Community Forests: Images and Reality

S K Watson

Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning

University College London

Submitted in June 1992
as part of the requirements of the
Master of Philosophy in Town Planning

University of London

ABSTRACT

Forestry has been part of the British landscape heritage since William the Conqueror. He introduced this form of extensive, managed woodlands as "game reserves" for his deer. More recently forestry has been associated with the extensive conifer plantations of the highlands. Forestry is a reflection of certain policy objectives which have specific land-use implications. The community forest represents the next generation of forestry policy.

The community forest proposal represents a vision initiated by the Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission. This vision is to set up multi-purpose forestry around the urban fringes of major connurbations. The "community forest" aims to create a re-generated, aesthetically pleasing well-managed, environmental amenity, via voluntary participation and joint partnerships between the private and public sector initiating voluntary participation. The proposal has been set up to tackle the land-use and management problems of the urban fringe; the need to find a new role for surplus agricultural land and a re-direction of forestry towards a lowland amenity and environmentally sensitive policy. Since its launch in 1989 twelve forest areas have been designated.

This thesis argues, via a political-economy approach, that the realities of these community forests are quite different from the images. This theoretical and contextual approach gives a deeper understanding of how the proposal will be implemented and the possible repercussions of the policy.

Through this contextual analysis, it can be argued, that the community forest proposal represents a new agenda for the urban fringes. The forests could be the beginning of a new management area within which the Greenbelt and local authority planners' authority can be undermined. The community forest proposal represents an idealistic image that in reality could represent a challenge, by Central Government and capital interests, to the autonomy of local authority planners. Community forest could represent a back door challenge to the planning system in urban fringe areas.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their help and time during the preparation and writing of this thesis.

Mike Colins, Philip Lowe and Professor R Munton for their comments and time. The project staff at Thames Chase who were so helpful in providing information. I am also grateful to organisations and individuals who participated so willingly in the interviews.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the library staff at University of London, who were so understanding. Many thanks are due to Mrs Janet Brown who proved so patient in typing up my thesis.

Finally I must thank Andy Pratt, my thesis supervisor for his encouragement, support and constructive criticism which he has given throughout the preparation and writing of this thesis.

S K Watson
May 1992

CONTENTS

Chapter 6

Examining the Realities

Chapter 7

Conclusion

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

1.0 "The trees of Britain: A radical new proposal"

This was the headline in the Daily Telegraph's Weekend Supplement Magazine. (C Clover March 10th 1990). This eye-catching article touched on the importance of what it perceived as Britains' woodland heritage. A heritage, that the telegraph article argued had been badly effected by poor economic and aesthetic management of both our commercial and indigenous forests and woodlands. However, the article stated that a radical new proposal by the Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission was about to change this legacy.

The proposal was for twelve new "multi-purpose" forests to be planted around the urban fringes of some of our major connurbations. Forests that would be planted on both public and private land and would be called "community forests". The vision that the community forest proposal offered was a potential for amenity, countryside access, a recreational resource and an aesthetically pleasing landscape in the form of woodlands on land close to urban centres. (Countryside Commission 1989) However, these proposals went further; suggesting a radical re-think of planning and land-use policy that would address the problems of surplus agricultural land; vacant and derelict land; mineral and old industrial sites and areas of the Greenbelts which was not perceived as very "green". Forestry, it seemed answered the problems of the urban fringe. While community forests also revived Britains' woodland

heritage (C Clover 10.3.90).

To understand the significance of this proposal, it must be understood that Forestry is a part of agricultural use, as a result is exempt from the town and country planning process. The new forest scheme presents a signficant influence on land-use but without direct town and country planning control.

Two years have passed since the Telegraph article was written and the proposal should be beginning to take shape. The community forest should have moved from the drawing boards of the policymakers and provide more than just a "visionary" concept that can be published in a weekend supplement magazine.

This thesis aims to examine the community forest concept: from its origins to implementation. The study aims to evaluate the community forest, its image and its realities.

However, no study can be undertaken in isolation. The community forest proposals bring into focus many important issues relating to land-use policy within the urban fringe. By placing the community forest proposal within its political and economic context, will enable not only a greater understanding of the forestry proposal but also the system within which it is being proposed.

The community forest places into perspective the mechanisms, policies and ideologies of land-use within the urban fringe. As a land-use and policy

analysis, community forests offer an interesting and topical source of material which can be used to provide a greater understanding of the planning system.

On a more theoretical level any discussion of policy and systems gives an insight into the agents and structures which are involved in the land-use process. The community forest proposal offers an insight, (and perhaps an explanation) into the power-relations which evolve, create and re-shape policy decision.

A key argument put forward here is that the benign image of the community forest is part and parcel of a radical attempt to restructure the role of planning in the urban fringe; particularly within the Green Belts. The net result could be a total loss of the Green Belt as we currently know it.

The aims and objectives of this study are:

- to examine the community forest proposal, its image and reality.
- to examine the changing policy influences within the urban fringes.
- give a greater understanding of the planning system by evaluating the dominant power-relations in land-use policy decisions.

1.1 Importance of trees to society

"Trees are the key to our survival. They came before us and we have used, abused and loved them for thousands of years. They have provided sustenance - food, shelter and medicine and the air we breathe. They are our past and our future".

N Siden 1988 p 26

This section aims to act as a stepping stone into the debate concerning community forest by outlining the place forestry has in our society. It also aims to evaluate the origin of British forestry policy providing a contextual background to the thesis.

1.1(i) Images of Forestry

Trees and forestry have a special place in British culture. We have individual preservation orders to protect trees under the planning system and a multitude of voluntary organisations associated with trees.

For example:

(i) Woodland Trust

(ii) Man of the Trees

(iii) The Tree Council

(iv) National Small Wood Association

(v) Green Wood Trust

The storms of 1987 (16th October) and 1990 seem to highlight the importance trees have in the British landscape. These storms had a dramatic effect on the woodland of lowland Britain. After the storms the Government pledged 2.3 million pounds towards a planting

programme called "Task Force Trees". The British Trust for Nature for Nature Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) began a programme called "Let's plant a million trees". Private companies have also been formed to protect trees and encourage planting. For example, "Traditional British Broadleaf Heritage Ltd" is a company which market small plots of land in which a tree is planted. In Cornwall a nine metre square plot with a lease of 75 years, costs £30 per plot. In return for the money the company puts a plaque by the new planted tree stating the owners name and sends the owner a heritage planting certificate. (Bishop 1990 pg 16). Trees, it would seem represent an important part of British landscape and the British psyche.

Trees also offer a powerful symbol to society: K Thomas' Survey of English attitudes towards the natural world between 1500-1800, concluded that trees provided a visible symbol of human society. They represent stability in a period of accelerated social change (Cosgrove 1989). A more recent study carried out by Sullivan (1983) highlighted the importance trees had in representing a sense of continuity and cultural identity.

Forestry has strong associated images: Miller (1988 p 21) argues that our perceptions give more than just a symbolic value to trees. When they are grouped together Miller argues trees obtain a sensory quality. Grouped trees, woodland and forest offer quality landscape features which can be appreciated in both a natural and man-made form. He

goes to on argue that the symbolic and sensory associations are also joined by the instrumental function. The tree is the "tree of life" (Miller 1988 p 22) and therefore woods and forests provide shade, shelter, protection, food, employment and recreation.

Cosgrove (1989) has taken these symbolic themes further and analysed the importance of features such as trees and forestry in the British landscape. He has evaluated their contribution by examining their representation in both art and literature. He highlights the cultural importance that trees and woodland play in creating a symbolic landscape. Trees can act as symbols of power and wealth. The development or ownership of a grand park or forest lead to associations of prosperity and also a prosperity of the countryside and townscape. For example Gainsborough's paintings often seated the subject in front of the grandest tree on the property. Trees also act as symbols of power and stability. Cosgrove points to Constables rural scenes which highlight the dominance of trees in the landscape. Cosgrove argues that the tree, if it still exists today, gives a sense of continuity to the landscape.

Two less subjective studies have been carried out by English Nature and the Forestry Commission into the people's perceptions of forestry. English Nature state:

> "The traditional image of a forest is of a thickly wooded wilderness in which the Normans and Plantagenets galloped around in pursuit of deer and wild-boar, while Robin hood and his merry men plotted mischief beneath a Greenwood tree."
>
> P Marren 1990 p 59

The Forestry Commission's on-going project on people's perceptions of the forest are to be used as part of the Forestry Commission's appraisal in April 1992. The findings are as yet unpublished and are confidential. However, Mr Broadhurt, the project co-ordinator, highlighted that many forests were perceived as large, often man-made conifer plantations with little tree variation. (Broadhurt 1992).

These two contradictory images highlight the past and present of British forestry policy. Obviously each researcher is trying to achieve something different from the conclusions of their study: the Forestry Commission is desperately trying to justify a new revenue, generating role and direction for the organisation; while English Nature is trying to use its research data to justify policies and monies to protect ancient woodlands.

The definitions of forestry described above therefore reflect the research agenda of the organisations. However, the images do help to reflect the differing attitudes that the British public have to forestry. These range from the idealism of the past and the notions of a forest heritage to the productionist policy of the late 20th Century.

Forestry is therefore an important part of British landscape; its images can be positive or negative. Any new forestry policy can call upon the strong associations British people feel towards trees within the landscape.

The next section aims to establish how these two differing images were founded. Placing the symbolic associations into some kind of context.

1.1(ii) History of British Forestry Policy

Forestry history is a long and involved subject. (James 1981; Rachman 1990; Marren 1990). The purpose of this section is not to exhaustively document forestry policy, but rather to highlight relevant policies and focus upon the evolvement of 20th Century forestry policy.

However, as an aside it is important to note that "forestry" in this country refers to a specific type of management or policy rather than a physical wooded area. The original forests introduced by William The Conqueror were legal jurisdictions. A forest area was a place where deer could graze unharmed. The actual wooded land-use of these areas of this time only accounted for 3% of England's land use (Rachman 1990 p 130).

The forests had their own laws and forest courts. They included within their remit villages, heathland, moorland and intensively farmed agricultural land, part owned by the Crown and part by the feudal

Lords. It would seem that in is these medieval forests that the myths and legends of Robin Hood were born. It was this form of forest administration (or Crown policy) which formed the ideas of the heritage of English forestry. As Rachman (1991) argues there have only been very few periods of English history where forestry was managed for a specific purpose. This idea of a forest as a Game Reserve for Royal hunters was its first function and has generated images which are still associated with forestry today.

The other periods of forest policy have generated very different functions for forestry. The main function being that of production of timber - first started in 1482 as Royal Statutes safeguarded coppiced areas from grazing. Timber was used for the building of ships. During this period the English oak provided the timber for many boats to defend Britain and hence, it played a crucial role in the economy as a resource, (like iron was was to be in a later period) and it also provided the resource to explore new lands (Marren 1990). This period was also the beginning of de-afforestation of England. It was not until the 20th Century that forestry policy evolved to try to create a positive sustainable policy for re-afforestation. It was also not until the 20th Century that forestry was considered as a national policy. The original function as a forest of a protected deer park had changed considerably.

By the 20th Century forestry had become strongly associated with woodland. Woodland for the production of timber, a concept that had

been exploited since 1482, had never really been developed as a forest policy. Rachman's (1990) evaluation that there are only two periods of strong forest administration seems quite valid. The first being the medieval forests with all its forest laws and associated life style. The second being the 20th Century drive for a co-ordinated, constructive woodland or productionist policy. It is this 20th Century policy which is valid in placing the thesis and its relevant debates into context.

In 1900 Britain imported 90% of its timber and forest coverage was at its lowest ever recorded (Stewart 1989). The gradual de-afforestation of the earlier centuries had taken its toll on Britain's timber resources. The threat of War, with its demands on natural resources, such as timber, meant that economic resources were evaluated by Government policy makers. The combination of these two factors, the reliance on imports and imminent threat of War meant that a strategic and cohesive forestry policy was developed.

The policy was developed by foresters trained for the Indian Forestry Plantation Service in the German tradition. This German ideology put more emphasis on production and the merits of plantations and less on amenity. The outbreak of war and the isolation of this colonial school of thought meant these forestry policies remained stagnant and did not evolve.

The Germans had discovered that their 19th Century practices had proved to be mistakes. Environmentally and asethetically the forest plantation did not fit with the natural wooded landscapes. The German scientists also realised that the straight line planting was unnaturaly to the contours of the physical landform they concluded this created problems of run-off, soil erosion and degredation of the landscape.

The Germans evaluated that efficient forestry could be accomplished by creating a better environment and productive uses of forests did not have to alleviate the consumptive recreational resource use of forests. The German foresters therefore changed and evolved their forestry management and policies accordingly. The German's began to follow the more continental approaches devised by the French.

The French had encouraged the guidance of natural processes and native species rather than large scale conifer plantations (Bishop 1990 p 916). These methods would have been much more appropriate to British ancient woods and in the long term more productive than the plantation approaches.

Policy decisions are influenced by dominant interest groups, at this time the colonial school (see Eldridge 1987) and its relevant interests were a dominant factor in forestry policy. The colonial school of thought was dominated by the productivist, elitist attitudes used in the British Colonies. Plantations were an extension of the traditional

aristocratic land-owning estates. They were identified as a "productivist" resource to be farmed and thus to yield a crop (Stewart 1989).

Production of timber was more important than amenity and quality of landscape more associated lowland meadows and parklands. The two interest of amenity and production were not seen to intertwine, unlike in Europe, and thus British forestry policy evolved from old-fashioned "productionist" ideas (Blunden & Curry 1988).

After World War I the need was identified to create a strategic, statutory policy concerning forestry production, in case of future Wars. Thus in 1919 the forestry commission was established. This was an unusual public body which had two distinct even conflicting activities created within the one Government department (Blunden & Curry 1988). On the one hand its role was as a Forest Authority: advising, negotiating and administering (often through grants and research) forest policy. On the other hand it was also a Forest Enterprise acting as a commercial company with specific responsibilities regarding production and employment. Financial constraints meant it could only afford land in upland areas but this also fitted into the landscape perceptions of the time.

Upland areas were considered part of the "wilderness" areas which should be tamed and brought into production. The areas were also

dominated by absentee landlords so aesthetic value was not an important part of the forestry process (Steward 1989).

The 1919 Forestry Act set up the Forestry Commission and it was given a target of 0.75 million hectares per annum for new plantation and 0.8 million hectares per annum for restocking existing forests. These policies have been kept in tact until quite recently with only "cosmetic changes" (Blunden & Curry 1988 p 57).

The cosmetic changes started in the 1960's when Dame Sylvia Gome was appointed to advise on forest landscaping Forestry policy was basically kept the same in order to reduce the timbers import bill and maintain rural employment. A strong forestry and timber lobby has developed to encourage the pursuit of these productionist aims and capital interests. This was commented upon by Zuckerman Committee (1957) which questioned the need for a forestry programme and called for greater integration of forestry and other land-use functions. However, like the agricultural lobby (see chapter two) the forestry lobby is very powerful (Bishop 1990 p 22). The forestry lobby represents the interests of capital and make up part of the powerful rural capital. As a result, despite evidence to the contrary, (e.g. 1972 cost-benefit forestry study by the Public Accounts Committee) forestry policy has been allowed to carry on with its expansionist policies (Bishop 1990 p 21).

Even as late as 1980 the Forestry Commission was pushing for political support for an expansionist programme. However, as chapter two emphasises, there was a political, economic and ideological need for change during the 1980's leaving the way open for a new policy concerning woodlands in Great Britain.

1.2 Conclusion

Forestry is a distinct product of policy. In the past forestry policy has been formulated to create a game-reserve for royal deer and more recently expand the production of timber. The community forest has been proposed as a radical new forestry policy. An urban fringe multi-purpose forestry resource on both public and private land for the benefit of both productionist and consumptive interests.

This chapter has identified the conflicts and contradiction that past forestry policy has created: the forest is a symbolic representation of Britain's heritage while it is also a reflection of the explosion of the countryside (re: the conifer plantations in the highlands); perceptions and images of forestry are therefore both negative and positive. The distributioned effects of forestry policy are important in terms of a landscape resource and environmental amenity, yet foresty is not controlled by planners. Forestry, like agriculture is outside the remit of the planning regulations. So despite the land-use implications forestry policy is created by Central Government.

The community forest proposal is for twelve multi-purpose forests on the edges of our urban centres. It is advocated as a policy which will benefit both consumptive and productive interests, will pay creedance to the symbolic heritage value of forests yet by being planted on private as well as public land (by way of voluntary participation) productionist interests can also benefit and have the freedom whether or not to participate in the scheme.

The community forest proposal creates a Central Government policy advocated as a radical new forestry initiative. This image on the surface predominately talks about "forestry". However, the realities of the policy could be far more widespread than merely planting trees on urban fringe land.

Forestry as a policy has always had a distinct function (or several functions) - why should the community forest proposal be any different. Forestry by working outside the planning system, creates an interesting insight into the policy makers: their motivation and ideas about land-use in the urban fringe. The community forest is the next generation of forestry policy but like past forestry policy it is implemented to serve a specific set of interests and functions. The community forest "image" could be quite different from the real policy function.

The community forest image is centered around the re-afforestation of the urban fringe and the re-establishment of forest heritage while maintaining production. The realities lie within the political and economic climate within which the policy is being proposed.

To understand the community forest proposal it is therefore important to reflect upon the political system within which policies are made; the policy makers and the interests they serve. This policy making process, concerning community forests, effects land-use and this has an important impact on local environment. However, the planning system is prevented from controlling forestry policy. Forestry is perhaps a Central Government way of influencing land-use planning and managing the environment. The implications of this could have far reaching effects for planners and the planning system.

The community forest proposal offers the opportunity to examine the policy makers and dominant power-relations within the urban fringe. The "community forest" proposal is not just suggesting a type of land-use but is a district policy. A policy which could have an enormous impact on the urban fringes and subsequently the role and function of planners and the planning system within this area.

This thesis aims to address the image and reality of community forest proposal, looking beyond the imagery and packaging to analyse the policy's implications. This thesis aims to examine the community forest proposal; its implications, their land-use in the urban fringe and thus reflect upon the dominant power relations in policy making which in turn will provide an insight into the pressures and challenges of the planning system. Forestry is not just a land-use but rather a distinct policy; a policy which in the past has created strong associations (both positive and negative) and as a land-use policy offers an interest insight into policy making and planning system.

The following chapters aim to examine the context which put the community forest policy into the agenda. This contextual approach enables the policy, its implications and possible repercussions for the planning system can be evaluated. The structure of the thesis will be that chapters two and three will provide a political and contextual basis for the debate while chapters four, five and six will evaluate the community forest policy in relation to this political analysis.

POLITICAL AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.0 Introduction

The late 1980's have been termed a watershed for rural land use policies (Bluden & Curry 1988). The Countryside Commission Policy Review Panel (1987) viewed this period as more significant than any other time since the enclosures. This chapter aims to outline why these changes were seen as so significant within the context of the urban fringes. Furthermore why agencies felt that there was a need for change and the ideologies and impetus for those policy changes.

2.1 Planning and the State

Any policy evaluation should be placed within the state-society relationship. As Cloke (1987 p 3) states:

> "No longer are policy decisions characterised as neutral and as political acts of resource arbitration or allocation."

The conceptualisation, role and understanding of the state helps to create a greater understanding of politics of decision making and subsequently its effect on the planning system. Therefore to evaluate community forestry policy in isolation fails to give any credence to the political decision making process and politicalisation of planning decisions.

It can be argued that the planning system has always at base represented a conflict of interests. Legally its mechanisms support private property rights while morally its philosophy supports the "common good" or "public interest" (by trying to create egalitarian distributional effects). The effects of this conflict of interest alters depending upon the political ideologies in which planning takes place. The planning system functions within the wider context of state society relations. The theories of the state help explain how one set of power relations effect whose interests the planning system services: whether the planning system supports the interests of a welfare state or a market economy or tries to balance the interests of both.

> "Land use planning ... is carried out by the state at the national and local level. What, therefore, is "the state"?"
>
> Ambrose (1986 p 22).

2.1(i) What is the State?

The concept of the modern State entails a notion of power. The role is to frame the rules of society (legislative) and to apply them (executive). The state can on one level, therefore be perceived as the operations of Government (Held 1984 p 29). However S Hall (1984) argues that conceptualisation of the State and Government are quite different where they embrace a much wider range of functions institutional machinery of "Government" functions. The State is a wider concept: it is a historical abstraction of human organisation,

hierarchial power. It is only as it has become legitimised and codified that State and Government have become interwoven concepts.

The Government bureaucracy and demonstrations are all part of the workings of a modern state. Government is a legitimate function of the State. This state apparatus can acquire a distinctive political and policy characteristic of its own. The State and the apparatus of Government create a power base to serve distinct interests.

The evaluation of these "distinct" interests the State serves depends upon the conceptualisation of the State. Various theorists conceptualise the State in different ways: (Hall 1984).

There are three basic models of power of the state and policy. Briefly these are:

(i) **Pluralist-Model** - which argues that power is dispersed and fragmented. The State acts as a referee (Pahil 1961). Power is therefore freely available to all aspects of society: through democratic elections, public participation and pressure group activity. This model pre-supposed that all individuals can gain access to public policy making. As a result the state works as a non-biased arbitrator. In this model the planner is a technician responding to the will of people and groups.

(ii) **Elitist/Institutional Model** - power is held by a minority group and thus these powerful groups benefit from political influence or power. When this power is transposed from one individual elite to an institution, the institution then functions in order to benefit economically, socially and politically the interests of the elite. The State therefore is an institutional representation of powerful elites and expresses their interests. (See Miliband 1977).

A combination of the pluralist and elitist models is the managerial or corporatist view where the "game-keepers" or professional managers (e.g. the planners) control policy. Either trade unions or employers represent a "power bloc" which can access, manipulate and influence policy outcomes in favour of their own interests (see Pahl 1975).

(iii) **The Structuralist Model** - the previous models highlight the power available to the individual, albeit within different degrees of constraint. The structuralist position is that class distributions represent the only real form of societal divisions. These division can explain the power distribution and political policy making process. The state therefore represents the current balance of class interests and thus policy favour the interest of these sections of society (Cloke 1987 p 10). This

argument has been influential to such theorists as Castells (1978) and Poulantzas (1973) who in their different ways took this basic marxist argument one stage further.

Structuralism has been divided into two theories: the class theory and the capital logic. The capital logic is argued from a structuralist position. That state has certain powerful relationships which are necessary for the capitalist production process to achieve its requirements (Abrose 1986 p 2) while the class theories advocate that the State does not represent the individual but rather it is used by different classes to achieve their ends.

These arguments represent "the State" as a puppet to either the interests of a certain class or a capital. Neither of these theories give space for the individual action or the relative autonomy of the State from capital and class interests. Gramisci (1973) has attempted to overcome this by his idea of Hegemony. He suggests that the political struggle is the result of a complex relationship of forces rather than a simple class confrontation (A Prat 1987 p 7). Hegemony suggests that there is not just one ruling class but a couple of dominant interests which have to be pulled together in order to achieve a higher aim (e.g. freedom/progress), incorporating along the way diverse interests in the name of the common goal.

Pluralism and Elitism fail to evaluate the fole of powerful divisions within society. They pay little attention to the dominance of capital, thus within this particular study a more structuralist viewpoint will be adopted. However, even in this brief analysis of the theories of the State, it can be seen that structuralism is also not a perfect illustration of the theories of the State. So introducing the idea of hegemony, the internal conflict can also be evaluated. The State seems to function in the interest of one particular group or capital accumulation but in fact under the surface there is a much more conflicting power-relation who are drawn together in a vague allegance in the persuasion that they can fulfil a higher goal.

Obviously this is only a very brief summary of the theories of the State, and there is not time or space to evaluate the topic further. However, it is vital to understand the basic theories, of the State. This places into perspective the standpoint the thesis is to be written In order to identify the interests of the State, evaluate policies and thus understand more critically the policy making process.

This thesis will adopt a structuralist hegemony view of the State and via a political economy approach to analyse aim to evaluate an analysis the community forest policy.

2.1(ii) The British State

Having conceptualised the State and analysed its role in relation it is important to analyse this in the UK context and examine the role and function of the State in relation to the British Government.

The British State in recent years has increasingly represented the interests of capital. No longer are "capital" and the State seen as autonomous entities rather as Ambrose 1986 points out, "there has been a shifting and blurring of both function and personnel" Ambrose (1989 p 22).

During the 1980's there was a dominance of monetarism as a form of economic management. This economic philosophy was a crucial part of neo-liberal or new right policies (Thornley 1991) Neo-liberalism had grown out of traditional philosophies of the old Liberal party in its demise at the beginning of this century and rise of the Labour party as the new opposition to the Tory party meant these philosophies, of free-market ideology gravitated towards a new home in the Conservative party who has a traditional commitment to free enterprise.

The Liberal views of possessive individualism and competition could be combined within the Conservative party. The Conservative party was traditionally paternalistic, more interventionist and authoritarian. This contradictory element formed a party political

compromise. The more right wing element of the party remained marginal until Mrs Thatcher and Sir Keith Joseph ideologies of monetarism and right wing philosophies were adopted at leadership level after the Heath Government of 1970-74. (Hull 1988).

Thatcherism adopted the somewhat paradoxical situation of arguing for the free market and strong state (A Gamble). She combined the strongest elements of the right and left of the Conservative party. Thatcherism represented monetarism, free-market domination, privatisation and "laissez faire" economics while it also retained the old paternalist views of the strong state: Law and order and authoritarian interventionist leadership.

> "Thatcherism is a quite distinct, specific and novel combination of ideological elements"
>
> (S Hali 1988 p 42)

Not allowing for an indepth historical or theoretical debate in relation to Thatcherism, this summary primarily represents the political ideology within which decision making process was being made during the 1980's. The State was created to function for the interests of capital, Government policy and philosophy supported this via neo-Liberal philosophy and emergence of the new right. However, the Government position remained central to power, organisation and distribution protecting traditional interests and philosophies in the paternalistic view.

This contradictory element of Thatcherism is what Gramsci (described earlier) meant by the complete interaction of a number of classes which creates a complex "hegemony". Hall quotes Althusser's essay relating to this:

> "Ideology cannot be regarded as a simple given fact, as a system of exactly defined institutions which could automatically duplicate the violent rule of the same class or which would have been installed by clear political consciousness... instead hegemony is the result of an internal struggle to overcome the contradictions of the bourgeois class fractions and produce unity within the bourgeoisie as a ruling class."
>
> (Hall 1988 p 48)

Thus, this hegemony is constructed. Thatcherism, therefore created a around two conflicting ideologies - neo-Liberal and paternalistic - with the result of dramatically influencing policy making in Britain in the 1980's.

This political economy viewpoint can contribute to the understanding of economy, society and the State (Curry 1981) both in the fields of urban (Healy 1989) and rural (Cloke 1986) planning. In studying the theoretical context of policy changes a broader understanding of the mechanisms and motivation for change within the planning system can be established.

Hence, this explains how the neo-Liberal monetarists managed to gain control. Yet the paternalist ideologies remained in place to create a paradoxical situation. It is this dual ideological element to the

Conservative party which is fundamental to explaining their philosophy to land-use planning, land-use planning policies and forestry and agricultural policy. This political context is guild to the philosophies of the policy making process and function of new policies such as community forest. It is this political evaluation which enables community forest scheme to be evaluated.

2.1(iii)Thatcherism and Planning System

Planning under Thatcherism has been one area where the political and economic ideologies of Central Government have become apparent in policy decision. The planning system has been constantly challenged during the 1980's (A Thurley) yet remained in place as a tool of Government policy. The planning system represents an example of the conflict and compromise of Thatcherite policy. The political and theoretical debate highlighted therefore plays a critical role in the future of the planning system and role of planners.

The planning system is an area of ideological debate and policy contradictions - if regulations are seen to interfere with the "natural" market forces and as such were an affront to new right ideologies. Yet, the system perpetuates a strong state regulation and supports paternalist ideology. One answer to the problem would be to dismantle the regulations altogether. As P Healey (1983) points out there are contradictions over the attitude of the conservations concerning

planning. Healey highlights the Governments desire to relax regulations but also their use of the planning system to interfere to support certain developments through the planning appeal decisions of the Secretary of State for the Environment. The planning system can be a useful mechanism to interfere to help capital interests.

This contradictory attitude regarding the role of planning system also helps to highlight some of the contradictions within the Conservative ideologies (Thornley 1991). The Conservative support of the market and the capitalist interests has been well documented as was the increasingly authoritarian attitude of Mrs Thatcher and the centralisation of the state via the fiscal controls and alienation of the localities (Duncan and Goodwin 1982). Thus, pushing for a free-market economy with the minimal amount of legislations yet in practice creating a state with an increased centralised function with the power to intervene when it was required.

Contradictions make policy decisions regarding planning and land-use in the urban fringes more understandable. On the one hand there was a drive to make decisions market-led and on the other hand an increasingly interventionist role as regards the Secretary of State.

Alongside the political and economic context already described, two other important issues must be raised. Firstly, the increased

politicalisation of the local state (Gyford 1984) which has put planning decisions within the political forum. These planning decisions have highlighted the divisions between different parties and within the same parties demonstrating the tensions between the central and local state and the conflicts within the parties.

Secondly, the evolving role of the EEC has begun to create a legal and economic force with the potential to supersede the power of the central state in favour of the local state and help influence Government policy by creating large share of economic and political pressures, and opinions. Thus, the analysis of changing policy takes place within a complex web of power relations.

It is within this concept of a watershed that significant changes have taken place in rural land use policies and a new agenda for farming, forestry and (perhaps) greenbelts has come to the fore.

This next section aims to examine these changing policies.

2.2 Agriculture and land-use policies

Post-war agricultural policies have encouraged, until 1987, a productivist and intensive farming system. The Government encouraged by the Country Landowners Association (CLA) and National Farming Union (NFU), saw a need for a self-sufficiency in agricultural foodstuffs after the war. As a result,

expansionist and protectionist policies were pursued. The State, it was perceived, was serving the interests of the public by providing an adequate food supply and the traditional capital interests by maintaining the power-relations of a landowning class.

Post-war policies followed the Scott report of 1942 stating "every agricultural acre counts". This was reinforced in 1975 by the White Paper **Food from our own resources** followed by a Government circular **Development involving agricultural land** (75/76) emphasising the protection of high grade agricultural land and the need to retain as much land as possible in agricultural cultivation. As Bluden and Curry (1988 p 3) stated:

> "Even as late as 1979, the White Paper Farming and the Nation called for a modest expansion in domestic food production."

This theme was continued when later in that year Terry Wiggin (Parliamentary Secretary to MAFF) stated the continuing loss of agricultural land was totally unacceptable.

These expansionist policies were not without their critics. Professor Dennison (1942) indicated that the "preservation of agricultural land at all cost was likely to be sub-optimal in economic terms if it thwarted the opportunity for a more balanced and more populated rural economy" (Bluden & Curry 1988 p 3). Adding to this debate in the 1970's came the emergence of surpluses in some cereal crops and with production in the EEC.

Yet the traditional power-relations still meant that the Conservative

Government of 1979 supported the protectionist policies. (In 1979 agricultural subsidies were nearly doubled (Bishop 1990 p 55). These traditional power-relations were represented by the strong power block of the NFU and CLA and many conservative MP's where the local constituency had strong farming interests. They had a powerful lobby through both MP's and to MAFF directly. The Conservative party had always in the past bolstered the interests of landowners and farmers. (For an example of how this was achieved it is useful to refer to Cowe (1986 p 133).

The political context surrounding the implementation of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in which political appointments in the Countryside Commission and English Nature assured that the conservation movement despite its opposition to some clauses were forced to tow the line (Cowe 1986 p 154). Mrs Thatcher even complimented the farming industry on their efficiency and productivity when attending the agricultural show in 1980 (Bluden & Curry 1988).

However, this status quo was challenged in the mid 1980's as perceptions, requirements and numer-relations within the State changed. (The changes were the result of a number of factors: Mrs Thatcher's battle with EEC especially over the CAP policy; the increasing support of Green issues within the electorate (culminating in the 1989 European Elections); the dominance of the new-right after an overwhelming victory for the Tory party in the 1983 General Election).

In 1985 Government expenditure on agriculture amounted to 40.6% of the GDP of the agricultural industry in stark contrast to manufacturing sector where Government expenditure only amounted to 1.9% of its GDP. In 1987/8 the direct cost of agricultural support n the UK had reached 17.3 billion pounds (MAFF 1989) while the amount of surplus within Europe made disturbing reading: In 1986, 16,780,000 tonnes of grain were surplus and 1,100,000 tonnes of milk powder. At a European level 70% of the agricultural budget in 1987 was spent on CAP (Common Agricultural policy). Clearly, to a Government dedicated to limited intervention, market forces and supply side economics, agricultural policies in juxtaposition to their political and economic ideologies. A change of policy was therefore adopted. This emphasises the battle within the Tory party. The neo-liberalists free market versus the paternalist limited interventionist view.

A number of other factors helped to bring about this change. According to Bluden and Curry (1988) there had, in the 1980's, been an increase in the rural population and despite restrictive planning policies the economic base of rural areas was beginning to expand. Agricultural employment had fallen to only 2.8% of the total workforce in 1988 and thus there had been a rethink about the autonomy of agricultural employment in rural areas. This had been coupled with Mrs Thatcher's strict "housekeeping policies" (Thornley 1991) and the continued growth of new capital interests in the countryside meant the state could begin to change policies concerning agriculture.

Mrs Thatcher had made her opinions clear at Bruges. Food surpluses and

subsidies did not make economic or political sense to neo-liberals. This stance indicated the threat to the CLA and NFU power and influence over Government policy.

At the same time as these political and economic pressures, the perceptions of farmers as guardians of the countryside had also begun to change. Organisations such as the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) had put forward statistics regarding the quality of the rural environment which highlighted their views of what the countryside should look like. Over the last fifty years 95% of lowland have been destroyed and 50% of ancient woodland has been destroyed by conifers and farmland and since 1947, 109,000 miles of hedgerows have been "ripped up". Selective use of statistics like these helped create a new emphasis for conservation and a justification for a change in agricultural policy.

MAFF took a lot of the blame for the overproduction of certain foodstuffs. Organisations such as the Countryside Review Panel (1989) stated that the prime cause of overproduction was the advice, technology, and research given out by MAFF. The Government had to implement a policy change which would seem to let the "market dictate" but not impose great increases in food costs to the consumer.

The start of this freeing up of the agricultural industry began in the EEC when a general agreement on "Tariffs and Trade" (GATT) was made to modify

distribution and create greater liberalisation of trade with an aim to increase international discipline on all direct and indirect sub-studies (Bluden and Curry 1988). This needed the political will to tackle strong European farming lobbies with 13 million pounds per annum being spent on storage and disposal of surpluses. The economic incentives to reform were greater than the old allegiances (Bishop 1990 p 56). The introduction of milk quotas and a tax on the production of wheat in 1986 was the first direct challenge to farming interests. European and British relations between the farming lobby and the state had begun to change.

The growth of the conservation movement gave weight to the reforms. In 1986 a Daily Telegraph poll showed that 79% of the people they questioned felt the "British Countryside" was under threat. This was reflected in the European election of 1989, when 15% of those voted for the Green (Marren 1990 p 184). It has been argued that much of this Green vote was generated by the media focus on worldwide conservation problems (e.g. acid rain, Greenhouse effect, hole in the ozone.

However, this was also due to the pressure from development and perceived erosion of Greenbelt policies but also partly directed at the concerns over farming methods. (Bishop 1990) The Agriculture Act (1980) was the beginning of a significant change in domestic policy regarding agriculture. In section 17 it was stated that promotion of a stable and efficient industry should compliment development of the social and economic interests of rival areas paying regard to conservation and enjoyment of the countryside (Bishop 1990).

This was followed in 1987 by Circular 16/87 reforming circular 75/76 **Development involving agricultural land**. This was reproduced in Policy Guidance Note Seven (P.P.G. 7) **Rural Enterprise and Development**. This revised policy stressed that it was no longer necessary to retain as much land as possible in production, just the higher grade agricultural land. Importantly, a new requirement was put forward "the need to protect the countryside for its own sake rather than primarily for the productive value of the land."

Research undertaken by Wye College London pointed to the fact that assuming the current increase in agricultural output, about 23% of agricultural land should be taken out of production by the year 2000 in order to reduce agricultural surpluses. This has created the idea of a "surplus" of agricultural land. Land which according to P.P.G 7 is no longer automatically protected.

This idea of surplus agricultural land being interpreted in different ways by local authority planning authorities. Some local authorities view it as an opportunity to positive management (e.g. Berkshire City Council 1991; Hertfordshire County Council 1990; Bedfordshire County Council 1990) while other more rural or agriculturally based areas saw the changes in policy as a threat to farming livelihoods, farm viability and traditional protection of the countryside (e.g. Lincolnshire County Council 1991 and Cleveland County Council 1990).

Local authorities have responded to these changes in different ways, however in general terms a trend can be identified which points to more "rural"

authorities developing planning policies to protect agriculture while authorities in marginal urban-fringe areas, where demand for development land is high, have tried to create new countryside protection policies by promoting a new conservation and leisure function for land coming out of agricultural use. (The CPRE are initiating research on local authority policies. It was from their general conclusions that these statements could be made. There were not actual e.g. that they cited).

New policies on an international (EEC), national and local level have been put forward. For example, set-aside schemes; a drive for less intensive farming; farm diversification and alternative land-use that an affect and call for new non-agricultural uses of agricultural land. Clearly, a new agenda is being developed for agricultural land and where pressures on land are greatest (e.g. the urban-fringe) the need for new land-use policies are very high.

2.3 Forestry and land use policies

In recent years forestry has also been subjected to a change in policy. Its expansion has been encouraged while its objectives and administration have been dramatically changed.

Although forestry is part of the productive land-uses in the countryside, it is a distinct entity from agriculture. Its policy is the result of a number of influences (including agricultural policy) but as was highlighted in chapter one forestry is a district policy and as a result will be evaluated as such. Forestry policies have changed and evolved in a different way from agricultural policy

and although the policies are influenced by the same political process they have been effected in different ways. This section aims to highlight the policy changes and evaluate them in light of the political and agricultural analysis previously outlined in chapter two thus giving a contextual argument for the community forest policy.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that traditional literature concerning forestry is concentrated around mechanistic analysis. Forestry policy is traditionally evaluated via economic appraisal such as cost benefit studies (e.g. CAG 6 1980). Any literature review of forestry policy is dominated by technical studies of forestry planting, economic schedules and practical guides for foresters (e.g. Ackers 1949; Ryke 1969; Miles 1967). To place forestry into a political context is a fairly new phenomena (Bluden & Curry 1988). This evaluation is therefore a valuable analysis of policy via a more political context thus providing a more meaningful and credible argument using more qualitative analysis rather than relying on the quantitative data created by policy evaluation of the traditional forestry policy literature.

Forestry, like agriculture, pursued a productivist and expansionist policy after the war (see chapter one). However by 1986 the economic and political climate had changed significantly. Seven years of "New Right" policies had eroded the powers of the forestry lobby in a similar way to change in power-relations concerning agricultural interests. The efficiency related to public spending was being examined in the forestry commission and forestry policy was being re-evaluated. Both the private sector forestry subsidies and public

enterprise sector of the forestry commission were under threat.

In 1986, a review cost benefit assessment of the forestry commission's objectives and achievements was undertaken by the National Audit Office and an independent consultant. This report was highly critical of the economics of providing subsidies; it also stated that investment in forestry was difficult to justify as a financial operation and its effects on the balance of payments was sharply questioned. The report also challenged the traditional view that planting alleviated some of the rural unemployment problems as forestry's contribution to employment was evaluated as "small" .

There are obvious problems in trying to use cost-benefit approaches when evaluating forestry (Bluden & Curry 1988) as environmental and amenity potential is difficult to evaluate. However, the 1986 policy review also stated that there were no environmental or strategic considerations that justified acceptance of a low rate of return on new investment in state forestry (Bishop 1990 p 25). The report also evaluated private forestry although its findings were somewhat inconclusive:

> "It was not clear whether the costs to the Exchequer from present grant and tax incentives .... were matched by commensurate benefits in nation terms."
>
> (Bishop 1990 p 5)

The forestry industry tried to hit back at this criticism by carrying out its own audit and changing the context of the argument. They pushed the industry as an infant industry in need of support which offered a valuable renewable

resource. The complexities of trying value forestry via cost-benefit approaches have proved difficult and the problems in verifying any findings have often mean successive governments have not changed their forestry policies.

However, in the 1980's forestry policies and their interest groups have been challenged by a change in political ideology of the Government. Its subsidies did not fit with the supply side economics of the Thatcher Government and increasingly the idea of privatisation of the forestry commissions "enterprise sector" has come onto the agenda, proposing a similar split to the water industry, privatising the enterprise section and leaving a regulatory administrative body in the Government interest.

This policy has finally come to fruition in December 1991. It has been very difficult to gain information on this privatisation proposal as the forestry commission regard the information as secret until the proposals are officially "published" in late April 1992.

Thus the administration of forestry policy is presently in a state of flux. As with agriculture, this is partly due to the economic climate and partly to do with the political ideologies of the state. In general a productivist policy is still being pursued but these policies will now be carried out by private enterprises.

> "The Government proposed to continue its policy of encouraging the expansion of traditional forestry with particular emphasis on the private sector."
>
> MAFF et al 1987 (Bishop p 30)

Alongside these changes in the administrative structure of the Forestry Commission there has been growing concerns at the environmental effects of this expansionist forestry policy. Certainly the expanse of conifer plantations in Britain's highland areas and their ecological and aesthetic effects have been well documented (Watkins 1991). The forestry commission has come under increasing pressure from environmental groups such as the countryside commission, English Nature, the CPRE and RSPB and Ramblers Association to create a more natural, amenity environment with more sympathetic planting regimes. Meanwhile, the Forestry Commission have also been accused of sitting back and allowing the degradation of Britain's lowland forests and ancient woodlands. The same environmental groups have been actively campaigning for policies to safeguard these areas. Essex County Council identifies six reasons for this deterioration:

(i) old age
(ii) collapse of traditional markets
(iii) loss of woodland management expertise
(iv) agricultural intensification
(v) small size and fragmentation of farm woods
(vi) inadequacy of the existing powers and shortcoming of responsibilities of various government agencies who are concerned for woodlands.

(Bluden & Curry 1989 p 7)

The Wildlife and Countryside Amendment Act (1985) pointed a change in policy concerning the conservation duties of foresters. It pushed for a "reasonable balance" between development of afforestation and management

of forests (Bishop 1990 p 30). Thus new management and policy aims have begun to be identified.

On a small scale voluntary organisations have taken up the challenge of providing a management lead concerning conservation ecology and amenity problems in woodland areas. However, the bulk of reform has been directed towards private landowners where management grants, new woodland initiatives and farm woodland grants have been created.

The Government has linked the need for reform within both agriculture and forestry yet still maintaining a policy of voluntary participation by private landowners which does not directly contradict Government ideologies.

The major drive for reform has come from organisations like the Woodland Trust and Countryside Commission who have identified the line between "surplus" agricultural land and the need for better countryside policies (especially regarding forest management). The Countryside Commission role should not be underplayed.

The Countryside Commission has always been diametrically opposed to the "productivist interests of the Forestry Commission. However, with policy changes in both agriculture and forestry there has been a need for both sides to compromise and try in some way to line the needs of the various interest groups and the enhancement of the environment. The creation of grant schemes has been one answer (e.g. Broadleaved Woodland Grant) (Bishop

1990 p 25). A more strategic overview of policy has also been needed.

In 1987 the Countryside Commission published its own National Forestry Policy based on its assessment of the problems and needs of rural areas.

The forestry's objectives should be:-

- o to produce a national supply of timber as a raw material and as a source of energy.
- o to offer an alternative to agricultural land use
- o to contribute to rural employment either in timber industries or through associated recreation
- o to create attractive sites for public enjoyment
- o to enhance the national of the countryside
- o to create wildlife habitats

Countryside Commission (1987a p 7)

These were the beginnings of a drive towards a co-ordinated forestry policy. A policy which would be directed at only certain areas - the urban-fringe, with multi-purpose forest use.

Both agriculture and forestry and therefore importantly the countryside, needed an alternative economic and environmental function. However, the Forestry Commission needed the impetus to change. Government had been pushing for private landowners to take the responsibility and therefore change it was perceived would have to come from the private sector. In 1988 (15th March) there were major changes in the budget concerning taxation policies relating to woodlands. Policies which had been heavily criticised in the past. No longer could private investors use an investment in forestry to offset their tax.

This change in policy was "partly" brought about by the environmental pressure groups which were increasingly emerging at a local level. Certainly, it is important to mention at this stage that local M.P.'s were increasingly aware of a conflict over the lack of environmental protection policies at a national level and the growing green role at a local level. Certainly the NIMBY Syndrome at a local level, and its effect on planning decisions, was a demonstration of a growing environmental awareness.

Traditionally, conservative - paternalist - M.P's had been seen as the protectors of the "English" countryside but increasingly Thatcher neo-Liberal ideologies were threatening those protectionist policies. The Government was beginning to try to market itself as having legitimate environmental policies. Small concessions such as the change in tax incentives added to the "view" that the conservatives could be trusted with the countryside, while in fact the tax incentives did not damage the long term interests of the state as tax cuts could be given elsewhere (Bishop 1990).

In March 1988 the Forestry Grant, Broadleaved Woodland Grant Scheme and tax incentives were all replaced by the Woodland Grant Scheme. This aimed to:

- encourage timber production
- provide jobs in and increase the economic potential of rural areas with declining agricultural employment and few sources of economic activity.
- provide an alternative to agricultural production and thereby assist in the reduction of agricultural surpluses.
- enhance the landscape, to create new wildlife habitats and provide for the recreation and sporting uses in the longer term.

- encourage the conservation and generation of existing forests and woodlands.

Forestry Commission (1988a p 2-3)

This created a wide scale management objective, still encouraging productivist policies, but fitting them in with the new multi-purpose woodland management. Agriculture and forestry interests were now being linked at a policy level. MAFF encouraged this linkage by "recommending measures to stimulate such developments" (Bishop 1990 p 30). As Watkins (1991) argues forestry is likely to be the most significant alternative land-use in the next 20 years. Importantly it has created forestry initiatives for lowland areas, bringing forestry "down the hill" Watkins (1991).

As stated before these changes should always be examined within a broader economic and political context. The role of the EEC has helped the affect these changes provided on impetus for change both in agriculture (as discussed previously) and forestry. In "The Community Strategy and Action for the Forestry Sector" (1988) the EEC pushed for the development of the forestry industry. They wanted forestry to:

- participate fully in land-use planning and encourage the development of rural life.
- to contribute to environmental improvement
- to ensure the security of supply of renewable raw materials
- to give the forestry sector its own dynamism to protect the communities forests
- to extend the role the forests have as a natural setting for relaxation, recreation and culture
- to participate in development in the most disadvantaged areas around the world.
- to give the forestry sector their full place in the formulation and implementation of community policies

(Commission of European Communities 1988)

The British Government may not agree with all the policy objectives but these policies were endorsed by a 6 million a year grant programme (EC forestry action programme). Money was being made available to act as a catalyst to create the new "dynamism" the commission had envisaged.

These policies were backed by funding from environmental groups to make available to farmers:

A **Countryside Commission:**

Amenity tree planting - Up to 50% discretionary grant on sites up to 0.25 ha in open countryside and grant aid for screening buildings

Woodland Management - 50% discretionary grant on 0.25 ha

Woodland Management - 50% (discretionary) on 0.25 ha of open countryside

Tree surgery - 50% (discretionary) to extend life on visibly important single or group trees

B **English Nature:**

Woodland Management - 50% acceptable costs on wildlife and conservation management

Woodland planting - " " "

C **Woodland Trust:**

Woodland planting - plant and manage native broadleaved trees for first 25 years plus 75% costs of fencing/pest control if unrestricted access.

Thus financial incentives were created to back up the new policy directions.

2.4 New Forestry Policy Initiative

The first direct reflection of this change in forestry policy was the community forest project and the new national forest in the Midlands. Both distinct and quite separate policies. The new national forest for the Midlands is the response of two factors: the need to find an alternative land-use function for surplus agricultural land and the need to protect and enhance a landscape which suffers from poor quality, lack of features and amenity for the large population centres of the West Midlands. The aim is to create a one-off area of deciduous forest which will simultaneously aim to retain agriculturally related jobs while creating an improved wildlife and landscape environment.

The community forest project (evaluated Chapter Four) is not a one off forest but a policy decision to try to tackle the problems of "surplus agricultural land but also create a new positive role for the urban fringes (as Chapter Three will show). The two policies are however a reflection of expansion of forestry within Britain and the conscious effort to establish forestry as a major land-use in countryside areas.

Politically it must be remembered that forestry offers an opportunity to expand a land-use without threatening the status-quo of agricultural influences. Forestry remains outside the planning remit, and thus does not threaten, via interventionist role farming's interests. However, while forestry remains a

Central Government policy and not a local authority one, Government can control these areas which are outside the remits of planning. An evaluation of this scenario of Central Government and private landowners creating the policy, there are obviously connotations for land-use planning.

While being sympathetic to the landowners wishes to retain some sort of working autonomy over farming and forestry land, it must be questioned that environmentally and aesthetically agricultural and forestry have failed to benefit wildlife, landscape or even access to the countryside. By bringing such interests under the general remits of the planning system, such criteria could be set for landowners to farm/forest environmentally sensitively and provide access to their land. Obviously there is a fine line to tread between

intervention and creating an unworkable farm/forest environment but the planning system, it should be argued, should have some control over the distributional effects of countryside policies. The community forest, it can be argued, represents an example of Government and capital interests creating a policy which land-use implications and distributional effects are outside the remits of the planning system.

2.5 Conclusions

In practice planning legislation can do little to control the actions taken by foresters and farmers. In the past policy has been to endorse production, at almost any cost (both in terms of environmental and economic costs). However policy changes within the EEC, Government and local authorities have during

the last decade changed the direction and nature of agricultural, forestry and countryside land-uses policies. These changes have created a new agenda for rural and urban fringe areas.

As a result of the changes farmers are now faced with a "plethoria of schemes" (Gilg 1991). The adoption and ultimate impact of these schemes are as yet unclear. However, it is planned that these schemes will add to the creation of new forest areas with multi-purpose objectives.

According to Cox et al (1986) the reason forestry has been chosen as the prepared alternative land-use to agriculture is that its face fits - it fits the productivist ideology of the farming lobby and the new recreational needs of urban areas. It achieves these aims while keeping the "establishment in charge" (Cox et al 1986: Bishop 1990 p 40). Also the right trees in the right places is an environmentally acceptable land-use.

Finally by changing the use and not ownership of land it fits with the present Government's philosophy concerning market forces. Clover (1989) argues Britain still imports 90% of all its timber requirement.

These Grant Schemes are proposed as a private sector answer using voluntary participation; they also offer no increased planning control over either farming or forestry. Thus they have developed as part of a piecemeal rethink of rural land-use. There have been no strategic policy statements regarding these important changes:

> "The Government's general "laissez faire" approach to the management of rural land is no longer adequate. It must recognise its dominant role and try to integrate its rural policies into a coherent framework or rural-land use strategy."
>
> House of Commons Agricultural Committee Report
> Land-use and Forestry 1990

As Bishop (1990) argues the effects of this and rural reconstruction is as yet unknown but it seems that it is an attempt to bring agriculture and forestry under the remits of Conservative ideology.

> "It is not the Government's intension to transfer agricultural support directly across to new ventures but instead is on market forces"
>
> MAFF 1990 (Bishop 1990 p 25)

This is perhaps a way of regulating forestry policy or more importantly the beginning of regulating the countryside via the back-door(?)

These policy changes frame the debate in which new multi-purpose low-land forestry has come onto the agenda. This chapter has aimed to evaluate why there has been a change in policy and the impetus and direction for that change. This framework provides the background to the community forestry initiatives, highlighting the political and economic conditions which has meant forestry and its functions have become an important land-use. Thus, the community forest initiative - i.e. low land -multipurpose forestry, in a designated area on private land - has grown up to tackle specific land-use issues at a specific time in political and economic context.

Chapter three aims to place this policy debate into some kind of planning and

management context for the countryside. In particular an evaluation of the urban fringes thus placing the community forest policy into a contextual debate.

EVALUATING THE URBAN FRINGE

3.0 Introduction

Forestry is the result of conscious land-use policy decision. As discussed in Chapter one forestry has been developed to serve particular functions. In the past the major function was to produce timber, however, today forestry has wider land-use implications. It has been noted that forestry can act as a solution to specific problems within the countryside while also providing the forestry authorities with the new role that they have been looking for. The push for multi-purpose forestry links up the problems facing the forestry industry and the policy-makers tackling the issues within the countryside. Gilg believes forestry has become the new "buzz word" in countryside planning (Gilg 1991).

Forestry has been proposed as one of the answer to the problems facing the countryside. (See Chapter 3 Countryside Commission 1981 1987 (a,c) Gilg 1991). More specifically forestry has been seen as the tool for tackling the problems of the countryside around towns - or the urban fringe. This chapter aims to describe the characteristics of the urban fringe introducing the problems and opportunities facing these areas. Therefore placing the concept of multi-purpose forestry within its context of prescriptive policy-making.

3.1 The characteristics of the urban fringe

An analysis of the urban fringes could provide a thesis topic in itself, however,

the purpose of this chapter is to act as an introduction to the issues and political context from which community forest concept grew. (For more detailed analysis see Bishop 1990; Herington 1990; Gilg 1991; Munton 1983; Cowe 1979).

The countryside around town refers to:-

> "An area of uncertainty, a zone of transition between rural and urban land-uses, dominated by urban activity where the pace of change contrasts sharply with that in more traditional rural areas and where the conflicts of interest are many and varied."
>
> Countryside Commission (1981 p 14)

This is one description of the urban fringes although it is almost impossible to define the concept either spatially or socially. The area represents a continuum between rural and urban. In some parts of the urban fringes, the associated images are of fragmented land-uses, poorly managed, derelict wastelands or mineral sites offering visually unattractive landscapes. In other parts of the urban fringes the associated images conjure up pictures of more positive land-uses and "green" places linked with the notions of Greenbelt and the "urban play space" (Newby 1988 p 113).

These areas represent a complex mixture of images, land-uses and planning policies. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to offer a detailed analysis and definition of the urban fringe - or countryside around towns. Nevertheless this chapter aims to highlight the major characteristics of the urban fringes.

Despite the difficulties of generalising about such a complex area there are

distinct characteristics to these areas.

I. Urban fringe land-uses

- agriculture
- land speculation
- vacant land
- opportunities as recreational resource

II. Urban fringe planning policies

- Greenbelt
- problems/opportunities

III. Urban fringe management

(J Collins 1992)

The following section will elaborate on this typology.

3.2 URBAN FRINGE LAND-USE

3.2(i) Agriculture

In terms of land area agriculture is the single most important land-use.

"Nearly half of all the land in the old metropolitan counties is farm land."

(Countryside Commission 1987b)

However, farming within the urban fringe has very distinct problems:

Figure 1 Problems of Farming in the Urban Fringe

Public Pressure	-	Trespass Damage to crops Theft of livestock and crops Hedge and/or building damage/arson Rubbish dumping/fly tipping Worrying of livestock Trampling of crops

Land losses through development - severance of farm/fields

High insurance premiums due to increased probability of theft, damage or arson

Difficulty of attracting agricultural labour due to higher paid jobs in urban area and cost of agricultural labour due to higher wages and costs of living.

Pollution	-	Run off from roads Atmospheric pollution Rubbish dumping
Transport	-	Volume of traffic causes time delays and hazard Increased occurrence of roadworks

Source: Derived from ADAS 1973

These problems result in higher costs to the farmer which can lead to land fragmentation: Munton (1983) found that in 1976 nearly half of the farms in the London Green Belt were less than 10 hectares by extent and only 11.5 per cent exceeded 100 hectares.

3.2(ii) Land Speculation

The urban fringe is continually pressurised by the demands of urban development. The Countryside Review Panel (1987) highlighted this pressure on countryside around towns. It stated that in Hertfordshire alone 2,000 hectares of agricultural land is lost to urban development every decade (Bishop 1990 p 96). The CPRE has also carried out research on the pressure of development in the countryside since Circular 16/87 came into force. The results of this report are as yet unpublished but they do highlight the increased development pressure on agricultural land closer to towns. (A Wilson 1992). This demand

for development land causes general problems.

A Hope-value

The price differentials between development land and agricultural land can be as much as 50,000 per cent Countryside Police Review Panel (1987). As a result the price of land (without planning permission) can be greater than the market norm. This potential development value - or hope value - adds to the problems of urban fringe.

B Land Speculation

Hope value means that within the urban fringes there are problems of land speculation. This can result in land being left vacant and unmanaged. According to Munton (1986) land speculation results in unmanaged properties, farming to quit (thus adding to poor management by farming the land in a very poor quality way in the hope that a development is seen as a more positive use of the land), absentee landownership and in some cases "land banking" (by mineral firms or development companies). Often land is left in degraded state to increase the chances of planning permission being granted; the argument being that a well managed and maintained property is better than an unmanaged, under-utilised land.

3.2(iii) Vacant land

Land speculation can result in large amounts of vacant land. Vacant land is a difficult concept to define and there are very few studies on the amount or type of land which is "vacant" within the urban fringe.

This lack of data and researched definition makes this section appear somewhat superficial. However for the purposes of this study, vacant land was identified. Vacant land was identified by Burrow (1978) as land which appears to be under used.

However, a lot of vacant land is in public ownership. Burrows (1978) identified that 10% of the land within the urban fringe is vacant land. While two thirds of local authorities vacant land is within the urban fringe.

The amount of vacant land contributes to the visual perceptions of an unmanaged landscape but it also means that there is under-utilisation of resources. Therefore, there is constant pressure and potential for alternative land-uses within the urban-fringes.

3.2(iv) Recreation

One of the major conflicts facing the urban fringe is its potential for development. The land has been identified as a resource for developers, not only for residential, industrial and retail. Land around the urban fringes is seen as offering a major recreational function. This idea was given credibility by the white paper Sport and Recreation HMSO (1975). This supports the idea that recreation should be developed within the urban fringes. Elson (1979) also argued that if provision in the urban fringes was made for recreation, it would take

pressure off the countryside. While Newby (1988) identified the need for people living in urban areas to have for recreation - the urban playspace. The Countryside Commission (1987 c) have taken up these themes in Policies for enjoying the Countryside.

Recreation is one way of giving the urban fringes a more positive and productive land-use function. This sentiment had been justified by earlier policy statement which had identified a need for recreational resource - taking pressure off the countryside and the urban areas.

> "The countryside on the edge of cities has a great potential for recreation. 60 per cent of all recreational trips are to destinations within two miles of the edge of towns."
>
> Countryside Commission (1985 p 16)

3.2(v) Summary

Thus, the characteristics of the land-use of the urban fringe be summarised in terms of problems and opportunities. The urban fringe faces specific problems: development pressures, inflated land-values, land speculation and economic and social pressures on farms result in fragmented land, high percentages of vacant, derelict and unmanaged land giving the impression of poor landscape and under-utilised resource. These pressures and availability of land also result in opportunities for a potential capital investment especially in the form of an "urban playspace". (Newby 1988; Bishop 1990; Munton 1983). The land-use problems and opportunities facing the urban fringes means that planning policies have to tread the difficult line between, on

the one hand conservation and protection and on the other development and utilisation. While also taking into account the wishes of particular interest groups within the urban fringes.

3.3 URBAN FRINGE PLANNING POLICIES

Note all areas of the urban fringe is Green belt but it is the only national policy instrument of direct relevance to the urban fringes and has become very important to the perception, development and management of the urban fringes.

> A Green Belt is "an area of land near to and sometimes surrounding a town, which open by permanent and severe restriction to building."
>
> Dept. of Environment (1988a p 8)

It is vital to the analysis of the community forest concept that the Green Belt debate is addressed. It acts as a reflection of the contradictions with Central Government in relation to planning. The division between the neo-liberals and pure paternalistic views toward planning (especially Green Belts) demonstrate the conflicts and tensions which have given rise to multi-purpose urban fringe forestry and thus the birth of the community forest.

3.3(i) Green Belt Policy

(a) Brief history of Green Belts

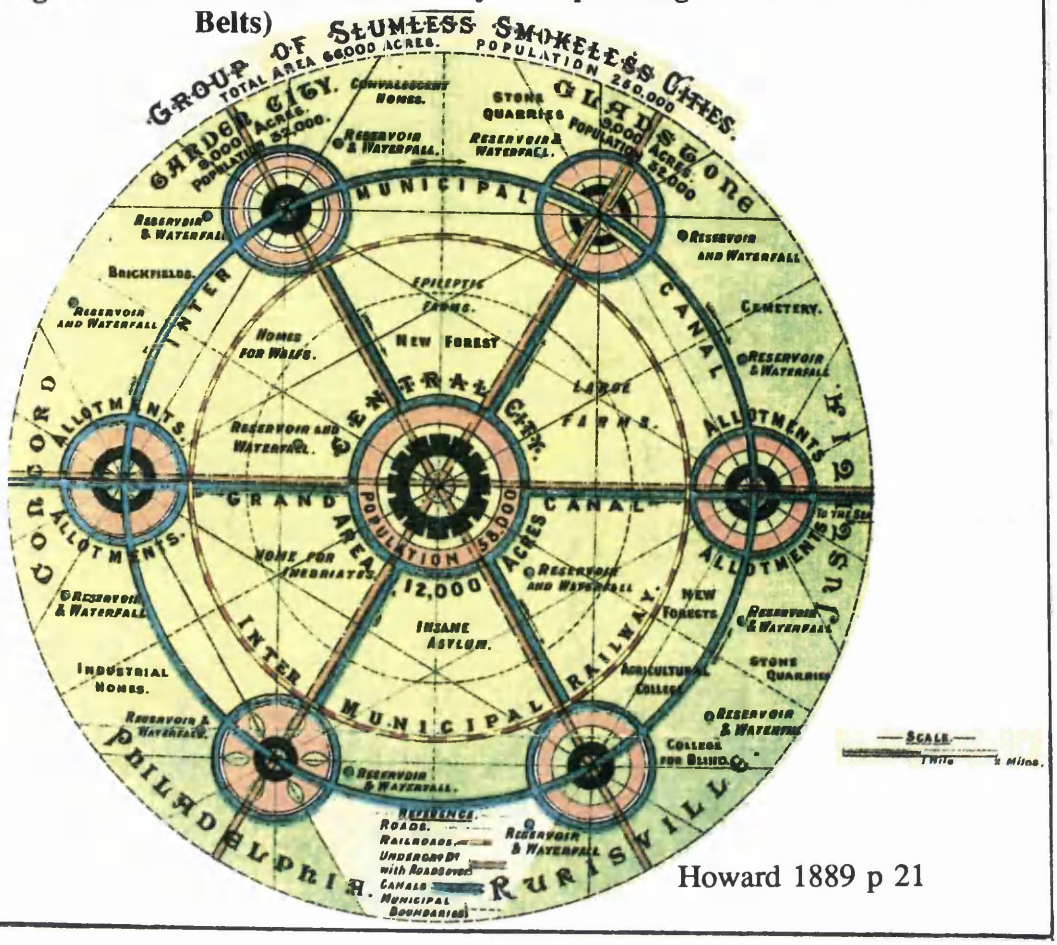
The first idea of Green Belts were put forward by Queen Elizabeth I in 1580 where a royal proclamation forbid any development within 3 miles of the City of London's wall. This was to provide cheap food

supply and reduce the spread of any plague outbreaks. This was followed by a similar proclamation in 1657 by James I. However, it was not until this century that Green Belt legislation came into being and spread to all cities, not just London.

"Green Belt" as a concept had been proposed as part of Ebenezar Howard's Garden City. The concept was quite different from the Green Belts in place today. According to Howard green areas were to be created between the small towns which mad the Garden Cities. They have to be considered within the wider social context of Howards ideas. These Green Belts provided the space for important social facilities such as space for hospitals, recreational amenities and an availability of fresh agricultural produce for the towns. The important features were that the land was to be publicly owned and open-spaces managed by the municiple authority. Land made available for development would remain in public ownership allowing a control of the nature of development.

These Green Belts were therefore active areas for expansion and development but by being publicly owned and managed the open land had an important amenity function to the local residents (See Fig. 3.2). This idea of collectively owned and managed community resources was part of the Social City concept (Howard 1889).

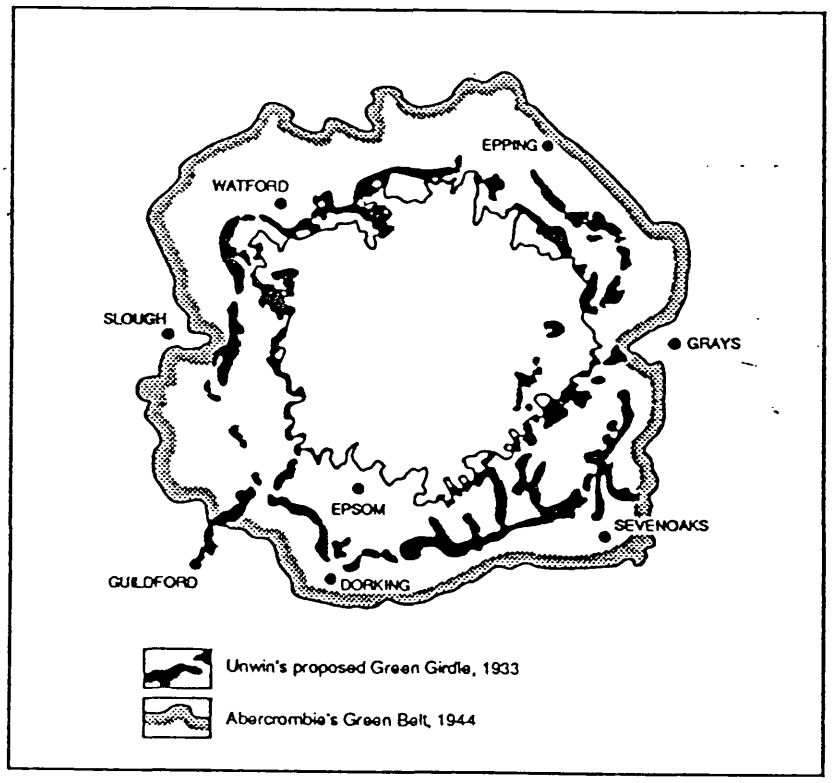
Fig. 2 **Howard's Social City incorporating Green areas (Green Belts)**



Howard 1889 p 21

The idea of a "Green Belt was taken up by Raymond Unwin, another pioneer in the planning movement, in 1920. It was the result of an effort to promote a green area around London. It was similar to Howard's ideas of providing a social facility for London. Unwin argued that the lack of sports facilities and recreational space in London could be compensated for by providing green spaces on the urban fringes. A "Green Girdle" approximately 2 km's wide completely surrounding London (Elson 1986 p 5). The 1938 Green Belt Act provided the financial incentive for London authorities and metropolitan land for recreation. However, only a fraction of Unwin's Green Girdle was developed.

Fig. 3 Unwin's Green Girdle



Derived DOE (1988a p 11)

The Green Belt as we know it today grew from Abhercrombie's "Plan for Greater London" (approved by Town and Country Planning Act 1947). However the plan moved away from the provision of a social facility in the Green Belt and instead Green Belt was advocated for a very different function - the containment of London. The notions of the Green Belt was formalised in Circular 42/55 which proposed its use in other areas apart from London.

The Circular advocated Green Belt to serve a number of specific functions. (Elson 1988)

- o to check the spread of further urban development
- o to prevent neighbouring towns
- o to preserve the special character of towns

This policy remained intact until 1983. A political storm was provoked by the Thatcher Government's draft Circular in 1983 which proposed to reform the Green Belt boundaries (A Wilson 1992). The aim was to allow areas to be omitted and therefore subject to normal development control. This would allow small development to be removed from the Green Belt. It would also allow a more flexible area of "white land" around towns. White land is the land designated to local authorities to absorb the 5 year development growth around a city or town and is often in areas of Green Belt. Bishop (1990 p 107).

These proposed reforms angered a number of sections of the community. The conservation lobbies (such as CPRE) saw this as opening Green Belt areas to development, while local residents saw the relaxing of Greenbelt boundaries as a threat to their countryside - and probably house values. The NIMBY element was extremely vocal (NIMBY - not in my back yard) (A Wilson CPRE Jan 1992). These areas represent the "Tory" heartland, concern about loss of votes meant that local residents and conservation groups were supported by backbench MP's (Gilg 1991). This political pressure forced a House

of Commons environment enquiry on the 1983 draft Circular on Green Belts. The recommendations of the Committee were that Green Belt boundaries remain sacrosanct.

The Government had pushed for reforms as Green Belt was a strong regulative force contrary to ideas of freedom of the market. However the ideological demands for reform were not as strong as the political need for the conservative Government to be seen as protecting the environment (or perhaps more importantly continuing the protection of Green Belt which ensures a limited number of developments in areas where demands for houses are high and thus house prices also remain considerably high (especially in easy commuting areas). The Green Belt protection adds to quality of life and value of houses. Urban fringes therefore represent a politically difficult area to enforce change.

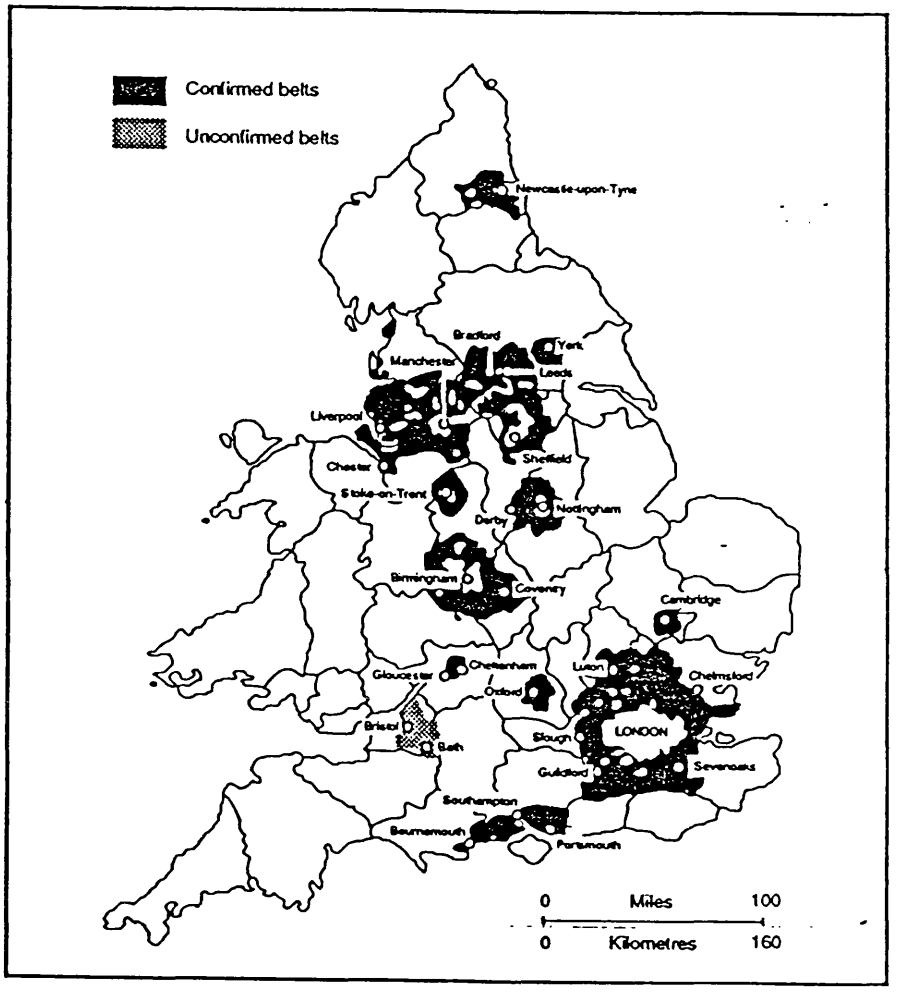
The result of the backbench MP's political pressure was the introduction of Circular 16/84 (D of E 1984) which represent a complete "u-turn" in policy. The new Circular strengthened the position of Green Belts emphasising that they could only be changed in exceptional circumstances. However, the neo-liberals did manage to pursue one change in emphasis - that Green Belt should offer the market some kind of potential - one of Green Belt's functions should be to add to urban regulation.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 (D of E 1988b) listed Green Belt functions as:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
- to safeguard the surrounding countryside
- To prevent urban encroachment
- To prevent neighbouring houses from merging into one another
- To preserve spatial character of historic towns
- To assist in urban regeneration

Although Green Belts do not include all the urban fringe areas, they now cover 1,800,000 ha of England and their restrictive policy has a "knock on effect" on non-Green Belt areas (Elson 1987). It is within this policy context that the problems of the urban fringe have to be addressed. It is partly the result of Green Belt policy debate that urban fringe forestry has come on to the agenda.

Fig. 4 Map to show the extent of the Green Belts



(Derived Elson 1986 p 24)

(b) Green Belt debate - continuity or change

Having highlighted the original aims of a "Green Belt" were as a greenspace for towns and cities - providing a facility to urban residents. It is obvious that the policy in place is far from that - it is a policy of constraint. This policy is under pressure to change its function: partly to help tackle the problems facing the urban fringes; partly to provide a more pro-active policy; partly to create a "greener" Green belt but also to address the obvious ideological conflicts which are apparent within the Conservative party - a strong regulatory policy does not

allow for a free market.

Multi-purpose urban fringe forestry has been developed to address some of these problems and the political imbalance.

Right-wing groups have been arguing strongly for reform, despite the "u-turn" in policy over Green Belt Circulars of 1983 and 1984. The Adam Smith Institute (ASI 1989) strive for a reform of Green Belt policy. They have highlighted the economic pressures of high housing and transport costs. The inflation of house prices by restricting development and the high transport costs endured by commuters who have houses beyond the Green Belt. The ASI also mentions the high environmental cost caused by pollution. Bishop (1990 p 121). This economic appraisal of Green Belts is very similar to arguments put forward by The Phoenix Group (1989) a group of Conservative MP's who believe the stagnant policy of constraint prevents markets to function freely therefore causing the problems of transport congestion, associated pollution, shortage of housing and inflated house prices (Bishop 1990 p 121).

The Regional Studies Association also reviewed the position of Green Belt recently (Herington 1990). The report identified a number of faults within the policy:-

1. Green Belt restricts economic development in areas which need development (e.g. Fothergill (1986) estimated that 14-23,000

manufacturing jobs have been lost as a result of Green Belt policies between 1974-1981).

2. Green Belts have a strong negative influence often preventing sensible development control decisions (Herington 1990 p 16).

3. Green Belts have brought about too much pressure on towns and villages beyond Green Belt boundaries.

4. Green Belts have not resulted in the enhancement or improvement of amenities or appearance of open land in the Green Belt.

These arguments have been opposed by campaigning groups such as the CPRE who argue that a strong planning policy is needed to prevent increased fragmentation and dereliction of farmland. The constant development pressure would, they argue be exacerbated by reducing planning controls (A Wilson 92). This would lead to a destruction of the countryside around town and pressure on English landscapes (A Wilson 92).

The urban fringes need a policy to help alleviate their problems - land fragmentation, poor management, land speculation and degradated landscapes. The question remains; can these problems be eased by

reforming Green Belt policy, or by maintaining strong planning controls?

The Adam Smith Institute believe reform should take place. By de-regulation, it is argued, the cost-benefit imbalance of local decision makers can be rectified. The inefficiencies of a local bureaucracy can be overcome by reforming Green Belt planning. By providing a new management framework it is believed that the appearance and function of Green Belt areas could be improved.

(i) **Non-political planning body:** The creation of a development commission or planning body for Green Belts as a whole, balancing local interests with national representation.

(ii) **National use Guidelines:** establishing a national guideline about the use of Green Belts based on systematic survey. Such a survey would allow pockets of development which the national survey reveals as not adequately fulfilling its functions importantly. Butler 1987 puts forward that the Adam Smith Institute suggests a general guideline that schemes would be considered sympathetically for approval if they restored 80 per cent of the site to accessible and attractive woodland, lake or open space, and budgeted for perpetual maintenance of the site.

(iii) **Limiting development site numbers:** A limited number of development schemes would be approved around major towns. Then no other applications would be considered within a limited amount of time. In return the planning gain on individual sites would be in terms of economic rent. This could either be taxed and the money used to restore Green Belt areas or in lieu of tax the developer could maintain property adjacent to the development site.

(Butler 1987)

The Adam Smith Institute argue the advantage of their reform is that it would increase dramatically the availability of well-managed "Green

land". An example of this approach is Wraysbury Berkshire, in the London Green Belt. In return for planning permission for a shopping centre complex, a proportion of the rents each year are allocated to a trust. The trust is responsible for the management of a nature reserve, Conly Park, and Educational Centre.

The use of planning gain within the Green Belt makes the system open for corruption - rather than protecting the environment. Green Belt policy can be used to ensure high planning gain which in turn makes a mockery of the system if regulations are there to be abused.

The system proposed by the Adam Smith Institute pushes for a "planning body" outside the jurisdictions of local government. The planning designations for development sites can be influenced by Central Government while planning gain seems to provide the motivation for where and which developments may ultimately get approved. This sets a dangerous precedence for omitting local authority control. It seems to fit with the neo-liberal philosophies of market democratic and government supporting the interest of capital.

The Phoenix Group's proposals for reforming the Green Belt further to implement neo-liberal ideology. The Phoenix Group's ideas is to privatise all publicly owned land in the Green Belt. The Government could achieve this by creating private companies encouraging environmentally sensitive development on under utilised land. Having

failed to reform the Green Belt by changing emphasis in Government Circulars, it seems that this radical move would by-pass the local residents opinions and create a more pre-development philosophy in the urban fringes. Privatising publicly owned land raises important issues of access, amenity and community facilities which may all be lost (Bishop 1990).

Herington (1990) argues for an expansion of green areas, removing the Green Belt regulations and replacing the legislation with strategic guidelines - incorporating the idea that "green areas" should be predominantly rural in character. This would replace the present presumption against development in the Green Belts. This could be then integrated into regional policy.

This suggestion seems to overlook the political difficulties of reforming any Green Belt legislation - while the other previous ideas ran "rough shod" over it. Herington's reform also needed to work in co-ordination with regional policy which has run into decline during the post 1979 Conservative Governments. It would therefore require a change in Government attitudes to planning authorities and regional policy. The reform also offers little management guidelines to help relieve problems of degredated landscape (etc.) What could evolve is more problems for the countryside around towns as the urban fringes become subjected, less investment and potential development and management schemes could move further into the countryside.

3.3(ii) Summary

There are no easy answers to the problems of the urban fringe. Green Belt policies can exacerbate the problems of land speculation, fragmented land and degredated landscapes. Therefore, Green Belt policies do not necessarily mean that the areas or urban fringe are "green". The problems of reform are complex. What is needed is regulation and management.

Political reform is controversial as Green Belts are a popular and well known element of the planning system. In a recent national opinion poll survey 60% of respondents were worried about the loss of Green Belt land (Bishop 1990 p 99). The result of this public interest has meant that Green Belt is a political issue. Support of Green Belt policy is seen as a way of offering some sort of to the Countryside (CPRE 92). So despite the erosion of the planning system in a decade where the market has dominated Green Belt legislation has had to be strengthened.

Although planning gain has meant that some areas of Green Belt have been developed, the neo-liberals within the Government have had to find alternative ways of getting around Green Belt reform in order to enhance the interest of capital. Regulation has remained in place. What has been identified as the area for potential change has been countryside management for the urban fringe. By changing the management structure the problems of urban fringe, it is believed it can

be tackled, without addressing the politically controversial process of Green Belt reform.

3.4 URBAN FRINGE MANAGEMENT

> "Planners face a paradox: whilst the landscape is under constant pressure from agriculture and forestry as well as urban expansion, they must seek to control (these) land uses in the general absence of planning powers."
>
> Bishop 1990 (p 104)

Planners during the 1980's have seen their power eroded (Ambrose (1986) Thornley (1991) and the inability for local authorities to solve problems such as those already identified within the urban fringes has led to a growth of partnerships to help generate management schemes. These partnerships have increasingly involved private and public sector agreements, but particularly within the urban fringe the use of the voluntary sector (S Anderson 92). This new form of management will be examined in relation to the setting up of community forest scheme: urban fringe forestry is the result of the need for urban fringe management and the Government drive to make management the responsibility of landowners and capital interests not the local authority. Bishop (1990) argues that the growth and number of these management schemes is the result of three factors:

1. The Government's reliance on voluntary principle to resolve land-use conflicts and implement rural policies. This can be argued as part of the continued lobbying of agricultural interests who do not wish to see planning regulations extended to private agricultural and forestry land

(see Chapter 2).

2. The idea that Government want to strive for financial and administrative efficiency has resulted in the privatisation of many local services. Conservation can lend itself to privatisation: The partnership approach allows delegation of certain functions to the voluntary sector.

3. The third factor identified is that voluntary partnerships fit in the Governments ideologies of self-help.

The community forest scheme is an extension of the urban fringe management schemes set up during the 1980's. These schemes highlight the context within which community forests are going to function, the ideologies behind the community forest scheme and the problems which have been identified.

3.4(i) Countryside Management Schemes

The conflicts within the urban fringe make it difficult to establish a positive management. Therefore, new management schemes were developed of which Countryside Commission run schemes are the biggest. The Countryside Management Schemes began as experiments in the Lake District and Snowdonia National Park and their success meant they spread to Metropolitan Green Belt areas. (For example Hertfordshire/Barnet) See Bromley (1990), Munton (1983), Bishop (1990) Countryside Commission (1981).

They were a joint initiative between the district and county councils partnered by the Countryside Commission. A Steering Committee is set up with representatives from the member groups e.g. British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Woodland Trust (etc.) The relevant associations give expertise and labour and financial assistance. The original grant contribution by the Countryside Commission is 75% of the costs for the establishment period of between three to five years. After this period the local authorities put in 100% of the costs:

- The aims of schemes being

(i) intervention
(ii) brokerage (e.g. providing a facility which enables a landowner to have access to information, grants or labour, then the landowners carries on the programme themselves.

Bromley (1990)

This fringe area management schemes had a total budget of £34,999.57 in 1988/1989 of which half was paid by the Countryside Commission in Grant Aid. It was from these schemes that Countryside Commission officials saw the need for a longer term involvement in the urban fringe and chance to initiate larger schemes.

The Countryside Commission (J Collins 1992) stated that they had identified a real need for an agency to co-ordinate the overtly rural and urban perspectives and really begin to tackle the problems of the urban fringe. It was from these initiatives that a management structure for community forests was developed. An agency of self-help, voluntary participation which relied on the community not the Government yet

was financially supported by the treasury. Giving Central Government the real control via the purse strings.

At its simplest level the Countryside Management Schemes developed as a way of resolving conflicts and actually achieving conservation work (see Munton 1987 for example). A project team is set up with a project officer responsible for resolving problems at a local level with the aim of getting small practical projects off the ground. In reality this role of the project officer is more important as she/he is fundamental in getting different groups together and implement pro-active policies.

3.4(ii) The Groundwork Trust

The Groundwork Trusts represent a form of privatisation of the Countryside Management Concept (Bishop 1990 p 108). They represent a partnership between public and private sector as well as the voluntary organisations. The aim being:

> "neglected and forgotten countryside in and around major urban areas could be brought back to life for recreation, food production and benefit of the whole community."
>
> (Handley 1988)

The Groundwork Trust were set up with the aim that they would become self-funding within 5 years.

The success of the Groundwork Trusts set up mainly in the North West

in the early 1980's (e.g. the first trusts were in Knowsley and St Helens in 1981) led to the setting up of the Groundwork Foundation. Its founder members being:

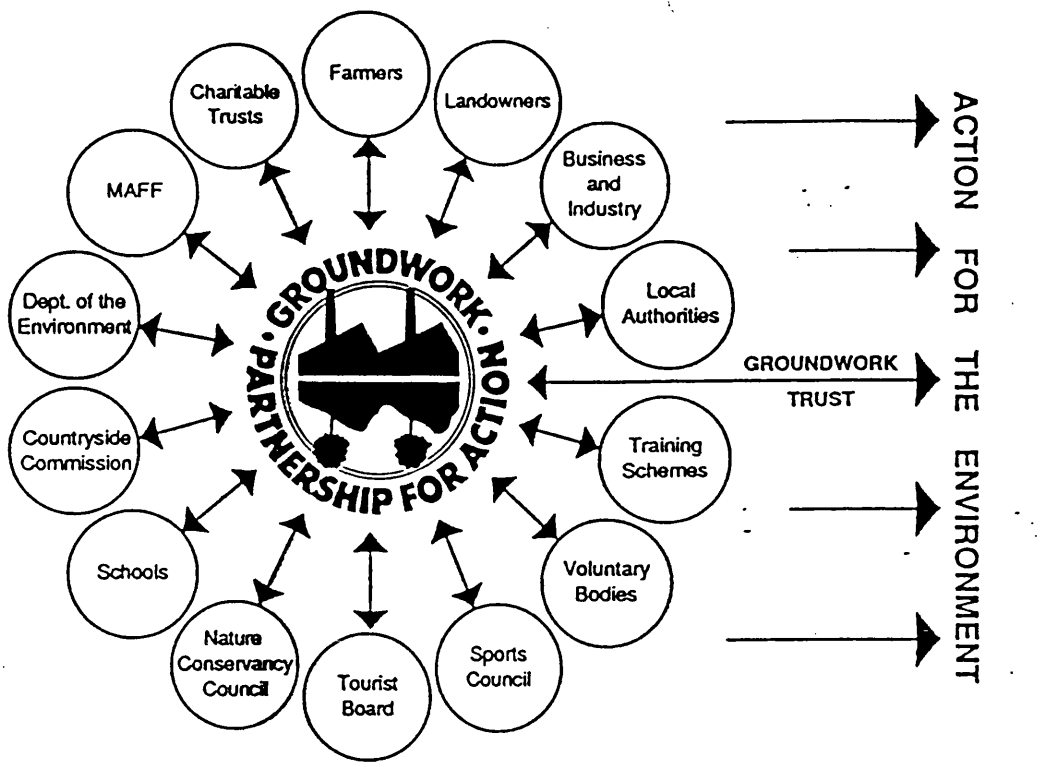
- Countryside Commission
- Nature Conservancy Council
- British Trust for Conservation Volunteers

backed by:

- Secretary of State for Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries
- Confederation of British Industry (CBI)

The Groundwork Foundation was set up to raise funds and national profile for the Groundwork Trusts. (See Groundwork Foundation 1986). They had a 50% grant phased over five years. Importantly this money mainly came from the Department of Environment (as the trusts were in urban areas as well as rural ones; the Countryside Commission have no influence in urban areas). The Department of Environment funding however, also gave the department a direct line over the projects.

Fig. 5 Partnership in Action: The Example of Macclesfield Groundwork Trust



Derived from Macclesfield Groundwork Trust (1985 p 5)

The main aims of the trusts are to:

- clear dereliction and eyesores
- to find productive uses for wasted assets
- to conserve and enhance good environments for wildlife, for recreation and for agriculture
- to assist farmers
- to improve the management of woodlands, parks, bridleways, water and public open spaces
- to provide small scale parking, picnicking and recreational facilities

Groundwork Foundation (1986)

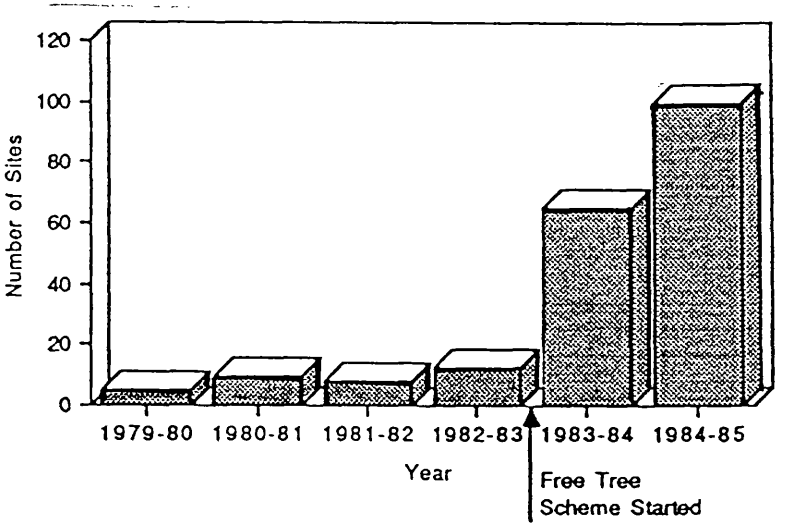
The success of the organisation has promoted keen interest from Government Ministers. The idea of private or charitage trusts carrying out the conservation work in the urban fringe has become increasingly more common. (A Wilson CPRE Jan 92). It is the idea of a self-

funding organisation after the initial period of grant aid has come to an end that has been adopted by the Countryside Commission for the community forest schemes. This links with the neo-liberals views of "self-help" and "privatisation". These views are strongly influenced in the setting up of the community forest proposal.

3.4(iii) Central Scottish Woodlands Project/Countryside Trust/Green Belt Company

The Woodland Trust Project was set up in Central Scotland in 1979 to improve the landscape of the area by planting woodland by the project Countryside Commission in Scotland and the Regional Council's of Lothian Strathclyde and Central and the relevant District Councils. The project had a steering group and project officer in the same ways as the Countryside Management Schemes (Bishop 1990 p 114). 500 schemes were implemented during 1979 and 1985 with 1.8 million trees (Central Woodland project 1984). The project however, did not really take off until the farmers were given free advice and 500 trees per annum free.

Fig. 6 Results of Central Woodland Project's Free Tree Scheme



Source: Central Scotland Woodlands Project, 1984 p 22

The scheme now has created golf courses on derelict land, school playing fields on private farms. Although since 1983 the scheme has been part of charitable trust, run in a similar way to the Groundwork Trusts, with an economic turnover of 1 million pounds and a staff of 150 people (including voluntary agencies and Countryside Commission staff) (Bishop 1990). This Trust took the idea of woodland planting into practice and by using voluntary and Government agencies has recreated a valuable economic and aesthetically pleasing landscape.

The problem remains that the trust company has established a base on a farm which means that it is run on a commercial basis. The "free" trees are grown in nurseries on the farm and then used on private land. The Countryside Commission has taken the principles of the success of the Central Woodlands Scheme - woodland planting to formulate its plans for the urban fringes. However, it has failed to learn for the

reasons of Scotland and introduce the element of an initial 500 free trees. The project is a successful example of woodland initiative and it will be interesting to see if it can be duplicated in more pressured land markets of the English Metropolitan Green Belts (A Wilson 92).

3.4(iv) Summary

These Countryside Management Schemes have been introduced mainly by the Countryside Commission. It has been argued that their existence is the result of failure of Governments to create real management through the land-use planning system (Elson 1986).

> "It is generally accpeted that the plethora of Countryside Commission Management Schemes and growing number of Groundwork Trust have been successful, yet usually, this success has been subjectively "reassured" by individual projects officers or trust directors."
>
> Bishop (1990 p 119)

The trusts have not been fully evaluated. It is therefore argued that the ideas of Government to promote self-help in communities and voluntary approach amongst landowners has not been proven. The voluntary approach is also offering a prescriptive answer to problems of the urban fringe rather than tackling the real issues - land speculation, farm fragmentation, development pressures.

These new types of management schemes have implications for the planning system creating new management structures for the urban fringes. This is a reflection on the political ideologies of the

Government indicating the neo-liberal approach towards land-use planning yet this trend towards new management structures is not written directly into policy. This common inheritance (1990) gives no indication of shift to private management of the urban fringe. This perhaps reflects the Conservative paradoxical policy to retain the paternalistic elements of State control through planning policies yet if the schemes quite obviously point to neo-liberal influences of self-help, private enterprise and private management. The community forest policy takes into account this internal policy dilemma.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The urban fringe has distinct charateristics: its land-use; its planning policies and its management. The urban fringe also has unique pressures and potential. Situated on the edge of major cities and towns the urban fringe is the middle part of the continuum between urban and rural and thus it has quality characteristics of these areas. The urban fringe offers a potential resource for development and a potential resource for enhancement and protection of the open countryside. The areas are difficult to generalise about as each urban fringe area has a unique mixture of problems and advantages. However, the policies and management framework is very similar for each area.

The policies aim to protect some areas by Green Belt and develop others. This distributional balance was managed by land-use planners. However, Green Belt policy represents an interesting political conflict. The problems and arguments already highlighted over Green Belt reform or preservation represent

the strong elements in the Conservative party. Green Belt is a strong regulation preventing the domination of a free market yet any attempt to reform it threatens the protection of the Countryside.

The political-economy analysis enables this conflict to be understood more fully. The neo-liberals argue for reform of policy while paternalism argues for the retention of the policy. The result being that to retain the "hegemony" (described in chapter two) a compromise must be developed. The compromise, it can be argued, is the increasing numbers of new management schemes. Schemes that are not controlled by planners but instead quasi-governmental bodies, private enterprise and voluntary organisations.

The new wave of countryside and urban fringe management schemes represent the ideologies of the neo-liberals. This piecemeal fragmentation of planning control can be achieved by creating new management structure, which in some

cases rely on a planning gain incentive - planning permission being granted in order that "Green" programmes and countryside access, recreational management and environmental quality can be achieved. These in the past would have been within the remits of a strong land-use planning system. However, the financial pressure on local authorities and the political pressures on the planning system has meant that areas of "new" management have been created.

The problems of the urban fringe are being addressed not by local authorities but Central Government. The policies of Central Government are shaped by the political-economy within which it works. Thus, while Green Belt and protectionist policies are not being removed (to support traditional Conservative ideologies of a strong state and paternalist influence), the policies are being undermined by planning gain decisions, interference of the Secretary of State for Environment and new management schemes. All of which reflect the neo-liberal attempts to free the market from strong regulation like planning.

The urban fringe policies are being quietly but radically changed to reflect current Government ideology. It is within this context that forestry has been proposed. Forestry is also outside planning control, so the combination of a new management structure and forestry land-use provides an opportunity for the status-quo of local authority planning control to be tackled via a "back door" approach. The community forest scheme is the manifestation of this Change in the relationship between the State and planning.

The next chapters aim to analyse the Community Forest Scheme in relation to the political and theoretical debate described in chapters two and three.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY FOREST PROPOSAL?

4.0 Introduction

The ideological and policy changes (outlined in chapter two/three) which had taken place in the early to mid nineteen eighties culminated in a period of flux for the urban fringes. It is within this context that while agricultural reforms created a "surplus" of agricultural land with a need for alternative use, forestry in the EC was proposed as one productive/environmental alternative. It is within this context that multi-purpose urban fringe forestry came onto the agenda at a specific time to serve a particular function.

The chapter aims to examine the precise format of the urban fringe forestry proposals. To achieve this, the chapter will take a more descriptive view of community forest policy, its origins; its vision and its objectives. Answering the question what is a community forest?

4.1 The origins of the community forest concept

The Community Forest proposal was launched jointly by the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission in 1989. However, the process of formulating the policy and the decision to implement via a Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission join venture reveals quite a lot about the nature of the proposal. This account of the origins of the community forest policy goes some way to explain the true nature of the proposal.

As a result of work carried out by the Countryside Commission's Management Schemes and Groundwork Trust (described in Chapter 2) a need had been identified for a broad scale initiative within the urban fringes. These ideas were reported by the Countryside Policy Review Panel (a panel appointed by the Countryside Commission). The panel saw a compelling need to:

> "Examine most carefully the rapidly changing rural scene in England and Wales... They also saw a considerable potential for establishing new woods within the urban fringe."
>
> (CPRE 87 p 20)

It seems that 1987 was the key year for policy proposals for the urban fringes. Several Countryside Commission (CC) policy documents were published. policies for enjoying the countryside (1987c) identified the need for major new forests on the edge of our cities with the aim that they would act as important recreational assets. In the same year, Forestry in the Countryside (1989a) highlighted the Countryside Commission's own objectives for forestry:

> "That forests for the community would symbolise and demonstrate the national commitment to a new multi-purpose forestry."
>
> (CC 1987a p 7)

The culmination of their ideas was to create forests around our major connurbations and to establish a major new forest in the Midlands (Chapter two). Two quite separate initiatives had been identified: (This thesis is only concentrating on the community forest scheme).

> "The origins of the community forest concept comes from the early policy statements of the Countryside Commission and its advisers."
>
> Bishop (1991b p 6)

The Key ideas came from the Countryside Commission. A government-quango which originally had durisdiction over countryside protection, access, amenity and development. Forestry had always been outside its control because, like Agriculture, forestry is not effected by planning constraints. The Countryside Commission had argued for its inclusion into land-use planning along with agriculture. So more control could be established over land-uses in the countryside. This would put the Countryside Commission traditionally at "loga-heads" with productionist interests with the countryside and their representatives - e.g. the Forestry Commission. The alliance between the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission seems an unnatural one.

The Countryside Commission had also grown in power and influence with the success of the Countryside Management Schemes. The Government, it has been argued, by A Wilson (1992) had identified a route to influence Countryside policy and bring it within the remits of political ideology without overtly threatening the traditional power-relations (identified chapter two) of the countryside.

The movement into urban fringe and forestry policy was a new step for the Countryside Commission, neither was traditional with the remits of their power-influence. However, the Countryside Commission power base is linked with Government support. The proposals of urban fringe multi-purpose forestry has been valued as a sensible policy direction (A Wilson) but by

introducing it through the Countryside Commission, it hints at the increasing influence of Government policy.

Although nobody at the Countryside Commission is admitting dreaming up the project, as B Roberts, Head of Conservation said:

> "It's the sort of thing that someone comes up with and everyone falls about laughing but the next day they tell you it is an interesting idea."
>
> (C Clover 1990)

There seems little doubt that the idea was initiated at the Countryside Commission and then suggested to the Forestry Commission that they should join.

The changes in the administration and ideologies of the Forestry Commission (FC) (see Chapter 3) meant that the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Commission were no longer dialectly opposed. (In the past the CC had supported the interests of consumption while the FC represent the interests of production). The proposed split between the regulatory and enterprise sections of the FC meant the CC and FC could now do "business together". (J Collins Countryside Commission January 1992)

During 1987 and 1989 the connection between the two commissions grew. As J Collins (interviewed January 1992) said:

> "There was a growing meeting of minds."

It was suggested, at this interview at the Countryside Commission, by J Collins that it was the increased autonomy of the management, advisory and grant functions of the Forestry Commission making them distinct from the "Enterprise" function that meant practical steps could be made to form a working relationship. The increasing pressure on the Forestry Commission to find a new role meant that they were prepared to take on board this new relationship. (M Steward FC March 1992). The Forestry Commission also saw the need to take on board conservation and recreational interests.

It was this "partnership of interests" which allowed the Countryside Commission and Forestry to jointly launch a project to be known as "The National Programme for Community Forests". The two commissions saw a joint launch as adding to the credentials and status of the project. The united approach gave each organisation more strength to act as a powerful lobbying group to push for the projects success. They both saw their roles to guide, advise and co-ordinate the projects (R Munton March 1992).

There is however, a potential antagonism between this partnership. The Forestry Commission is fighting for survival and government finance and legitimisation. The view within the Forestry Commission is that the Government hope to reduce the commission in a similar way to the National Rivers Authority then placing these new regulative bodies under an umbrella organisation for environmental policy. It has been argued that this umbrella

organisation could take the form of a re-vamped Countryside Commission who are increasing their power - base, policy and political spheres influence. This inequality of power throws some doubt on the managerial relationship again highlighting the dominance of Government policy in shaping land-use proposals. The uneasy alliance between the Countryside Commision and the Forestry Commission highlights the overtly political nature of the community forest proposal.

In July 1989 this major new initiative was set in motion. A radical proposal to create multi-purpose urban fringe forestry around our major cities. It was to be called the **"Community Forest"**. The next section aims to explain what the community forest proposal actually intended to achieve.

4.2 **The Vision** - What is a community forest?

> "Imagine a forest with an exciting range of leisure facilities at the edge of the city - a well wooded landscape right on the doorstep of thousands of people. Woven into the forest is a rich variety of landscapes including farming, heathlands, flower filled meadows and lakes..... a **Community Forest** shaped by local people for themselves and their children to cherish for generations to come."
>
> (CC 1990 p 4)

This vision (see Appendix II) used evocative language and imagery to create the notions of a forest that had lines with history yet could provide for our future. The language was positive and imagery bold.

For example, the vision highlighted the cultural lines with woodland:

> "Britain: earliest settlements took shape in its ancient woodlands .....

now Britain has one of the least wooded landscapes of any country in Europe."

(CC 1990 p 4)

The literature also emphasised Britain's woodland heritage:

> "With our history and prosperity so deeply rooted in the forest it is not surprising that a close relationship with trees is woven into the life of the nation."
>
> (CC 1990a pg 5)

and also the vision evoked images of the strong symbolism of trees:

> "Even in this modern society forestry significance goes far beyond any economic value ..... they provide a link with the past and make our towns and cities more natural."

This vision was to evolve into a community forest:

- Each project area (not a forest!) should be between 10,000 and 15,000 hectares.
- Each (Community Forest) project area should consist predominantly - but not exclusively of broadleaved woodland.
- Each project are should be adjacent to the urban areas.
- The project areas identified should be in need of some kind of landscaping.

These project areas, called community forests were more than the glossy vision of multi-purpose urban-fringe forestry:

> "The vision was not of a continuous forestry but of a network of community woodlands and other landscape features."

This vision of woodland on the "doorsteps of thousands of people" (CC 1990 p 4) offered more than just an amenity for local people, it offered according

to the Countryside Commission an opportunity to bring wasteland back to life and inject a new unity to depressed areas (CC 1989 p 15). The "Forest Vision" was offering the catalyst to change in Greenbelt, Agricultural, Industrial and derelict land-uses within the urban fringes. The vision goes beyond the idea of a "wooded forest" the Countryside Commission is offering through the Community Forest ideas a potential for change. A change it feels will benefit the community (R Munton March 1992).

However, these key ideas for "catalyst for change" within the urban fringes link directly to Governments attempt to reform and de-regulate Green Belt areas. If this vision is analysed in this context of neo-liberal attempts at opening up Green Belt areas and the paternalist views to retain some sort of Government policy on the Countryside, the community forest is representative of the State attempting to reform and legitimise land-use decisions, all of which had dangerous ramifications for the planning system.

Certainly the vision and imagery looks attractive (See Appendix II) but in reality the imagery hides some important details. Only one feasibility study was carried out before any proposals were made public. This was a cost benefit-analysis aimed to find out if the economics of setting up such forests showed the proposition as realistic. The case study area was chosen as East London (this study forms part of the analysis of the case study area Thames Chase carried out in Chapter six).

The feasibility study used traditional cost benefit analysis to determine the economic potentials for such a land-use proposal. No study was carried out into the amenity or aesthetic benefits of woodlands; no study was carried out to determine peoples needs or aspirations from the urban fringes; no study was carried out on people's perceptions of woodland. Forestry "fitted the bill" in relation to changes identified within the urban fringes. A policy gap had been identified, a community forest seemed to provide the answer. An economic and political need had been identified. Policy makers in a traditional top-down approach to planning had created the "community" forest proposal.

> "The vision was dictated to the populace while the difficult process of implementation was advocated as an opportunity for real community involvement."
>
> A Wilson Jan 92

The fact was no research had been carried out as to what the community wanted; little research had been carried out into the type of land-use which had been proposed.

Forestry Commission consultants did visit European examples of urban fringe forestry; namely Vestkoven in Denmark (see Chapter six). When asked what they had learnt, a Forestry Commission spokesperson (who wished to remain anonymous) stated:

> "Comparative studies can be very misleading as we are working in very different political situations to foresters and policymakers in Scandinavia".
>
> Forestry Commission Spokesperson January 1992

The Forestry Commission did however say they had looked at the Danes work on perception of forestry but found their techniques too mechanistic and

therefore the FC preferred to carry out its own study.

The question was then asked as to whether any less mechanistic studies had been carried out by the FC which were used in justifying the implementation of the Community Forest vision. It was pointed out that a feasibility study in East London had been produced and the Broadhurst perception study (Chapter five/ Chapter one) was also used to justify the forest proposals.

The Broadhurst Study is an ongoing project which has not yet concluded its major findings and certainly prior to the 1989 launch of the community forest vision would have been very much in its infancy as a research project. Broadhurst himself admitted (January 1992) that no real perception study had been undertaken by the Forestry Commission prior to the community forest launch as recreational uses were only just being established as the major way forward for British forestry.

The vision had therefore been proposed without any major new research data - either qualitative or quantitative. As R Munton (Jan 92) pointed out, it is often much easier to gain support when the proposals do not represent a detailed plan or policy but rather a set of general criteria, a base map and an image.

The presentation of the community forest as a vision also hides the difficulties of implementation and more importantly the conflicts that might arise from that implementation. By packaging the community forest as a "vision" the real agenda of the policymakers can be hidden behind imagery and expensive

marketing (see Appendix II).

4.3 Locations

The next two sections aim to describe the logistics of the vision: its location, its objectives, and its management structure.

Three lead project areas were identified:

(i) Tyne and Wear INE Durham (Great North Forest)

(ii) South Staffordshire (Forest of Mercia

(iii) East London (Thames Chase)

These areas were chosen, according to Julie Collins (CC January 1992) for their geographical locations (i.e. one in the north, in the midlands and in the south). The specific locations had been identified by Countryside Management schemes which had been working in these areas. The D of E (March 1992) also acknowledged that the areas were places which they felt could benefit from indirect grant aid.

The second tier of forests were not officially launched until February 1991. These points had been put out for tender. The criteria for being designated a community are as follows:

- high levels of derelict land
- past involvement in Countryside Management schemes
- General state of landscape and amenity
- amenability of local authorities

J Collins CC January 1992

The following areas have now been designated part of the community forest "vision".

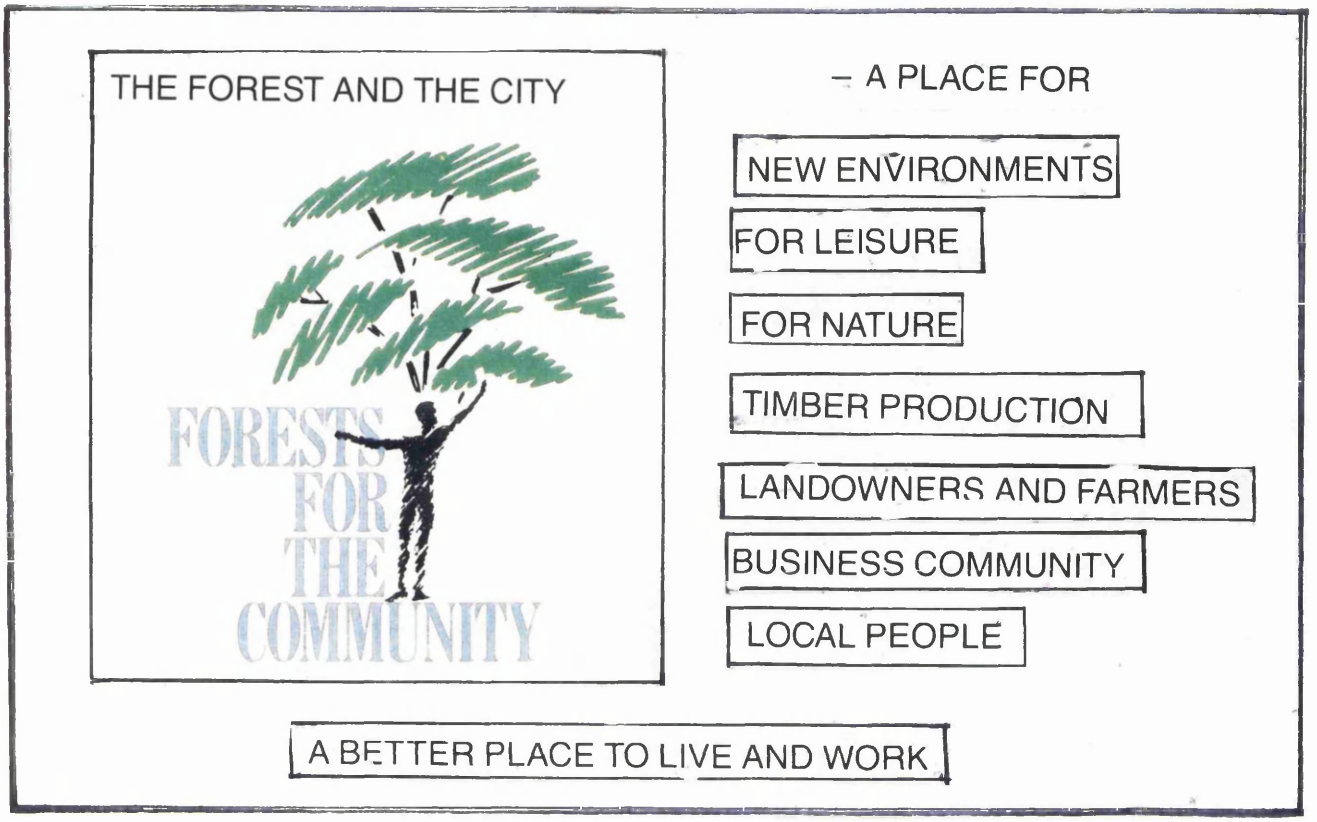
- South Hertfordshire
- Bedfordshire
- Swindon
- Nottinghamshire
- Merseyside
- South Yorkshire
- West Manchester
- Cleveland

The D of E see this vision as a way of initiating change in the urban fringes by tendering out the scheme it assumes that areas which want to change now have the opportunity. (J Collins CC January 1992)

4.4 The Objectives

The three lead forests (or project areas) had a general set of objectives which were cleverly woven into the launch literature. Forests for the community in brief these can be summarised below:

Fig. 7 Diagram to show a summary of the objective of the Community Forest Proposal



The general idea that the vision would work as a whole providing an improved urban environment and a partnership of interests working towards that end. A partnership of interests between public and private landowners and between productive and consumptive uses. Importantly, the Countryside Commission see this partnership as a way of co-ordinating the rural and urban perspectives. Community forests, the Countryside Commission said, provide the opportunity for organisation to work together to tackle the unique problems of the urban fringe. Problems which the Countryside Commission believed had been ignored too long. (J Collins January 1992).

The Department of the Environment also see the need to co-ordinate

knowledge, expertise and administration in these areas and to make local landowners part of the partnership for change (Bishop 1990 p 27). The Community forest it seems was being pushed as a catalyst to create a sense of unity via "partnerships" for the whole area.

> "By building partnerships, the dream can be achieved. We need to generate a spirit of co-operation that can extend far beyond the forests."
>
> J Collins CC January 1992

The major part of this vision is that private and public partnerships will implement the scheme. The essential part of community forests is that large scale changes on land ownership are not envisaged. (Countryside Commission 1989a). Instead as Bishop (1990) highlights in his PhD research that forestry will be set up some public but essentially private land:

> "The main approach will be to discuss with landowners and occupiers the business opportunities that might be available to them by diversifying in whole or part, into leisure and forestry ... This represents a continuation of the voluntary approach that has underpinned previous Countryside Management initiatives."
>
> Bishop (1991 p 6)

This concern with the early analysis (Chapter 3) on the ideologies of the state. The imposition of such a scheme as the "Community Forest vision" fits with the traditional conservative paternalism in relation to the guardianship of the countryside. However, present conservative ideologies means that any such vision should be provided for by the market. The forest is therefore initiated by a quasi-governmental body (with a conviction towards strong regulative control) but it is in fact implementing the ideologies of the state which favours the interests of capital.

"We are confident that farmers and landowners will be interested in planting trees on part of their land. This will be on a voluntary basis."

Countryside Commission 1989a

This "confidence" is as a result of the Countryside Commission's strong belief that private landowners will gain from their involvement in the community forest scheme. The gains envisaged by the Countryside Commission are listed below:

- commercial leisure opportunities
- productive use of former agriculture land
- better working environment
- an improved public image
- **perhaps** an enhancement in the value of their land

Julie Collins January 1992

The objective of the scheme is to help create this vision for the urban fringe via voluntary participation of private landowners (and to a lesser extent public landowners). The key words behind the vision seem to be "voluntary" and "private" participation (issues which will be dealt with at some length in the next two chapters). The community forest vision is not just an image of change within the urban fringes, the vision represents the ideology that the market can provide.

The project also suggests a "vision" which may be a contradiction to existing land-use policies. For example in Green Belt areas commercial leisure opportunities may not fit in with the official land-use functions. The vision therefore not only represents a policy where self-help and the market should provide but it also suggests that the market may be more influential then planning policy.

4.5 Management structure

Each of the lead project area has a project team. On this project team are representatives from the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission. The remaining members of the team vary between forest area. In general though the teams also included a member from British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, The Woodland Trust, Groundwork Trust and education and public relations officer.

The project teams are founded by the Countryside Commission and gain support (both financial and manpower time) from the relevant local authorities.

The teams have been founded for a period of three years in which time they should have prepared a non-statutory forest plan which identifies the aims of the scheme and how it will be identified (the detailed management structure will be discussed in Chapter 5).

The project teams are responsible to project directors - run in a similar way to the Countryside Commission Countryside Management Scheme. The project directors then report to the Steering Committees Committee whose members include a representative from the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission. This Committee in turn reports back to representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries and the Department of Environment (see figure 8).

Fig. 8 Community Forest Management Structure

Community Forest Group

Senior member MAFF (names confidential)
D of E
Independent Consultant

Maralyn Rawson	Marcus Sancster	Paul Burnet	Mike Kirby
Countryside Commission	Forestry Commission	MAFF Liaison Officer	Countryside Commission
National Co-ordination	Forestry Commission		Director of
Community Forest	representative and responsible		operations
	for contribution FC		Senior Policy
			Officer

PROJECT DIRECTOR AND PROJECT TEAM ON COMMUNITY FOREST SCHEME

R Munton March 1992

In summary:

"The Community Forest" represents a vision, an image of how the urban fringes could become in the future. It represents the image of senior politicians and countryside and forestry commission policy officers. This image aims to use urban fringe forestry to fill a policy gap but also provide a better environment. More recreation, amenities, education and wildlife opportunities. It also aims to help farmers and landowners diversify. Importantly this vision includes the political ideologies of the policy makers. The market will provide by creating a partnership of interests which will result in the voluntary participation of private landowners and tenants.

Little has been written about implementation of the scheme. In theory the project areas should cover between 10-15 hectares. Administered by project

team whose responsibility will be to draw up non-statutory forest plans to cover the whole community forest area. (The next chapter will evaluate how this "vision" becomes a reality).

4.6 Conclusion

On the surface the community forest scheme represents a "vision" of land-use in the urban fringe. However, this vision seems to hide some critical issues which will only be addressed by its implementation. However, very little has been written or analysed on the implementation, or the implications, of multi-purpose forestry in the urban fringes. The scheme appears to have been presented as a concept rather than a strong, feasible policy or even strategy for the urban fringes.

The community forest vision, it could be argued, seems a meek cover of undermining planning policies in the urban fringe (especially Green Belt). The scheme suggests a partnership of interests, however, the "voluntary participation" element favours the interests of capital and landowners. The community forest is a proposition to re-use agricultural land but it encourages commercial and employment opportunities for Green Belt. This undermining of protection of agricultural land and Green Belt uses policy reflects the spirit of the PPG's over the last decade.

Community forest may be a vision but its images could create a difficult reality for land use planners. The community forest scheme could be seen as a "Trojan Horse" to undermine the Green Belt (which the voters would not

allow to be reformed in an open way). In this way the community forests can get developers into the urban fringes and yet appear to be protecting it.

There is an analogy here with the use of golf courses as a way of infringing Green Belt, the idea being that by "greening" the Green Belt and providing a well managed environment like a golf course - recreational forest, a percentage can be allowed to be developed because the predominant use is "green".

The community forest vision is perhaps a back door way for the Government to initiate market policies while retaining the element of paternalist protection. This could create a creeping infringement of traditional land-use policy. By pressing the concept as a "vision" and <u>not</u> a strategy, it is difficult to fully evaluate the land-use implications. All that seems to be being presented is a series of glossy publications; poetic prose and photographic images.

LOOKING BEHIND THE "COMMUNITY" FOREST IMAGE

5.0 Introduction

The "community forest" concept is a distinct policy: a policy that arrived on to the political agenda to tackle specific problems - problems of the urban fringe, Greenbelt uses; "surplus" agricultural land and the need for a new direction for forestry policy (chapters 2 and 3). The community forest concept represents a vision - an image - of what new forestry land uses within the urban fringe could achieve (see chapter 4). The crucial part of that image is the management structure and importantly the concepts of partnerships. Chapter 2 highlighted the move towards quasi-governmental countryside management initiatives and even the use of the voluntary and private sector to manage some schemes within the urban fringe. The aim of this last section (chapter five and six) is to examine the realities behind the image.

This chapter proposes to examine whose interests the community forest scheme really represents by looking behind the vision of "Community Partnership" (Countryside Commission 1991). Firstly by disentangling the partnership into the "interest groups" functioning in the Countryside around towns. Secondly by assessing the role of the "relevant" interest groups. Then, the real power-relations and objectives behind the community forest can be examined.

5.1 Methodology

It is important at this point to address the questions of methodology. As methodology provides the basic tools for my research. However, questions of methodology are never simple within social science there is endless debate over the type of methodology and the nature of research designs. This section can only provide a brief, somewhat superficial insight into the debate. (For further study see: Johnson 1986; Silverman 1985; Sayer 1984; Eyles 1988). Despite its over-simplification, this section is a vital part in explaining the nature of analysis undertaken within the thesis.

5.1(i) Methodology for the Thesis

This thesis has been based on a qualitative methodology in contrast to a quantitative approach. Qualitative methodologies are more appropriate for the policy analysis of the community forest proposal.

The reason for the rejecting of quantitative methodology is that this approach is based on more scientific analysis. The research is advocated as objective; setting up a hypothesis and testing that hypothesis. This methodology is allied to a positivist research design. The research is based upon the results of statistical and mathematical modelling. This "model" process provides a source of data which explains only what has happened not why it has happened. (For critique of positivism, see Silverman 1985)

The policy analysis required in this thesis needs to look beyond "what" and explain "why" the policy has been formulated. Only by an explaining why the community forest proposal has come onto the policy agenda will the thesis be able to address the repercussions and implications of the policy.

Qualitative methods give the central importance to the actors' definitions and behaviour. The aim of this methodology is to help explain the social world. This is achieved via more interpretative and subjective research. Qualitative methodology has an array of "tools" to help expedite this information involving interviewing, questioning, participant observation and ethnographic study. (There is not room to evaluate the differing approaches to this research design for further study see Johnson 1986).

5.1(ii) Research Design

The research for this thesis followed the route of reviewing literature (both secondary and primary sources). This provided a basic knowledge of the temperal, political and economic context of the community forest proposal. This formed the basis for the analysis in Chapter one, two, three and four. However, to gain a deeper understanding of the real issues behind the policy decisions, a more detailed analysis is needed to be undertaken.

As Figure 9 shows there are a variety of research designs to collect this information.

Fig. 9 Extensive and Intensive Research Designs reflecting alternative methods of collection information

	INTENSIVE	EXTENSIVE
Research question	How does a process work in a particular case or small number of cases? What produces a certain change? What did the agents actually do?	What are the regularities common patterns, distinguishing features of a population? How widely are certain characteristics or processes distributed or represented?
Relations	Substantial relations of connection	Formal relations of similarity
Type of groups studied	Causal groups	Taxonomic groups
Type of account produced	Causal explanation of the production of certain objects or events, though not necessarily representative ones	Descriptive 'representative' generalizations, lacking in explanatory penetration
Typical methods	Study of individual agents in their causal contexts, interactive interviews, ethnography. Qualitative analysis	Large-scale survey of population or representative sample, formal questionnaires, standardized interviews. Statistical analysis
Limitations	Actual concrete patterns and contingent relations are unlikely to be 'representative', 'average' or generalizable. Necessary relations discovered will exist wherever their relata are present, e.g. causal powers of objects are generalizable to other contexts as they are necessary features of these objects	Although representative of a whole population, they are unlikely to be generalizable to other populations at different times and places. Problem of ecological fallacy in making inferences about individuals. Limited explanatory power
Appropriate tests	Corroboration	Replication

(Sayer 1984 p 22)

The research design adopted was a more intensive one: (as highlighted in Fig. 9). This pursues the idea of interactive interviewing. The interviews undertaken were therefore informal and allowed for an

exchange of ideas and understanding of the participants' views on the community forest policy. These informal interview techniques follow a basic, but not stringent, list of issues which need to be covered in the interview. The informal method allows for more interaction and explanation of interesting issues therefore creating a greater understanding of casual explanations: policy decisions and power relations.

Obviously this technique has its faults, the intense nature of interviewing process means only a limited number of people could be interviewed in the time allowed for this thesis. Thus a subjective selection of interviewees had to be made based on the information gleaned from the literature review. Thus, more formal interviewing techniques do have their place and one criticism of this thesis is that the "community" where the forest were being planted, could not be interviewed. It was impracticable to interview so many people in an informal way. Formal questionnaires would be more appropriate. However, in the remits of this study, the process would have to be extensive if any valid conclusions were to be drawn, this would have proved time-consuming and expensive. The focus of this study therefore remains on the "policymakers" and it seemed appropriate to focus time and resource on extensive interviews of interested groups.

The following analysis was therefore gained by talking to a limited number of people and representatives of interested groups. The interviews were intensive and informal (For a summary of the research schedule see Appendix I).

The difficulty of carrying out such analysis is that it does not provide a wealth of statistical data or easily analysed results. The following chapters are therefore formulated as part of the general argument of the thesis and the interviews provide an important part of the knowledge base which enabled the analysis to be carried out. These interviews are not recorded verbatim but rather the essence of the arguments and the interesting points and crucial parts of the analytical process are carried within this thesis.

This chapter is divided into a number of sections: identifying the interest groups within the urban fringe; analysing the power relations; establishing the community forest partners and finally, evaluating who the community forest policy serves. This analysis was carried out using the information gained from intensive interviews of the interested groups. The research schedule is documented in Appendix I.

5.2 "Disentangling the Partnership" - Identifying the interest groups within the urban fringe

The Community Forest vision represents a unified approach to solving the problems of the urban fringe, with the community forest becoming the co-ordinating factor for a number of interests -thus creating a need for partnerships (J Collins Countryside Commission Jan 92). This concept represents an image of unification a policy which will generate partnerships - rather than partnerships which will generate policy.

> "By promoting the idea of partnerships the Countryside Commission can give credibility to their notions of community."
>
> A Wilson CPRE Jan 92

It is interesting to note, that "community" as a concept is nearly always interpreted in a positive way. As R Williams (1976) demonstrates the associated images of community are of collected, local groups independent from the State or Society often with some form of autonomy.

These positive perceptions add to the perceptions that the vision be achieved by local interest groups working together.

> "The community forest aims to form a partnership between public and private landowners and manager within the urban fringe, in order to benefit the community."
>
> J Collins Countryside Commission Jan 92

This "vision" of interested parties co-ordinating for the good of the forest's implementation presents a somewhat worrying picture (A Wilson CPRE Jan 92).

To understand the real function of the community forests - its real policy objectives -it is necessary to look behind the concept of partnership. It is therefore important to our understanding to disentangle this all encompassing idea of partnerships.

The partnership is between public and private landowners and managers (and therefore also policy makers). In general, public landowners are the relevant local authority - public land being recreation grounds, parks, schools and community grounds and also vacant land (Gilg 1991) the local authorities are also the managers of these sites. The private landowners within the urban fringes are farmers, mineral companies, speculative investors (both individual and collective) - This can include development companies. Private landownership might also form part of a large private residence. Land also belongs to the church, the Crown, conservation environment and wildlife groups and trusts. It can also form part of a private club (e.g. golf club, riding centre, tennis club and other sports clubs). All these landowners could manage the land themselves, employ staff, rent out to tenants or leave vacant (Countryside Commission 1981). There is also still some common land often maintained by local authorities or perhaps a civic or community trust.

This fragmented landownership pattern generates a complex mixture of interests within the urban fringe. Each
"interest" having a slightly different set of priorities and therefore each type of landowner requiring a different set of policy decisions (Bishop 1990).

Not all interest groups are landowners or managers, some are policymakers e.g. local councillors, while some interested groups are campaigning organisations e.g. Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Friends of the Earth. Government quangos also act as policymakers, regulators and advisers within the urban fringes: (e.g. English Nature, English Heritage, Countryside Commission).

In trying to understand this mosaic of private and public interest within the urban fringe it has been necessary to evaluate and to some extent generalise about the types of groups represented. Therefore a certain categorisation of interest groups were identified. By this categorisation of landowners, managers and representatives of different interest groups, it is easier to evaluate the nature of partnership envisaging in the implementation of the community forest. (Obviously generalisation and categorisations are dangerous precedents but for the practical purposes of this overview of the partnerships within the community forest scheme the amalgamation of certain groups seemed necessary). For identification of these groups see Appendix I.

5.2(i) Identified Interest Groups - Within the Urban Fringe

The following list forms a general categorisation of interest groups in the urban fringe

(i) Private Landowners

representatives
- County Landowners Association (CLA)o
- National Farmers Union (NFU)o
- House Builders Federation

(ii) Public Landowners and Managers

representatives	-	(	Essex County Council o
		(	Hertfordshire County Council *
local authorities	-	(	Havering *
		(	Barking & Dagenham
		(	Brentwood *

(iii) Environmental Groups

representatives	-	Council for Protection of Rural England (CPRE) o
	-	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) o
	-	Friends of the Earth o
	-	National Trust

(iv) Government quangos

representatives	-	English Nature o (NCC)
	-	English Heritage o
	-	Countryside Commission *

(v) Government Departments

representatives	-	Forestry Commission o
	-	Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries
	-	Department of the Environment

There are a representative cross-section of the interest groups active within the urban fringes. (See Appendix I). This list by no means represents all the interest groups working within the urban fringe but their input was enough to provide an initial understanding of the type of interests and attitudes working within

the urban fringe. They also form the basis of the "partnership" envisaged by the Countryside Commission.

The research within this chapter was carried out by first sending a letter containing a set of open-ended questions to all the above mentioned organisations. (See Appendix I for research schedule, letters and questions). Depending upon the response follow-up telephone calls were made and wherever possible, interviews were arranged. The interviews were carried out over a period of two months at the beginning of 1992. The interviews were generally about 45 minutes and the approach was "intense" (see Methodology and Appendix I). Where face-to-face interviews were difficult to obtain or where the organisations were unwilling to co-operate, a brief telephone conversation was used to glean as much information as possible. (* denotes where intensive face-to-face interviews took place. o indicates where telephone interviews were possible). All except the National Trust replied to letters to a greater or less extent.

On choosing the groups it was important to represent a multitude of interests - from productivist and capital interests, to policy or administrative, to consumptive and environmental.

The interest groups were chosen to reflect a diversity of power interests within the policy making process. (For a deeper analysis of the power-relations within the Countryside see Newby 1979; Lowe et al 1983 & 1986 and Gilg 1991). The initial survey indicated that the different interest groups did, in fact, have different agendas and priorities which resulted in different policy requirements. They also seemed to feel that they had different roles to play within the policy making process and thus each interest group had a

different assessment of their "power" within policy making.

The vision upon which the community forest scheme is anchored is the idea of "voluntary partnerships", which it is envisaged, by the community forests publicity, as a set of equal partnerships. The idea being that the different factions of the urban fringes will be equally investing in shaping the forests. Having identified a number of different interest groups this section wishes to demonstrate that the community forest vision is based upon a set of uneasy alliances, differing interests and in a political climate of power imbalances. The dominant interest groups will shape the community forest not, as the Countryside Commission would have us believe, an equally partnership representing the different interest groups.

The next section aims to address what are the dominant interest groups and thus who holds the power within the urban fringes.

5.3 Who Holds the Power within the Urban Fringes

Lowe (1983) showed how an organisation's structure evolves internally to reflect on its relations with the political system:

> "There is a strong connection between the objectives of a group; its tactics and political style and its access to Government."
>
> Lowe (1988 p 177)

The community forest concept offers an interesting insight into the power relations both internally and externally of the interest groups within the urban

fringe. The information gained from the survey of interested parties in the community forest scheme showed that each group had its own aspirations.

Environmental groups have been seen as growing forces in British politics, since the drive to reform CAP and precedence set by the European Elections (chapter 2) gave them more political clout. However, all the environmental groups surveyed (CPRE; RSPB; Friends of the Earth and National Trust) disputed this idea that they had a massively increased lobbying power relative to their situations in the mid to late 1980's. Most of the groups felt their influence had diminished during the recession.

Lowe and Goyder (1988) show that the more political power that an environmental group has, the less autonomy the group will possess. Also, if a environmental group is to be a political force it needs not only a large membership but also a strong, small managerial-type leadership. To attain political power it is difficult for the organisation to function as a bottom-up policy making institution.

Lowe and Goyder (1988) took their evaluation one step further and tried to see how representative the powerful environmental groups were in reflecting the "interests" of the society. Arguing that political influence was not the only way to achieve power, but linked power with strong interests in society, such as capital. (This fits with the appraisal of the groups interviewed in this thesis. As Lowe and Goyder (1988) point out, there is a confrontation between economic and environmental interest. While economic interests and capital

interests are more dominant it is difficult for environmental groups to influence the decision making processes.

In conclusion of their study Lowe and Goyder evaluated the support of environmental groups. They advocated a decline in relative power during the recent economic recession which is in contrast to the power held by environmental groups in the early 1970's where they had strong membership and political support. However, the paper argues that environmental groups do have a stable level of support which will be revived if there is an economic resurgence.

The environmental groups interviewed in the analysis of Community Forest have large memberships. The membership subscriptions paid for the existence of an executive policy making body. In most cases the environmental groups felt they had a certain amount of autonomy in policy making and could reflect the relevant issues they felt needed to be addressed. However, the National Trust argued more strongly that it carries out the wishes of its members and therefore has to retain a certain degree of separation from interference in political Governmental policy making.

All the environmental groups interviewed supported the move towards lowland, urban fringe forestry, highlighting the need for an advisory element to their campaigning. They felt any direct involvement in policy making prevented objectivity and to some degree environmental credibility. The role of groups such as CPRE, RSPB, and National Trust was to lobby in support of their

relevant interests. While Friends of the Earth saw the role as to directly lobby policy makers to change major political and economic systems and policies. These opinions were directed at sympathetic MP's but mainly formed the basis of lobbying publications: (CPRE (Nov 1990); RSPB (1991); Friends of the Earth (1991).

> "Environmental lobbying "clout" is the result of environmental acceptability, credibility and pressure via access to power. Its success is based upon how embarrassing the environmental concern could be for the relevant political agent or Government policy. Many environmental groups are in their very nature responsive to policies rather than pro-active in their formulation. In the case of community forest scheme the idea met with general approval while the specifics of each forest and implementation remain a worrying issue."
>
> A Wilson 1992

This sentiment was echoed by the RSPB who stated at a national policy level they had not been involved in the formation of policy but would concentrate on making sure the specifics of the forest would enhance and generate new wildlife habitants. Friends of the Earth also supported the forest idea in principle as did the National Trust. Both groups voiced concern over management and funding issues.

> "Rather than influencing community forest policy the environmental groups believe they have more power and influence on the ground by site specific campaigning."
>
> Sue Webster
> English Nature Jan 92

This analysis of environmental groups highlighted the main actors in the community forest concept:

(i) The Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission

(ii) The Private Landowners

(iii) The Local Authorities (Public Landowners)

The CPRE and RSPB saw their role in the partnership of the community forest scheme as safeguarding the environmental habitats and landscapes. However, they both believed this was a difficult task as environmental lobbying was not based on their "capital" power but rather continued pressure.

> "It is the capital interests within the countryside which still dominate policy-decisions."
>
> A Wilson 1992

Thus, the partnership envisaged by the community forest is that of landowners and policy makers (who may not be separate groups).

5.4 The Community Forest Partners

This next section aims to evaluate the partnership of policy makers and landowners firstly by addressing the policy making "partnership" of the Forestry Commission and the Countryside Commission, then secondly evaluating the landowning partnerships.

5.4(i) The Foresty Commission and Countryside Commission

The Community Forest Scheme is set up on an initial partnership between the Forestry Commission and Countryside Commission. This partnership is fundamental to our understanding of how the forests will be implemented and whose interests they will serve. As it has already been shown the Forestry Commission has been under political pressure

to reform its organisation: to privatise its enterprise initiative and to become a regulative body for the forestry industry. (In the same way the National Rivers Authority regulates the privatised water companies). It is within this context of political pressure and organisational uncertainty that the partnership with the Countryside Commission has been made.

Traditionally, the Countryside Commission has been opposed to forestry commission policy especially the fact forestry as a major land-use is outside planning control. Despite the conflict of trying to ally productionist and consumptive (and protectionist) ideologies, the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission linked up to introduce the community forest scheme.

The Countryside Commission is a quasi-Governmental body. It has adopted an increasing role in creating new urban fringe and countryside management schemes. Creating a precedence for initiatives to be set up with Government grants as a result evolving new spheres of influence in countryside planning. These areas were traditionally controlled by local authorities (Munton Jan 1992)

Chapter four demonstrated the increased power of Government quangos. It is necessary at this point to re-emphasise the point that quangos can offer a "buffer" between the State and capital. The important point to notice is that the increased role of such Government

quangos reflect the increasing influence of Central Government in land-use policy making process. This increased power is at the expense of the planning authorities.

The Countryside Commission is strengthening its role in the urban fringes and it is arguable that as an organisation it is increasing its political power (Munton Jan 92) while the Forestry Commission is desperately seeking a new orientation and structure. The Countryside Commission internally and externally is strengthening its lineages with central Government (Anon: Countryside Commission 1992) while the Forestry Commission have refused to comment on the state of their organisation saying:

> "Jobs are on the line and until the re-organisation is complete there will be no public access to the internal dealings of the Forestry Commission."
>
> Forestry Commission Spokesperson Jan 1992

Lowe (1982) argues that there are costs and benefits in structuring an organisation to have political influence. The benefits of close links are increased political influence while the cost of active participation may be a loss of objectivity, freedom of ideology and policy and a responsibility to the existing political system.

It is the closer association of the Countryside Commission with central Government which has worried environmental groups. The CPRE described the increased politicalisation of the Countryside Commission

as "very worrying". (A Wilson Jan 92). Worrying in several respects. The increased association points to the increased role of central Government ideologies in Countryside Commission's policy decisions (A Wilson CPRE Jan 92). The initial community forest partnership is set amongst a context of central Governments interference in local authorities countryside planning:

> "In terms of strategic policy: it (the community forest scheme) is a central Government initiative: as central Government controls the resources of the Countryside Commission."
>
> A Wilson CPRE Jan 92

The National Farmers Union believe the strengthening of the Countryside Commission will result in forestry being incorporated into planning control. This back door policy making of central Government, they believe, will reduce the autonomy of private land owning interests to do as they wish with their land.

Thus the community forest partnership is based on a strong organisation, the Countryside Commission and a meeker organisation, the Forestry Commission (who are desperately fighting for a justifiable role and thus funding). This unequal relationship is the foundation upon which the community forests vision of partnerships is to be implemented. But more importantly the relationship ensures that the partnership with the community forest areas will reflect Government ideology.

5.4(ii)Community Forest Partners - Public and Private Landowners

The Countryside Commission, as lead agent is implementing a vision based on the linking of public and private landowners to initiate the scheme. This reflects Government thinking concerning self-help and private investment generating the changes needed in both urban and rural environment. The debate surrounding interest groups within the countryside is also dominated by the power-relations and state of flux concerning countryside policy and rural areas. This extends to the urban fringes. The community forest by initiating "partnership" of public and private investment in the urban fringes has to address the long standing debate over agricultural "surplus" land and set aside.

The community forestry scheme offers voluntary participation to farmers to diversify into forestry. The question remains how much subsidy is Government willing to pay to ensure this "voluntary participation".

The community forest reflects Government policy. The partnership scheme therefore reflects upon the political debate between productionist interests in the countryside and the conflicts between paternalist and neo-liberal factions within central Government. The NFU and CLA both have strong linkages with paternalist Conservatives MP's. Traditionally landowning interests have been supported along with ideas as farmers as the natural stewards of the countryside. (Chapter 2). However, the neo-liberals argue against productionist

policies stating that the market should provide (A Thornley 1991).

The community forest concept plays out this division - with the treasury holding the political purse strings. The Treasury argue that the community forests should be evaluated via cost benefit studies - with economics dominating whether investment takes place. However, as Munton (Jan 92) argues cost benefit analysis has several weaknesses. One of its major ones being that the results can be manipulated to represent the best interests of certain economic interests within the countryside.

Munton argues that the cost-benefit analysis on the community forest is being carried out by the Forestry Commission. Environmental concerns are low on the agenda, what remains, in his opinion, the driving force behind the study is the need to justify the existence of the forestry commission and thus continued investment in forestry policy. This would benefit the traditional productionist interest of the countryside. The paradoxical situation of political philosophy within the Conservative party remains the ideology to advocate free market enterprise yet the continued support via regulative, Government policies and finances of making sure that the free market enhances the interests of capital (Thornley 1991); (Ambrose 1989).

The partnerships envisaged within the community forests must advocate market provision, yet what is apparent is that private investment will

only be adopted if there are public sweeteners. When interviewed the NFU and the CLA advocate that private investment depends upon the willingness of Government to provide adequate grant aid, or other financial incentives:-

> "Only if there are real benefits to be obtained will there be the hand of participation needed to make each (forestry) scheme a success."
>
> NFU (Nov 1990 p 2)

Thus, the partnership between private and public landowners is reliant upon investment. This forms an interesting parallel to the Wildlife and Countryside Act negotiations prior to 1981 (Lowe 1986). The NFU and CLA will, in a similar way to their attitudes towards the Wildlife and Countryside Act, hold out against the scheme for as long as possible. By remaining sceptical about their members willingness to get involved Lowe (1992) has argued that they could jeopardise the success of the community forest scheme. This uncertainty about participation could worry the political interests. Munton (1992) has argued that there is a political commitment at a high level to the community forest initiative. Thus, the longer the landowning interests are seen to be against the scheme the more their political bargaining position is strengthened. As it is their members participation which will result in the success of the scheme.

This private/public partnership is important to be perceived by commentators, and political opposition as working (Munton 1992).

Firstly for the success of the scheme, secondly to provide credibility to Government ideology.

Landowning interests still have a powerful political lobby and bargain position. As a result of this it is believed that private capital will be the benefactors of the scheme. (A Wilson CPRE Jan 92; Bishop 1990, Pit 1991). Private landowners are not just farmers, many are also developers, speculative investors and mineral companies (as advocated in Chapter 3). Hope value and planning decisions play a large part in the value of urban fringe land. To invite landowners to put there land under forestry requires an incentive. (See Fig. 6, chapter 4 p97).

Grant incentives are one method of enticing private landowners to participate in the community forest schemes but as A Woods, (Head of Forestry and Planning Policy at the County Landowners Association) advocated. the grant must be greater than the potential revenue gained by other land-use (such as farming, development or mineral extraction). The result is that many landowners will hold out against planting until the Government investment is guaranteed or the potential for community forest development schemes, such as houses, recreational facilities are ascertained.

> "In the meantime it is probably more worthwhile for our members to resist planting and wait upon the realisation of land or mineral speculation."
>
> A Woods CLA April 92

Grant incentive is therefore not the only "sweetener" that landowners are looking for the Government to provide. Although the grant mechanism is seen as vital to the community forests implementation (A Wilson CPRE Jan 92), it has been strongly argued that the Government will not wish to provide the sums needed to make up an "adequate" grant for the implementation of the schemes. This would challenge political ideology, the treasury could be providing substantial funds for private investors to create a public woodland. This anomaly within Conservative philosophy has been well documented. (Thornley 1991; Ambrose 1989).

However, it has been argued that the more favourable method of providing incentives for private sector investment in Government schemes is by providing the right environment for capital interests (Thornley 1991). The introduction of certain "benefits" to investors in terms of planning decisions in community forest areas have been advocated by commentators (Bishop 1990/91: Pit 1991). The Countryside Commission strongly advocate that any community forest scheme will take place within the remit of the existing local or structure plan policy. However, it has been proposed by many commentators that community forests will be implemented only as a result of partnerships between private investors and public planning authorities by planning gain. (CPRE 1990; Bishop 1990/91; Pit 1991: Considered Feasibility Study Countryside Commission 1991). In return

for favourable planning decisions landowners will plant a certain percentage of community forest and manage it so it can be available for public access.

It has also been argued that by allowing "planning gain" decisions management agreements can be more strictly enforced. The major failing of the grant mechanism is that it does not automatically ensure the creation of an amenity environment for the local community (House Builders Federation Jan 92). Thus:

> "In the absence of other major incentives, planning gain is seen as one of the mechanisms of implementing the forestry proposals."
>
> CPRE June 1991
> Community Forest Charter

The only feasibility study carried out prior to the community forest's launch in 1989 was a cost-benefit analysis carried out by Harcrow Fox Associates for the Countryside Commission. The study took place in Essex. Unfortunately the detailed results of the study could not be printed as the report is confidential. However, a confidential source did say that it was disclosed that the findings reported to Countryside Commission in 1989 did advocate only two realistic methods of implementing the community forest schemes.

(i) By transferring land into public ownership or charitable trusts (which was later reported as impractical in this political climate:) Countryside Commission source who wishes to remain confidential.

(ii) The second method advocated was that of planning gain. The report goes into a detailed financial appraisal of how allowing development would entice landowners to join the scheme, in return for managed accessible woodlands in some areas of their development.

J Collins (Countryside Commission Jan 92) strongly denied that the Countryside Commission supported development gains associated with forest planting.

The Hertfordshire proposed community forest provides an interesting insight into the planning gain debate:

> "The Hertfordshire forest is one of the second generation forests. These forestry were put up for "tender" and the county had to compete for eligibility to have a community forest in its area. However, once adopted the scheme was supported within the draft structure plan".
>
> (K Bloxham March 1992)

Policy I5A

> "The County Council will support the establishment of a community forest in South and East of the county ... for the purposes of landscape conservation, recreation, wildlife conservation and timber production".
>
> (Hertfordshire Draft Structure Plan 1990)

However the Council assess the difficulties of implementation and advocated footprint development be allowed within the forest areas: placing into policy these statements:

> "In a limited number of cases an economic appraisal may demonstrate that the provision of the community forest will only be through redevelopment for uses not strictly related to community forest activities."
>
> (Hertfordshire Draft Structure Plan Explanatory Memorandum)

Policy 15A (revised)

> "Exceptional development which would not normally be permitted within the Greenbelt may be allowed within the community forest."
>
> (Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review July 1991 p 20)

The public consultation material advocated that redevelopment for uses other than recreational and activities directly relevant to the community forest were

> "deemed essential to secure the provision and long term management of the community forest."
>
> Hertfordshire CC (Explanation on Policy 15A prepared for public consultation of the Draft Structure Plan).

However, the Secretary of State proposed modifications to the policy advocating there were no exceptional circumstances where development could take place in the Greenbelt:

> "The Secretary of State agrees that, notwithstanding the need to seek funding for the community forest through enabling development, there is no case for relaxing Greenbelt policies in the area concerned by the proposed community forest."
>
> Hertfordshire County Council Structure Plan Review Mar 92 p 5

These proposed modifications are now being considered by the Council and there is a six week period for people to object. However, according to K Bloxham (March 92), the Planning Department of Hertfordshire County Council, believed that the community forest will have to be funded by grant aid and developments outside the Green Belts.

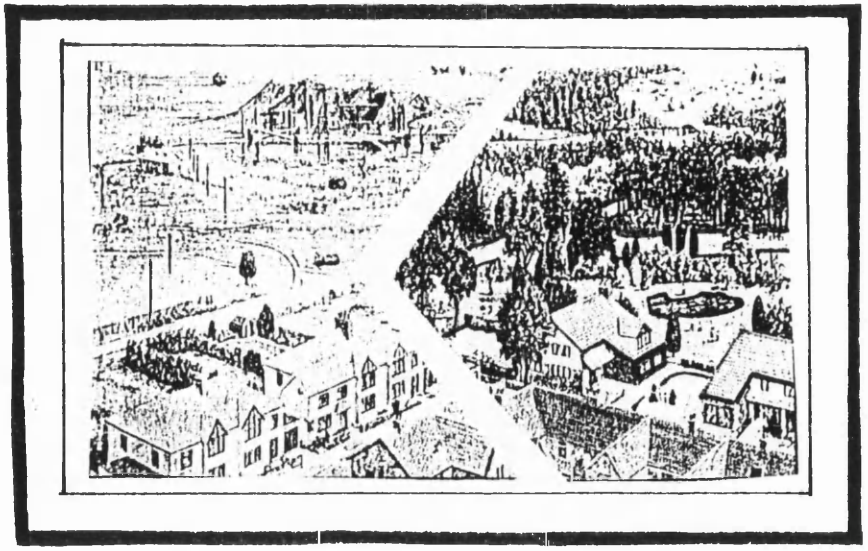
These examples show the political controversy proposed by any development within the Green Belt. At the moment Government has supported the

sacrosanct nature of Greenbelts but financing the community forest is still a major problem. The interests of capital must be satisfied either by increasing grants (i.e. supporting the pressures of CLA/NFU) or by allowing development on the Green Belts in community forest areas. This development would be piecemeal overturning individual planning decisions rather than laying down distinct policy.

Certainly Bishop 1991 and Pit 1991 advocate the only way forests can be realistically implemented in today's political climates, is to allow "planning gain" decisions. Local authorities are acting with their hands tied, if they openly support Green Belt development like Hertfordshire, then they may get the structure plan modified in support of the non-development in the Green Belt. But in order to gain amenities and services for the local communities, local authorities have increasingly had to resort to allowing piecemeal development. (Ambrose, Thornley 1990, Gilg 1991). The result being that the interests of capital dominate planning decisions.

Pit (1991) advocates that if planning decisions are not favourable to developers straight away, then landowners will prepare land for development in the future.

Fig. 10 Preparation for future development



cited Pit 1991 p 189

Thus the partnership advocated by the community forest vision, represents the interests of capital.

5.5 Whose "interest" does the community forest policy serve?

The debate about whose interests the forest serve has to be focused around the power relations between the policymakers and the landowners. The argument lies in that it is difficult to distinguish the interests of the two groups.

The policymakers are the Countryside and Forest Commission. It has already been shown that the power behind both these agencies is Central Government. Central Government's community forest policy is affected by the division in Government ideologies. On the one hand the interests of the neo-liberals -

advocating financial efficiency, freeing up of regulatory machinery hampering the market, pushing for self-help and privatisation (especially in relation to management of the land-use and urban fringe environment). All of which support private enterprise.

On the other hand, there is a more paternalistic view to Government ideology. This is regarded as protecting the old established interests by offering patronage and protection to certain groups. Traditionally, landowners have been Tory voters. These landowners and farmers have arguably been regarded as protectors of the countryside. Areas not controlled by productionist interests of farming and forestry have been protected by planning regulations. This ideology also advocates the support of "capital interests". However these capital interests have been directly supported via grants and subsidies.

The community forest scheme is trying to create a "partnership" of private and public landowners. However, as has already been shown the partnership favours capital interests. The question remains in what way will the policy be implemented to favour these interests - via neo-liberal philosophy or paternalistic ideology. The grant mechanism has been advocated as the way of implementation, retaining to the old protectionist schools of thought.

However, commentators (Bishop 1990, Pit 1991) advocate that the only realistic way the community forest can be implemented is through planning gain. It is argued that the political influence of neo-liberalism is more dominant than paternalism. (Thornley 1990). It is believed that through

planning gain, and perhaps the eventual freeing up of the Greenbelt, community forests can be implemented (Pit 1991). Whichever fraction of the Conservative party dominate policy will effect the implementation of the community forest scheme. (Bishop 1990). The connitations of this battle within Central Government will have far reaching effects on the future of countryside planning. The community forest policy is an experiment into new methods of countryside management and policy. The distributional effects of these countryside management schemes could possibly change the countryside enormously (A Wilson CPRE Jan 92).

Munton sees the community forest scheme as having a "hidden agenda" (Munton Jan 92). He argues that its aim is to tackle the regeneration of the urban fringes and challenge the role of Greenbelt. However, at the present moment the debate within Central Government as to which ideology should be pursued within the urban fringe, has still resulted in the community forestry policy serving the interest of capital. This compromise has left local authorities playing the deciding role in the type of implementation.

Local authorities have been supporting the implementation of the community forest for urban fringe areas. The "vision" they believe addresses the problems of the urban fringe but fails to provide any powers of implementation. Ideally local authorities would support grant aided programmes or public land acquisition. However, as K Bloxham (Planning Assistant, Hertfordshire County Council) argues, the precedent set in the 1980's, does not give much support to the ideas that public money will be made available to implement a

"grand scheme" to regenerate the urban fringe. The political climate within land-use planning at central level means implementation can only practicably come through planning gain. (K Bloxham March 92).

The landowners support this:

> "The future of the urban fringe should be dependent on the enterprise and initiative of the landowners"
>
> A Woods Country Landowners Association

It appears that local authorities are the only controlling factor as to the distributional effects of the community forest.

However, as Cloke argues that:

> "The major issues facing rural planning is the degree to which autonomy and discretion are available to planners to implement their policies... an increasingly widespread realisation is that rural policies and promises are not matched by planning action. Indeed a substantial conclusion is that planning has largely failed to regulate market-based trends."
>
> Cloke (1987 p 19)

The community forest policy therefore represents the interests of capital. At the moment this is contained to a limited degree by local authority planning policies. However, if Central Government ideology supports the neo-liberal philosophy of de-regulation and free market enterprise, the distributional effects of a forest would <u>not</u> be for the community but rather development and investment capital interests. This could also be at the expense of the traditional "farming" interest within the countryside.

The Central Government dilemma over whether to support paternalist or neo-liberalist ideology will effect the nature of planning within the urban fringes. Depending upon which philosophy is supported, the community forest scheme could mark the beginning of a new countryside management initiatives led by private enterprise or the return to old paternalistic traditional views of countryside stewardship. The community forest scheme's implementation, form and effects will depend upon which Government philosophy is supported.

5.6 Conclusion

Thus, the community forest represents not a partnership of interests within the urban fringe but rather a partnership of interests between Central Government and capital interests. The local authorities are left to try to establish the maximum amount of "community" benefit for the local areas.

Community forest policy is the beginning of a new period of partnerships within the countryside (Munton Jan 92). The Community Forest Scheme represents the partnership of Central Government and productionist and capital interests. The "image" of the community forest is that it can benefit the environment, provide a resource for local people and a wildlife and recreational amenity for the urban population.

The "images" represent the idea of partnerships for the benefit of the community with the goal of re-generating the urban fringes. This chapter has shown that realistically the community forest is a Government policy representing a potential opportunity for capital interests to infringe Green Belt

regulations and take the opportunity of developing on "surplus" agricultural land. The partnership created by the community forest proposal could make the reality far different from the image. A reality where planners have very little control over the community forest area and very little power to ensure positive distributional effects for the community.

The next chapter aims to examine via a case study of the Thames Chase community forest, what shape, form and function the forest is going to take therefore helping to give an insight into which Government philosophy is being supported. Thus helping to determine what the future agenda will be for countryside planning and management policy.

EXAMINING THE REALITIES

6.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to illustrate the images and realities of the community forest scheme by use of a case study - the East London community forest; Thames Chase. This will enable the issues facing the implementation of the project to be realistically highlighted. By using a case study, concrete examples of political and economic issues can be extracted, therefore the chapter will aim to act as an illustration of the issues already debated in the previous chapters. Also by way of conclusion a comparison will be made between Thames Chase and European urban fringe forests.

6.1 Thames Chase: Community forest

This section will look at Thames Chase examining the background of the proposal, the location and management of the forest and finally its implementation.

6.1(i) Background

The Thames Chase community forest was one of the three lead forests launched by the Countryside and Forest Commission in July 1989. They have now been joined by a further nine forests. However, the initial lead forests were set up to act as learning grounds and if they proved successful (in terms of treasury cost benefit studies), the community forest schemes are to be spread to all areas which apply for grant designated status. The implementation of these first forests has

an important effect on the nature and extent of the scheme.

The initial lead forests were chosen for their geographical locations (J Colins Countryside Commission Jan 92).

- o one in the North: The Great North Forest, Tyne and Wear/ North East Durham
- o one in the Midlands: The Forest of Mercia, South Staffordshire
- o one in the South: Thames Chase, East London

The areas chosen were close to major connibations, had been involved in the Countryside Management Schemes (and therefore had been identified as areas with urban fringe land use, amenity and management problems); they were also areas where the relevant local authorities and County Councils were amenable to the schemes. (R Munton March 92) The community forest areas were chosen where they could help bring:

> "Wasteland back to life and inject a new vitality into depressed areas."
>
> Countryside Commission 1989 p 15

However, while existing literature explains the "vision" and "images" of the community forest concept, very little has been written about how the scheme will be implemented. The scheme's only guidance from the policymakers has been a community forest plan - complete with management, marketing and business strategy, design guild and community, public participation should be written by the end of 1992 -

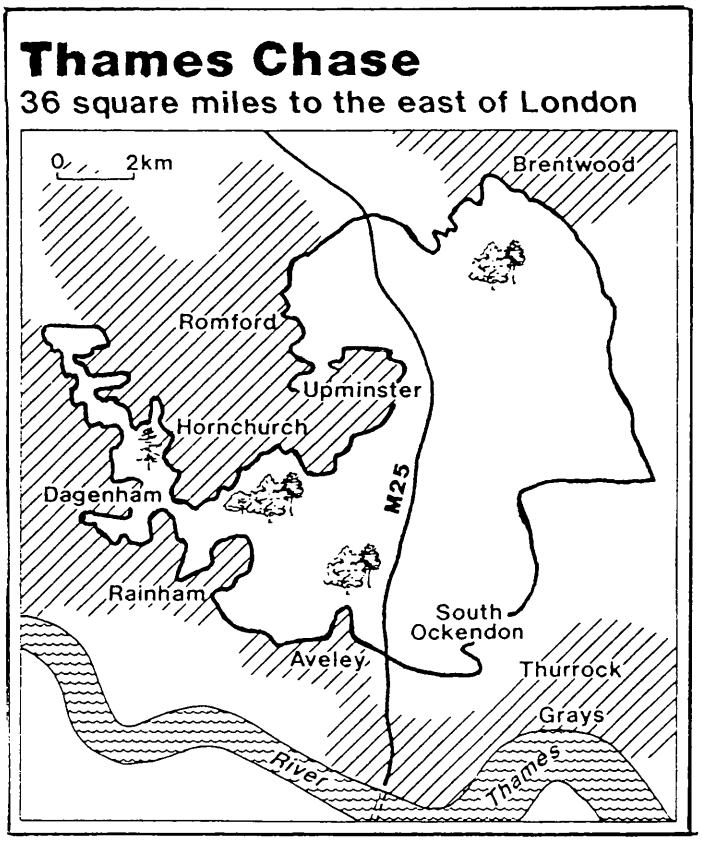
three years after the initial launch.

The information in this chapter is the result of a literature review: interviews carried on with the relevant interest groups and working with representatives from the Thames Chase organisation. (See chapter five for Methodology and Appendix I).

6.1(ii) Location

Thames Chase is an area between Romford, Thurrock and Brentwood. The area covers 36 square miles of which up to one quarter may eventually be planted with trees. The community forest vision is not going to be large areas of continuous trees but rather inter-connected wooded landscapes (Brentwood District Council April 92).

Fig. 11 **Map to show location of Thames Chase**

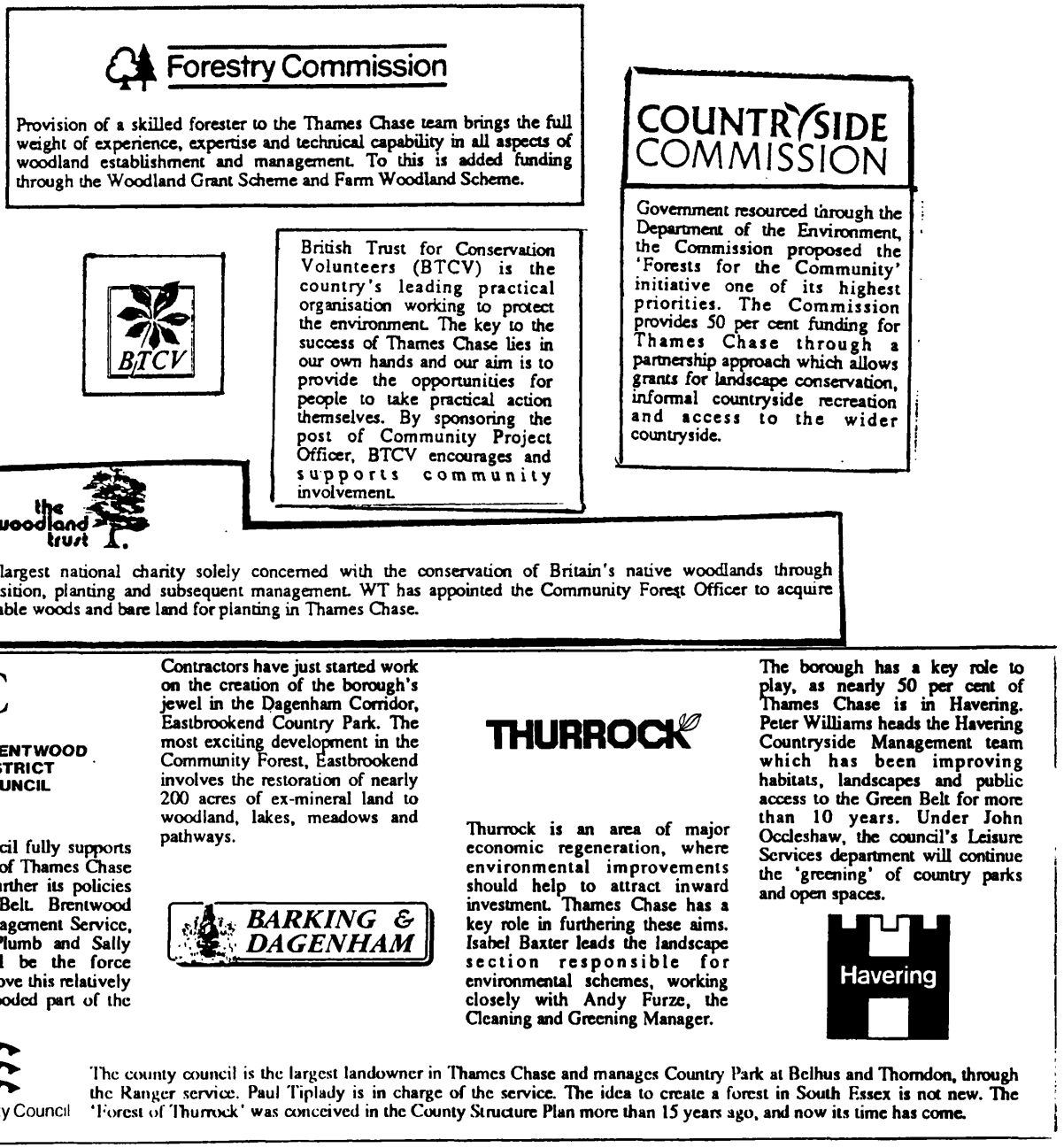


Derived: Countryside Commission (1990)

6.1(iii)Management

The project team is jointly sponsored by the Forestry Commission and Countryside Commission in conjunction with the local councils: Harvering, Brentwood, Barking and Dagenham; Thurrock and Essex County Coucil. These organisations are committed to providing a grant for 3 years to fund the running of a project team. (See Fig. 12)

Fig 12 The Sponsors



Derived: Thames Chase Countryside Commission (1990)

The project team is made up of representatives from the Countryside Commission, Forestry Commission (and in a similar way to the Countryside Management Schemes), it also relies upon voluntary organisations: (e.g. The Woodland Trust, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers). The team's task is to draw up a community forest plan by June-July 1992. Preliminary to this task they have been encouraged to draw up a business plan. Helped by a marketing strategist on the project team who is sponsored by British Petroleum. If this business plan is approved, the next stage of the scheme is to encourage local landowners and communities to co-operate in order to provide opportunities for:

- recreation
- education
- wildlife habitat
- a thriving forestry and farming industry.

"Having assessed our "product" strength, we now feel confident to approach the private sector, as community partners, to ensure they too are aware of the opportunities presented to them by Thames Chase, both in the corporate sense and for the well-being of their employees."

P Wilkinson, Director Thames Chase (1990)

Fig 13 The project team for Thames Chase

Derived: Thames Chase
Countryside Commission

Thus, the structure of the 3 year sponsored community forest project is as follows:

Thames Chase Launch (13 June 1990)

Construct Marketing
and Business Plan (1990-91)

The promotion of the forest
"The year of the Ear"
Listening to the opinions of
landowners, investors and the community (1991-92)

Formation of a Forest Plan
(Draft Plan due out May 1992) (1992)

6.1(iv) Thames Chase Implementation

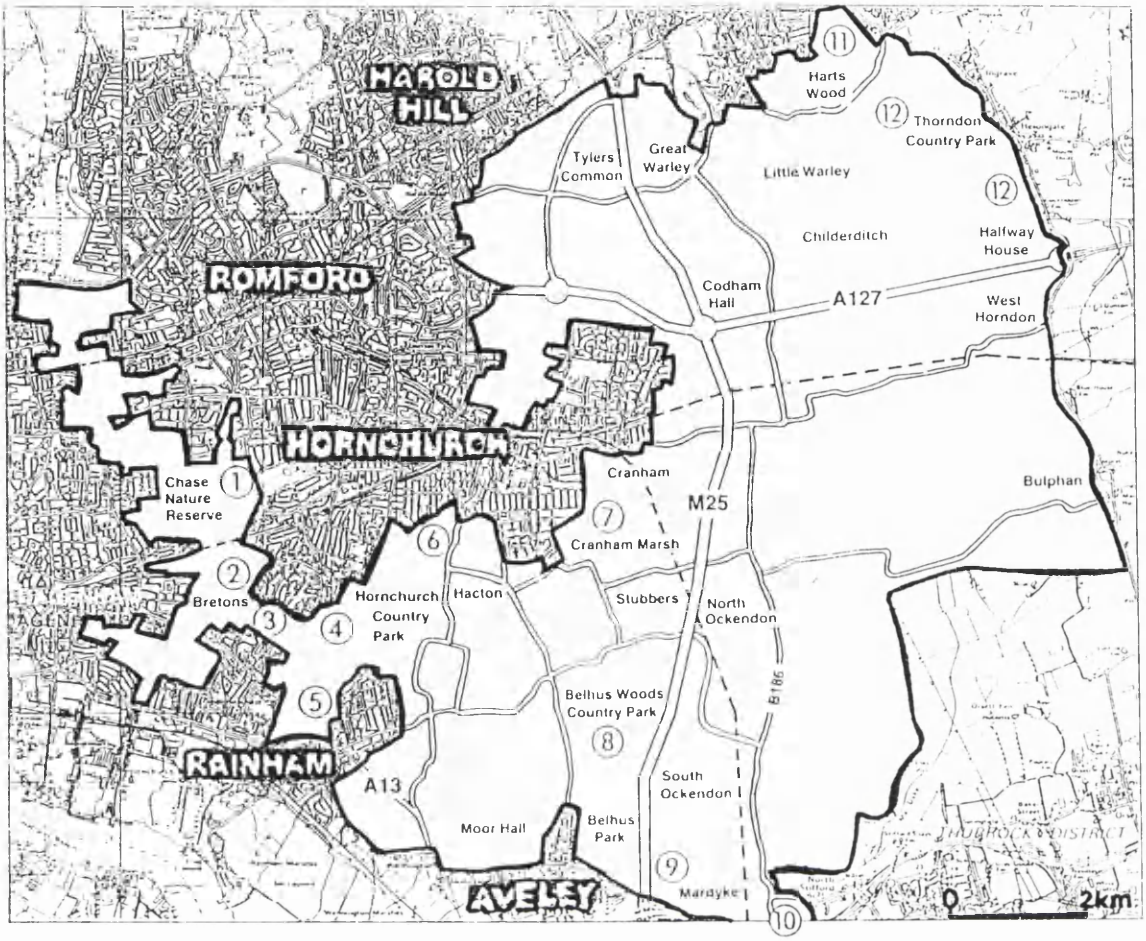
This section will examine the implementation of Thames Chase: firstly by looking at the progress so far of the scheme (taking a small area in South Ockenden), thus establishing the implementation issues. Having identified the major issues surrounding implementation, this section will evaluate the forest scheme in terms of its success realising the landowners's needs and the planning systems objectives.

In practice the development of a business plan has revolved around work carried out in a few strategic areas. It has involved on-going negotiations between the private and public sector and the community.

> "The (business) plan is now developed and clearly identifies our key needs of community involvement, finance and land."
>
> Thames Chase: Countryside Commission (1990)

An example of how these 3 key project areas have been tackled is to be seen in South Ockendon. This is one key strategic area identified by the Thames Chase team with the aim that success in a few small areas will have a "snowball" effect on the implementation and involvement of other areas of the forest:

Fig 14 Detailed map to show areas within Thames Chase



Thames Chase Publicity (1992)

6.1(v) Case Study Area to identified the major issues - South Ockenden

(i) Community involvement

The participation of the local community was tackled by initiating several "planning for real" reasons: The aim of the planning for real technique is to encourage the active involvement of residents in the planning of their environments. The technique has been successfully used in other community plans (e.g. Kings Cross Community Development Plan). It involves the making of a large scale model: The scale being of significant size so that residents can identify their own houses and local landmarks and thus feel some tangible contact

with the concept (CLAWS 1992). (CLAWS are a building and landscape design company offering professional skills and advice to community based projects.)

Once the model is made it is taken and exhibited in the local area. Following on from this "awareness" process the public participation is to get maximum community involvement. As a result the public "participation" is a hands-on process. Flags are made for all the relevant land-use functions and amenities that are envisaged as either being required or proposed for the plan area. The model acts as a base map and people are encouraged to place a flag where, in their opinion, an amenity development is required.

In the case of Thames Chase, this has also been for wildlife and conservation areas; meadows for wooded areas. This idea of trying to create a "landscape" aspect to community design is a new venture for the planning for real process which in the past has been centred around urban areas (CLAWS 1990).

A process of discussion follows the "hands on" experience to try using the help of professional planners, (consultants and local authorities), architects, landscape designers and community officials. The aim is to generate a true community based plan. Several of these were set up in South Ockenden with the genuine aim of gaining community support for Thames Chase. However, the planning for real sessions which were

attended in April 1992, had an average turn out of 6 people. This apathy is a hinderance to community involvement.

The community forest team spend a lot of time and effort in trying to gain support for these planning for real sessions. The publishing and advertising of the project seems very good. The problem remains that people just do not seem to have sustained interest. There is a need for a detailed analysis of community perceptions and requirements into such public participation processes. However, within the remit of this project such a detailed analysis would prove expensive and time consuming if a valid study was undertaken.

(ii) Finance

Alongside this "community" based initiative, Thames Chase has also been trying to generate financial support by forging partnerships within the local area. Again South Ockenden is a key strategic area. It was argued, by Thames Chase officials, that the knowledge gained at the planning for real experiences made it easier to target potential private sector partners.

> "Already we enjoy good relations with a number of companies who have been keen to support the enterprise in various ways."

An example of this is an old building belonging to Essex Water Company. The building, it has been suggested, could be turned into an education area and the land around it planted. This is still under

negotiation. However, it is believed the stumbling block will not be the acquisition of the building situated on the southern most edge of the Thames area near Ockenden/Mardyke valley, but rather the funding to convert the building. It has been suggested by sources who wish to remain anonymous, that the only way to really implement the scheme would be to offer some sort of planning gain deal to Thames Water, running on the scenario that if Thames Water donate the building and develop that site, development may be allowed elsewhere in Thurrock.

This problem of finances - previously raised in Chapter Five remains one vital component in the implementation of the scheme. Should the "image" become a reality via Government grant via the local authority grants or planning gain? Financial partnerships can be made in Thames Chase but it seems that private sector involvement will be at a price - in terms of positive planning applications!

(iii) Land

The third area of concern identified by the business plan was the issue of land. If involvement cannot be on a voluntary basis via grants or planning gain incentives, the answer lies in the public acquisition of land.

> "After a quiet time, there are now encouraging signs on the land acquisition point."
>
> Thames Chase Countryside Commission (1990)

The Mardyke Valley scheme seems to be the only example of where public acquisition has been considered. The planning gain alternative has been dismissed by the local authorities so the idea now being considered is a joint venture involving Essex County Council, Thurrock Borough Council and Essex Water. (Again the source is confidential).

It is believed that the alternative to an open planning gain negotiation has been that Essex Water would donate the building while the local authorities would buy some of the land in the Mardyke Valley area - adjoining their own land. Thus, developing a "Southern Gateway" into Thames Chase. The area is strategically located near the M25 and A13 interchange and it is also near the centre of Grays. (See Fig. 14) This would provide both a local and regional asset for education, wildlife, conservation and recreation. If its implementation was a success, it can represent not just politically but physically the arrival of the community forest in Essex.

However it is argued that the only way a "Southern Gateway" could possibly be financed is by entering into some kind of agreement with Essex Water - the question remains what will Essex Water require in return for part of the scheme?

6.2 Major Implementation Issues

The major problem area identified by Thames Chase is how to implement the policy. Finance and Management remains the stumbling

blocks to implementation (as has been argued in the previous chapters). What drives these financial and management arrangements is the philosophy which drive the project. The implementation of any forest plan will resolve around the political philosophy of the community forest policymakers (i.e. Central Government).

The major question remains how will the forest be managed and financed? The work carried out within the community forest, Thames Chase area, identifies that neither of these problems have been realistically addressed. The "partnerships" are being worked on, the only practical way of achieving these partnerships is by creating either a strong planning led basis for "development" within the community forest (i.e. planning gain), or via creating enough other financial incentives to entice the private investor.

All the successfully planted and implemented schemes on Thames Chase are on local authority land - where there is the management potential to create the scheme and the grant aid to initiate planting. The rest of the community forest area remains under-utilised: the land-use break up has been identified below:

Fig. 15 Land-use break-up in the Thames Chase Area

6%	Existing woodland	(587 ha)
16%	Mineral Extraperation/tipping restored land	(1598 ha)
69%	Farmland (open space)	(6805 ha)
9%	Other (e.g. residential)	(838 ha)

(Thames Chase 1991)

The majority of the land is therefore farm land. Therefore major implementation issue is how to entice farmers to join the community forest scheme. How to create a package, within the Government's philosophy of self-help, limited Government grant aid and public private partnerships without undermining the position of the "farmers" (a strong interest group) nor undermine the paternalist element of Central Government which would not want to see the regulative bodies that protect the countryside (e.g. Greenbelt and local planning policies) from being undermined.

Unfortunately, the draft forest plan is not available until at least June 1992. Therefore, the questions of how those central issues will be addressed has had to evaluated from interviews (See Chapter 5 for methodology) and the Thames Chase working papers. These unpublished working papers are the result of subject-based working groups who have been brought together to examine the problems of implementation:

> "Subject working groups were set up to ... a widen debate within partners and key outside bodies concerning the way forward for the community forest."
>
> P Wilkinson

From the evaluation of this work it can be identified the major issues facing Thames Chase remain:

(i) how to get private landowners involved

(ii) how to balance the creation of a new forest plan without contravening local planning regulations

(iii) how to finance the operation and obtain satisfactory management conditions so as to provide a "resource" (as advocated in the image of the community forest (Countryside Commission 1989) without challenging either the landowner or planners.

6.2(i) Section 6.3(i) addresses the issue of how to get private landowners involved in the community forest scheme.

Realising the landowners interests

The Country Landowners Association and the Countryside Commission both argue very strongly that the grant incentives for involvement are too low. The hope value of land on London's urban fringe is too high and the losses may be great if the Landowners commit their land to forestry. The argument also revolves around a challenge to productionists freedom to manage their own land. The provision of access, recreation, wildlife and amenity could mean that local authorities would encourage management agreements. The CLA also argue strongly that:

How long will it be before tree preservation orders are placed on community forest trees and the trees cannot provide any economic

returns. The community forest scheme offers a challenge to landowners right to manage their own land. Thus, any community forests may challenge that agriculture and forestry are outside the remits of planning authorities. The major landowning interests are fearful that they will lose their rights and power of management of their own land (A Woods). The only way of enticing landowners to join the scheme is to provide substantial gains to tie land into the community forest schemes. Although Thames Chase is a long term project, and the realisation of which is not envisaged to make an impression until 40 years time, it is becoming apparent in the Thames Chase area that very few partnership have been generated within the forest areas and private landowners are reluctant to take up the scheme.

> "It was unanimously agreed that the aims of the community forest would <u>not</u> be achieved unless greater incentives were provided to the farming community."
>
> Minutes: Working Group re: Farming/Forestry (1991 p 6).

These "greater incentives" either had to form the basis of large grant aided packages, or according to the working groups, public acquisition of land.

> "Forestry Commission acquisition of land within Thames Chase is not dismissed."
>
> Working Group re: Forestry/Farming (1991 p 3)

The Thames Chase organisation therefore is advocating a strong local authority involvement backed by Central Government - a somewhat

unrealistic aim considering previous debates on Conservative Government's ideology. (See Chapter 2).

It is little wonder that the minutes from Farming Working Group report that:

> "Leading representatives of the NFU and CLA remained hopeful that the initiative would fail."
>
> Minutes: Working Group Forestry p 6 1991

The alternative to the scenario of land acquisition and public finances seems more realistic in present political-economic conditions. The option proposed by the CLA is that participation in the Community Forest Scheme should be voluntary via either high grant aid or planning gain agreements. The political influence of the "productionist" power groups will maintain that participation will be voluntary and certainly the Countryside Commission (representing Government policy) have stated they see no need for compulsory purchase (J Colins Jan 92). Voluntary participation is therefore the policy being supported to implement the community forests.

Thus, the argument still remains how will this voluntary participation be financed: grant or planning gain. The answer to this lies in the power of local authorities. The issue over management of agriculture and forestry, (traditionally outside the remits of local authority plans) is crucial to the debate if one of the aims of Central Government is to

promote regulative control over rural land-use. Then community forest policy could create a new set of power relations within the countryside, where Green Belt and the urban fringes could be more positively influenced by local authorities.

If local authorities had more control over the management of agricultural forestry land, they could initiate the scheme by using grant aid as they would have a stronger influence over land-use policy.

However, Central Government remain committed to neo-liberal views. Therefore it is unlikely that it will encourage greater controls. Similarly the paternalistic ideology supports the philosophy of farmers as neutral "rural managers" and thus it seems that the community forest scheme does not aim to extend the control of local authority planners by bringing forestry and agriculture within the remit of planning regulations. (R Munton March 1992).

The debate over planning gain or grant financing has yet to be convincingly resolve. Politically any obvious attempt to challenge the Greenbelt policy would antagonise traditional Tory voters. As a result the planning gain option has been strongly played down. At present the Forestry Commission is carrying out a cost-benefit questionnaire. The questionnaire is being sent to households in the 3 lead forest areas to establish how much people are willing to pay for forestry in their area. How much would be acceptable on a local tax to plant forests.

Unfortunately, it was not permitted for this study to be examined as the findings are considered as confidential and the questionnaire was not published in any form. This "secretiveness" on behalf of the Forestry Commission re-establishes earlier comments about the status of the organisation. The findings of this questionnaire will feed into the cost-benefit analysis of the Forestry Commission. It seems unlikely with the imminent privatisation and selling off of the enterprise division of the Commission, that Treasury money will be made available for public land acquisition or large grants to bolster forestry policy.

Similarly Government philosophy will not support the idea of creating a local tax increase for forestry expenditure - even if this tax comes under the guise of an "environmental tax" (A Wilson Jan 92). These conditions cannot be verified as neither Countryside Commission, Forestry Commission or Central Government wished to comment on these issues. The result is that farmers are left with the opinion of a low grant or waiting for a possible "planning gain" decision. Planning gain remains the realistic option in the implementation of this policy.

6.2(ii) Realising the planning system's objectives

Ideally the community forest vision would mean a resource for everyone. However, as previous discussions show local authorities have their hands tied in trying to implement the scheme with little real financial control.

All the local authorities within the Thames Chase area supported the initiative for the community forest, e.g. Policy CT8

> "The Council supports the establishment of Thames Chase as a community forest."
>
> Brentwood UDP Feb 1991 p 8

However the local authorities in the Thames Chase area all emphasised the need for the forest plan to adhere to local planning policy. The forest plan is going to be a non-statutory document which it is hoped will act as a planning consideration in future planning applications. This leaves the power of implementation in the hands of the local authority.

However, the local authorities are well aware that the major problem surrounding the community forest project is "implementation" and Thames Chase is no exception.

> "How will the plan be implemented without infringing local planning authorities policies especially Greenbelt."
>
> J Boyton March 1992

This fear was emphasised by M Simmons of LPAC. He stated that while there was an enormous potential for a scheme such as a community forest, and if offered a tangible environmental policy initiative, the scheme could, in its present form, undermine existing planning policies.

The major worries of all the local authorities interviewed was how to implement the scheme without making it have special planning considerations. All the local authorities wished to protect Green Belt and they realised that the major threat to policy was via planning gain. No officials said that they would consider planning gain as an implementation tool. The Hertfordshire test case has proved that Central Government will not openly support planning in the Greenbelt. However, as previous chapters have shown, the Green Belt is a major policy controlling capital interests. The neo-liberals would wish to see it removed. However, paternalists have strongly argued against any reform.

The test of the Government's philosophy will be if an application for a development contravening Green Belt policy is allowed on appeal to the Secretary of State. Certainly the CPRE fear that the only practicable way, within the existing remits of the community forest scheme, that Thames Chase can be implemented by allowing a piecemeal erosion of the Greenbelt in return for community forest plantation.

Even R Munton (Jan 92) argues that the community forest schemes could be the beginning of new agenda for Green Belt and urban fringe planning. The argument will remain that this agenda is in the hands of Local Government or Central State. I would argue that while Central State can reduce public spending to local authorities and while appeal

decisions fall to the Secretary of State, the new agenda will be formed by Central Government.

The debate again revolves around neo-liberal and paternalist ideology. The answer seems to be a compromise. The neo-liberals are forcing a new agenda for Greenbelt and urban fringe management. The Community Forest represents a new management agency - influenced by Countryside Commission; or treasury grants - which will favour capital interests. While the paternalists will ensure that the farmers and Greenbelt policy remain in place as traditional stewards and regulators of the countryside even if their power has been undermined.

Community Forests represent a "Trojan Horse" openly advocating positive management but potentially undermining planning policies. Central Government control whose intersts the community forest will serve and perhaps by creating new "planning" zones will affect the land-use and policy agenda in the urban fringes. The community forest falls far short of being able to implement its "vision".

6.2(iii)Summary

Thames Chase represents a microcosm of the political, planning and economic problems facing the community forest scheme. It highlights the problems of implementation relating to finance and management. It demonstrates power relations between farmers and local authorities, the Forestry Commission and the Treasury and illustrates Central

Governments influence on land-use of the urban fringes. The case study also highlights the critical role of Central Government ideology - neo-liberal or paternalist. It seems in the case of Thames Chase a compromise has been reached. Time will tell which interest is the most powerful.

6.3 Comparative Plan - Community forest vs European examples

It is useful at this stage to compare Britain's handling of the urban fringe forestry debate to that of Europe. European countries have also recognised the potential of urban fringe forestry. However they have realised that potential in very different way.

6.3(i) Dutch approach

(a) Amsterdam Bos:

The forest park, or Amsterdam bos, was a scheme initiated as early as 1928 although it was not planted until 1938. The bos was created as a response to the city of Amsterdam's demand for recreational facilities. An area was chosen on cheap low level swamp land. This area was close enough to the city to enable the extension of the tramcar and a bus system to run to the area. The area was bought by the City Council and transformed (Travis 1979).

The bos now consists of interspersed woodland and parkland and provides wide range of recreational facilities:

- 50 miles of footpaths, 27 miles cycle path, 13 miles of bridleway and 9 miles of road for motor traffic.

- A woodland museum and information centre (Bos museum)
- A large recreational lake area (Bosbaan), Nieuve Meer and Amstelveense Poel.
- Sports ground (Nieuve Kalfjeslaan area) for cricket, hockey and tennis.
- a camp site
- a special facility for younger children

(Travis 1979)

The Bos is used by some six million people. 50 per cent of which come from Greater Amsterdam (Bishop 1990 pg 128). Although the pressures for urban development are very great the area owned by municipal authorities has been able to resist the pressure. It has become an important asset to Amsterdam. The Dutch planning system has resulted in a strong regional planning system backed by government funding.

(b) Raudstadgroenstreluur

The Rundstad area of Holland is a metropolis between the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague and Utrect. While the centre of Raudstad is an area of agricultural land, approximately 160,000 the "Green heart", pressures upon agricultural land have meant all European countries have been encouraged to find alternative land uses for agricultural areas (See Chapter 2).

The growth of urban centres have also brought pressure on the land. The result of these pressures was development of plan to protect green areas: near the cities an area of land was designated for recreation and forestry and the agricultural status of the land outside this zone was

therefore strengthened. This coherent policy for the urban fringe and rural areas was a green structure called the Raustadgroen Stuctrur initiated in 1985 (Van Gessal 1988).

The plan articulated the need to contain urban areas and protect agricultural land. However, unlike a Greenbelt policy in Britain the plan set out to include urban land uses within the green areas (Van Gessel 1988).

The planning system in Holland means that very different rules applied to the Dutch forest than the British Community forest. The Dutch supported the project with huge grant aid (Van Gessel 1985). According to Van Gessel (1985) the investment envisaged by the government was equivalent to:

- £129 million for land acquisition, forest planting and landscaping
- £6.8 million towards informal recreation facilities
- £13.9 million on tourism and provision of sports facilities

(assuming exchange rate of 3.245 gilders to the pound).

This resulted in 100% growth for recreation facilities and 75 grants for woodland and forest planing, while the woods given grant aid would automatically be managed by the State forestry department.

The implementation of this scheme was also helped by the Dutch

planning systems land consolidation programme (Pinder 1979) which advocated the interventionist policies in rural planning and public acquisition of land (via compensation payments to landowners), thus securing public access and management initiatives can be maintained. The Raudstadgroenstrelvvr policy (backed by strong interventionist planning and government funding) has enabled co-ordinated green policy to be implemented in the Ranstad area.

The woodland and urban fringe forest projects have been co-ordinated but each project is incorporated into the regional development plan with financing controlled by the relevant provisional Government. This has resolved the worry that the projects would be totally controlled by Central Government. (Van Gessel 1988) There are now ten development projects in progress covering more than a creational and forestry resource has been created on the fringes of towns covering more than 35,000 ha.

6.3(ii) Danish (Urban fringe forest)

Vestkoven

Similar to the Amsterdam Bos a forest has been created on western fringe of Copenhagen. This forest was set up in 1964 and according to Broadhurst (Jan 92) was set up to meet a recreational need and create a better quality landscape. The Vestkoven (West forest park) was set up through the planning process. A plan was drawn up for the

area backed by government finances (1.5 million pounds at an exchange rate of 10.64 kroners to the pound). The design, implementation and management of the forests was the responsibility of the Forestry Commission while the Ministry of Agriculture provided some 50% of the finances (Bishop p 133). The land was bought on the open market not via compulsory purchase power. (Broadhurst Jan 92). In cases were Government could not afford the land, planning regulations enforced the rights of access.

The area is well used, with recreation facilities, formal and informal available. The area was used as a case study by the community forest directors. However, it was argued that the political system was too different to draw any comparison. (R Munton Jan 92).

Despite the reluctance of the community forests directions to draw any comparisons, the process could be a useful one. The two examples cited do work within different political, economic and planning conditions. However, they are both successful urban fringe forests. Providing an example of potential use for urban fringe forestry and positive management of the urban fringe. They were developed to serve the same needs: a recreational resource for urban dwellers; a protection of the environment from urban sprawl and re-use of agricultural and urban fringe land. The aim being to provide a position resource and land-use function in an accessible area. These aims are similar to those of community forest vision. The missing element is

that of voluntary participation of private landowners and the vision to create a partnership. The community forest scheme has looked at the European models but rejected the fundamental implementation tools: public finance and strong planning controls.

If nothing else this thesis provides an insight into the demise of Government investment into public resources and the continual undermining of the planning system.

6.4 Conclusion

The case study examples highlight the major problem of implementation: financing and managing a public "vision" on private land with very little resources or regulations. The European examples re-affirm these problems

Thus, it must be argued that Government philosophy is effected the implementation of the community forest "vision". The images are acceptable, the realities are not. The reality is that Government has begun to create a new management body within the urban fringe - the community forest plan. It has increased the power of capital interests while, it has retained the status quo with traditional landowning interests and their rights to control their own land.

In reality the community forest represents a very dangerous vision - a vision which could mean the undermining of Greenbelt; the continual erosion of local Government planning authorities power and the increased power of private interest and Central Government.

CONCLUSIONS

7.0 Introduction

The aims of this thesis were three fold:- to examine the community forest proposal (its image and realities); in doing so evaluate the changing policy influences within the urban fringe and finally provide a greater understanding of the dominant power-relations in policy makings which ultimately have a vital effect on the planning system.

These aims, their analysis and evaluation, are inter-linked. Therefore the conclusion will be argued as integrated whole rather than evaluating each distinct aim.

The thesis has examined the community forest policy:- firstly by examining political context; the policy agenda for agriculture, forestry and planning: secondly it has evaluated the urban fringes - its continuity and pressures for changes especially in relation to Greenbelt. These provide the background for an analysis of the community forest proposals - its aims, and its implementation.

7.1 Synthesis of Research Findings

Notions of state and political theory are an important starting point for this debate.

The community forest proposal provides the material with which to find out what the changing policy influences are within the urban fringe while these changes in policy give an insight into the decision making process. These reflect on the role of planning within todays political and economic climate. The major factor to highlight is that the community forest proposal is not just the culmination of a series of coincidences but is a distinct policy initiative driven by its political and economic context. The community forest proposal is a consequence of conscious decision-making to change the management structure of the urban fringes. It may be only one proposal, but it is an important illustration of the changing management structure of the urban fringes. Therefore it represents the pressures and constraints within which urban-fringe planners work. Thus, the community forest proposal can act as a microcosm for the issues and problems facing the urban-fringe planned and ultimately the planning system.

This thesis has examined the community forest policy. Planning authorities still maintain a degree of control over planning application but they have few policies to ensure positive management.

The political theory surrounding the notions of the state effect the type of analysis which can be carried out. This thesis has been examined through a political economy approach of the state - the state benefits certain distinct factions of society, in this case capital. However, in the past decade this has become more obvious by dominance of Thatcherism. This strong monetarist and neo-liberal force within British politics has, it can be argued, had an

enormous effect on Britain's structures and agents. Importantly it has effected the role and position of public sector structures and agents. In particular the planning system and local authority planners. This thesis has aimed to examine this changing influence on the planning system by placing this debate within context.

As has been previously argued the planning system has been under considerable threat. Local authority planners have had their power diminished by the politically motivated policies from central Government.

The Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG's) have increasingly created a new policy agenda. Nowhere is this more true than the countryside. During the 1980's there have been policies to encourage the diversification of uses of agricultural land and enterprise in the countryside alongside increasingly less protectionist regulations for rural areas, thus, increasing power of capital interests. However, the one policy which central Government has been unable to reform has been Greenbelt:-

> "politically it has proved a real hot potato."
>
> A Wilson

Greenbelt has remained sacrosanct despite pressures to reform it in the mid 1980's.

The Greenbelt policy stands in the way of neo-liberals view of a free market and de-regulation - but to reform it overtly threatens the traditional values of the old conservative paternalist ideologies. Reforming the policy could prove

potentially damaging to conservative votes in the "Tory heartlands". The result, I would argue, has been a compromise and the community forest is one example of that compromise.

Politically the Greenbelt policy must remain sacrosanct. However, in the past 13 years there has been a trend (depending upon the ideology of the Secretary of State) to allow on appeal the development of some areas of Greenbelt. The argument being that the development benefits are greater than the loss of open land. This approach has allowed capital interests to dominate. However, Greenbelt policy does not ensure management of the urban-fringe.

"Community forests aim to re-generate the urban fringe"

J Colins

Central Government have control of designating and managing areas which they have identified as in need of generation. The result of this has been the development of new management agendas.

The community forest, it can be argued, is an example of a new type of management agency. The forest plan is a non-statutory document and therefore the community forest is proposed to work within local Government policies. It does not present an open threat to Greenbelt. However, the designated community forest areas are chosen (via competitions) by the Countryside Commission. A Government quango, which it has been argued has had increasing power as a result of its stronger ties with central Government. Politically the Countryside Commission is influenced by Government policy so they can designate a community forest area.

The implementation of the scheme is carried out via partnerships with private enterprise. The Government and the relevant local authorities provide the grants (50/50). However, pressure on local Government spending has resulted in the grants being mainly dominated by the treasury. As a result the majority of the grant aid has come via the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission.

As had already been demonstrated the Forestry Commission is fighting for its existence so has little political clout resulting in Countryside Commission being the dominant force in allowing grants - for both planting and management to be allocated. They therefore have the financial control of the project. However, implementation of project has been threatened by the low grant rates in comparison to potential development value of the land (Hope value). As a result many landowners are reluctant to plant their land in hope that a development application may be approved. The real implementation lies in a "planning gain" approach. Government have refused to adopt this approach openly (Hertfordshire Community Forest is an example).

It is strongly argued that planning gain is the only real way of implementing the policy. The partnership approach advocated by the community forest proposal could represent a piecemeal release of Greenbelt in urban fringe "community forest areas" via constant pressure for development in return for forest planting.

Thus, community forests offer a situation where the real power of these areas

lies in both Government grant aid (controlled by the Countryside Commission) and successful development applications (via planning gain). This leaves the community forest location as areas where the managers are the Countryside Commission (controlled by Central Government) and local authority planning officials (controlled by planning gain decisions). The real power in these areas lie in the hands of Central Government and capital interests (either landowners or development/mineral companies).

The community forest scheme offers the initiative to Central Government and capital interests. In these areas a new set of power-relations have been generated at the expense of the local authority planners. As R Munton argues, the community forest could be the beginning of a new agenda for the urban fringes.

7.2 The Realities of the Community Forest Proposal

Thus, it could be argued that the image of the community forest is quite different from the realities that could develop. The "image" represents no threat to the traditional power-relations. It places the forest plan under the control of the statutory local plan. While it retains voluntary participation for farmers and landowners with no threats of controlling land-use functions within agricultural areas. The "image" represents an opportunity to "green" the Greenbelt and utilise the resources of the urban fringe. If the policy was considered in isolation the community forest seems to be a "radical new proposal" to enhance the urban-fringes and restore Britain's woodland heritage (C Clover 10.3.91).

However, the policy has not been considered in isolation and it has been argued that the "radical proposal" is not as innocent as the Daily Telegraph (10.3.91) article inferred. Instead, the community forest scheme represents a new type of management structure for parts of the urban-fringe - a back door challenge to Greenbelt and local authority planning control. It also represents a compromise between the neo-liberals and paternalist members of the Conservative party. The proposal offers to enhance the Conservative credentials as traditional protectors of the countryside (i.e. the paternalist ideology).

The community forest proposals present a new woodland and forest which will re-establish Britain's forestry heritage . The scheme also has a management structure that does not threaten the landowning interests. It is not suggested to offer compulsory purchase or the regulation of agriculture via planning policies. The community forest proposal also enhances the neo-liberalists ideology. By presenting an opportunity to indirectly de-regulate Greenbelt and thus allow market domination. It also advocates self-help and creates a management structure which does not increase the power of public bullies such as local authorities.

The realities of the community forest proposal are that it represents a new management and investment opportunity for the Greenbelt and urban-fringes. It potentially threatens the power of local authority planners in the community forest area by creating a new power-relations within the forest area. Perhaps the "new agenda envisaged by Munton is in reality the piecemeal erosion of

Greenbelt. Munton argues that the new agenda could afford a positive approach to the management of Green Belt areas. It is difficult to evaluate if the erosion or even de-regulation of Green Belt will have positive or negative effects as the arguments put forward for continuity and management of the policy are equally strong. Certainly this would prove an interesting, practical research topic. Whatever the effects to Green Belt policy the community forest scheme represents a reduction of the management powers within the urban fringe.

These "realities" of the community forest also help to enforce the dominance of Central Government decision making, the increasing power of capital interests and the pressures on the planning system.

7.3 An Idealist Future

The community forest scheme could be a positive asset to the urban-fringes if the European examples are followed. These are on public land with substantial grant aid. Obviously planners can only work within their own political and economic context. British planners face a battle to make the realities of land-use initiatives like the community forest - a "community" amenity. What is needed is positive management controls.

It is very difficult to muse how this can be achieved within the present political and economic climate. Certainly more research is needed to investigate the role of new urban-fringe management schemes.

Detailed research is also needed in the role and function of Greenbelt. Greenbelt policy is a strong tool for the planners but it offers very little scope for positive management. This element of Greenbelt needs to be investigated.

As well as this research on management structures and positive management for planners via policy control, more research is required on the use of forestry as an amenity. What is needed is a detailed analysis of landowners and farmers requirements from the grant mechanisms i.e. how much do farmers and landowners require from grant aid in order to "voluntarily" plant forestry. On the other side of this analysis, how much are people prepared to pay for forestry? This research is sorely lacking in the community forest feasibility study.

Alongside this research more qualitative analysis is needed to show the aesthetic, amenity and health benefits of investment into urban fringe multi-use forestry. This could add to critical evaluation of the economic cost-benefit analysis dominating present Governments environmental policy. This research could provide a powerful argument for the implementation for public sector recreation and forestry on the urban-fringe. There is no doubt looking at our European neighbours that multi-purpose forestry on the urban fringes can work very successfully if it is a publicly funded and managed amenity. Obviously the political climate means that local authority planners "hands are tied" but a well-worked community forest scheme could really provide an important resource and land-use function for urban-fringes. It is disappointing that the "reality" of this community forest scheme is not going to be allied with the images.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ACKERS (1949)
Practical British Forestry:
Oxford University Press: Oxford

ADGER N; Whitby M
(November 1991)
Environmental Regulation in forestry
Implementation of the EC Environmental Assessment Directive
Working Paper 24
(ESRC Countryside Change Initiatives

ADAS (1973)
"Agriculture in the Urban Fringe: A Survey of Hillingdon Area
ADAS Technical Report No. 30 MAFF London

ADAS (1976)
"Agriculture in the Urban Fringe: A Survey in the Metropolitan County of Tyne and Wear"
ADAS Technical Report No. 30 MAFF London

ALD T (1991)
Forests for Our Children
Heritage Outlook Vol II No. 4

AMBROSE P (1986)
Whatever Happened to Planning?
Methuen & Co Ltd London

ANON
Thames Chase: Towards a Community Forest Plan
Unpublished Thames Chase: Essex

Barking and Dagenham (1992)
Draft Development Plan: Barking Dagenham

BEATON A (1991)
Taking Stock of Tree Grants
Crops Oct 5 1991

BERKSHIRE Structure Plan (Feb 1991)
New Forest for Berkshire - Community Forest Strategy

BJORNSKOV L (1989)
New Opportunities in Denmark
p 53-60 in Talbot H (Ed) (1990)
"People Trees and Woods"
Countryside Recreation Advisory Group Bristol

BISHOP K.D. 1990
Mutli-purpose woodlands in the countryside around towns: Fact or Fiction
unpublsihed PhD Thesis Reading: ref R 5889 - 90-3005889-6

BISHOP K.D. (24 May 1991)
Community Forests Implementing the Concept:
The Planner Vol 77 No. 18 p 6-11

BLUDEN J and CURRY N (eds) (1988)
The Changing Countryside
Basil Blackwell: Oxford

BRADSHAW A (1987)
"Opportunities Problems and Possibilities in the Urban Fringe"
p 1-10 in Skyes J (ed) "Recreation and Ecology in the Urban Fringes"
Recreation Ecology Research - (Group report 11 proceedings of a meeting held at Manchester Polytechnic 1986)
Recreation Ecology Research Group
WYF College Ash Fund

BRADSHAW M (1989) Eds
"Breaking New Ground: operation groundwork the learning years"
St Helens and Knowsley Groundwork Trust, St Helens

BRENNAN A (1991)
Moral Pluralism and the Environment
Unpublished paper: philosophy department University of Stirling, Scotland, UK presented as environmental seminar London University Nov 91

BRINDLEY T, Rydin Y, Stocker G, (1989)
Remaking Planning: The politics of Urban Change in the Thatcher years:
Unwin Hyman Ltd; London

BROMLEY P (1990)
Countryside Management
Spon & Son London

BRYANT C, Russwurm L, McLellan AG (1982)
The City's Countryside: Land its Management in the rural-urban fringe
Longman: London

BROADHURST R (11 April 1991)
Forests Woodlands and Peoples Preferences
Unpublished paper FC ICC

BURGESS J (1989)
The Production and Consumption of Environmental Meansing in Mass Media: a Research Agenda for 1990's
Institute of British Geographers Vol 15 No. 2 1990 p 139-161

BURROWS J (1987)
Vacant Urban Land: The Planner
Vol 64 No. 1 p 7-9

BUTLER E (1987)
The Myth and Reality of Green Belt policies p 1-11 in Adam Smith Institute (ed)
"An Environment of growth"
Adam Smith Institute: London

CASTELLS M (1978)
City Class and Power
MacMillan: London

CLARK J
The First Year of a Community Forestry
Landscape Design Nov 1991 Vol no. 205 p 21-24

CLOKE J and Park C (1985)
Rural Resource Management
Croom Helm: London

CLOKE P (Ed) (1987)
Rural Planning Policy into Action
Harper & Row: London

CLOVER C (1989)
The Trees of Britain - a Radical proposal
Telegraph Weekend Magazine: March 10

COSGROVE D and Daniels S Ed) 1988
The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments
(Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography 9)
Cambridge University Press: Cambridge

CPRE (1987)
Enterprise and Development: a resume by the Council for the Protection of Rural England:
Council for the Protection of Rural England: London

CPRE (1990)
The Countryside and rural economy: A response by the CPRE to Government's Draft Policy Guidance Note 7:
Council for the Protection of Rural England: London

CPRE (1990)
Community Forest Charter
Council for the Protection of Rural England: London

Countryside Commission (1981)
Countryside Management in the Urban Fringe: Countryside Commission Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1984)
Central Scotlands Woodland Project: Countryside Commission: Edinburgh

Countryside Commission (1985)
1984/5 Annual Report: Countryside Commission Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1987) (a)
Countryside Management in the Urban Fringe:
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1987) (b)
Forestry in the Countryside: Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1987) (c)
Policies for enjoying the Countryside: Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1987) (d)
Planning for countryside in Metropolitan Areas: Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1989) (a)
Planning for a greener countryside: Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1989) (b)
Planning for the countryside around Metropolitan areas
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1989) (c)
A new forest for the Midlands
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1989) (d)
Incentives for a new direction for farming
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1990)
Forests for the Community: Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission and Foresty Commission (1991) (a)
Forests for the Community
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission (1991) (b)
Thames Chase: Forests for the community
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission News (1989) No. 38 July/Aug (p4-5)
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Commission News (1990) No. 14 July/Aug (p 1-7)
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

Countryside Policy Review Panel (1987)
Policies for enjoying the countryside
Countryside Commission: Cheltenham

DAHL RA (1961)
Who Governs Politics
Yale University Press New Haven

Department of Environment (1955)
Circular 42/55 Greenbelts
DofE London

Department of Environment (1983)
Draft Circular Greenbelts
DofE London

Department of Environment (1984)
Circular Greenbelts
DofE London

Department of Environment (1987)(a)
Draft Circular 16/87 Development involving agricultural land
DofE London

Department of Environment (1987)(b)
Circular 16/87 Development involving agricultural land
DofE London

Department of Environment (1988)(a)
Greenbelts
HMSO London

Department of Environment (1988)(b)
Planning Policy Guidance No. 2 Greenbelts
DofE London

Department of Environment (1990)
This Common Inheritance - Britain's Environmental Strategy
HMSO London

Department of Environment (1991)
Policy Appraisal and the Environment - A guide for Government Departments
HMSO London

ELDRIDGE C (1987)
Imperialism
Basil Blackwell: Oxford

ELKIN (T), McLaren (D), Hillman (M) (1991)
Reviving the City: Towards Sustainable Urban Development
Friends of the Earth

ELSON MJ (1986)
Greenbelts Conflict Mediation in the Urban Fringe
Heinemann London

EWALD (Ed) (1967)
Environment for Man - the Next Fifty Years
Indiana University Press London

EYKES (J) & Smith (DM) (1988)
Qualitative Methods in Human Geography

Forestry Commission (1990)
Forestry Review highlights from Annual Report 1990-91
Forestry Commission: Edinburgh

Forestry Commission (1991)
Community Woodland Supplement
Forest Commission: Edinburgh

Forestry Commission (1991)
Forestry Policy for Great Britain
Forestry Commission: Edinburgh

FOTHERGILL S (1986)
Industrial Employment and Planning Restraint in London's Greenbelt
Paper presented at Kingston Polytechnic 11 April 1986
Cited Bishop 1990 p 121-122
PhD Thesis Reading University

GARBUTT J (1989)
Greenbelt Re-negotiation in the outer Metropolitan area
Working paper No. 114
Oxford Polytechnic: School of Planning

GARROD G, Willis K (Nov 1991)
Some Empirical Estimates of Forestry Amenity Value
ESRC Countryside Change intitiative - ESRC

GARROD G, Willis K (June 1991)
The Environmental Economic impact of Woodland
A two stage lodenic price model of amenity value of woodland of forestry in Britain:
Working Paper 1991

GILG (A) (1991)
Countryside Policies for the 1990's
CAB International

GOODEY (B) (1971)
Perception of the Environment: An Introduction to the Literature
Occasional paper No. 17
Centre for Urban and Regional Studies: University of Birmingham

GOODEY B (1974)
Images of Place - Essays on Environmental perception, communications and Education
Occasional paper No. 30
Centre for Urban and Regional Studies: University of Birmingham

GRIFFITH (M) (1991)
The re-creation of the Forest of Arden
Planning and Transportation Department Warwickshire County Council
Unpublished

Groundwork Foundation (1986)
Groundwork: The Environmental Entrepreneurs:
Groundwork Foundation: Birmingham

GYFORD J, Leach S, Game C (1989)
The Changing Politics of Local Government
Unwin Hyman Ltd

HADLEY J (1988)
"The operational Groundwork experience" p 3-13 in Bradshaw M Ed
Breaking new ground: operation groundwork the learning years: St Helens & Knowsly
Groundwork Trust: St Helens

HALL S (1988)
"The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism amongst the Theorists in Nelson C & Grossberg L (eds)
Marxism and the interpretation of culture: Macmillan: London

HAMMETT C, McDowed L, Sarre P (1989)
The Changing Social Structure: Open University Restructuring Britain
Sage Publications Ltd, London

HARINGTON J (1990)
Beyond Greenbelts: Managing Urban Growth in the 21st Century
Regional Studies Association and Jessica Kingsley Publishers: London

HEALEY P (1982)
Understanding land-use planning: the contribution of recent developments in political economy and policy studies. In Healey P, McDougall G, Thomas MJ (Eds)
Planning Theory: Prospects for the 1980's: Pergamon London

HEALEY P (1984)
Emerging Directions for Reseearch on Local Land use
Planning Paper presented to Local Land use Seminar May/June 1985
Oxford Polytechnic (unpublished)

Hertfordshires Community Forest Plan (Jan 91)
Woodland Strategy: Hertfordshire County Council

HOWARD (1889)
Garden Cities of Tomorrow
Altic Books (1989) reprint London

HOWARD (1989)
Hertfordshire Publications (Ed)
Garden Cities and New Towns
Levenham Press: Suffolk

IRVING JA (1985)
The Public in Your Woods
Packard Publishing: Chichester

JAMES ND (1981)
A History of English Forestry
Basil Blackwell: Oxford

JOHNSTON RJ (1986)
Geography and the State: An Essay in Political Geography
MacMillan London

JOHNSTON RJ (1988)
On Human Geography
Basil Blackwell: Oxford

Leicestershire Draft Structure Plan Jan 1991
Leicestershire County Council

LOWE P; Cox G; MacEwen M; O'Riordan T; Winter M (1986)
Countryside Conflicts: The politics of farming, forestry and conservation
Gower/Maurice England

LOWE P (1979)
Land use Conflicts in the Urban: A case study of aggregate extraction the London Borough of Havering
Countryside Commission Working Paper No. 11
Countryside Commission Cheltenham

LOWE P; Goyder (J) (1983)
Environmental Groups in Politic's Resource Management Services (6)
Allen & Unwin London

McLENNAN G, Mela D, Hall S, (Eds) (1984)
The Idea of the Modern State
Open University Press: Milton Keynes

Macclesfield Groundwork Trust (1985)
Linking town with country: Macclesfield Groundwork Trust Annual Report 1983/4:
Macclesfield Groundwork Trust: Macclesfield

MARREN P (1990)
Woodland Heritage - Britain's Ancient Woodlands
Nature Conservancy Council

MILES R (1967)
Forestry in the English Landscape
Feber & Feber: London

MILIBAND R (1977)
Marxism and Politics
Oxford University Press

MILLER R (1988)
Urban Forestry - Planning and Managing Urban Greenspaces
Prentice - Hall Inc. New Jersey

MUNTON R (1983)
London's Greenbelts: Containment in Practice
George Allen & Unwin London

MUNTON R 1986
The Metropolitan Greenbelt
in Clout M, Wood P (1986)
London - Problems of Change
Longman London

NEWBY H (1979)
Green and Pleasant Land: Social Change in Rural England
Hutchinson London

NEWBY H (1988)
The Countryside in Question
Hutchinson London

NFU (1990)
November Policy Statement
Re: Community Forest
National Farmers Union: London

NUFFIELD Foundation (1986)
Nuffield Report of a Committee of Inquiry appointed by Nuffield Foundation
Town and Country Planning
Nuffield Foundation: London

PEARCE (1989)
Blueprint for a Green Economy
Environmental Economic Centre: London

PITT (Y)
Community Forest Cities of Tomorrow
Town and Country Planning Vol 60 No. 6

PRATT AC (1989
Enterprise Culture; Rhetoric and Reality: Unpublished paper

RACHMAN O (1979)
Trees and Woodlands in The British Landscape
Dewt & Sons: London

RACKMAN O (1990) (3rd Ed)
The History of the Countryside
Deut & Sons Ltd London

RANSON M (March 1991)
Implementation Strategies for East London Community Forests
Countryside Commission Cheltenham

RSPB (Oct 1991)
Forests for the Future: Integrating Forestry and the Environment
RSPB Edingburgh

RYLE G (1969)
Forestry Service: The First forty-five years of the Forestry Commission of Great Britain:
David & Charles: Newton Abbot

SAYER A (1984)
Method in Social Science
Hutchinson London

Shropshire County Council (May 1991)
Forestry Policy 2/21 - 5.32, 5.36
Shropshire County Council

SILVERMAN D (1985)
Qualitiative Methodology and Sociology
Gower Hants

SIMMIE J, Kind R (1990)
The State in Action: Public Policy and Politics
Pinter Publishers London

SINDEN N (1989)
Trees in mind - The Roots of Prejudice
E103 Vol 9 No. 4 pg 26

Somerset Draft Structure plan (1990)
Section 12.60-12.67
Somerset County Council

STEWART P (1989)
Growing Against the Grain (2nd Ed)
CPRE: London

Thames Chase (1991)
Towards a Community Forest Plan
Draft reports of Working Groups: unpublished

Thames Chase (1991)
The Chaser: issue one December 1991
Countryside Commission: Essex

THORNLEY A (1991)
Urban Planning under Thatcherism: The Challenge of the Market
Routhege London

TRAVIS A (1979)
"Urban Fringe Recreation in other Countries p 31-41 in Travis A & Veal A (eds)
Recreation and the Urban Fringe; proceedings of the 1975 Countryside and Advisory Group Conference Centre for urban and regional studies.
University of Birmingham: Birmingham

VAN Gessal P (1988)
Randstaidgroenstructuur
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries: The Hague, Netherlands

WATKINS C (1991)
Recent Development in British Forestry
Unpublished paper for the International Seminar on the contemporary social and economic restructuring of rural areas - (August 12-18 1991 Centre for Rural Studies): Royal Agricultural College Cirencester

WATKINS C (1992)
Nature Conservation and the New Lowland Forests
Nature Conservance Council

WILLIAMS R (1976)
Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society
Fontana: London

WILLIAMS R (1985)
The Country and the City
Horgarth Press, London

FURTHER REFERENCES

List of Interviews: (more in depth reference see Appendix I)

Anderson J (1992)	Thames Chase
Attenborough (1992)	Thames Chase
Bloxham K (24.1.92)	Hertfordshire County Council
Boyton J (26.3.92)	Brentwood L.A.
Broadhurst R (28.2.92)	Forestry Commission
Collins J (25.1.92)	Countryside Commission
Hislop M (1992)	Thames Chase
Lloyds G (19.2.92)	National Farmers Union
Lodford J (5.2.92)	RSPB
Malet L (13.1.92)	Barking and Dagenham L.A.
Marcus S (26.2.92)	English Heritage
Munton R (26.2.92) (2.3.92)	Professor Geography UCL and Consultant Community Forests
Sanster M (24.2.92)	Forestry Commission
Simmons M (3.4.92)	LPAC
Sinden N (15.6.91)	CPRE
Stamp D (1992)	C.L.A.W.S.
Warden P (1992)	Thames Chase
Webster S (17.2.92)	English Nature
Wilson A (25.3.92)	CPRE
Williams P (28.1.92)	Havering Countryside Management
Woods A (18.2.92)	CLA
Woods C (6.2.92)	Havering LA

APPENDIX I

A The enclosed letter was sent to:

- Country Landowners Association
- National Farmers Union
- House Builders Federation
- Essex County Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Local Authorities: Havering, Barking & Dagenham, Brentwood
- Council for Protection of Rural England
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Friends of the Earth
- National Trust
- English Trust
- English Heritage
- Countryside Heritage
- Forestry Commission
- Ministry of Agriculture Food and Fisheries
- Department of Environment

All the organisations responded except the National Trust and The Housebuilders Federation.

Follow-up interviews were then carried out wherever possible or practicable either by face to face unstructured interviews (Table A) or by telephone conversations (Table B).

Supplementary interviews were carried out when interested individuals or influential policymakers could be accessed (Table C).

All these interviews followed an informal, but in depth technique: a research schedule was identified, within these three basic topics a series of sub-topics were isolated for discussion:-

(I) **The urban fringe**

What is the influence of organisation/individual in urban fringe?

- what problems/characteristic did the interviewee associated with urban fringes?
- what role and function should the urban fringes have? (Prompt)
  - Green envelope
  - developed space
  - recreational amenity?

(II) **New Community Forest Scheme**

- what role and function did forestry have to play?
- what input did the interviewee have in shaping the community forest policy if any?
- what problems/advantages could the community forest scheme bring?
- how can the scheme be implemented? (Prompt)
  - planning gain
  - management structures

(III) **Consequences of the scheme in future?**

(Prompt)

- positive/negative?
- political?
- future of the urban fringes?

34B Colet House
Tudor Close
Belsize Avenue
Belsize Park
LONDON NW3 1PG

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Community Forest Concept

I am studying for my MPhil (Town Planning) at University College London. My Thesis topic is "Community forests - the images and the reality." As I am sure you already know, this is a new initiative led by the Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission to set up "urban fringe" forest areas around 12 major conibations.

My research is structured into three areas - the image and perception of the forest landscape; the policy making decisions behind the initiatives (who formulated policies, its aims, objectives and why?) and finally the problems of implementation.

As your members will play a leading role in the schemes, I am very interested in the Landowners Association opinions. Please could you pass comment on the following topic areas:

I. What are your organisations views on the future of the type of land-use in the urban fringes?

II. Please could you define your organisations "image" of a forest (its landscape, its function, etc.)

III. I would be interested to know your organisations role, if any, in the shaping of the community forests.

- Did you have any input into the policy decisions? Were you consulted on your views of the concept?

IV. Finally, have you any worries about the forests' implementation, form or function?

Thank you very much for your help. Please could you send me any information to the address above as soon as possible.

Yours faithfully

Susie Watson

TABLE A **FACE TO FACE INTERVIEWS (Following up letters)**

Name of Organisation	Person(s) interviewed	Position Held	Logistics of Interviews		
			Date	Location	Length of Time
Hertfordshire County Council	Kim Bloxham	Assistant Planning Officer	24.1.92	County Hall Hertford	30 mins
Havering L.A.	Peter Williams	Head Countryside Management	28.1.92	UCL	15 mins
	Chris Woods	Assistant Planning Officer	6.2.92	UCL	20 mins
Barking & Dagenham L.A.	Lesley Malet	Assistant Planning Officer	13.1.92	UCL	20 mins
Brentwood L.A.	Jeff Boyton	Assistant Planning Officer	26.3.92	Brentwood	30 mins
Council for Protection of Rural England	Neil Sinden	Planning Officer	15.6.91	CPRE London	40 mins
	Andy Wilson	Farming Representative	25.3.92	CPRE London	40 mins
Countryside Commission	J Collins	Representative Community Forest Scheme	25.1.92	Countyside Commission London	40 mins

TABLE B **TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS (Following up letters)**

Name of Organisation	Person(s)contacted	Position Held	Logistics of Interviews	
			Date	Length of Time
Country Landowners Association (CLA)	Alan Woods	Land-Use Advisor	18.2.92	25 mins
National Farmers Union	Ms G Lloyd	Responsible for Forestry	19.2.92	35 mins
English Nature (NCC)	Sarah Webster	Responsible for Land-use concerns	17.2.92	20 mins
English Heritage	Susanna Marcus	Historic Parks, Gardens, Woodlands	26.2.92	30 mins
Royal Society for Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Ms J P Lodford	Education Department	5.2.92	25 mins
Friends of the Earth	(Receptionist) (no one available for interview but could give policy) (and ideas)		20.2.92	20 mins
Forestry Commission	M Sanster	Responsible for Community Forests	24.2.92	30 mins
	R Brodhurst	Research on new planting	28.2.92	35 mins

TABLE C **FURTHER INTERVIEWS**

Person Contacted	Position	Reason for Contact	Logistics of Interviews		
			Date	Location	Length of Time
Profesor Richard Munton	Professor of Geography UCL	(I) Independent Consultant for Central Government on review and implementation of Countryside strategy.	26.2.92	UCL	60 mins
		(II) Academic advisor on community forest scheme.	6.3.92	UCL	60 mins
		(III) Chair of cummunity forest directors forum.			
Philip Lowe	(was at the time of interview) Lecturer of Countryside planning at Bartlett UCL	To add to knowledge base on the workings of environmental groups and landowning/productionist interests in policy making	20.3.92	UCL	20 mins
Martin Simmons	Director of Planning at LPAC (London Planning Advisory Committee)	To provide an overview of London's need for an urban fringe forest and the implications for London boroughs.	3.4.92	UCL	20 mins

TABLE D

Re: Community Forest - Thames Chase

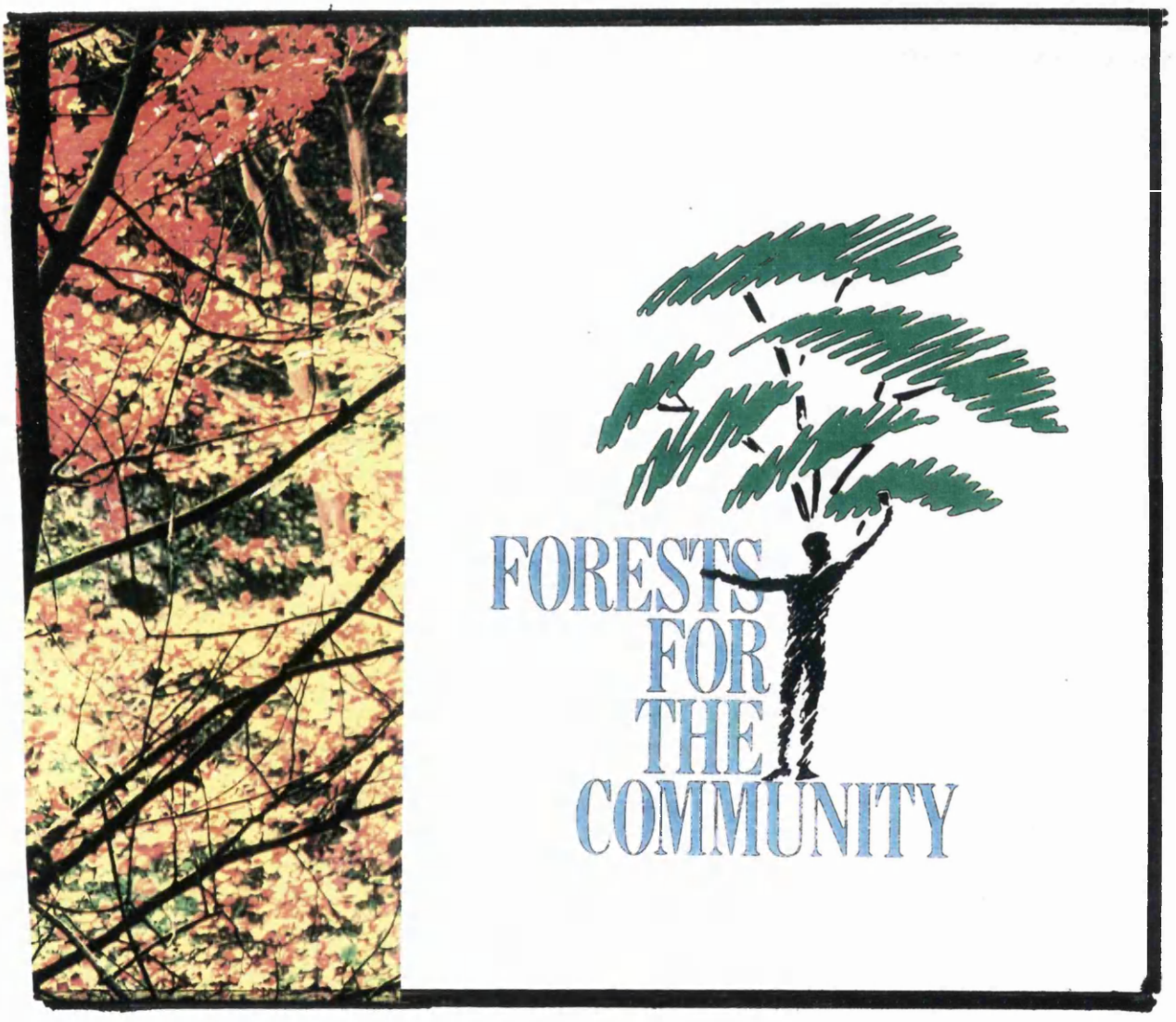
These "interviews" consisted of a series of conversations conducted as informal fact finding processes and active participation in the teams' work. They took place over a period of nine months (between September 1991 and April 1992).

Thames Chase Representatives

Name	**Position held**	**Organisation employed by**
Jill Attenborough	Community Forest Officer	Woodland Trust
Sue Anderson	Community Project Officer	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
Pam Warden	Publicity Officer Team Assistant	Thames Chase (i.e. Countryside Commission)
Max Hislop	Community Forester	Forestry Commission
Dee Stamp	Advisor to Community Forest Plan and Design and Planning for real	CLAWS (Community Land and Workspace Services)

APPENDIX II

The following illustrations show the glossy, imagery surrounding the launch of the community forest playing on the symbolism and heritage of trees in the British landscape.



12 COMMUNITY FORESTS FOR ENGLAND

Community Forests are places on the edges of towns and cities where major environmental improvements will create well-wooded landscapes.

Each covering 30-80 square miles (8,000 – 20,000 ha), **Community Forests** will provide extensive opportunities for:

- a thriving forestry and farming industry with increased scope for diversification,
- recreation – walking, riding, sports and much more,
- education – as an outdoor classroom,
- new habitats for wildlife,

Community Forests are an important new initiative led by the Countryside Commission and Forestry Commission. They will be shaped by landowners, farmers and local communities for their own work and enjoyment and that of their children and grandchildren.

(DERIVED: COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION 1991)

FORESTS FOR THE COMMUNITY

THE VISION

Imagine a magnificent forest — a forest of oak and ash, hawthorn, hazel, scots pine and yew.

Within the forest a mosaic of woods, farmland, open spaces and lakes create a rich and varied scene.

Here are farm and forest businesses, but also opportunities to relax, walk and ride, and areas to enjoy sports, the arts and other leisure activities.

Now imagine all this near your city.

For this is a **Community Forest,** a major new initiative from the Countryside Commission and the Forestry Commission.

Shaped by landowners, farmers and local people for themselves and their children, these living, working forests will be landscapes to cherish for generations to come.

(DERIVED: COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSON 1991)