

INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS: EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM DENMARK, ENGLAND AND GERMANY

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1. Introduction

There are increasing calls for greater policy integration from a number of areas. This is coming at a time when decision-making is facing increasing complexity as a result of various concurrent trends. Some of these trends are toward globalisation and greater centralisation of decision-making, whilst other trends are toward fragmentation and decentralisation of decision-making. A variety of factors have increased the number of actors involved in the policy process, such as the emergence of the information society, greater emphasis on public participation and the increasing role of non-governmental organisations, pressure groups and agencies in the decision-making process. All these developments make policy integration increasingly difficult but more compelling to achieve.

In the area of urban transport policy, there is widespread acceptance that integrating decisions across different sectors of policy (e.g. transport, land use planning, health and environment) is crucial for sustainable development (see for example Banister and Marshall, 2000; Barton and Tsourou, 2000; ECOTEC, 1993; Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, 1994). This is exemplified in the final report of the ECMT-OECD project on Implementing Sustainable Urban Travel Policies which states:

"Sustainability requires that policy-making for urban travel be viewed in a holistic sense: that planning for transport, land-use and the environment no longer be undertaken in isolation one from the other... Without adequate policy co-ordination, the effectiveness of the whole package of measures and their objectives is compromised."

European Conference of Ministers of Transport (2001:19)

Despite consensus about the need for policy integration, information about the importance of policy integration in practice, the experiences of policy-makers with policy integration in this field and the mechanisms or tools for policy integration that could help to lead to more integrated policy are all difficult to find. This paper attempt so shed some light on these issues and reports on some recent experiences of policy integration in local authorities in Denmark, England and Germany (Copenhagen, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and Freiberg respectively). The focus is on the integration of three specific areas of policy: land use planning, transport and environment policy. The material is based primarily on in-depth interviews which were carried out with key actors involved in policy making in the selected case study areas. The research was carried out in 2002 for the Netherlands Agency for Energy and the Environment (NOVEM) as part of their Regional Transport Performance (VervoersPrestatie Regionaal or VPR) research programme. This paper presents a short summary of various parts of this research project.¹ The paper is divided into four main parts. The first part focuses on definitions and concepts of policy integration. This is followed in the second part by a discussion of various impact assessment techniques that may help lead to more integrated policies. The third part of the paper considers the role of institutional arrangements on policy integration and looks in particular at the division of roles and responsibilities, and the nature of joint working arrangements. The fourth part of the paper ends with some conclusions and general lessons for policy integration in practice.

¹ A full account of this research project can be found in the two final project reports (Stead et al, 2003a and b).

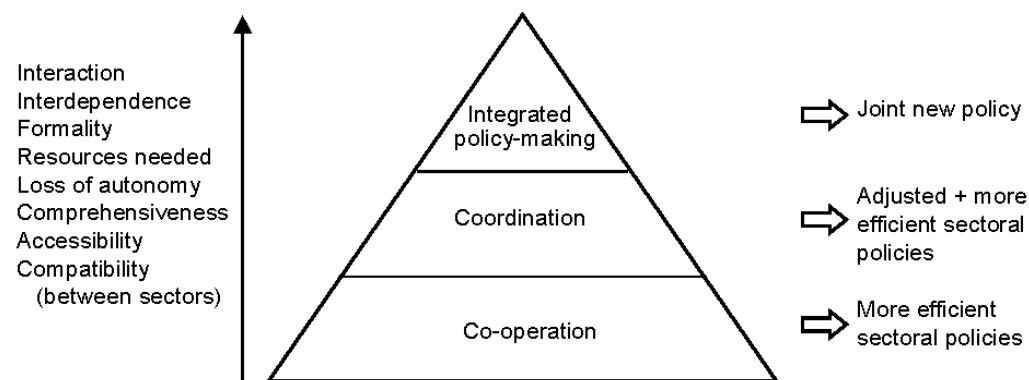
2. Definitions and concepts

First a few words about definitions, since a number of different terms exist in the literature referring to policy integration. These include terms such as coherence, consistency, collaboration, cooperation, coordination and integration. Some authors consider cooperation and coordination to be distinct and separate (e.g. Davidson, 1976; Morris, 1963), whilst others see coordination as one type of cooperation (e.g. Alter and Hage, 1993). According to Challis et al (1988), the concept of policy coordination had a more specific dominant form in the 1960s and 1970s (when rational, synoptic planning was the dominant paradigm) but more recently such precision about the meaning of policy coordination or integration is rare. Similarly, Mulford and Rogers (1982:9) note that, although inter-organisational coordination has been examined by both scholars and practitioners, “*few efforts have been made to define this phenomenon*”.

I contend that there are a number of distinct terms concerning policy integration and that there is a hierarchy of terms, as illustrated in Figure 1 (see also Stead et al, 2003a):

- *policy co-operation*, at the lowest level, which simply implies dialogue and information
- *policy coordination*, policy coherence and policy consistency, all quite similar, which imply co-operation plus transparency and some attempt to avoid policy conflicts (but do not necessarily imply the use of similar goals)
- *policy integration (joined-up policy)*, which includes dialogue and information (as in policy co-operation), transparency and avoidance of policy conflicts (as in policy co-ordination, policy coherence and policy consistency) but also includes joint working, attempts to create synergies between policies (win-win situations) and the use of the same goals to formulate policy

Figure 1. Integrated policy-making, policy co-ordination and cooperation



Although there is a substantial amount of theoretical literature on the subject of policy integration from research in the fields of policy science, organisational science and political studies (see for example Agranoff, 1986; Alter and Hage, 1993; Peters, 1998), there is very little literature that is specific to the issue of policy integration concerning urban transport planning policies.² A few recent publications by the author have begun to address this issue (see for example Geerlings and Stead, 2002 and 2003; Stead, 2003; Vigar and Stead, 2003).

² A review of literature on policy integration from the research fields of policy science, organisational science and political studies can be found elsewhere (Stead et al, 2003a).

In terms of concepts of policy integration, various forms of policy integration can be distinguished, all of which are important to promoting more sustainable and healthy urban transport planning. One simple typology contains vertical and horizontal policy integration as the two main forms (Figure 2). The former (vertical policy integration) concerns policy integration between different levels of administration whilst the latter (horizontal policy integration) involves policy integration between different sectors, professions or agencies operating at the same administrative level. Because these two types of policy integration cover a broad spectrum (especially horizontal policy integration), it is also possible to identify various sub-divisions within these two basic forms of policy integration such as:

- *inter-agency integration* – policy integration between different agencies operating at the same administrative level (e.g. local government, health authority or environment agency)
- *inter-territorial integration* – policy integration between neighbouring administrations with some shared interest in infrastructure and/or resources
- *intra-sectoral* – policy integration between different sections or professions within one department (e.g. integration between different environmental sectors such as air quality and noise or biodiversity, or integration between different transport sectors such as roads, public transport, cycling or walking)

For the purposes of this paper, policy integration concerns the management of cross-cutting issues in policy-making that transcend the boundaries of established policy fields which do not correspond to the institutional responsibilities of individual departments, and the main focus of this paper is on two aspects of policy integration: horizontal sectoral integration in policy-making (between different departments and/or professions in local authorities) and vertical intergovernmental integration in policy-making (between different tiers of government).

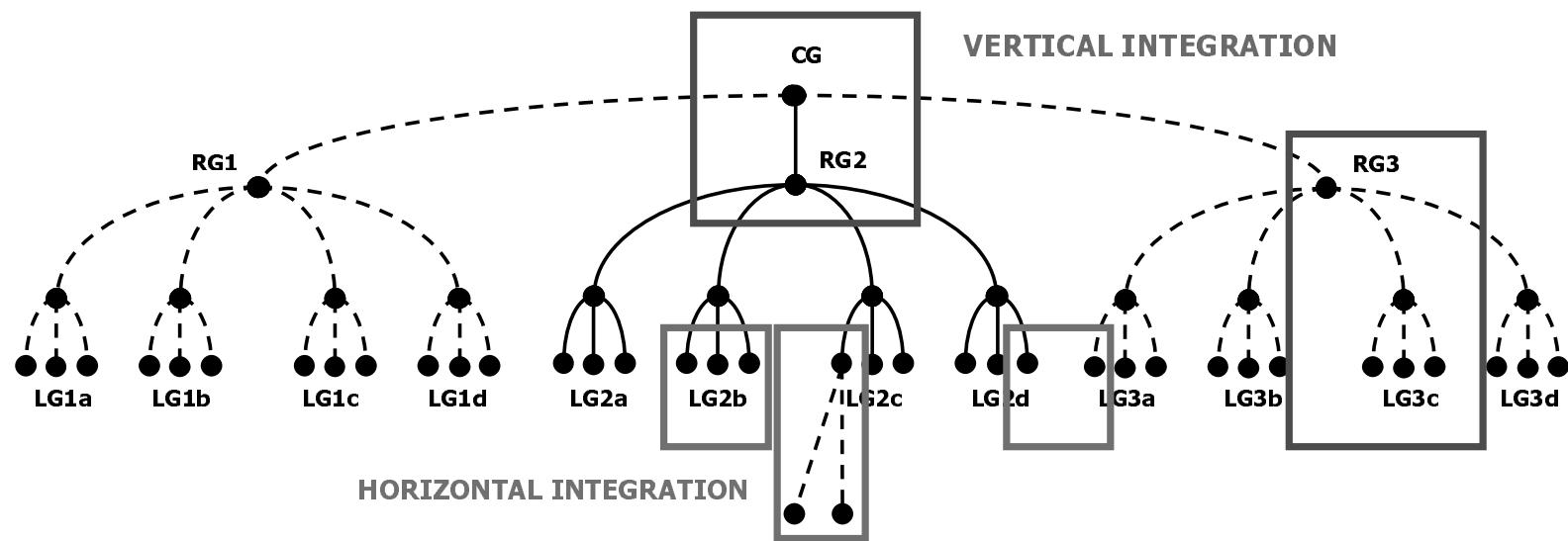
3. Impact assessment techniques

One striking observation from the case studies in Denmark, England and Germany is that there are more impact assessment techniques in England that interviewees consider important for policy integration than compared to Denmark or Germany. It should be stressed here however that this does not in itself imply that policy integration is any more advanced in England than in Denmark or Germany: it only implies a different approach across the three countries. In England, a number of impact assessment techniques are currently a necessary part of the land use and transport policy process. These include *sustainability appraisal*, *transport assessments*, *air quality management* and *causal chain analysis*. These techniques are discussed in turn below.

Sustainability appraisal

One of the important ways of ensuring consistency between policy in England (between land use and environmental policy in particular) and ensuring that environmental considerations are adequately taken into account is through sustainability appraisal, required as part of the process of preparing regional planning policies (DET, 2000a and b). In the case of the joint structure plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, a series of 19 sustainability objectives for Cambridgeshire and

Figure 2. Examples of different types of policy integration



CG = central government

RG = regional government

LG = local government

Peterborough were developed that the plan should aim to achieve (Land Use Consultants et al, 2002). Using these objectives, a review of each of the policies in the draft structure plan was carried out. In addition, the sustainability appraisal also considered how well the policies 'fit together' to provide a coherent plan for the development of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Alongside the sustainability appraisal, a health impact assessment of the structure plan and the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan was also carried out. This included an assessment of the impact of policies on social inclusion, safety and access to services and facilities.

Transport assessments

Under current planning policy guidance for transport in England (PPG13), transport assessments are required to be submitted alongside the planning application for new developments with significant transport implications (DETR, 2001). For major proposals, the assessment should illustrate accessibility to the site by all modes and the likely modal split of journeys to and from the site. It should also give details of proposed measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling, to reduce the need for parking associated with the proposal and to mitigate transport impacts. This relatively new requirement provides an interesting and important opportunity for transport and land-use agendas to come together.

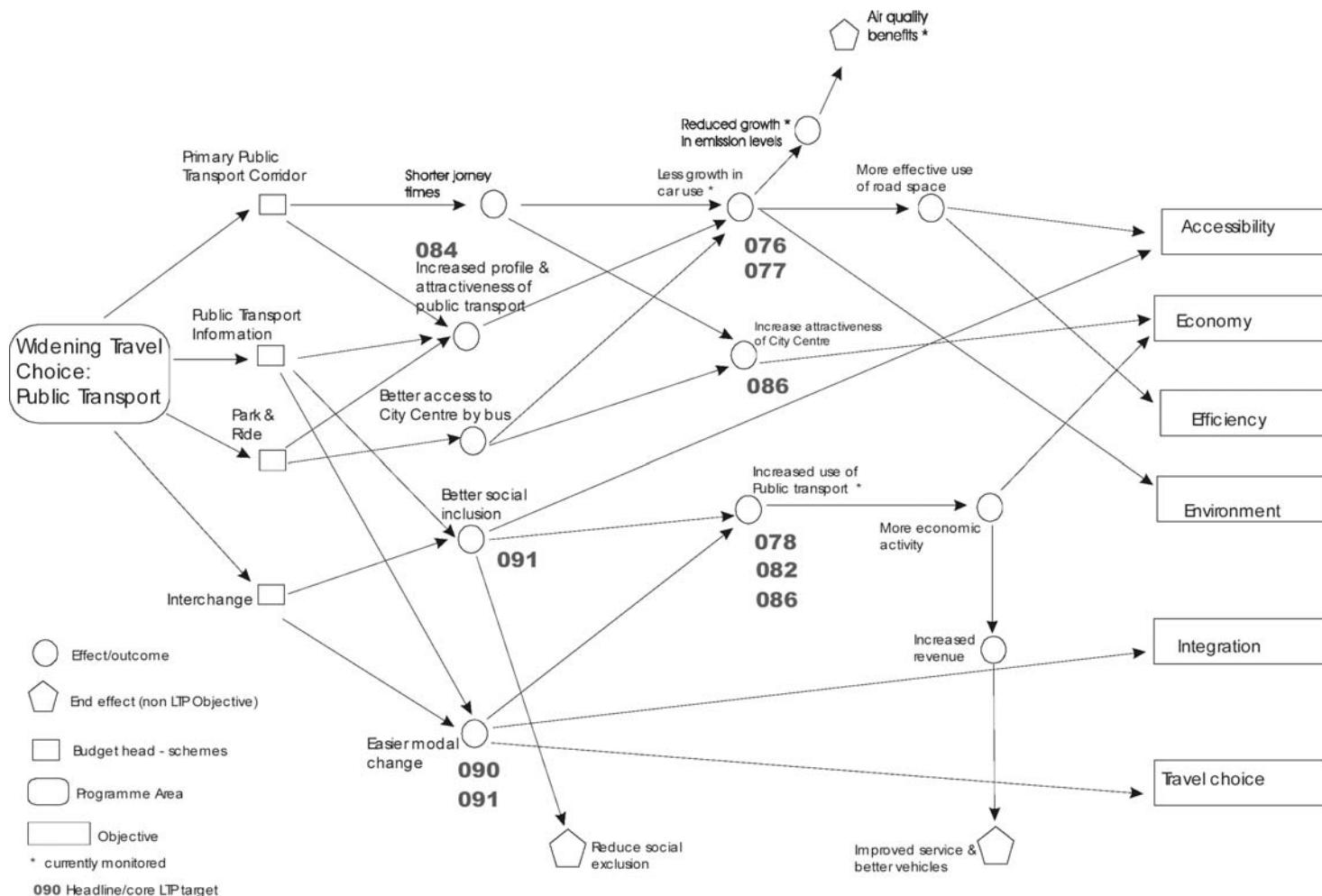
Air quality management

The UK air quality strategy plays a role in influencing a more integrated approach to land use, transport and environment policy. The strategy requires air quality considerations to be taken into account when preparing land use development plans and when planning transport (DETR, 2000c and d). In areas where air quality is poor (or is forecast to be poor in the future), local authorities must designate an air quality management area (AQMA) and prepare an action plan setting out how the air quality problem will be tackled. This involves planning and transport considerations. The situation is however made more complicated by the fact that local authorities have the responsibility for air quality, while responsibility for transport and strategic planning sometimes rests with the next tier of government (the county level).

Causal chain analysis

According to government guidance on preparing local transport plans (LTPs), monitoring arrangements need to be considered as an integral part of the document (DETR, 2000e). It states that LTPs should show a clear link between objectives, measures and outputs. In this respect, the guidance advises that authorities should use causal chain diagrams as a way of identifying connections between measures and objectives. Peterborough's LTP adopts such an approach as a way of trying to ensure that all the schemes in the LTP work towards achieving the overall objectives of the document. Each package of the schemes in Peterborough's LTP is assessed against the objectives using a causal chain methodology (an example is illustrated in Figure 3).

Figure 3. An example of a causal chain diagram used in Peterborough's Local Transport Plan



source: Peterborough City Council (2000).

4. Institutional arrangements

This section considers the role of institutional arrangements on policy integration in the three case study areas in Denmark, England and Germany. Two key areas are discussed: the division of roles and responsibilities, and the nature of joint working arrangements.

The division of organisational roles and responsibilities

Although the German political system is characterised by a strong horizontal and vertical *Politikverflechtung* (political entanglement), there is a clear separation of responsibilities and legislative instruments at all the different levels of policy making (from national to local). One of the organisational approaches to implementing cross-cutting policy in Germany is the establishment of *Spiegelreferate* (mirror units) in each government department, such as an office for environmental affairs in every ministry. To a certain extent this approach has led to positive results in terms of policy integration (see Schleicher-Tappeser et al, 2001). Another approach involves formalised advice procedures, whereby ministries are formally required to consult with other departments before policy decisions. Here, much depends on the spirit in which these procedures are carried out and informal communication plays an important role. Inter-departmental committees are also used to some extent for discussing important cross-cutting issues. This approach has gained importance with policies on climate change and sustainable development. Despite these various approaches, the interactions between policy fields are in general rather limited (especially at the federal level). In addition, policies are rather segmented, especially environment and transport policies, despite claims from policy-makers that they favour more co-ordination and cooperation. The very differentiated administration at the local level is one of the barriers to a more integrated approach to policy-making.

In England, requirements for the production of an increasingly large number of strategies by local government (such as air quality, health, noise, contaminated land, transport and so on) means that achieving consistency and integration across all documents is increasingly challenging for policy-makers. Some interviewees feel that this 'production line of documents' devotes too much attention to policy and too little to delivery.

An important point to make here is that planning is a restrictive or regulatory activity that relies on other agencies to provide development and realise plans. Inevitably this involves negotiation and sometimes trade-offs. Furthermore, implementation of policy is not just a matter of getting the policy right – it is also reliant on decisions and action by other agencies (such as developers, businesses and individuals) that are in line with policy. Policy-making authorities have a number of regulatory instruments ('sticks') at their disposal to influence decisions and action but few incentives ('carrots'). In Denmark, for example, five development sub-centres were identified in the 1973 plan for greater Copenhagen but since then only one of them (Høje Taastrup) has been developed to any degree because of the collapse in demand for office space during the 1980s. This is a clear example that plans are reliant on other bodies (such as the development industry) and the right conditions (such as the demand for property) to achieve planning goals.

Joint working arrangements

Joint working arrangements can help to produce more integrated policy. Preparation of the transport and environment plan in Copenhagen, for example, involved an equal stake (in terms of resources and staffing) from two departments: transport and environment. This has led to a greater sense of joint ownership of the plan and good collaboration between the two departments. At the time this plan was developed, few Danish authorities had prepared transport and environment plans, so there were few methods and techniques that could be used from elsewhere. Consequently, most joint working arrangements during the production of Copenhagen's transport and environment plan were ad hoc. Because only a small team of people was involved in producing the plan, interaction could be more informal and less structured. Similarly, the city-centre masterplan for Peterborough was jointly resourced and drafted by the planning and transport departments of the authority, which meant that there was equal involvement in the process and equal interest in finding policies to fulfil planning and transport goals.

Production of the structure plan involved a small joint team with members from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils. The core team also drew on the expertise of other colleagues for various areas of policy. Each of the core team members was responsible for taking the lead on one or more chapters of the plan. A small team clearly offers the advantages of opportunities for close collaboration but has disadvantages in terms of the breadth of expertise and experience that a small group can bring. A brainstorming process involving a wide range of officers and disciplines was used in the early stages of developing structure plan policies which was considered beneficial to the process. Joint working between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough on producing the structure plan was undoubtedly made easier by the legacy that Peterborough was once within the county of Cambridgeshire and that plans were always made for this area. In addition, various staff from the two authorities (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough) had worked as colleagues before the creation of the unitary authority of Peterborough.

In all three case studies, formal networks were generally considered to be an important part of policy integration: they provide a good opportunity for more open discussion and debate. Movement of staff between different parts of the organisation can also be beneficial for internal links within the organisation. A high turnover of staff, on the other hand, is likely to lead to lower levels of informal networks within the organisation.

5. Conclusions

The driving forces for policy integration are somewhat different in the three case study areas. In Copenhagen, the driving forces are more international in nature and include directives on SEA and water, although local driving forces such as Local Agenda 21 are also important. The driving forces for policy integration in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are more national and include policy guidance (in the form of planning policy guidance and other government advice on policy such as Local Transport Plans and Air Quality Management) and national policy reports (such as the 1998 Transport White Paper). In Freiburg, the driving forces for policy integration are primarily regional and local in nature. The city's status as an environment city and the existence of a large number of environmental groups in the city are two important factors here.

Although there is increasing attention being given to the issue of policy integration, the concept remains fuzzy for many policy-makers, somewhat analogous to the concept of sustainable development. As is the case for sustainable development, there is widespread consensus that it is a sensible goal but understanding about what exactly it is or precisely how to achieve it or how to monitor it is quite limited. According to Hull (2003), integration is one of those nebulous concepts that gives legitimacy through usage in policy documents but, like sustainable development, is poorly elaborated. Despite frequent recent claims of policy integration, little has changed in terms of policy-making processes or implementation. There is therefore something of a rhetoric and reality mismatch in terms of policy integration.

Evidence from the case studies suggests that there are more impact assessment techniques in England that interviewees considered important for policy integration than compared to Denmark or Germany. This does not in itself imply that policy integration is any more advanced in England than in Denmark or Germany: it only implies a different approach across the three countries. In England, a number of impact assessment techniques are currently a necessary part of the land use and transport policy process (e.g. sustainability appraisal, transport assessments, air quality management and causal chain analysis) and these techniques provide useful examples of how to formalise some of the procedures to deal with inter-sectoral issues and policies.

In terms of education and training, an increasing emphasis on non-technical skills (such as negotiation and facilitation for example) for professionals involved in land use and transport policy has meant that authorities now recruit fewer staff with specialist technical training for a specific job. Many people are now trained on the job and more people move around within an organisation to gain experience of different departments or sections. Thus, officers within local authorities are generally more cross-disciplinary and have more non-technical skills than in the past, which is often advantageous in terms of policy integration. Movement of staff between different parts of the organisation can also be beneficial for internal links and networks within the policy-making organisation. These links and networks provide a good opportunity for open discussions and debate. They also help to improve understanding of the connections between different areas of policy.

The conclusions from case study analysis in Denmark, England and Germany concerning policy integration and institutional arrangements are summarised below:

- *Joint teams* working on strategic planning are generally considered more effective in terms of time, resources and expertise. Although the joint structure plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is mainly a consequence of former administrative responsibilities, officers also see it as a way of saving money and improving policy co-ordination.
- *Political support*. Policy implementation requires political support for adequate resources and the approval of policy. Securing this political support is sometimes problematic because decisions concerning land use planning, transport and environment policy may only have long-term and/or rather intangible impacts, which do not generate great interest from politicians.
- *Shared budgets and responsibilities*. There is a consensus that policy integration is more effective when there is a balanced (fairly even), clear division of budgets and responsibilities, as in the case of the transport and environment plan in Copenhagen and the joint structure plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

- *Shared goals.* Integrated policy is dependent on a shared set of goals within the policy-making organisation. This in turn depends on procedures, rules and guidelines that promote policy consistency (see below) as well as issues such as information, communication and professional training.
- *Procedures and guidelines.* Policy-makers often feel that they have no clear guidelines or procedures for producing integrated policy, despite frequent calls from different tiers of government for policy integration. Thus, most procedures are currently developed in an ad hoc trial-and-error way. There are usually no formal procedures set out by local or national government to formulate integrated policy.
- *Key individuals and networks.* Strongly motivated officers and/or those with an extensive professional network are generally considered important for bringing about policy integration. Various practices such as benchmarking and staff mobility can help to extend professional networks and disseminate good practice.

In summary, there is no single measure or technique that can bring about policy integration alone. Different approaches may result in similar levels of policy integration, and similar approaches in different settings may have different effects in terms of policy integration. There are a wide variety of institutional arrangements and there is no one model for effective policy integration. A range of factors can affect the impact of different approaches, such as cultural, political and organisational issues. Nevertheless, some of the examples of instruments, techniques and institutional arrangements identified in this study would appear to offer some promising contributions to policy integration in a variety of different situations. Finally, it is important to recognise that integrated policies provide no guarantee of integrated practice (implementation). Thus, integrated policy should not be seen as an end in itself but as a potential means of influencing more integrated outcomes.

6. Acknowledgements

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