"THINKING LIKE A PLACE – LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCES WITH COMMUNITY PLANNING"

MOIRA LAWLER

RESEARCH ESSAY SUBMITTED IN COMPLETION OF A MASTERS IN PUBLIC POLICY
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

FEBRUARY 2008

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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at how local government in New Zealand is working to improve the participation of residents in local decision-making. Since the Local Government Act 2002, Councils have had new requirements both for long term planning, and public consultation on that planning. Some Councils are using ‘community planning’ to work with suburbs or villages on what people in that area want for their future.

The research looked at three communities where community planning had been used and talked to Council and community members about their experiences. Using a case study approach, the information gathered was used to build a picture of possible sources of success or failure in using community planning.

The case studies demonstrated that community planning can be an effective method of gaining input from residents who do not normally get involved in Council matters, and improves relationships between Council and communities.

There are limits, however, to how effectively community planning can increase resident participation, unless Councils explicitly decide to share decision-making and resource communities to act on their own behalf.

Understanding the context in which community planning occurs is a key to its success for all participants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research would not have been possible without the case study participants who contributed their experience, opinions, and insights. The participants and their organisations showed a generosity and commitment to collaborative learning that is much appreciated.

Thanks also to my supervisor, Cath Wallace, who guided me through the research process.

Finally, thanks are due to my family, in particular to my children, who lost many weekends and holidays to my study programme.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Local Government Act 2002 (LGA 2002) was heralded by the Hon Sandra Lee, then Minister of Local Government, as:

"A *reaffirmation of both the place that local government has within our democracy, and of the rights of local people in their communities to exercise controls over their aspirations, their decisions, in the democracy that affects them."*
(Hon Sandra Lee, 2001)

The Local Government Act 2002 requires Councils in New Zealand to prepare 10 year plans and to take account of the views of their diverse communities in the preparation of these plans.

Since the introduction of the Act, increasing numbers of Councils are using community or 'place-based' planning to improve the sense of connection between a city wide, long term plan and local residents. Across New Zealand, this varies from locality planning within city suburbs, to producing local plans for rural towns. There is, as yet, no agreed 'best practice' model for community planning in New Zealand, and the processes used vary widely and produce different results for the communities and Councils involved.

This paper explores the notion of community, and why community planning is increasing in popularity. The context in which the Local Government Act 2002 was introduced and the public policy trends it supports will be examined. Finally, democratic theory and the role of public participation in local government will be explored.

The paper then examines examples of community planning undertaken by three Councils in New Zealand. The objective is to identify emerging issues and possible success factors that could inform the future use of community planning in local government. In particular, the research will look at how community planning is working, how it impacts on relationships between Councils and residents, and how it influences priority setting in Council planning.

The research is qualitative, using comparative case study methodology to explore local government practice under a new piece of legislation. The research design uses a form of grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) to uncover emerging issues for communities and Councils using community planning. The programme theory underpinning community planning is compared against the case studies to develop ideas to inform practice and hypotheses for further research (Pawson, 2006).

It is hoped that this research paper will inform Councils as they review their community engagement processes. Ultimately, the research has the potential to improve the capacity of Councils and communities to work together under the Local Government Act 2002 to achieve their vision for the future.

CHAPTER 2 DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC POLICY

What is Democracy?

Democracy means 'rule by the people' (Forgie, Cheyne, McDermott, 1999;:2). Since the time of the early Greeks and Romans, however, the best way to secure public involvement has been a matter of debate. Similarly the notion of citizenship has evolved over time and remains contested. As Forgie, Cheyne and Mc Dermott comment:

"*The question of who should be entitled to make decisions underlies the contested nature of democracy*".
(Forgie, Cheyne, McDermott, 1999: 2).

There are different forms of democracy each with a different role for citizens. The basic role of the citizen in a representative democracy is to vote for representatives, who will deliberate and make decisions on behalf of the public. Increasingly, though, citizens are being called upon and are requesting to do more – to be involved in decision-making processes in a form of participatory democracy. Participatory democracy can be as basic as information exchange or as inclusive as citizens sharing in decision-making power. Forgie, Cheyne and Mc Dermott (1999) refer to a new interest in another model, that of deliberative democracy which:

"*seeks to emphasise the importance of dialogue and debate within the community in decision-making*"

The authors suggest that public participation and deliberation have the potential to strengthen participatory democracy.

It is crucial for the efficacy of our democracy that people have, and take, the opportunity to participate in decision making. Citizen involvement has a number of benefits:

- It legitimizes decision-making;
- It provides a mandate for elected representatives;

- It provides a broad base of opinion to inform decision-makers.

(Drage, 2002)

"*As well, in liberal democracies it is regarded as a basic human right that citizens are able to participate in decisions that affect them. Sooner or later the most passive amongst us may find that they have become involved in an issue, a quality of life matter that pushes us into action. When this happens it is important that processes are there to ensure we can have a say*."

(Drage, 2002:9)

There are costs, however, associated with democracy. Taxation is required not only to run the democratic system itself, but to provide the services a democratic government resolves to fund. In New Zealand, there are transaction costs associated with maintaining a complex national, regional and local system of government with a mix of First Past the Post, Mixed Member Proportional and Single Transferable Vote election systems. There have been debates raised particularly by Maori on whether an English parliamentary system is an appropriate model for a South Pacific country (James 2000). More recently, falling voting numbers have raised questions about the effectiveness of a representative democracy that many citizens choose not to participate in.

The Case for Government

Both central and local government have the coercive power of taxation. In the face of this coercion, citizens are entitled to debate the most appropriate role of government.

Classical economic theory suggests there are two broad reasons for a government to intervene in a society that could otherwise be ordered through the forces of the market place: to promote efficiency and to promote equity (Mankiw, 1998).

"*Public funding and delivery of local government services are often justified on the grounds that benefits extend beyond direct users of the service to others in the community. Economists describe these benefits as externalities (or alternatively third*

party community benefits) and suggest that externalities result in 'market failure' and a possible rationale for government intervention" (Scott, 1999:146).

Economic theory explains the role of local government in terms of the provision of local public goods: that is, public goods which confer benefits to defined geographic areas. Public goods are defined as:

"*goods or services that are non-rival, and non-exclusive*" (Reid, 1999:171)

Under this model, individuals choose to live in communities that provide the mix of goods and services that meet their preferences. Efficient resource allocation is enhanced through a better understanding of local preferences, as demonstrated by people 'voting with their feet' (Reid, 1999). The theory suggests that people have choices about where they live and move to local government areas where their preferences for goods and services provided by local government are met.

Where economic theory provides a rationale based on economic costs and benefits, democratic theory offers different criteria for local government, based on accountability, participation, and community of interest.

"*Two concepts are particularly important: decentralisation and devolution. Both are promoted as a means of limiting the concentration of power in central government, increasing citizen participation (regarded as desirable in its own right) and as a mechanism for expressing minority views and opinions*."
(Reid, 1999:173)

Representative democracy can itself, in some circumstances be seen as a source of government failure. Voting is an imperfect mechanism for aggregating individual preferences rather than a complete picture of what a diverse community really wants. Representative democracy can be particularly poor at enabling minority views to be heard. This can compromise both efficiency and equity.

Increasing citizen participation in government is one way of increasing understanding of citizen preferences. This in turn can improve both the equity and efficiency of government actions.

What is Public Participation?

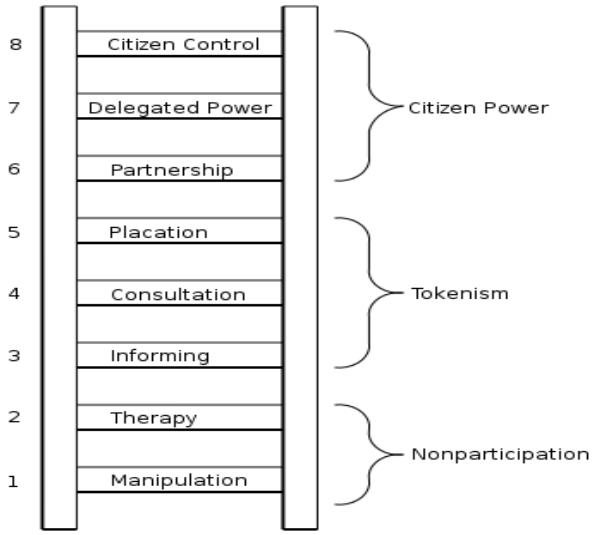
Public participation: "*refers to a group of methods and procedures designed to consult, involve, inform and empower lay citizens and interested groups.*"
(Smith, 1999:66)

There is a continuum of levels of participation. At the more active end, public participation can be defined as:

"The sharing of power, the ability to negotiate, compromise, and be directly involved in the decisions made."
(Forgie, Cheyne and Mc Dermott, 1999:43)

In 1969, Sherry Arnstein devised what she called a "ladder of participation" to describe different levels of participation from the least to the most empowering.

Figure 1. Eight rungs on the ladder of citizen participation



Source: Arnstein (1969)

The first two steps include such methods as communication strategies and public education. The middle layers refer to methods where voices are heard but there is no guarantee that they will influence decisions. The top three levels involve citizen engagement, negotiating and decision making.

Arnstein's work forms the basis of much subsequent work in participation models. There are real challenges in moving up the scale towards citizen power.

"*While the conceptual framework advanced by Arnstein has withstood the test of time, experience with participation over the last 20 years has shown that the rungs are not equidistant, and that it is far easier to move up the lower rungs than the higher ones*."
(Forgie, Cheyne and Mc Dermott, 1999:43)

How local government is faring with these challenges will be explored further in this paper.

How Do We Evaluate Different Models of Public Participation?

While there is a myriad of literature on the practice of public participation, there is less written on frameworks for evaluation of participation methods. Rowe and Frewer (2000), in their work on public participation in technology and science, point to a lack of criteria to determine effectiveness. Indeed, they suggest there is a lack of clarity on what counts as effective – is increased public involvement enough in itself, or should the quality of decision-making improve? (Rowe and Frewer 2000). They provide a tentative evaluation framework which uses two categories of criteria – acceptance and process criteria. Acceptance criteria relate to the effective construction and implementation of a procedure – is the public likely to accept the results as democratic? Process criteria relate to the potential public perception of a procedure – is the ultimate decision practical or effective?

Acceptance criteria include:

- Representativeness of the public participants;
- Independence of the participation process;
- Early involvement of the public in framing the issue;
- Influence of the output on policy;
- Transparency of the processes to the public.

Process criteria include:

- Resource accessibility to enable public to participate;
- Task definition around the nature and scope of the process;
- Structured decision making so that the milestones for decision-making are clear;
- Cost effectiveness so that the scale of the process matches the scale of the issue.

Rowe and Frewer evaluate various participation models used in their field against their criteria. Perhaps not surprisingly, more passive methods such as surveys and public hearings score low against their criteria, and more active methods such as citizens' juries and citizens' advisory committees score higher (Rowe and Frewer 2000).

Smith suggests evaluating public participation within three phases – the *context* within which the participation occurs, the *process* by which it is engendered and the *outcome* of that involvement (Smith, 1993:68).

Developing a 'results chain' based on context, mechanism, and outcome also forms the basis of Pawson's approach to programme evaluation and has parallels with Intervention Logic, a methodology used to evaluate public policy programmes.

It would be a mistake, however, to think of public participation solely in terms of tools and techniques. Public participation is about people and therefore about relationships.

King, Feltey and Susel point out that public participation processes have four aspects – the issue, the administrative system or process, the administrator, and the citizen.

They define authentic participation as:

"*Deep and continuous involvement in administrative processes with the potential for all involved to have an effect on the situation."*
(King, Feltey and Susel, 1998:4)

Their recommendation for authentic participation is to work on all aspects of the process by empowering and educating community members, re-educating administrators, and developing enabling administrative structures and processes (King, Feltey and Susel, 1998).

This recipe for success is clearly an evolving process, involving much more than process design, and not a 'quick fix'. Fundamentally, the search for authentic participation assumes a willingness to build strong citizen participation in decision-making, rather than assuming that decision making is the domain of the elected representative.

Local government may have the potential to increase the relevance of government in the lives of ordinary people. Local government is in a unique position to encourage public participation in decisions that affect the lives of ordinary citizens and the communities they live in. The English philosopher, John Stuart Mill, an early advocate of local government institutions, is quoted by Drage as saying that they:

"*Widen the opportunity to participate and provide the capacity to educate the citizen in the practice of politics and government*."
(Drage, 2002:66)

The LGA 2002 provides opportunities for Councils and their communities to explore ways to move from representative democracy to a more participatory approach.

Public Management Theory - How Public Managers Help or Hinder

As active citizens are important to democracy, so are public managers. The way in which the public sector operates is a key determinant of the health of a democratic system.

The move towards 'economic rationalism' in western democracies such as New Zealand in the 1980s and 90s bred a new culture of public management. A reduction in the role of both central and local government was favoured, and a drive for ever-increasing efficiencies from the public sector. In local government, this led to programmes of privatisation and contracting out of local government services, accompanied by down-sizing, out-sourcing and flexible employment practices. Driven by public choice theory, 'new public management' as it became known, called for greater transparency and consumer choice.

Forgie, Cheyne, and McDermott (1999) identify three broad strategies of public sector reform, each with potential for greater public participation.

The first Strategy, the 'Market Model', shifts away from monopolistic supply by the state and opens the way for competitive provision by the private sector of 'public' goods and services. Under this model, individual freedom of choice is evidenced through market place transactions.

The second strategy, 'Managerialism', relies on restructuring and refocusing public sector institutions to respond to residents as consumers of services. The emphasis is on identifying and responding to customer preferences.

New public management represents a softening of the market model through the incorporation of managerialism.

The third strategy looks to extend 'Citizens' Voice', often involving devolution or decentralization to give citizens a greater say in decision making as a means to strengthening citizenship (Forgie, Cheyne and Mc Dermott, 1999).

As fast as new public management was adopted in western democracies, however, its critics voiced concern. Mark Moore, writing in the mid 1990s, suggested instead the notion of public value management.

"*Every time the organisation deploys public authority directly to oblige individuals to contribute to the public good, or uses money raised through the coercive power of taxation to pursue a purpose that has been authorized by citizens and representative government, the value of that enterprise must be judged against citizens' expectations for justice and fairness as well as efficiency and effectiveness.*"
(Moore, 1995:53)

Moore argued that even the act of accountability itself provides public value:

"It satisfies the desires of citizens for a well-ordered society in which fair, efficient, and accountable public enterprises exist."
(Moore, 1995:53)

In the United Kingdom, the language of 'new city management' is emerging. New city management acknowledges both pressures to be more efficient and effective, and demands from confident and well informed citizens for more responsiveness and openness from government.

"*New city management is about much more than the development of an array of managerial tools for urban governance - such as customer-driven decision making and the contracting out of public services to private companies. It is also concerned with the changing roles of politicians, managers and citizens in the governance of localities – it promotes innovation in the politics of place as well as innovation in public service management*."
(Hambleton, in Hambleton, Savitch and Stewart, 2003:147)

New city management supports the concept of local governance, and is concerned to promote community leadership and active citizenship. Hambleton asserts the role of communities in his notion of public management.

"*The new city management is certainly concerned to promote community development and community leadership. This involves working with local communities of interest as well as communities having place-based identities. It involves drawing communities directly into the decision-making arrangements relating to, for example, urban regeneration or social care.*"
(Hambleton, in Hambleton, Savitch and Stewart, 2003:165)

While new public management brought improvements to public management through increased transparency and the reduction of red tape, there were costs to communities. As Adams and Hess, commenting on the Australian experience, note:

"Reforms have had quite ironic consequences with the assumed efficiencies of competitive tendering and contracting out being seen as problematic in terms of social-policy objectives and often constituting transfers of costs to employees or the poorer sections of communities."
(Adams and Hess, 2001:17)

Adams and Hess also list the perceived failures of economic rationalism and new public management as a reason for the:

"Re-emergence of community in the policy debate."
(Adams and Hess, 2001:17)

The recent shift in thinking about public management has, then, a common theme – that of returning to community participation and active citizenship to achieve outcomes. This requires the acknowledgement of local or community knowledge as an important contributor to decision making. As Adams suggests:

"*Communities are always tricky in public policy because unlike individuals the nature of agency is much more complex with communities. For example, one can readily understand the nature of individuals as actors making public and private choices, whether in a supermarket or ballot box. It is much harder to grasp and make practical the idea of communities as co-producers of outcomes with government. In other words to view communities as entities which can and should co-produce policy*

casts a whole different light on how community information would be assessed."
(Adams, 2004:37)

In order to create space for community knowledge and citizen participation, it may be necessary for public managers to step back from the decision making table. John Ralston Saul, in a recent address to local government, cited the rise of managerialism in western democracies as a problem. He reminded his audience that the basis of democracy is amateurism, debate, disorder and taking time. He suggested that the myth of professionalism and expertise is crowding out the innate inclusiveness of true democracy (Ralston Saul, Society of Local Government Managers Conference, August 26-28, 2007, Wellington.)

This return to community is not without its challenges. As Moore comments:

"Ideas associated with social learning and leadership are as concerned with mobilizing citizens to act on their own as with organising them to give advice or reach collective agreements. In short, they aim to mobilize citizens for action – to move right into the implementation of both collective and individual solutions …

The most important insights associated with the concept of social learning and leadership stem from two important observations about public policy making in democratic systems. First, many public policy problems cannot necessarily be solved by senior public officials working out a technically competent and politically acceptable conclusion. Many problems can be solved only by ordinary citizens learning to adjust or devising their own solutions. Second, this exceedingly unpleasant reality is often resisted by citizens who would like the government to solve problems for them."
(Moore, 1995:183)

If Moore is right, then governments have a role in creating environments where cooperation and innovation are the norm. So how have these concepts of public participation and public management impacted on local government in New Zealand?

CHAPTER 3 LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN NEW ZEALAND

What is Local Government?

Local government can be defined as:

"The level of government in a political system that is closest to the citizen and that bears or shares responsibility for a relatively wide range of services and policies, rather than regional or other levels of international government."
(Denters and Rose, 2005:7)

In New Zealand the Local Government Act 2002 describes the purpose of local government in Part 2 Section 10, as:

"(a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities: and
(b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of communities, in the present and for the future."

Local government in New Zealand today consists of 85 Councils, made up of 12 Regional Councils, 16 City Councils and 57 District Councils (including 4 unitary authorities).

New Zealand's Local Government Model

Local government in New Zealand is subservient to parliament – its powers and responsibilities are determined by central government statute. Since the early establishment of local government with the Municipal Corporations Ordinance in 1842, the role of local government in the lives of citizens has evolved, marked at key milestones by shifts in central government policy.

The New Zealand democratic model derives from the Westminster tradition of government – a function of our history as a British colony. Common to Anglo models of government is the restriction of local government activity to functions explicitly mandated by central government.

Compared to some of the European models, New Zealand local government has a narrow range of functions, which are defined in the Local Government Act and the Resource Management Act 1991. Scott, Reid, Yeabsley and Zolner (2004) point to a historic tension in the structure of New Zealand government, between the acknowledged strength of local variation and local knowledge on issues such as environment, and the desire for national uniformity in core services received by New Zealand communities. They argue that this overriding equity value led to:

"A system of local government that granted councils a high level of autonomy, while services that mattered – health, education, policing, housing, welfare – came under the control of central government."
(Scott, Reid, Yeabsley and Zolner, 2004:4)

Today, local government in New Zealand has its own revenue streams, primarily through property taxes, and remains largely independent of central government policy and programmes. Funding is provided by central government for some infrastructure programmes such as roading, and there are services, such as dog control, that government requires Councils to provide. In environmental matters, central, regional and local government are all allocated different functions, with government requiring certain policies and plans from regional and local government. In the main however, the legislative framework takes a permissive approach – local government can provide services over and above their statutory requirements to meet the needs of their communities, as long as their communities are prepared to pay for them. Public opinion is sought on the appropriate range of services through detailed consultation requirements and tested at each local body election. This permissive approach was instituted by the most recent Local Government Act in 2002 with the notion of the 'power of general competence'.

The Local Government Act 2002

In December 2002, the Local Government Act was enacted. The Act heralded a new phase of local government history and raised challenges for local government and local residents.

The Local Government Act 2002 was a complete overhaul of local government legislation and represented an attempt by the government of the day to settle the debate on the role of local government after 15 years of legislative change.

The Local Government Amendment Acts of 1988 and 1989 restructured the local government sector through a programme of amalgamation, reducing the number of locally elected organisations in New Zealand from approximately 850 organisations including a diverse range of local governance boards and Councils, into 87 multi-purpose local authorities. The 1989 Local Government Amendment Act also introduced for the first time the statutory annual planning process using a specified consultation process – the special consultative procedure.

In 1991, the Resource Management Act introduced a new statutory planning system in New Zealand, with a focus on increased transparency in decision making on resource and environmental planning issues. The Local Government Amendment Act 1996 focused on long term financial planning and public disclosure on funding proposals. In 2001, the financial powers of local government were reinforced through the Local Government Rating Act 2001, which enshrined the right of local government to tax property.

The relative newness of systematic corporate planning in local government should not be understated. As Bush has commented:

"*Prior to 1989 systematic planning was completely foreign in nature to most local bodies and the policy process was poorly understood. Yet driven by both efficiency and accountability goals, the reform forced local authorities to embrace planning as a fundamental process. Initially this comprised the statutory preparation of annual plans and reports. In the mid-1990s an entirely new raft of financial planning*

instruments was added, while near the end of the decade strategic planning arrived on stage unprodded."
(Graham Bush in Denters and Rose, 2005:183)

Planning and Consultation Processes Required by the Act

The Local Government Act 2002 opens the way for local government to broaden its sphere of activity. The Act states the purpose of local government as:

"(a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and
(b) to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future."
(LGA 2002, Part 2, section 10)

Councils are required to prepare 10 year strategic plans, or Long Term Council Community Plans (LTCCP), including their 10 year financial planning, which respond to a set of Community Outcomes, developed for the area in collaboration with other agencies.

The purpose of identifying community outcomes is described in Section 91 of the LGA 2002 as:

"(a) to provide opportunities for communities to discuss their desired outcomes in terms of the present and future social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the community; and
(b) to allow communities to discuss the relative importance and priorities of identified outcomes to the present and future social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of the community; and
(c) to provide scope to measure progress towards the achievement of community outcomes; and
(d) to promote better co-ordination and application of community resources; and
(e) to inform and guide the setting of priorities in relation to the activities of the local authority and other organisations."

While the local authority is responsible for facilitating the development of a set of city or district wide community outcomes, the need to consider diversity within communities is also acknowledged. Section 14 of the Act describes the principles relating to local authorities and states:

"(b) a local authority should make itself aware of, and should have regard to, the views of all of its communities; and

(c) when making a decision, a local authority should take account of-

(i) the diversity of the community, and the community's interests, within its district or region; and

(ii) the interests of future as well as current communities; and

(iii) the likely impact of any decision on each aspect of well-being referred to in section 10.

(d) a local authority should provide opportunities for Maori to contribute to its decision-making processes."

In a nutshell, the LGA 2002 represents a shift to collaborative planning processes, a longer term planning view, a broader scope of activity and closer community consultation.

In commenting on the post 2002 local government regime, Bush wrote:

"*The strategic vision of local government is unashamedly expansive, participatory, and embraces a philosophy of governance that prefers the local body at the centre of advancing community goals rather than just as a service-provider and regulator."* (Graham Bush in Denters and Rose, 2005:190)

Local Government's Planning History

Local government has always had community planning tools. The first wave of urbanisation in New Zealand culture in the 1920s gave rise to the 1926 Town and Country Planning Act. It was the Town and Country Planning Act of 1953, however, that really institutionalized planning as a local government function. Local

government planning since that time has focused on managing the impacts of humans on the environment. While the Resource Management Act 1991 opened the door to consideration of cultural issues and social impacts, the way in which the Act was interpreted depended on the planning regime of the day. Memon and Leonard (2006) argue that planning regimes in the 1990s did not concern themselves predominantly with social issues or the needs and aspirations of communities, but focused instead on addressing environmental effects using the 'evidence based' policy approach. As Memon and Leonard have commented:

"Decision-making during the statutory planning process accords limited cognizance to locally held knowledge and understanding about the environment (apart from Maori cultural knowledge). There is limited room for advocacy or adaptive planning within the statutory planning system."
(Memon and Leonard, 2006:2)

By contrast the community planning process required under the LGA 2002 has a broad mandate, with little prescription as to the planning processes to be used (as distinct from the prescription around the statutory consultation and decision making processes). Councils are encouraged to take collaborative, community development approaches and to work with local people to identify local issues.

There is an inherent challenge for Councils in aligning the evolving LGA 2002 planning process and the relative inflexibility of the RMA process, to deliver on community aspirations. Chris Carter, who was to become Minister of Local Government, said before the LGA 2002 was passed:

"Rather than hindering local authorities as the current Act does, the Local Government Bill seeks to provide for greater flexibility and certainty, and allows councils to respond effectively to the changing needs of their communities. At the same time, the Bill will provide ratepayers and electors with a greater capacity to involve themselves fully in the decision-making processes. The balance between empowerment and accountability is critical."
(Hon Chris Carter, 2002)

From Government to Governance

One of the challenges in the LGA 2002 is the mandate given to local government to facilitate and report on the community outcomes process; given that community outcomes by their very nature refer to aspirations of the community well beyond the purveyance of local government. The Act does not go so far as to require other agencies such as government departments to demonstrate commitment to the community outcomes – local government is alone in that regard.

Collaboration is essential in both the development and achievement of community outcomes if the complex needs of communities are to be met. In specifying this need for collaboration, the LGA 2002 mirrored work being done concurrently within central government referred to as the 'Review of the Centre'. The Review of the Centre was the first step in promoting central government collaboration (or joined up government) to tackle complex social problems (Report of the Advisory Group on the Review of the Centre, 2001).

At the local government level, this shift from one agency thinking to collaborative approaches is commonly referred to as a shift from local government to local governance. Banner defines the difference between local government and local governance as:

"*A broadening of the notion of local government beyond its traditional role in the delivery of services, to encompass greater breadth in 'governing' all aspects of the local community. This implies a shift of emphasis for the local authority from public administration towards political leadership in civil society".*
(Banner, 2002:221)

Under a local governance model, the debate moves from:

"*What Council does, to local decision making based on multiagency relationships.*"
(Denters and Rose, 2005:8)

Interagency collaboration is promoted in the LGA 2002. How to ensure that collaboration includes community voices is a further step in the process.

Peter McKinlay, in his report on the opportunities provided to Councils by the LGA 2002 and in particular the community outcomes process, acknowledges the significant shifts in thinking and behaviour required to move to more collaborative, local governance, planning processes.

"The greatest difficulty for local government may be the culture shift, from leading and directing to facilitating. One highly regarded English local government think tank from which we sought input based on their experience with local strategic partnerships in England and Wales commented:

- *Expecting councils to change to simply facilitating a process is asking a lot;*
- *There are stiff difficulties in England especially for elected members who are used to making decisions based on their own notions of representative democracy."*
  (McKinlay, 2004:47)

Hambleton provides a cautionary note on the move to local governance.
His view is that local governance can displace the responsibility of any one organisation and as such obscures accountability to the citizen (Hambleton, Savitch and Stewart 2003).

If true governance is to be achieved, then, the voices of communities must be heard, and their role in collaborative decision-making acknowledged and supported. Furthermore, a balance must be achieved between bringing on board a range of influencing agencies and ensuring accountability to the public is not lost in the complexity of the networks.

The Political Rationale for Change

Given central government's defining power over local government, shifts in local government legislation have to be examined in the context of the politics of the day.

Local government reforms undertaken in New Zealand in the 1980s and 1990s by both National and Labour governments reflected the neo-liberal policy framework of the time. The emphasis was on the modernization of local government, with reform objectives described in terms of deregulation, enhanced efficiency, and transparent decision making. The notion of social democracy, so proudly promoted by post war governments, was replaced instead with the call for social responsibility, which left the wellbeing of communities in the hands of individuals and families (Memon and Leonard, 2006).

This period of government was characterized by economic retrenchment, the withdrawal of the welfare state, deregulation and privatization, and moves to limit the role of government in the market and in communities. Local government reforms during this time bear the same characteristics. The local government amalgamations of 1989 produced much larger councils and widened the gap between citizens and elected representatives.

The election of the Labour-Alliance coalition government in 1999 heralded a new political paradigm.

"*Market driven economics based on neo liberal reforms of the fourth Labour government and its National successor had failed to deliver promised growth, which led to a deepening distrust of representative democracy, an erosion of community and increased social disparities. Communitarian citizenship and participatory democracy discourses dominated the reform agenda which led to the 2002 Act.*"
(Memon and Leonard, 2006:3)

The consultation document on the proposal for the review of the Local Government Act 1974 was released by the Department of Internal Affairs in June 2001.
One of the four objectives of the review of the Act was stated as:

"To develop a new statute which will involve a move to a more broadly empowering legislative framework under which local authorities can meet the needs of their communities."

(Department of Internal Affairs, 2001:6)

The document goes on to state:

"Enhanced opportunities for participation in decision making
One of the underlying objects of the review of the LGA is to encourage increased participation of citizens and communities in local government. In order to do this, there will be some expectations for consultation provisions to be specified in the Act, to protect the right of people to be involved in decision making. Councils will also have the opportunity to develop their own consultation mechanisms that best suit the needs of their communities.

Enable opportunities for communities to signal desired outcomes
Citizens and communities want to tell councils what their aspirations are and seek information from their councils about how these aspirations can be met. It is proposed that long term council plans will include the identification of desired community outcomes, the role of the council in achieving those outcomes through its services, activities and policies, and through partnerships with other bodies and organisations."
(Department of Internal Affairs, 2001:8)

In the first reading of the Local Government Bill to the House, the Minister of Local Government, the Hon. Sandra Lee, described the bill as:

"A reaffirmation of both the place that local government has within our democracy, and of the rights of local people in their communities to exercise controls over their aspirations, their decisions, in the democracy that affects them…

It is about ensuring that the dreams and aspirations of local communities are reflected in the activities of their councils."
(Hon Sandra Lee, 2001)

The focus of the then Minister of Local Government was as much on increasing the level of control that residents could exercise over their Councils as it was on

increasing the role of Councils in their communities. The Local Government Act 2002 represented a major push for participatory democracy and citizen power.

The reforms introduced by the Labour-Alliance coalition were strongly influenced by the success being experienced by Tony Blair's Labour government in Britain. Blair's government coined the term the 'Third Way' - an ideology which seeks to maintain the free market policies of the right, while softening the impact through promoting public participation with government and the strengthening of communities through the creation of social capital. The degree to which the New Zealand LGA 2002 was influenced by Blair's Labour government is starkly obvious in this description of the UK legislation:

"*The Local Government Act 2000 gave local authorities major new powers. They now have a community leadership role with powers to promote and develop social, environmental and economic wellbeing. The same Act gave local councils a new role in the context of collaboration with other agencies; they are now expected to lead the search for solutions to the range of crosscutting social, economic and environmental problems in the locality.*"
(Denters and Rose, 2005:173)

The tension between free market efficiency and participatory democracy which occurs in all Third Way policy is also inherent in the New Zealand's Local Government Act.

The Act promotes community visioning and prioritising and collaborative work to meet broad community objectives, while at the same time requiring prescriptive 'rational' economic planning techniques such as detailed financial planning from Councils, descriptions of service levels, requirements for asset management and depreciation, targeted rates, and stringent audit processes (Memon and Leonard, 2006).

Challenges to Democracy

The LGA 2002 was in part a response to the trends evidenced in many western democracies of public apathy and disengagement with government and community.

There is an extensive published discourse on the challenges faced by government in western democracies to engage citizens and build strong communities.

The issues New Zealand faces are local variations on the same theme.

The alienation of citizens from government is writ large in voting figures. In the 2004 local body elections, for the first time since 1989, the average national turnout dropped below 50 per cent to 46 per cent. Voting turnouts for youth, Pacific voters and Maori were of particular concern (Department of Internal Affairs, Local Authority Election Statistics, 2004).

Voting averages in the October 2007 local body elections dropped again from 46% to 44%. Self-reporting from Councils such as Gore suggests that Council areas where there has been a 'busy year' with high levels of debate and/or controversy have had higher turnouts than the rest of the country. Wanganui, with controversial politican Michael Laws contesting the Mayoralty, returned 63.3%, the country's top polling turnout.

The Quality of Life Survey measures residents' perceptions in the largest cities in New Zealand. In 2002 the survey questioned those who reported as not voting in elections.

"*Respondents who did not vote in the last local authority election (held in 2001) were asked what motivated their decision.*
The most common reasons given were:
• *Lack of information (32%);*
• *Time constraints (14%);*
• *Lack of interest (22%);*
• *Candidates did not appeal (8%)."*
(Quality of Life Survey, 2003:157)

Voter turnout does not coincide that closely, however, with people's confidence in local government, or their self perceived willingness to engage.

In 2006, Local Government New Zealand, the membership organisation of Councils in New Zealand, commissioned Colmar Brunton to complete a nationwide telephone survey of New Zealand ratepayers to test their perception of local government - in particular, the perceptions of value for money of rates and the value that local government provides (Local Government New Zealand, 2006).

The survey found that overall, ratepayers have reasonable awareness of Council activities and feel positively towards Councils. Two thirds (66%) believe that Council does a good job. Awareness of Council core services (promoted and unprompted awareness) ranged from the high 80 to 90 percentages. Only 9% of ratepayers could not recall any services provided by Council. Those 9% were more likely to be young ratepayers (20 to 29 years) or those that had never had involvement with a Council. Only 24% of ratepayers have never had any involvement with a Council. Of those that have had involvement with a Council, 35% report making submissions. Rural ratepayers report higher involvement with 55% reporting having made a submission to Council.

The majority of ratepayers (87%) agree that it is important for Councils to let ratepayers have their say.

The majority of ratepayers surveyed reported voting in the 2004 local body election (87%). Those less likely to have voted were young or Maori.

This mismatch between voter turnout and perceptions of local government is not unique to New Zealand. Between 2000 and 2001 a comprehensive survey was completed in Britain designed to examine citizenship, referred to as the Citizens' Audit (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004).

The Citizens' Audit suggested that people were largely positive about local government and more likely than expected to engage in civic behaviour. Harnessing this potential engagement remains, though, a significant challenge for British institutions.

British residents believe collective action at a local level can be effective:

"People are more likely to believe that working together can have an impact on local communities than upon national outcomes. Whereas over one-half (58 per cent) agree that 'when people like me work together we can really make a difference to our local community', by contrast fewer people (43 per cent) agree that by working together they can change Britain. Clearly people feel that it is at the local level that their potential impact is greatest."
(Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004:46)

When asked about their willingness to volunteer in their community, seven in ten were willing to assist in an activity such as neighbourhood watch, and one in two was willing to assist renovate a local park. Only one in eight however would consider standing for Council (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004:51).

Three in every four respondents reported engagement in some kind of political activity, defined as attempting to influence rules, laws or policies. Two out of every three people belong to an organisation or participated in some kind of neighbourhood group (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004:107).

"*Without wanting to minimise the significance of public disillusionment with long established political institutions and practices we would suggest that by concentrating on just a few of these political institutions and practices the public exit from civic behaviour has been exaggerated.*"
(Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004:107).

It is clear that self reported interest in participation does not necessarily translate into actual behaviour. If we accept that people see engagement as a positive thing, then understanding the obstacles to action may be the key to improving citizen participation.

"*One reason for a mismatch between beliefs and actions may be the costs involved in acting on beliefs. A second reason may be that the opportunities for action do not arise, that is the opportunity structures do not support participation. A third reason*

may be that our respondents are liars although the evidence tends to suggest that people do not do this in large numbers."
(Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004:52)

The Local Government Act 2002 can be seen, then, as an attempt to reconnect local government with communities. What the Act tried to do was encourage new opportunity structures for public participation.

CHAPTER 4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCES WITH PARTICIPATION

Local Government Practice Overseas

Reviews of the citizen participation practices of local government in Western European countries, many of which have political and institutional structures similar to our own, produce comprehensive lists of tools and mechanisms.

Banner refers to such things as public choice through alternative service delivery; quality assurance through citizen's charters; user panels; citizen and customer surveys; complaints and suggestion systems; citizen consultation on draft proposals; user representation bodies; support for neighbourhood initiatives; citizen run institutions; and co-planning with citizens. As Banner points out:

"*In most cases however, these instruments are not employed cumulatively to form a consistent strategy giving the community any genuine influence on local government decision-making. Most bureaucracies still find it hard to see citizens as a problem-solving resource, and indeed, the ultimate goal of local policy-making*."
(Banner, 2002:224)

Banner also points to the conflict for local government between meeting the objective of operational efficiency and providing for democracy/legitimacy.

"Radical efficiency drives via market orientation may lead to undesirable losses in quality, while radical legitimacy drives via participation may lead to a cost spiral that cannot be financed. It is the job of political leadership and top management to maintain an equilibrium between the two performance boosters – market and community."
(Banner, 2002:225)

In Australia, a similar range of public engagement mechanisms are at play, but the planning requirements differ. A primary difference between the Australian and New

Zealand experience is that there is no equivalent statutory requirement in Australia to undertake community based strategic planning (although New South Wales has some limited requirements). Many Australian local authorities use community based planning techniques simply as good practice and the lack of statutory prescription is identified as an advantage (McKinley, 2004). Indicators of success for community planning frameworks examined in New South Wales include:

- Improved integration within Council in planning and delivery of services;
- Strong inclusion of Councillors in the engagement process and Councillor ownership of results;
- Provision of quality information and continued cross-pollination of community ideas;
- Pre-consultation with influencing agencies;
- Specially commissioned research/surveys;
- Clear responsibility for implementation within Council.

(McKinley, 2004)

In the United Kingdom in 1998, a census was taken of local government activity to enhance public participation, commissioned by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR). Both local authority attitudes and citizens' perspectives were surveyed. Local authorities were asked to identify different forms of participation they used under five categories:

- consumerist methods – concerned with service delivery to customers;
- traditional methods – public meetings etc.;
- forums – e.g. bringing together interest groups on a regular basis;
- consultative innovations – new methods to consult on particular issues;
- deliberative innovations – new methods to encourage citizens to reflect on issues through a deliberative process.

(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker 2001, Part 1)

The results were reasonably encouraging.

"*Over the last few years the number and range of participation initiatives in local government has expanded greatly, offering citizens wide opportunities to take part in local affairs. This growth in participation … demonstrates a sense of ownership within individual authorities of the democratic possibilities which such initiatives hold and a willingness to develop them*."
(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker 2001, Part 1:214)

The survey also identified difficulties for local government. For example, participation initiatives were not always well supported by the public and did not always influence final decision-making.

"*Top of most lists is the crucial dichotomy between justifying expenditure on democratic activities when specific services are still in need of resources. Similarly, the tension between introducing real democratic enhancements and achieving efficient and effective service delivery remains.*"
(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker 2001, Part 1:214)

In the DETR survey, the attitudes of citizens to participation initiatives drew a more positive picture.

"*It challenges the idea that the public is universally apathetic and throws light upon current deterrents to participation in local government. The research findings point to the potential value of local authority strategies which:*

- *ground consultation in good 'customer care';*
- *Address the stated priorities of local residents and involve all relevant agencies;*
- *Mobilize and work through local leaders (informal as well as formal);*
- *Invite or actively recruit participants rather than waiting for them to come forward;*
- *Employ a repertoire of methods to reach different citizen groups and address different issues;*
- *Recognize citizen learning as a valid outcome of participation;*

- *Show results – by linking participation initiatives to decision-making, and keeping residents informed of outcomes (and the reasons behind final decisions).*

Citizens in our focus groups had no difficulty in coming up with evaluation criteria for public participation initiatives, despite the difficulty encountered in this area by local authorities. Succinctly stated in their own words, citizens' core criteria were: (a) 'Has anything happened?'; (b) 'Has it been worth the money?'; and (c) 'Have they carried on talking to the public?' "
(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2001, Part 2:454)

There are instances in the United Kingdom of local government moving to complete decentralization of service delivery and decision-making. In 1986 the London Borough of Tower Hamlets was decentralized in this way as an experiment run by the controlling Liberal Party. Under the decentralization of Tower Hamlets, seven neighbourhood committees (made up of sitting Councillors) were given responsibility for service provision and policy making for their area. In a review of the outcomes, Gerry Stoker points to improvements in local service delivery, particularly around responsiveness to local issues such as housing maintenance (Stoker, 1991:373). There were, however, real tensions between areas around equitable funding for diverse needs. In some areas, fragmented minority groups struggled to get their interests acknowledged. The Tower Hamlets' experience of neighbourhood autonomy highlights a potential conflict between local responsiveness and integrated service delivery on the one hand, and the need to lift some issues above parochial local borders to address equity and effectively deal with minority interests on the other.

While community planning in New Zealand does not take the experiment as far as Tower Hamlets, the same tensions are possible in the model. Some issues can only be effectively planned for on a city wide basis, while responsiveness at a local level is also important.

Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker (2006) have continued their work in public participation to look at what drives people's political engagement. They suggest the attitudes and behaviour of public managers is central to brokering participation in

local government; i.e., that the 'rules-in-use' are important to encouraging participation in decision-making processes. These 'rules-in-use' include such factors as "*the openness of the political system"* and *"the presence of a 'public value' orientation among local government managers."* (Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2006:539)

In an exploration of Putnam's work on social capital (Putnam, 2003) the authors tested the relative importance of resources, relationships and rules (Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2006). These authors argue that socio-economic status (SES), while making some difference to public participation in local government, does not fully explain British variations in participation measures such as voter turn out. Similarly they argue that levels of social capital in a community can enhance public participation levels but on their own may not be enough. A third factor is suggested as instrumental in encouraging public participation in local government – that of 'rules-in-use'.

'Rules-in-use' are defined as "*the specific combination of formal and informal institutions that influences participation in locality, through shaping the behaviour of politicians, public managers, community leaders and citizens themselves*."
(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2006:542)

The pragmatic point is made that 'rules-in-use' is something public administrators and Councillors can act on, whereas impacting on SES or social capital is much more complex.

"*While policy makers (especially at a local level) can do little to change the underlying SES of a locality, and have limited scope to nurture social capital, they can shape the institutional rules of the participation game."*
(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2006:542)

These institutional rules can be formal, such as election arrangements, partnership agreements, representative structures and opportunities, consultation processes etc. They can also be informal, such as patterns of behaviour that maximize inclusiveness, support openness and value diversity (or the opposite of these things).

"*In short our case studies showed that, where rules-in-use reinforced the message that active engagement from communities was welcomed, there was more political participation. Where the rules-in-use discouraged public participation, relationships between local government and citizens were characterized either by confrontation, or a resigned but critical apathy*."
(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2006:551)

These results can be seen as a call to action for local authorities. As Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker suggest:

"*Local authorities need not regard themselves as passive ciphers of wider social trends towards political incapacity and cynicism. They can actively shape the environment within which citizens make their decisions about engagement*."
(Lowndes, Pratchett and Stoker, 2006:560)

This poses a direct challenge to local government in New Zealand, one that is being met in a range of ways around the country.

New Zealand Models of Participation – The Move to Community Planning

There are examples of robust local government planning with communities that pre-date the LGA 2002. In fact, it could be argued that the LGA was trying to bring local government as an industry up to a best practice standard already evident in parts of the country. As early as 1996, Wairoa District Council was working with its communities on a collaborative approach to address economic and social needs. Both Porirua City and Manukau City had models of city wide multi partnership long term planning in place before 2002. Southland District took a community planning approach in the late 1990s to deciding how to devolve governance responsibility across its region (Daly and van Aalst, 2001). These community planning exercises were typically city or district wide. There has always been planning under the Resource Management and other Acts with a focus on environmental wellbeing. Through the 1980s, many Councils engaged in planning for the economic

development of depressed or struggling areas. Since the introduction of the LGA 2002, there have been a myriad of engagement, visioning and planning processes used, primarily to develop the Community Outcomes or Council direction in an LTCCP, i.e., to develop the city-wide 'Community Plan' in an LTCCP sense. The range of models summarised by Burke (2004) include city wide inter-agency fora, community outcome committees, and collaboration between Councils to develop regional community outcomes. Burke also refers to the work of Queenstown District Council since 2001 in developing place-based community plans for the townships in the district (Burke 2004). A search of Council websites demonstrates that place-based community planning is now occurring in Council areas all over the country.
The reasons for this trend are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 WHY COMMUNITY PLANNING MIGHT BE IMPORTANT

What is Community?

The notion of community is hotly contested. This research builds its definition on the work done by Terrence Loomis on developing sustainable communities in New Zealand.

"*In general terms a community may be thought of as a network of people and organisations linked together by various factors. The term 'community' can refer to:*

- *a geographic community (e.g. a neighbourhood, city, rural town or district);*
- *a community of common interest, identity or whakapapa (e.g. a hapu, an ethnic group, voluntary organisation, or virtual on-line community); or*
- *an administrative/political community (e.g. a state, federation)."*

(Loomis, 2002:5)

Central and local governments have an interest in developing and maintaining strong communities because they are a vital contributor to the wellbeing of families and individuals. As Loomis notes:

"*Strong communities provide the essential social infrastructure necessary for individuals and families to attain wellbeing. Personal networks, employment, social services, local government, community events, recreational pursuits, and voluntary organisations all provide individuals and families with opportunities to generate wealth, find security, meet their needs and be involved*."
(Loomis, 2002:6).

Loomis defines strong communities as those that:

"
- *give people a sense of belonging through shared values;*
- *are adaptable and able to respond to adversity;*
- *have capable, enterprising leadership;*

- *promote social trust, participation and mutual responsibility;*
- *generate resources from inside and outside the community;*
- *foster a stable, innovative local/regional economy that provides employment opportunities and generates wealth; and*
- *protect and effectively manage their local environment.*"

(Loomis, 2002:13)

The Labour-Alliance government of 1999 recognized the importance of communities through adopting a range of actions under the strategy umbrella of 'building strong communities'. The strategy was based on:

"
- *bringing a community perspective to policy;*
- *encouraging co-operation and partnership between government, local government, business and the community and voluntary sector;*
- *encouraging citizenship and participation;*
- *improving resourcing for community-based activities; and*
- *encouraging community leadership."*

(Loomis, 2002:19)

This concern for communities influenced a range of government programmes in the social development, employment, and voluntary sector areas. It also influenced the review of the Local Government Act.

Why Geographic Communities?

While community can be defined in many ways, there is a new recognition in central and local government policy frameworks of the importance of place.

Increased urbanization in countries such as New Zealand is leading to the development of large metropolitan areas of cities within cities. The Auckland region is home to 31 % of the country's residents. Establishing a sense of community and accountable relationships between residents and elected representatives in such large urban environments is a real challenge. Economic globalization has established these urban centres as nodes of global networks. Economists could argue that Auckland has

more interdependencies with Sydney and Hong Kong than with Hamilton or Wellington. New information channels born out of technology rather than interpersonal relationships risk leaving citizens in a sea of information but no better informed or connected.

One response to the global economy is an increased focus on the connection to local communities. Reid, when considering the challenge of citizen engagement with government, suggests:

"*In an age of globalization it is the politics of the neighbourhood, the locality, that matters more not less.*"
(Reid, 2003:6)

Peter McKinlay quotes from an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) paper to demonstrate the changing views of region and locality:

"*The complexity and uncertainty of engaging in a globalised environment increases the importance of a local place where individuals can find consistency and where they can have some direct involvement in shaping the economic, political and social events in their community. Thus, as the processes of globalization deepen, intensify and strengthen, individuals will become more attached to the security and certainty of the local versus the uncertain and rapidly changing globalised world.*"
(McKinlay, 2004:70)

Knowledge about and from local communities is crucial to the concept of planning for localities. It challenges public managers to move away from the traditional policy model of applying programmes and services to communities. Adams (2004) challenges public managers instead to embrace local knowledge and 'think like a place'.

"*Thinking like a place (e.g. a community) might well involve seeing relevant information as:*

- *the (diverse) experiences of people in their communities and the relative importance of history and narrative;*
- *how social, economic, human and natural capital interact;*
- *information about the drivers of long-term community sustainability (such as the rate of renewal of community assets);*
- *profiles of community engagement, its breadth and diversity;*
- *what communities consider as important outcomes and how they might change over time;*
- *long-term demographic trends and their drivers;*
- *intensity of feelings about ideas and issues and puzzles and solutions;*
- *the nature of bonding, bridging and linking;*
- *the nature of embedded community resources and whether and how they are activated and for whom;*
- *the extent to which identity and trust are clustered or distributed and why;*
- *how communities and their constituent groups deliberate about their many paradoxes and possible futures;*
- *whether and how people think about the future and intergenerational equity;*
- *the extent to which innovation and enterprise is present;*
- *people who can tell you what is really going on and who are the people pulling the strings;*
- *where power and influence lies and how it is mobilized.*"

(Adams, 2004:38)

Acknowledgement and inclusion of community knowledge could provide part of the answer in the quest to reconnect people with their governments.

"*Understanding the nature of community knowledge has profound implications for the way in which we organize, plan, fund and deliver public services. In particular it implies that our case management writers might be right and that the key unit of organisation for the public sector should move from programmes to relatively small places for the planning and delivery of many services. It suggests, for example, that community outcomes managers might become critical roles in the future as will*

figuring out the skill set required for co-production of community knowledge … Perhaps it also means a more serious rethink of our local institutions (particularly local councils and community agencies) and their capability to be the hub of local general purpose community knowledge."
(Adams, 2004:39)

This research looks at communities using the place-based definition. It concerns itself with local community or area-based planning. It tests the view that local communities can be engaged with as a whole to promote the interests of that community. Having specified geographic communities as the subject of this paper, it is important to detail the definition further as referring to a geographic sub set of a city or district**.**

Communities for the purpose of this paper are defined as: **suburbs, small towns, or villages within a wider council city or district.** A more specific definition of geographic communities is not attempted except to say that in all instances of communities chosen as case studies, the participants quickly identified the boundaries of their respective areas in a meaningful way to local people.

What is Community Planning?

The LGA 2002 provides the opportunity for councils to work every six years with local communities to develop community outcomes. Councils' ten year plans must then provide a response to these community outcomes. The adoption of Councils' ten year plans must include strong public consultation processes. The resulting document is called a council community plan.

These steps however, simply describe the 'letter of the law'. If councils restrict their activities to a six yearly discussion with communities on community outcomes, three yearly consultations on a Long Term Plan and a statutory consultation round to adopt annual plans, it is difficult to meet the intent of the Act. Councils are finding it is necessary to do more.

Remember the Hon Sandra Lee's aim of "*ensuring that the dreams and aspirations of local communities are reflected in the activities of their councils".*

(Hon. Sandra Lee, 2001)

Increasingly, councils are looking at ways to ensure that engagement of citizens goes deeper than a city wide statutory consultation process. Place-based community planning is being used to gather information for the Long Term Council Community Plans and to improve knowledge of, and engagement and relationships with, local communities.

For the purposes of this research, community planning is defined as: **a local authority using its mandate under the LGA 2002 to work with geographic communities and other agencies relevant to that community, to determine both a desired vision for the future wellbeing of that community, and some agreement on activities in the short, medium and long term to achieve that vision.**

The community planning process allows communities to raise issues that may relate to a range of agencies or require local voluntary solutions. Council's' actions might be progressed either through RMA channels, or LTCCP prioritization, or through every day business. The aim is to encourage communities to actively engage in their future.

A report to Hastings District Council on their community planning put it like this:

"*The Local Government Act (LGA) 2002 states that the purpose of local government is to enable democratic decision-making and action by, and on behalf of, communities; and to promote the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future.*

The Act sets out principles that a local authority must act in accordance with in performing its role:

> *'A local authority should make itself aware of, and have regard to, the views of all of its communities.'*

Community Plans are central to this. The development stage of a Community Plan provides Council with information sourced directly from communities. Council enters

identified communities and facilitates public meetings. The communities identify their concerns, issues, needs and wants, and also develop a vision statement of how they want their community to develop in a set time. The various Planning Committees' regular meetings also provide an opportunity for Council to make itself aware of the specific communities' views. There may be few other Council processes that enable Council to gather such a wide range of information from the communities themselves."
(Hastings District Council, 2007)

Peter McKinlay, in his 2004 report on the local authority community outcome process, compares the New Zealand local government planning processes with those of the United Kingdom and Australia. He identifies the move to regional or locality based strategic planning in local government as an international trend.

McKinlay's paper identifies some key flaws with strategic planning at a city wide level:

"*The UK guidelines are written as though a community may have a single vision, there will be a single action plan focused on all of the objectives inherent in the strategy, and action will proceed on all fronts. Experience shows that, in practice, the achievement of a single vision is possible only at a meta-level: as soon as it starts being reduced to a more practical level, visions will differ. The issue for any community is to minimize the incompatability of different visions and arrive at a shared general direction that can accommodate those*."
(McKinlay, 2004:2)

Place-based community planning is a method of recognizing that particular geographic communities have unique characteristics that result in unique problems and a unique vision for the future. Community planning recognizes the complexity of small communities made up of such elements as their history, layers of networks and the nature of local leadership.

The objective of identifying and accommodating different visions is a primary driver for locality or place-based community planning.

What Might Community Planning Have to Offer?

1. Community Building

Community planning undertaken in the local government context typically results in a particular outcome – a documented plan. It could be argued however, that if local governance is to be promoted, that the process of community planning is in itself valuable. This is especially true if the community planning exercise is used by participants to build networks and relationships within their area and between their area and other communities, geographic or otherwise. It's possible that community planning can in itself build social capital and community inclusiveness.

Putnam, in his work on social capital, describes a kind of virtuous circle where community activity builds social capital, which in turn builds the capacity of communities to engage (Putnam 1993). Political institutions also benefit from the development and maintenance of these 'civic' communities.

"*On the demand side, citizens in civic communities expect better government and (in part through their own efforts) they get it. They demand more effective public service and they are prepared to act collectively to achieve their shared goals.*
On the supply side, the performance of representative government is facilitated by the social infrastructure of civic communities and by the democratic values of both officials and citizens. Most fundamental to the civic community is the social ability to collaborate for shared interest."
(Putnam, 1993:182)

2. Improving Relationships

Community planning processes require cross-agency and cross-community relationships to be built and maintained over long periods of time, often years. While these relationships have been built through a particular process, the relationships can go on to support future partnerships on other issues. These downstream and accidental consequences of building networks often bring real gains, both to communities and to agencies that struggle with community engagement.

3. More Relevant Decision Making Through the Use of Local Knowledge

There is a potential tension between the 'expert' advice of Council staff, who are used to recommending priorities for Council work, and the priorities set by local residents. On the other hand, using local knowledge can lead to improved efficiency and effectiveness. It provides, for example, an opportunity to deal with ongoing 'gnarly' issues, as those affected can be encouraged to find relevant and effective solutions on the ground. It also allows communities to indicate trade-offs they are prepared to make in order to get priorities attended to.

4. Promoting the Concept of Governance

Getting inter-agency support for 'high needs' areas is often cited as a driver for community planning. Community planning encourages organisations, government departments and Councils to see issues and develop solutions from a resident point of view – this is what Adams refers to as 'thinking like a place' (Adams 2004). The resident with transport concerns does not care that two levels of local government and a private company may have to work together to provide a solution. Community planning involves local government working with communities to get relevant government and other agencies involved in a 'governance'approach. Not only does community planning require collaboration between agencies, but it gives residents a place at the table and acknowledges the role of local voluntary activities.

5. Increasing Engagement Through Making Things Happen

As the local government surveys show, people report reasonable interest in and satisfaction with local government, but can fail to act when opportunities are provided.

The complexity of local government processes can exacerbate the problem. Both the LGA and RMA processes are formal and long. It can take a long time, in some cases years, between views being canvassed and action being taken. Local government consultation often focuses on the significant, the long term and the expensive. Neighbourhood issues such as street lighting and traffic calming seldom reach the glare of publicity. Community planning provides opportunities for local residents to have a say on the way in which everyday services are provided, and as a result changes can occur quickly. Community planning processes can also clear the way for

community groups to take ownership of an issue and start working on it. They give people 'permission' to act. This capacity to deliver small results quickly sustains the community planning process, as it draws new people into the discussion inspired by the change (or in some cases objecting to it!).

What Are Some of the Risks?

1. Capacity Issues

Community planning places a significant burden on communities to rally locals, prepare material, attend meetings or hearings, and sustain community discussions over months and sometimes years. In some instances, funding is available to community groups to resource their involvement. This still assumes, however, that people are available with the skills, time and personal capacity to be involved. Capacity issues can be particularly acute for iwi groups who may have a small number of personnel involved in a broad range of issues within and outside of the community planning area. There is a risk that the community planning process is so intensive and onerous that it loses people or it exhausts groups and individuals who are needed for other roles in their communities. Similarly Councils can be stretched trying to find the resources in staff and Councillor time to sustain community planning.

2. Representativeness

Those who step forward to represent communities are not necessarily truly representative of the range of residents in the area. The British Citizens' Audit (Pattie, Seyd and Whiteley, 2004) identified that civic engagement is dominated by the wealthy and well educated. Members of the public may also wish to participate but may not want the added burden of being expected to represent others. Ensuring that community representatives are appropriately supported, and are not 'gate keepers' to the rest of the community, is an important part of community planning design.

3. Inequity and Parochialism

Community planning recognizes and celebrates what is unique about particular geographic communities. It encourages residents to build on the existing strengths of

their community. There is a risk however, that this will lead to parochialism and competition between communities as they fight to 'get their share' of resources. There will always be some communities clearer about what they want than others. There are also, as the Hamlet Towers experience shows (Stoker, 1991), small minority groups whose voice will never be heard if it is fragmented across a number of geographic communities. This provides an opportunity fro the 'majority' to find ways to hear the voices of those typically left out. In cities of great diversity, there is also merit in celebrating what disparate communities have in common to build a sense of community connectedness.

4. Burn Off

As mentioned above, community planning has the potential to engage people by demonstrating responsiveness and providing quick results. The converse is of course also true. Community planning processes in themselves can be engaging and interesting. If however tangible results are not evident reasonably quickly, they risk seriously damaging relationships between agencies and residents, leaving them in a worse state than if the planning process had never happened. Most local and central government agencies are familiar with how long it takes to recover reputation after a poor community process.

5. Inappropriate Expectations

Adams, in his writing on the "fad" of community in public policy, warns against the expectation that the community will provide the answer to issues that government has spent years struggling with. He writes of using the community "*as a blunt instrument to try to solve intractable social problems."*
(Adams, 2001:21)

Similarly, the community may see community planning as a way to advocate for programmes or projects that would not meet usual prioritisation criteria in a city wide planning process. Managing expectations is a significant challenge in community planning.

This research paper now examines instances of community planning and considers how well they have dealt with the opportunities and challenges afforded by the community planning model.

CHAPTER 6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY – THE USE OF COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

Why Comparative Case Studies?

A comparative case study approach was chosen using Yin's (1999) definition of a case study:

"*The all-encompassing feature of a case study is its intense focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context. The method is not troubled by the fact that the context contains innumerable variables – therefore leading to the following technical definition of case studies:*

'Case studies are research situations where the number of variables of interest far outstrips the number of datapoints'."

(Yin, 1999:1211)

This paper is concerned with policy research rather than theoretical research. It is an evaluative study which looks at how an existing process is working. It is concerned with 'knowledge for action' (Hakim 2000); that is, can we learn something that might change the way we act in the future?

Community planning is essentially about people and relationships, their processes and interactions. It is about agency. The success or failure of community planning is heavily context dependent and models of community planning differ in each area – each one is unique. The research methodology chosen needed to be sensitive to context, to history, to complexity and perhaps even to personalities. For these reasons, qualitative, case-based research was considered the most appropriate approach.

"*Cases seem to be most useful when the research questions are on what actually happens, such as in the study of policy implementation or complex management processes, particularly when the researcher is less interested in quantitative outputs or other such measures. How such processes develop and why events take place can*

best be explained through cases, since these questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere counting of frequencies or incidences."
(Agranoff and Radin, 1991:206-207)

Risks in the Case Study Approach

There are potential problems with the comparative case study approach. For instance, a transparent selection of case studies is important, as is a consistent framework for collection and analysis of information. Ethical considerations are important, since the identity of people and places can be possible to detect even if confidentiality is observed. Finally, case study findings are hard to generalize across other areas, and therefore have limited use in proving theories.

A rigorous research design is essential in order to mitigate potential weaknesses in the case study approach. To develop as accurate a picture as possible, the researcher must use different types of methods to triangulate different types of evidence. It remains, however, hard to establish causal links in case studies as it is often difficult to source enough material across a broad enough range of examples to establish necessary causation (Ragin, 1999). Without clear cause and effect, the results of one case study are difficult to transfer to a different context. Yin suggests considering each case study to be a single unit – in effect its own experiment.

"*Under this assumption, the problem of generalizing from case studies is not different from the problem of generalizing from experiments – where hypotheses and theory are the vehicles for generalization. To this extent investigators doing case studies are not 'theory driven' (a criticism that has been raised by some), but are driven to theory."*
(Yin, 1999:1212)

One approach to assist with this issue is to establish an intervention logic model that explores the assumed chain of cause and effect in the programme in question. This provides the researcher with a framework for the case study research and gives a theoretical hypothesis against which to test the research results (Yin 1999).

Intervention logic uses a 'results chain' to explain the core rationale, or programme theory, behind a programme or intervention (Baehler 2002). The hypotheses used are documented along with the assumptions behind those hypotheses. Intervention logic essentially explores the '*if-then'* connections (Baehler 2002).

Intervention logic is used both to design and to evaluate policy programmes. It is by definition optimistic, as it describes the model environment. Logic models are also by definition simplistic, as they attempt to summarise complex long term processes. As Yin suggests, however, they provide a useful structure against which to test case studies – a hypothesis to explore (Yin 1999).

A Community Planning Logic Model

The approach taken to the research was to develop a theoretical model of community planning based on this researcher's experience of community planning in Porirua City. The logic model attempts to describe the programme theory behind community planning. Against this model, other examples of community planning from local authorities in New Zealand were gathered and explored. This approach is informed by the work of Pawson (2006), who promotes the use of 'realist synthesis' to consider

"*what works, for whom, in what circumstances and in what respects and why.*"
(Pawson, 2006:94)

Pawson's approach is to start with a preliminary understanding of programme theory, then use the data to refine the initial theory map, ending up with a more refined theory. As Wolf explains:

"*The basic device is a series of comparisons of cases which draws out from the often-sketchy available data, details of content, mechanism and outcome.*"
(Wolf, 2004:75)

The content, mechanism and outcome variables are then used to draw out instances of success and failure.

"*He ends up with ideas or hypotheses that can be further explored empirically but that can also directly inform policy development.*"
(Wolf, 2004:76)

In a similar fashion, the case study information collected was evaluated against chosen criteria, and against the logic model, to identify successes and failures, as well as potential strengths and weaknesses in the assumptions behind the programme theory.

Selecting the Cases

Three communities from local authority areas were chosen for inclusion in this study. Rather than developing an exhaustive list of examples, information from three areas was used to develop a rich picture of their experience.

Communities were chosen from a list developed through reviewing local literature, queries sent out via the local government list-serve, and discussions with staff from Local Government New Zealand. The three communities were selected based on the following criteria:

- The focus of community planning is community wellbeing, encompassing all four aspects – environmental, social, cultural and economic (as per the LGA 2002), rather than the sustainable management of natural and physical resources (as per the Resource Management Act 1991);
- The local authority in question has had more than 2 years' experience in community planning, so that impacts of the planning could be assessed;
- Community planning has been completed in more than one community in the local authority area so that depth of experience is available;
- Communities chosen represent a mix of community types; e.g. urban and provincial;
- Areas chosen represent a cross section of public participation structures e.g. community board, resident association, community trust;

- Preference was given to communities where there has been some review of their process as evidenced on Council websites, journal articles or other sources, so that participants have had the opportunity to reflect on their experience;
- Willingness to participate and availability of documented information.

Using these criteria, the communities of Whakatu in Hastings District, Greater Otaki on the Kapiti Coast, and Timberlea in Upper Hutt were chosen as case studies. Two case studies met all of the criteria and the third met most.

Gathering the Data

The data collection followed a standard methodology for comparative case studies. Information gathering techniques included:

- Desk top analysis of the community chosen; e.g. size, demographics and location within the district or city, to provide contextual information;
- Research of Council reports, planning documents, and final plans to establish community planning rationale, objectives, methodology and written results. This work included reading reports of Council Committees proposing community planning as a process, to identify Councils' objectives and expectations; reviewing the Community Plan documents themselves to assess scope and purpose; and reviewing Council planning documents such as Annual Plans and Long Term Council Community Plans to identify where community plans are referenced in Councils' city wide plans.
  The information was analysed and categorized to identify variables and commonalities;
- A written survey completed by one staff member and one community participant from each Council area to collect perspectives on the experience, successes and failures in the process, changes in the relationship with Council, and perceived impact on Council decision making;
- Follow up open-ended interviews, either face to face or by phone, either with survey participants or with other key informants who emerged from the information gathered. The purpose of these interviews was to explore further

issues of significance, as well as interesting outliers or gaps in information that appeared from the survey results;

- Site visits to Otaki and Whakatu.

The research does not explore the views of elected representatives in the community planning process. This perspective is relevant to the research, but was not included in order to keep the research to a manageable size. Further work on how the politics, attitudes and the role of elected members impacts on community planning would be of value.

Criteria for Evaluating Case Studies

The criteria identified in the work of Rowe and Frewer (2000), and discussed earlier in this paper, were adopted to analyse the case study data.

These were:

- representativeness of the community participants and the process of engaging the wider community;
- early involvement of community in the initiation and design of the exercise;
- influence of community on the process, decision making and outcomes;
- transparency of the process to other community members;
- resource accessibility for community participants;
- task definition from both a Council and community point of view;
- structure of decision making in terms of clarity and transparency;
- cost effectiveness of the exercise.

The criteria of 'independence of process' was excluded as inappropriate to the context, as relationship building is an objective of many community planning processes, and the hands-on involvement of Council staff with community is seen as contributing to this.

The case studies were also compared across a range of additional variables chosen to explore the context of the community planning process and the outcomes. Some variables emerged as themes from the data. Other variables enabled the testing of the assumptions in the Community Planning Logic Model

prepared as part of the case study evaluation. The additional variables explored were:

- the nature of the community and the Council – this enables comparison of the circumstances for 'what works when';
- expectations of community planning – so that success on its own terms can be considered, and to explore differing expectations;
- alignment to Councils' Long Term Council Community Plans and other planning documents;
- whether regional or city wide issues were part of the planning information to assess the wider context in which communities plan for their futures;
- cross-Council involvement to ascertain integration of the project within Council;
- ongoing relationships;
- organisational change as a result of community planning;
- promotion of a governance model through collaboration with other agencies.

The nature of the Council was determined using a framework developed by Mike Reid and Jeff McNeill as part of the Local Futures project (McNeill and Reid, 2007).

In this framework, Councils are categorized into Type A and Type B Councils depending on whether they have more of a service delivery focus (Type A) or a community governance focus (Type B).

Type A Councils are typified as being Council-centric, focusing on internal efficiency, providing infrastructure to enable other agencies to carry out their work, and preferring contestable, contracted out and/or core services. Type A Councils generally conform to the 'managerialism model' identified by Forgie, Cheyne and McDermott, described earlier in the paper (Forgie, Cheyne and McDermott, 1999). Type B Councils are typified as being community-centric and collaborative, involved in networks and partnerships to exercise the power of general competence, actively intervening in 'place-shaping' activities, and focusing on community wellbeing and sustainable development. These Councils could be described as moving towards

Hambleton's concept of 'new city management' also described earlier in the paper (Hambleton, Savitch and Stewart, 2003).

NcNeill and Reid are clear that these are blunt caricatures representing two ends of a spectrum rather than any actual reality; however, they provide a short form depiction of the history and culture of a Council. An estimation is given in the case study analysis as to which type of Council each of the case studies represents. Again this is a blunt estimation based on planning and other documentation.

Analysing the Data

The research in this project used a 'grounded theory' approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) to data handling. Throughout the project, information collected was coded and categorized until themes started to emerge about community planning.

The grounded theory approach is ideal in public policy environments where research questions or hypotheses tend to be fuzzy and tentative due to the complexity of the issues under consideration. This makes the methodology of particular relevance to case study research.

Grounded theory approaches allow opportunities to generate theory, rather than trying to validate it. The grounded theory approach also allows the researcher to adjust and modify the analytical framework in use as information is gathered.

"*The development of a separate case study for each site allows the researcher to collect data that might be idiosyncratic to that site and provides the base for in-depth interpretation of the context of that site. At the same time, the data collected does provide the researcher with more than an enumeration of similarities and differences among cases. If new categories and working hypotheses do emerge during the course of the study, it is possible to fit them into the data collection protocols without major problems. These types of modifications would be virtually impossible in a formal large-scale data collection methodology using closed ended questionnaires*."
(Agranoff and Radin, 1991:218)

The research used a modified version of grounded theory, as criteria were chosen against which to analyse the data. This approach was taken for two reasons. Firstly, the limit of two participants from each of the three case studies meant less material would be available than is ideal in a grounded theory approach. Secondly, the time constraints of the research project required a focus for analysis of material. As much of the data came from open ended questions and documentation, the grounded theory approach to logging data was still usefully implemented. The grounded theory methodology complemented the realist synthesis approach (Pawson 2006) as both approaches emphasise drawing out theory from the information gathered.

The framework for evaluation was designed to meet the requirements of traditional public policy evaluation, to be consistent with public participation theory, to traverse the identified risks in community planning, and finally, to explore the potential of the Local Government Act 2002.

CHAPTER 7 THE CASE STUDIES

Porirua City Community Planning

Porirua City Council is a medium size Council, serving a city of some 51,000 people as part of the wider urban region of Wellington. The city is ethnically diverse with Maori making up 21% of the population and 27% of residents being Pacific. Porirua City Council has a significant history of collaborative planning, including the development of the city wide Strategic Plan 2000-2010. Porirua City has always been involved in more than core business and as such is a Type B 'Community Governance' focused Council in the NcNeill and Reid typology (McNeill and Reid 2007).

Porirua City Council is involved in community planning largely at the request of the residents' associations, who pushed for community planning for two main reasons: firstly, they saw community planning as a way of identifying the specific needs and interests of their communities for the review of the City District Plan; and secondly, they saw it as a way of ensuring the needs of residential communities did not get overlooked in the city wide planning required to develop an LTCCP (Porirua City Council 2006).

Porirua City is a relatively young city. Considerable investment has been made in the last 20 years in city centre development and facilities. Some residents' associations articulated a view that the balance between city centre and suburban spending was 'out of kilter'. Community planning in Porirua focuses on suburbs or discrete seaside communities.

The City Council saw community planning as a useful way to engage with residents on issues of importance to them, and to ensure the special character of each residential community was acknowledged in future Council planning (Porirua City Council, 2004). Community planning and project implementation is funded through a ring-fenced budget identified in the Council's Long Term Plan.

Community planning began in Porirua City in 2003/04 and was identified as a priority programme of work in both the 2004 and 2006 Long Term Council Community Plans. To date, five areas have completed community or village plans and planning is underway in two other suburbs. In most instances, community planning has been requested by a residents' association or other community organisation. In some instances, the area has been identified as vulnerable to change under the review of the District Plan or other regional work such as Transmission Gully. In one instance, the community planning was initiated jointly with a government department, Housing New Zealand.

In all instances in Porirua, an existing community organisation or organisations partner the process. This has included Residents' Associations, Ngati Toa, a Marae committee, and a social service organisation. The process to develop a plan is decided together. Council provides logistical support and funding, including funding the community organisation itself if required. The community organisation provides local leadership, volunteer time and significant local networking and promotion. Methods used to develop plans have included local history expos, story telling evenings, public launches with bands and food, surveys, questionnaires, kitchen meetings, public meetings, agency meetings, shopping centre displays, letterboxed newsletters, newspaper pages, school competitions, stalls at local festivals, workshops and charettes. Once the plan is finalised it is presented to Council. The plans are not adopted by Council as they are seen as community owned documents with many contributing agencies. The community organisations subsequently remain involved in the prioritisation of Council work and the implementation of projects.

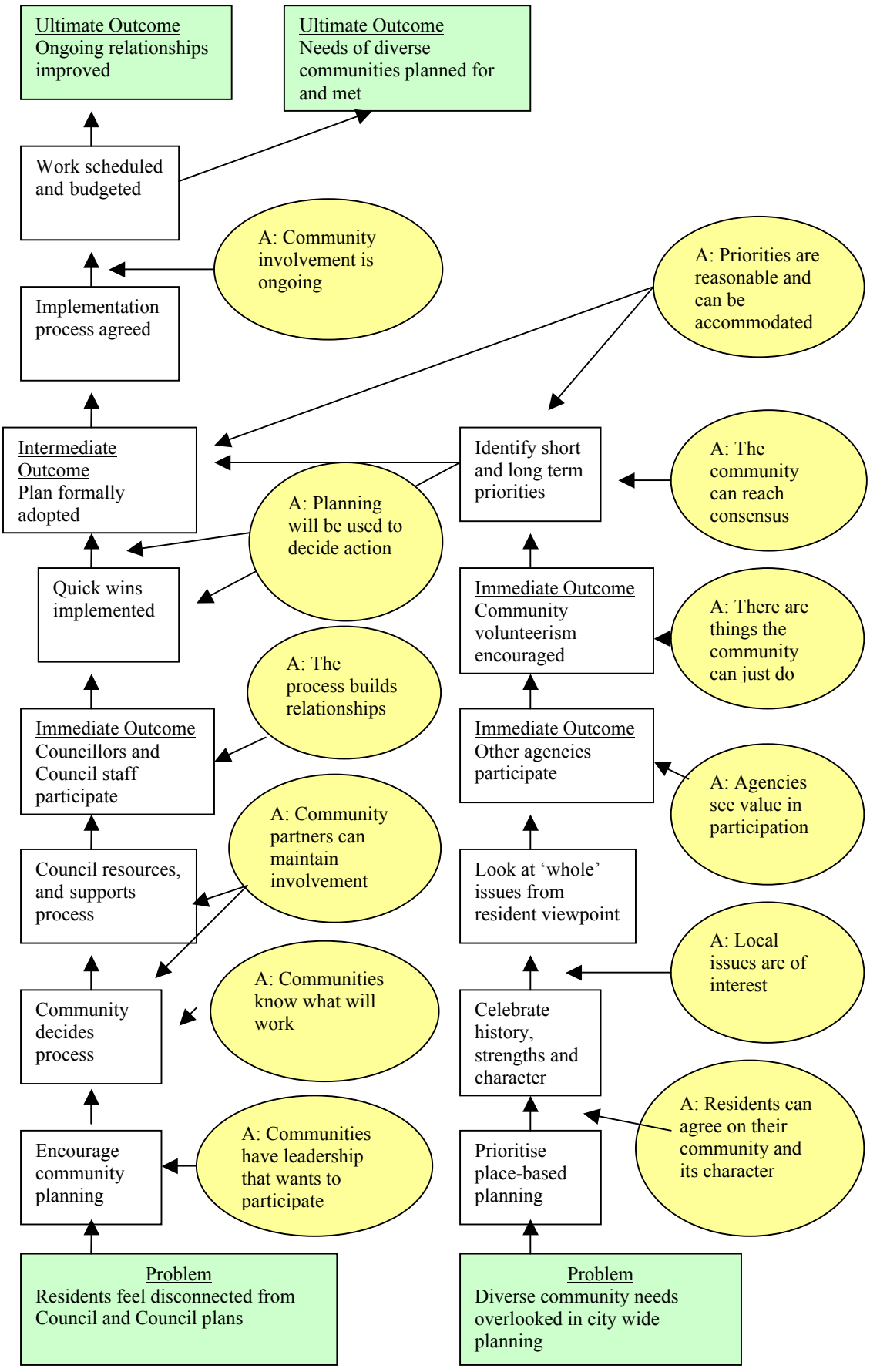
A Community Planning Logic Model

Figure 2 is a hypothesised representation of Porirua City Council's overall community planning approach. It describes the initial problems community planning was seeking to resolve – resident disconnection, and identifying diverse community needs.

The outputs or steps in the process are described towards a chain of outcomes - some immediate, and some intermediate, with the process eventually achieving ultimate outcomes. The key assumptions underpinning each step are identified.

This is a generalised model of the approach taken by Porirua City Council and partner organisations to community planning in the city. It provides an overview of the programme theory in diagram form. The logic model is written from the perspective of the Council. This is a simplified and idealised representation of a much more complex and less linear process (Porirua City Council 2006).

Figure 2: Porirua City Community Planning – The Logic Model



A = assumption

The Case Study Communities

Greater Otaki, Kapiti Coast District

Kapiti Coast District covers 40 kilometers of western coastal plain at the northern edge of the Wellington region. The population is around 46,000 (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Kapiti Coast District is a string of coastal townships and one of the fastest growing population areas in New Zealand (www.kcdc.govt.nz).

Historically, Kapiti Coast District Council has been a Type A Council with a focus on core service delivery and provision of infrastructure. However a new Chief Executive introduced significant culture change as part of the development of the LTCCP 2004-14 and it would now be considered a Type B 'Community Governance' focused Council on the McNeill and Reid typology, despite its relatively small size.

Otaki is the northern most settlement of the Kapiti Coast District. The Greater Otaki project includes the township on State Highway One, the Otaki village shops, Otaki and Te Horo Beach, and the surrounding district.

The 2001 Census recorded over 5,600 people living in the Otaki area.
The community is slightly younger, and older, than the rest of the Kapiti Coast, with 71% Maori and 34% European residents. The 2001 unemployment rate was 10.2% with 39.9% holding no qualification. The median income of people in Otaki in 2001 was $14,000. Twenty three percent of families were one parent families compared to seventeen per cent for the Kapiti Coast. The township is home to Te Wananga O Raukawa, a Maori university (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

The community planning process was run as a partnership between the Kapiti Coast District Council and the Otaki Community Board, which is made up of elected Board members and appointed Councillors, and which has a delegated authority as part of Council's governance structure.

The residents of Otaki worked with the Kapiti Coast District Council through 2003 and 2004 in a process to develop Community Outcomes for the District. From that process came a commitment from Council to developing 'local visions' in each

community. A series of hui/workshops were held with different interest groups in the community, using a geographic, demographic and sector approach. The local newspaper was used, as well as billboards, community newsletters, community events and celebrations, and extensive use was made of a growing database of local residents and business people.

The brochure summarizing the project states:

"The community of Greater Otaki has responded with enthusiasm and commitment to help shape the vision for their future direction. Residents and business people from the wider community have participated in a number of design workshops since the initial Kapiti Coast: Choosing Futures process in 2004. The Greater Otaki Project was launched in May 2005. The material from these workshops, including the detailed material from the original Choosing Futures process, is woven to create a clear picture of a collectively desired future direction for Otaki as a place and diverse community.

The Broad Vision

Retain its current low-key character; restore the Mangaone Stream to a healthy state; have safe water and wastewater on-site systems; no new urban development.

The broad vision embraces the current strengths of the Greater Otaki area in recognising the nationally unique mix of tangata whenua, Chinese and Pakeha communities and the cultural vibrancy and heritage that results; the strengths of its community elders and the resource of prospective young leaders; the role of Te Wananga-o-Raukawa as a gateway to learning and advancement; the role of Otaki Town and the Railway as a gateway to the Kapiti Coast; the regional importance of the productive potential and capacity of the rural areas; a place where there is interest in creating new jobs and opportunities."
(Kapiti Coast District Council, (2007b)

The Greater Otaki Vision is organized under eighteen headings that relate to children, youth, fresh water protection, managing growth, transport, the main street and railway, industrial development, the coast and beaches, symbols and identity,

Otaki language town, heritage, character, road safety, river access and water supply.

The community planning exercises in Kapiti support the Community Outcome in Kapiti's Community Plan - "Local character is retained within a cohesive District". The Greater Otaki Vision document was formally adopted by Council in August 2007 but the project received its own mention as a major evolving project in the Kapiti Coast District Community Plan 2006. The Greater Otaki project has evolved into a broader community planning exercise than other community visioning work in the District, most of which focus on town centre improvements.

Whakatu, Hastings District

The Hastings District is made up of three main centres - Hastings, Flaxmere and Havelock North. These main centres are surrounded by 38 rural settlements including Clive and Bridge Pa. The whole of the Hastings District covers an area of 5229 square kilometres (2018 square miles) and with a population of 73,400; the Hastings District has 1.8% of the population of New Zealand and ranks 14th in resident population out of the 74 territorial authorities (www.hastingsdc.govt.nz).

Hastings District Council has had a traditional focus on infrastructure development, and the affordability and efficiency of services. While traditionally more of a Type A 'Service Delivery' focused Council, Hastings District's public documents suggest that this Council is shifting towards the Type B 'Community Governance' model identified in the McNeill and Reid (2007) typology.

Whakatu is a small residential community in the Hastings District which is part of a once densely populated Maori tribal area, home to the hapu of Rangitane, and more recently Ngati Kahungunu. The community is on the Clive River and since the 1920s has grown around the Whakatu freezing works. In 1986, the freezing works closed and 2,200 people from the surrounding district lost their jobs.
The snapshot in the Whakatu Community Plan included the following information:

" ■ *843 people live in Whakatu;*
■ *24% are between 10 and 24 years of age;*
■ *The dominant ethnic groups are European – 54% and Maori – 43%;*

- *31% of residents aged 15 years and over have no qualification;*
- *56% of those 15 years and over are employed full-time and 16% are employed part-time;*
- *5% of those 15 years and over are unemployed;*
- *The median total personal income for residents aged 15 years and over who stated an income is $21,800."*

(Hastings District Council, 2006b:8)

The Whakatu Community Planning process was run in a partnership between the Hastings District Council and the Whakatu Community Trust, a pre- existing independent community organisation established to promote the interests of Whakatu. The Whakatu Community Plan 2006-16 provides detail on the process used to develop the Plan.

"The Whakatu Community Trust (the Trust) approached Hastings District Council (Council) in April 2004 to request a Community Plan. Council has worked in conjunction with the Trust to develop the Whakatu Community Plan (the Plan) with and for the community.

The purpose of the Plan is to improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of the community. The Plan provides a framework outlining goals and actions to achieve the community vision.
'Whakatu 2016: A village community that is friendly, safe, thriving, and supported in a harmonious relationship by its industrial neighbours'.

The Plan may also help to:

- *align stakeholders' objectives to community needs;*
- *identify where additional resources may be necessary to address community concerns; and,*
- *support funding applications for community projects included in the Plan.*

Consultation for the development of the Plan with the community took place from March 2004 – September 2006. The consultation process included:

- *a community survey: March 2004;*
- *community meetings: six in 2004, four in 2006; and*
- *consultation with progress partners: 2004 and 2006."*

(Hastings District Council, 2006b:4)

The community planning process in Whakatu started with a community survey undertaken by Council that identified some issues for further discussion in the community.

The Whakatu Community Plan was adopted in September 2006. Major focus areas in the plan include:

- Traffic safety;
- The impact of industrial activity;
- Beautification and environmental improvements;
- Play equipment and recreational opportunities.

Clear linkages are made both in the Community Plan and in Hastings District's Long Term Council Community Plan, between community planning and the achievement of the District's Community Outcomes.

"*The Local Government Act 2002, Part 2, Section 10, states:*
The purpose of local government is:
(a) to enable democratic local decision-making and action, by and on behalf of, communities; and
(b) to promote the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of communities, in the present and for the future.

The Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) 2006 – 2016 states:
- Strong Regional Leadership and a Sense of Belonging.
- Co-ordinated regional leadership to achieve economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing of our communities.
- A democratic environment where all people are able to participate in the life of their communities and achieve a sense of belonging.
(Pg21)

A team from within the community will be formed to guide the implementation of the Plan, and monitor its progress. The Plan will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years.

A Community Development Advisor from Council will provide support to the team and the community.

Council has developed plans with Camberley, Flaxmere and Clive communities. The Whakatu Community Plan is a further step in Council's process to fulfil its strategic commitment."
(Hastings District Council, 2006b:5)

Hastings District's Long Term Council Community Plan also clearly references community planning as part of its strategic planning and partnership work.

"The *community outcomes identified in this LTCCP set the vision for all of Council's work. Every activity provided by Council makes a contribution to achieving these outcomes. Council's other planning documents are all part of the long term planning process and feed into each review of the LTCCP. The LTCCP becomes an umbrella for other statutory and non-statutory planning documents. These include the Hastings District Plan, Council's asset management plans, individual community plans, and various other strategies such as the play, youth, walking, cycling and urban development strategies."*
(Hastings District Council, 2006a: 25)

Hastings District Council receives quarterly reports on the progress of its community planning programme compiled by the community development advisor with input from the relevant community planning committee. Each community plan once completed is adopted by Council. Hastings District also reviewed its community planning process, including community and other agency views, and reported the results to Council in April 2007.

The review highlighted concerns and risks associated with the community planning process.
Issues reported included confusion over the Council's role and the mandate of the community planning committees, raising unrealistic expectations, ensuring the representativeness of the community planning process, retaining community volunteers, Council staff buy-in, Council staff turnover delaying the process, and gaining participation from other agencies. Benefits of the programme included increased services and facilities in communities, increased community pride and activity, increased community cooperation, better focus on priority issues and understanding of community needs, identified contact points and improved communication.
(Hastings District Council, 2007)

The recommended improvements in the report to Council largely related to improved role clarification, stronger communication, more information, publicity and celebration of success. Hastings District Council decided to continue supporting community planning in the communities already underway, but to slow new community planning projects so that resources could be focused on supporting the existing community planning areas.

Timberlea, Upper Hutt City
Upper Hutt City Council covers a total area of 54,116 hectares in the north east of the Wellington region. The population was 38,200 on Census night (Statistics New Zealand, 2001). Upper Hutt is not an area of strong population growth, and the Council has typically focused on the provision of core services. Upper Hutt City Council would be regarded as a Type A 'Service Delivery' focused Council in the McNeill and Reid typology.

Timberlea is a suburb in Upper Hutt City, on the northern edge of the residential area known as Maoribank. It sits in a small valley at the foothills of the Rimutakas and is a small community with an estimated 400 houses in its area.

The Community Planning process was begun in the first instance by the Timberlea Residents' Association, assisted by the Department of Internal Affairs. The planning

process grew around the role of the Community House – a focal point for the Residents' Association and the local residents. In 2005, a Strategic and Action Plan for Timberlea was completed. A three part structure including the Residents' Association, Upper Hutt Council and the Wellington 20/20 Trust was then set up to advance a Digital Strategy Application for an e-learning hub.

The Timberlea Residents' Association Strategic and Action Plan notes that at the time the plan was written, Census information was only available for Maoribank. At that time, nearly 40% of Maoribank residents had no qualification, 76% of Maoribank were European, 25% Maori and 8% Pacific. The median income of residents in the area was $20,600 per annum, and unemployment for the area was 10%. Twenty-five percent of families in Maoribank in 2001 were one parent families (Statistics New Zealand, 2001).

The Strategic and Action Plan notes a lack of community services including no dairy, mail centre, doctor or service station within walking distance, and residents having to travel to Upper Hutt township for high school, government and health services.

The Timberlea Community Planning process had two stages. The first was the strategic planning exercise instigated by the newly elected Timberlea Residents' Association, with support from the Department of Internal Affairs and Council. The strategic planning process included letterbox drops, a resident survey, and workshops with other organisations and government departments, leading to a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of Timberlea.

The Strategic and Action Plan had two Goals – 'Community Services for Timberlea', and 'A Vibrant Community Spirit.' Objectives under these goals included access to government agencies, improved transport, a robust Residents' Association, community pride, recreational opportunities and pride in ethnic diversity. Two strong and connected objectives surfaced – to increase the use of the Community House and to provide access to the digital world.

Stage two of the project involved the Wellington 20/20 Trust, a digital access organisation, who were asked by the Mayor of Upper Hutt to work with the Timberlea

Residents' Association. This quickly developed into a project run jointly by the Residents' Association, the 20/20 Trust and Council to develop a plan around the development and future use of the Community House, including an application to government's Digital Strategy Fund to establish the Community House as an e-learning centre.

The project resulted in a new Community Centre building being moved on to the site, a successful Digital Strategy application resulting in a community computer suite, and a new programme of action for the Community Centre and surrounding area.
The project was strongly aligned both in the early stages, and in the Digital Strategy application to Upper Hutt's Community Outcomes process. The Timberlea Strategic and Action Plan cites the Upper Hutt City Vision and Community Outcomes as a key resource, and links its goals and objectives to the Community Outcomes. The Digital Strategy application refers to the Community Outcome "Upper Hutt is Connected with the World". Upper Hutt's Annual Plan 2007/08 also refers to supporting the Timberlea project in its section on Community Development Services.

The community planning project was not reported to Council for adoption. However the Digital Strategy application was approved by Council as Council must agree to being the fund holder for the project. Research participants reported that the Mayor was closely involved with the project and took a personal interest in its progress and outcome.

CHAPTER 8 WHAT DO THE CASE STUDIES TELL US?

Case Studies Analysed Against Success Criteria

The case study information was gathered from documents, surveys, phone and face to face interviews and site visits. All information was categorized and coded and emerging themes noted. Once all the data was logged, a matrix was drawn up of the data against the criteria identified for the research project.

Where the material was largely descriptive, it was summarised and important outliers were noted. Under other criteria data was logged according to how well the criteria were met using *low, medium* and *high* categories. The rating is primarily an indication of how well the criteria were met compared to the other case studies and the logic model: i.e., across the range of data collected, how well did this case study support the criteria? While this is of course a subjective exercise, the categorization was drawn from all the available data sources so had reasonable triangulation.

Using the Pawson approach to synthesizing case study information, the criteria were organized into context, mechanism or process, and outcome variables, and examined to draw out instances of success or failure (Pawson 2006). This was used to critique the logic model and provide comment on the possible strengths and weaknesses of the described outcomes and assumptions.

The Community Planning Context

The Results Matrix – Community Planning Context is attached as Table 1.