economic and environmental issues so that each has equal priority when making decisions; this includes policy integration and sectoral integration
- democratic participation, based on awareness raising and capacity-building.
- staff and councillor training and awareness raising
- long-term focus
- priority setting
- equal focus on implementation
- monitoring and feedback mechanisms

8.3.2 Staff Awareness Raising, Training and Involvement

As emphasised in the previous chapter, particular attention must be given to the training of staff and councillors. The training and awareness raising of councillors will aid political support and buy-in to a sustainability planning approach. With knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues, councillors are more likely to support related proposals. Local government personnel in the CMA generally seem to receive very little training, especially around corporate issues. Local government officials interviewed¹⁴⁷ complained of minimal consultation, despite their wealth of experience in their specific departments. Similarly, the local government employees who attended the discussion on integration of strategic planning initiatives highlighted the fact that staff, generally, are rarely involved in corporate decision-making.

¹⁴⁷ Refer to Section 7.4

Training and awareness raising of staff could also help in tackling the outdated bureaucratic mindsets that still exist in some local government officials¹⁴⁸. Staff involvement should, therefore, be comprehensive and involve the following elements. Firstly, staff should receive training and awareness raising around the principles and key operational themes of sustainability, as well as the issues of policy and sectoral integration. Secondly, local government staff should be involved in corporate decision-making. They should be afforded the opportunity to participate in issues relating to, amongst other issues, corporate structure and areas for efficiency gain. This factor is particularly important in a future Unicity dispensation where the vast size of the proposed structure threatens to increase bureaucracy and to reduce accountability and efficiency. The corporate involvement of staff in decision-making along with training and awareness raising of staff and councillors must be amongst the tools that accompany the new approach detailed in the framework.

8.3.3 Integrated Development Planning as a Tool for Integration

This study has established that the integration of local government policies and sectors is one of the key themes of sustainability planning. Within the Metropolitan Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework, Integrated Development Planning (IDP) represents a useful tool to facilitate greater integration at the strategic level. Amongst its numerous advantages for facilitating integration is its statutory status, local authorities are required by law to carry out the IDP process. Additionally, IDP holds wider advantages for local sustainability planning, it makes provision for community participation in the identification of urban management and sustainability priorities for local government.

Whilst local government authorities are currently finding the concepts and procedures of IDP difficult to implement, new guidance, to be released shortly, promises to alleviate this difficulty. The new guidance, produced by Department of Constitutional Development will be centered on a simplified process.

Once the problems of over-complexity have been overcome with IDP, the process has the potential to aid sustainability planning through the aforementioned means.

¹⁴⁸ Refer to Chapter 6.

8.3.4 Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback is an essential element of any planning process and as such needs to be built into a sustainability planning framework.

Feedback mechanisms can, potentially, link any of the different elements of a planning process. For the proposed Metropolitan Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework, it seems advantageous to feedback outcomes from the operational and implementation stages to the strategic planning stages of the framework. In this way the project level can directly inform the strategic level and allow greater understanding of the local context. A feedback mechanism would be based on indicators. Indicators are a way of measuring change and performance. They provide a mechanism to illustrate and quantify movement towards or away from a benchmark facet of sustainability.

8.4 Factors Aiding the Success of the Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework

The success of the application of the framework for sustainability planning in metropolitan local government could be aided by a number of factors presented below. These could assist in overcoming the major constraints to sustainability planning which have been identified through this study.

8.4.1 Integration

Local government structures are traditionally designed around both operational and strategic sectors which function, to a greater or lesser extent, independently of one another¹⁴⁹. This contradicts the underlying axiom of sustainability, namely the integration of social, economic and environmental issues. Local government must, therefore, increase inter-departmental cooperation in order to engender more integrated strategic and operational functioning. A useful method to tackle local governments' current silo structures could be the creation of integrating themes which pull issues together. These themes could help to cross-cut sectors and tackle the sectoral mindset. An example might be the planning and promotion of sustainable forms of transport, this would require input

¹⁴⁹ Refer to Section 6.7

from the spatial planning department, the transport department, the health promotion sectors, and the environmental management department amongst others.

8.4.2 Priority Setting and Long-Term Focus

Policies within the framework should be based on priority setting, target setting and the identification of accountable parties. Priority setting ensures actions are graded according to their relative merits. Target setting provides specified dates to ensure the action is carried out, and the identification of responsible parties holds them accountable for carrying out the action. In addition, the policies should be based on a long-term vision for sustainability in the area. This long-term focus is one of the fundamental principles of sustainability, namely intra-generational equity where the resources base is maintained for future generations. Ensuring a long-term focus in policy development ensures that decisions are not made which have negative implications for sustainability in the long term.

8.4.3 Implementation

Chapter Seven¹⁵⁰ highlighted the importance of placing greater emphasis on the implementation of policy. In the past, local government policy formulation has received proportionately more resources in terms of staff and money. In turn, implementation has received an unequal share of resources, despite this being the most crucial aspect of any policy process. A greater focus on the implementation of projects on the ground will ensure that there is evidence that sustainability can be successfully translated into practical action. This, in turn, will help to gain political buy-in and community cooperation. By drawing on sustainability principles from the start, it follows that policies - and the projects they influence - are more likely to adhere to the tenets of sustainability.

8.4.4 Overcoming the Constraints Associated with Capacity- Building and Participation

Inter-generational equity, widespread illiteracy, a disempowered majority, and the distrust of authority structures is pervasive throughout different sectors of South African society, the CMA is no exception. Many of these legacies can be addressed through capacity-building. Capacity-building and awareness raising are, however, time-consuming and

¹⁵⁰ Refer to Section 7.14

costly tasks. This expenditure is compounded by the ongoing events which follow these tasks, such as data synthesis and analysis, and feedback for the review and monitoring of the policy. The negative aspects of these realities could be overcome through sharing and integration within local government. A centralised capacity-building and public participation forum or structure would provide the means to ensure that the participation required for sectoral policy formulation could be more efficient and cost-effective. Participation events could meet the needs of a number of different local government consultative processes, and avoid the need for duplication of participatory events. Public participation processes should be carried out in conjunction with local NGOs and CBOs with whom a formal networking relationship should be established. The Unicity structure may be more favourably placed to coordinate such public participation processes than the smaller, under-resourced MLCs in the current dispensation.

Another method of overcoming the constraints imposed by the process of public participation was suggested in Section 4.3. Here it was recommended that local government could reconcile 'bottom-up', democratic participatory methods with traditional technical, official-led, 'top-down' techniques in order to save on time and funds.

Effective capacity-building and public participation with trained facilitators can be an extremely rewarding experience for all involved. It can serve to improve the community's perception of local government¹⁵¹ as well as informing them of the aims of sustainability and their role in achieving sustainability.

¹⁵¹ Currently public participation in the CMA is perceived by local government officials and councillors as fairly poor. Refer to Section 7.9.



Conclusions and Recommendations

The concept of sustainability has emerged from the growing necessity for a change to society's current path towards diminished quality of life for all. The fact that sustainability is a concept developed by humans dictates that it has this anthropocentric focus. Ideally, sustainability should be viewed from an ecocentric perspective¹⁵² based on the belief that nature and ecology are the central guiding forces setting the parameters for social and economic behaviour. Yet it is the ability of the concept of sustainability to be used as a tool to bridge the vast differences between the anthropocentric, economic and ecocentric perspectives that renders it useful. The goal is revolutionary, however the steps which must be taken in order to reach this goal are reformatory (Naess 1989: 156). Local sustainability planning represents a 'reformatory step' towards sustainability.

Chapter Two concluded that true sustainability is based on a number of principles which represent the essence of the concept. These principles¹⁵³ have been well established during the course of this study and are integral to understanding the nature and complexity of sustainability.

This study has shown that there is an international move towards local level participatory sustainability planning. Local government is being recognised as the ideal institutional structure to carry out sustainability planning¹⁵⁴. Essentially, local government sustainability

¹⁵² Within the ecocentric system, humans are an intrinsic part of nature in contrast to the anthropocentric ideology which places nature under human control. Refer to Section 2.6

¹⁵³ Refer to Figures 2.4 and 8.2.

¹⁵⁴ Illustrated by the case study in Cajamarca, Peru where decentralisation led to effective democratic sustainability planning. Refer to Section 4.4.

planning entails local government working in partnership with their communities to prioritise action towards sustainability. Chapter Four argued that sustainability planning broadly requires the decentralisation of political, legal, social and economic institutions to the local level; effective public participation and a democratic approach to decision-making, and; effective institutionalisation of local sustainability planning.

A framework for implementing sustainability planning must, out of necessity, be sensitive to the socio-economic context of the area. Chapter Five presented the key socio-political challenges in South Africa. It highlighted that a local government sustainability planning framework should respond to, amongst others, the absence of societal cohesion, the presence of cultural and language barriers, the dislocation of communities, and the environmental damage caused by poor planning. It concluded that public participation and policy formulation should be designed and carried out in response to these socio-political factors.

Local government in South Africa is undergoing transformation as part of the country's transition to democracy. Chapter Six presented national government's vision for the transformation of local government which is called 'Developmental Local Government', discussed in Chapter Six. Essentially Developmental Local Government is comprised of the following characteristics: accountable, democratic, and integrated, it also requires local government to adopt a more sustainable approach to development planning¹⁵⁵. Whilst South African legislation is largely embracing the concept of sustainability there are no specific mechanisms in place to operationalise sustainability planning. Local sustainability planning offers a strategic management tool which can aid local government in achieving its' developmental goals.

Chapter Seven outlined the challenges which exist within government which would need to be addressed in a sustainability planning framework, through an analysis of local government in the CMA.

In the previous chapter a Metropolitan Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework developed during the course of this study was presented, see Figure 8.1.

¹⁵⁵ Refer to Constitution of RSA (Act 108 of 1996) discussed in Section 5.7 and the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 discussed in Section 6.4.

Whilst this framework has been designed specifically for the CMA, it is applicable to all metropolitan areas in South Africa. Ideally, sustainability planning is carried out at the level of government closest to the people. It is possible that the new Unicity dispensation¹⁵⁶ in the CMA will contain provision to maintain this community link by delegating powers to the ward level.

The Metropolitan Local Government Sustainability Planning Framework requires action in a number of areas. It draws on overarching sustainability principles and key operational sustainability themes¹⁵⁷. These principles and themes inform strategic planning and policy development whether economic, social, environmental or spatial, and will trickle down to sectoral policies and projects. The framework includes certain factors which aid its success, these include integration, priority setting and long-term focus, emphasis on implementation and a more efficient approach to capacity-building and awareness raising.

There are several key recommendations that arise from this research. Firstly, it is recommended that at a national level, Government places sustainability at the highest strategic level.

Secondly, it is recommended that sustainability planning be strengthened at the national level. This could take the form of encouraging cooperation between spheres of government or through statutory means. If a statutory response is deemed an appropriate route, regulations could be enacted under NEMA, for example.

Finally, this study recommends that metropolitan local government adopts the proposed sustainability planning framework. Metropolitan government throughout South Africa is at a unique stage in its development. It is now, therefore, an ideal time to develop institutional arrangements for local sustainability planning.

Further studies could focus on the application of the proposed framework using specific urban management systems as a conduit for the research. For example the use of the

¹⁵⁶ The Unicity dispensation will come in to effect in the CMA following the local government elections in November 2000.

¹⁵⁷ Refer to Figures 2.4 and 8.2.

sustainability planning framework in catchment management and the associated implications for institutional structures.

Whilst the framework and prerequisite factors offer a mechanism for achieving a transition to sustainability from the local government level, a number of unquantifiable variables remain. These will impact on how effectively the recommendations of this thesis are implemented.

Will national government recognise the importance of a transition to sustainability and allocate sufficient power to this responsibility? Will national government give local government sustainability planning the recognition it clearly deserves? Can the proposed Unicity structure maintain a local focus? Can the traditional bureaucratic CMC structure accommodate the sustainability planning framework? The answers to these questions will only become apparent over the coming months.

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Appendix A1



Group A and B Interview Framework

(Cape Metropolitan Council Officials and Metropolitan Local Council
Officials)

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Appendix A1: Group A and B Interview Framework

(Cape Metropolitan Council Officials and Metropolitan Local Council Officials)

I am a masters student at the Environmental Evaluation Unit of the University of Cape Town. I am carrying out a number of interviews with key players within the areas of environmental management, sustainability and integrated development planning within local government in the Cape Metropolitan Area (CMA). The aim of these interviews is to gain an insight into the status and functioning of local government, and the views and perceptions of local government officials about various sustainability issues. This information will contribute to assessing the context in which a participatory sustainability planning process could operate within local government in the CMA. Your cooperation is appreciated and your answers will be treated in the strictest confidence

1. Position and grade.
2. How long have you worked in your current position?
3. Could you provide me with a brief explanation of your departments role in the authority and your role in the department/section?
- **Local government - current sectoral/ departmental integration,**
4. Does your department have any interaction with any other departments in the municipality?
How far does this interaction extend:
 - Sharing of ideas at inter-departmental meetings
 - Sharing of information to aid efficiency of service functions
 - Close coordination of activities to aid efficiency service functions
 - Others.....
5. Is there an inter-departmental group which focuses on sustainability issues?
6. Does your Municipality have any interaction with any of the other municipalities within the CMA?
 - any interaction with the CMC?
7. Do you think closer integration would be beneficial to the workings of your department/section?
 - if so, in your opinion how could it be established?
- **Participatory processes, awareness-raising and education**
8. Is your department/section involved in any public consultation processes?
If yes / no, explain:
9. How do you perceive the general public within your municipality?
10. Does your department/section work with or have dealings with any specific NGOs

or community organisations that you are aware of, could you name them?

11. Is your department/section involved in any awareness-raising or educational activities?

If yes / no, explain:

• ***The community and participation/ perception of local government .***

12. What do you perceive the constraints to be in carrying out public participation processes in the CMA?

13. How do you think the general public perceives local government

• ***Sustainability in the Cape Metropolitan Area;***

14. What is your definition of the term 'environment'?

15. What is your understanding of the term 'sustainability' (sustainable development)?

16. What sustainability issues do you think are most pressing within the CMA?
could you prioritise them:

17. What do you understand to be the greatest barriers against the implementation of sustainability planning in the Cape Metropolitan Area?

- What changes would be most helpful in the development of local sustainability planning ?

18. Is your authority / department coordinating any sustainability initiatives currently?

19. Has your authority produced a local environment policy or a state of the environment report, if not are there any plans to do so in the future?

• ***Local Agenda 21 and IDP;***

20. Are you familiar with Local Agenda 21, the local sustainability initiative which originated from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992?

21. What do you understand Local Agenda 21 to be?

22. Are you familiar with the IDP process, the new statutory process

- What is the aim of the IDP process,?

- How much of this years budget was allocated to the IDP process?

23. To what extent can you see the IDP affecting the content or method of your work?

24. Have you received any publications that you are aware of from central government or other organisations providing guidance on environment management or environmental sustainability processes?

• **For IDP managers :**

22. Have you received any guidance on carrying out the IDP process , any training?
23. Has the first year proved successful or have you encountered problems?
If yes, could you detail specific problems
How can these be overcome in your opinion?
24. Do you see the IDPs being of benefit to your authority as it is proclaimed by national government ?
25. What public participation took place as part of your local authority's IDP?

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Appendix A2

Group C Interview Framework

(Councillors)

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Appendix A2: Group C Interview Framework

(Councillors)

A Personal details

1. What political party do you represent?
2. What is your constituency?
3. What committees do you sit on?
4. How long have you been a councillor?
1. Have you set yourself any specific goals for your term as a councillor?
- how far have you progressed in achieving these goals?

B Status/ functioning of local government

6. It is likely that local government in the CMA will restructure again and follow a Megacity model. Do you think this model will result in more effective local
7. What has been your experience of the impacts of restructuring to date? What impact do you think further restructuring will have on the performance and service delivery of local government?

C Public perception, participation processes, awareness-raising and education

8. What in your view constitutes effective public participation in decision making?
9. Is this realistic, if not how can public participation be realistically carried out in your view?
10. How do you think the general public perceives local government generally?
11. Do you have dealings with any specific NGOs or CBOs in your locality?
If so, could you please name them?
12. How aware are the general public within your constituency? Do you see them as in touch with and enthusiastic about pertinent issues in their locality?
- are you doing anything to raise awareness

D Sustainability in the Cape Metropolitan Area;

13. What in your view constitutes the 'environment'?
14. What environmental problems do you think are currently most pressing within the CMA? could you prioritise them:
15. What in your view are the primary causes of environmental degradation and what can be done to address them?

16. What is your understanding of the term 'sustainability'?
17. Are you engaged in any projects or initiatives aimed at achieving sustainability currently?
18. What sustainability issues do you think are most pressing within the CMA?
could you prioritise them:
19. What do you understand to be the problems in implementing sustainability planning in the Cape Metropolitan Area?

E Local Agenda 21 and IDP;

20. Are you familiar with Local Agenda 21, the local sustainability initiative which originated from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992?
If so, what do you understand Local Agenda 21 to be?
21. What do you consider to be the most important elements/ principles of LA 21
22. Are you familiar with the IDP process, the new statutory planning process which aims to prioritise and strategically focus a municipality's activities and resources?
23. Have you been involved in any way in your municipality's IDP process?
Please elaborate:
24. To what extent can you see the IDP affecting the way in which your council carries out its' work?

Finally

25. How in your view has local government changed in the past 5-10 years
26. What in your view will be the key issues at the next election?

Appendix A3



Group D and E Interview Framework

(Non-Governmental Organisation and Community Based Organisation workers plus other relevant stakeholders)

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Appendix A3: Group D and E Interview Framework

(Non-Governmental Organisation and Community Based Organisation workers plus other relevant stakeholders)

1. Could you provide me with a brief background to your organisation (you as an individual).
2. What is your role in the organisation?
3. What is your organisations role in the CMA?
- ***Participatory processes, awareness-raising and education***
4. Is your organisation involved in any public consultation processes?
If yes, explain:
5. Does your organisation work with or have dealings with local government?
6. Is your organisation involved in any awareness-raising or educational activities?
If yes, explain:
- ***The community and participation/ perception of local government .***
7. What do you perceive the constraints to be in carrying out public participation processes in the CMA?
8. How do you think the general public perceives local government?
- ***Sustainability in the Cape Metropolitan Area;***
9. What is your definition of the term 'environment'?
10. What is your understanding of the term 'sustainability' (sustainable development)?
11. What sustainability issues do you think are more pressing within the CMA?
12. How do you think sustainability could most effectively be pursued in the Cape Metropolitan Area ?
13. What do you understand to be the greatest barriers against the implementation of sustainability planning in the Cape Metropolitan Area?
- ***Local Agenda 21 and IDP;***
16. Are you familiar with Local Agenda 21, the local sustainability initiative which originated from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992?
17. What do you understand Local Agenda 21 to be?

18. Are you familiar with the IDP process, the new statutory process
- What is the aim of the IDP process?
19. To what extent can you see the IDP affecting the content or method of your work?
20. Have you received any publications that you are aware of from central government or other organisations providing guidance on environment management or environmental sustainability processes?

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Appendix B1

Formal Interview Respondents

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Appendix B1: Formal Interview Respondents

Group A, Cape Metropolitan Council Officials

1. Keith Wiseman Head of Policy and Research, Environmental Management Department , CMC
2. Edgar Carolisen, Healthy Cities Coordinator, CMC
3. Ron Herd, Head of Strategic Support, CMC

Group B, Metropolitan Local Council Officials

4. Mike Callahan, Environmental Management Department , South Peninsula Municipality
5. Andre Olivier, Strategic Manager, IDP, South Peninsula Municipality
6. Shahid Solomon, Director of Planning and Environment, City of Tygerberg
7. Osman Asmal Environmental Manager, City of Tygerberg
8. Martin Van Der Merwe IDP Manager, City of Tygerberg

Group C, Councillors

9. Brian Watkyns Chair of Urbanisation and Planning Committee, CMC
10. Cllr Uys Ex- Chair of EXCO, CMC
11. Cllr Holderness Deputy Chair of the Urban and Environmental Planning Committee and the EXCO, South Peninsula Municipality

Group D, Non-Governmental Organisation, Community Based Organisation workers and other relevant stakeholders

12. Peter Willis Director of The Natural Step, South Africa
13. Sally Timmel Fair Share, Economic Devt, Government Policy NGO
14. James Nowicki Fairest Cape Association, Waste Management NGO
15. Ardiel Sueker Environmental Justice Networking Forum
16. Diane Salters Ex-councillor for South Peninsula currently with experience in carrying out IDP consultation workshops



Appendix B2

**Contributors to the Discussion on the Integration of Strategic
Planning Initiatives**

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Appendix B2

Contributors to the Discussion on the Integration of Strategic Planning Initiatives

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Darryll Kilian | - Consultant on the CMC Integrated Environmental Management Policy Project |
| Marlene Laros | - Consultant on the Durban Metropolitan Environmental Policy Initiative |
| Patrick Kulati | - Coordinator for the National LA 21 Awareness Raising Programme |
| Sue Parnell | - Urban Geographer with experience in the field of local government and IDP |
| Merle Sowman | - Director of the National LA 21 Awareness Raising and Capacity Building Programme |
| Osman Asmal | - Environmental Manager, City of Tygerberg |
| Edgar Carolissen | - Healthy Cities Coordinator, CMC |
| Rynhardt Avenant | - Environmental Health / Healthy Cities Officer, City of Tygerberg |
| Aah Sekhesa | - Capacity-building and Training Coordinator, National LA 21 Programme |
| Sophie Oldfield | - Urban Geographer with experience in the field of local government and IDP |



Appendix C

CMA Local Government Powers and Duties Agreement

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Appendix C

CMA Local Government Powers and Duties Agreement

In terms of the Provincial Proclamation Gazette No. 5152 dated 30 June 1997, the CMC is responsible for:

- Bulk supply of water
- Storm water drainage
- Bulk waste water management
- Roads (adequate planning, policy co-ordination and financial provision for roads of metropolitan significance)
- Transport planning, passenger transport services and other transport facilities (the CMC may provide airports other than provincial, national and international airports)
- Traffic matters
- Municipal health services (including integrated air and water pollution control)
- Spatial planning and environmental management (involving the development, monitoring and review of strategies to manage and co-ordinate use of environmental resources at the metropolitan wide scale)
- Libraries and museums
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Abattoir and markets
- Recreation facilities, amenities and sports promotion
- Civil protection and fire brigade services
- Promotion of economic development at the metropolitan wide scale*

In the CMA each Municipal local council has a complete infrastructure and administration to supply basic municipal services to its area (PAWC Gazette No. 5152, 1997), namely:

- Water reticulation
- Stormwater drainage
- Waste water management
- Solid waste management
- Electricity supply and distribution
- Transportation planning
- Other transport facilities (such as ferries, jetties, harbours etc.)
- Planning, provision and maintenance of roads
- Passenger transport services and traffic matters
- Spatial planning and environmental management
- Municipal health services
- Libraries
- Museums
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Abattoir and markets
- Recreation facilities, amenities and sport promotion
- Civil protection
- Fire brigade services
- Promotion of tourism
- Promotion of economic development*

*These functions are not listed as local government functions in terms of the Local Government Transition Act (209 of 1993).