

MODERNISATION OR  
MANAGERIALISM?

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE  
MANAGERIAL PARADIGM  
AND LOCAL TOURISM  
SERVICES

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## **Abstract**

Tourism in England has grown to become an activity worth around £111billion to the English economy, and constituting around 4% of employment. This has led to increasing numbers of local areas becoming involved with tourism development. However local authorities supporting tourism are impacted by financial pressures and pressures for 'less government', which are indicative of a 'managerial paradigm' which has surrounded public sector management in England.

This study has examined the impact of the managerial paradigm on management of tourism at the local level. Using the English cities as a 'case', a methodological triangulation of questionnaire and contact with senior management in local authorities involved with tourism policy was used. The findings have led to an important understanding of the current picture concerning public sector management of tourism at the local level. This study has found that tourism is worth over £17billion to the English cities, and supports around 360,000 jobs. The findings suggest that the driving forces that characterised the managerial state continue to impact management of local tourism. This study has also examined the impact of policy changes introduced by the Conservative/Liberal Democratic Coalition government on local tourism. The accession of a new government has led to a significant realignment in public sector engagement with tourism. Policy discourse has stressed government ambition for tourism to be 'industry-led' with a 're-balancing' the economy towards the private sector. As a result, this study has found the most significant challenges facing local tourism management centre around financial pressures. Reductions in tourism budgets are leading to major changes in departmental structures and tourism managers' roles. Reductions in

tourism budgets are leading to significant pressures on tourism departments to raise income in order to make departments financially viable. This study has found that in some cases local authorities are ceasing to financially-support tourism.

This research also suggests that pressure from government for the private sector to increasingly fund tourism partnerships may be difficult to achieve locally. Respondents have argued that high levels of engagement with the private sector already exist locally, and as the private sector in tourism is predominately small businesses there are limitations as to how much such businesses can contribute to marketing partnerships. Policy for the private sector having the 'majority power' in the new emerging tourism partnerships may also have implications for the motivation of such partnerships. Doubts have been raised in this study from within the public sector, concerning the ability of local tourism businesses to take 'responsibility for their own future' whilst at the same time protecting the public interest. It is concluded that a 'realignment' towards more private sector involvement in partnerships brings with it potential consequences if local tourism businesses are unable to 'increasingly fund' the new arrangements, and the new tourism bodies are unable to establish a 'pluralistic' tourism policy environment in their areas. With evident reductions in local authority budgets, it is legitimate to question the scope of funding that the emerging DMOs will have at their disposal, and thus their ability to deliver local ambitions for tourism development. Therefore, the new tourism partnerships will require careful structuring and management. However, their financial futures will inevitably hinge on the value that the private sector places on the new local tourism arrangement, and their ability to maintain the public interest will depend on striking an appropriate balance of power amongst all stakeholders within the partnership.

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As Ted would say 'God Bless' you all.

## Abbreviations

ACPI	Audit Commission Performance Indicator
BTA	British Tourist Authority
CCT	Compulsory Competitive Tendering
DCMS	Department of Culture Media and Sport
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DETR	Department of Environment Transport and The Regions
DMO	Destination Management Organisation
DMP	Destination Marketing Partnership
DNH	Department of National Heritage
DOE	Department of Employment
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ETB	English Tourist Board
ETC	English Tourist Council
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GOM	Government Office on Merseyside
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationary Office
LGA	Local Government Association
LGC	Local Government Chronicle
MDC	Merseyside Development Corporation
MELU	Merseyside Economic Liaison Unit
NPM	New Public Management
NHS	National Health Service
NR	New Right
NTO	National Tourism Organisation
PI	Performance Indicator
RDA	Regional Development Agency
RGF	Regional Growth Fund
RTB	Regional Tourist Board
TIC	Tourism Information Centre
TMP	The Mersey Partnership
SME	Small-to-medium Enterprise

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# CHAPTER 1: THE MANAGERIAL PARADIGM AND TOURISM

## 1.0 Introduction

Tourism in England has grown to become an activity worth around £111 billion to the English economy, and constituting around 4% of employment (Penrose, 2011). Historically, London has been the foremost tourism destination in England in terms of visitor numbers. This is linked to a number of factors including being the capital city and receiving a large portion of UK in-bound tourists through its airports, but also its history of attracting tourists from the beginnings of the European Grand Tours (Black, 1992; Penrose, 2011). Other places in England, particularly the resorts and spa towns, also have a history of involvement with tourism often going back over 100 years. More recently, the English tourism picture has undergone much change. Places which may not have automatically been perceived as tourist destinations have assumed increasing responsibility for tourism (Burns, 2008). The appeal of tourism destinations is that each area may provide unique visitor experiences, the variation of experiences offered to tourists formed by each place's individual character (Enjoy England, 2010). The resorts or the cities may offer uniquely differing tourist experiences, and yet both may attract high numbers of visitors.

The research area for this study is found within the conjunction of two larger conceptual areas; change in the management of public services, and involvement with tourism at the local level. The author of this study was previously a manager within the local government tourism environment. The author was formerly Tourism

Development Manager at Liverpool City Council. Local government in England has existed in some form for almost 1,000 years (Massey, 2005). This long tradition has evolved as a natural impulse of small communities to meet their collective needs, localism being founded on the view that the needs of 'ordinary people' were more important to that of the nation state (Kingdom, 1991). The 'local state' (Hall, 1998), in England consists of 326 local authorities (DEFRA, 2009). Appropriation of 'local authority' is not determined by the size of the authority, local authorities vary considerably in size ranging from large metropolitan areas to small local parish councils. The 326 English local authorities are comprised of 36 metropolitan authorities, 55 unitary authorities, 32 London Boroughs, 34 county councils, and 169 district and parish and town councils (DEFRA, 2009). The economy in England has recently witnessed a rise of a new 'localism, as local authorities have adopted policies perceived as being necessary for the wellbeing of the local community (Torkildsen, 1999; Stoker, 2004; Cochrane, 2009). One such policy is that of developing local tourism. Attraction for tourism by the localities has mirrored a general trend of public sector support for tourism by governments across the globe (Millington and Cleverdon, 1999). Public sector support for tourism has enabled English tourism to grow to be the 5th largest industry in England, supporting one in twelve jobs (Penrose, 2011). The rise of a new 'localism' in tourism will be explored in more detail in chapter 2, but such development has seen places which may not automatically be associated with tourism, such as the post-industrial cities, encouraging tourism promotion. This has witnessed the English tourism product undergoing significant change in terms of its scale and character as more cities (Law, 2002, Burns, 2008), counties (LGA, 2000), districts (Charlton and Essex, 1996), and smaller localities (DNH, 1997) have become attracted to tourism (Burns, 2008).

The motivation for this study is linked to the author's previous tenure at Liverpool City Council. During the 1990s Liverpool City Council sought to grow its tourism product. In 1995 the author joined Liverpool City Council as the City's new Tourism Development Manager, having previously worked in the cruise ship industry and hotels. The key role of this post was to lead the development of Liverpool City Council's Tourism Strategy and Action Plan. An important objective of Liverpool's Tourism Strategy was to increase the number of day and overnight visitors, through working with partners to

improve Liverpool's range of attractions and tourism infrastructure, tourism training initiatives and tourism marketing (Liverpool City Council, 1996). To this end Liverpool's key tourism markets were the Irish market, the international market, and post-Fordist 'mobile' markets: car-owning consumers with disposable income who could come to Liverpool for weekends or short visits. Festival development and other initiatives (such as the later grandiose initiative to bid for, and win, European Capital of Culture status for 2008) have assisted tourism growth, significantly impacting the number of tourist visitors to Liverpool. In 1995 the International Beatles Festival attracted 50,000 visitors, and by 2009 this had grown to 350,000. In 2011, the 4-day Grand National Festival attracted 152,000 visitors to the Liverpool area. In 2010, the Liverpool region received 54 million visitors (The Mersey Partnership, 2011).

The author's role working to develop Liverpool's tourism product saw the author's working day heavily impacted by change affecting public sector management, a phenomenon echoed across the country by other public sector tourism managers. Local tourism management in England, along with many other areas of public sector provision, resides in a volatile and changing political environment of national-local tension (Burns, 2009). Ackroyd (1995, p.30) argues that reform during the Conservative government (1979-97) followed a general thrust of 'privatising what can be privatised, and making the remaining services look and feel as close to private organisations as possible'. During the 1990s, the workplace in the local authority environment mirrored that reported in a case study by Mueller and Carter (2007). Mueller and Carter noted an increasing driving force for the adoption of management techniques into public sector working. In the 'privatised' electricity industry 'what had before been expressed in engineering language became reformulated in management language' (p.192). Mueller and Carter's case study described how an electricity company which had been 'privatised, 'adopted the practices and language of managerialism' (p.192). The author's experience of public sector management within a local authority had similar tones. Language such as 'performance', 'performance indicators', 'strategy', 'strategic plans' started to be increasingly used within local authority vocabulary. From dialogue with colleagues both within my local authority, and others, it was evident that the growing use of such terms was seen within the local authority environment almost as a 'new language'. 'Strategic management' became a

buzzword. Chape and Davies (1993) described Liverpool City Council's introduction of the strategic planning process in order to try to move the Council away from 'ad hocery and management by firefighting to a more rational model' (p.6). Their paper outlined Liverpool's vision for the management of the City Council seeking to develop clear objectives based on analysis of the needs of the city, resulting in a corporate strategy statement and which would then set out the broader framework within which the Council would operate. Individual Service Action Plans, which explained how the Council would achieve its objectives, were produced. This signalled a sea change at Liverpool City Council. The notion of 'strategic management' was a new concept within council vocabulary (Chape and Davies, 1993). Having joined the Council from the private sector, the author found the perception of this 'new language' within the Council slightly strange as 'performance', 'performance indicators', 'strategic plans', 'consultation' were terms that I was quite familiar with having worked in the private sector for number of years.

## **1.1 The managerial paradigm**

The new millennium coincided in a change for the author as the author left Liverpool City Council to join Liverpool John Moores University. However, when the opportunity arose for this project, the author wished to investigate the influence of the managerial paradigm (Brooks, 1999; McGrath, 2003) on the management of local tourism in England.

In the social science context, a 'paradigm' can explain how society perceives and understands what it sees as 'reality'. The argument presented in this work concurs with that made by Brooks (1999) and McGrath (2003), in that management has become 'paradigmatic' because of the increasing importance placed on 'management' across society (Mintzberg, 1975; Pollitt, 1993; Schermerhorn, 2005). Mintzberg (1975, p.61) has contended that 'no job is more vital to our society than that of the manager'. A managerial paradigm has served to promote the importance of management within society, through a 'social construction' (Willocks and Harrow, 1992, p.xvii) which enhances the prestige of managers and promotes management as a force for 'good' (Pollitt, 1993; Clarke and Newman, 1997). The managerial paradigm promotes the

perception that the 'modern' manager is a 'thinking doer' in a 'socially-constructed reality' perceiving the primacy of management in global society (Willocks and Harrow, 1992, xiii).

As Flynn (2007) has argued, pressure for a more 'managerial' public sector has existed since the post-War years. However, political drive for public sector reform intensified under the dominance of similar political doctrines of the Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan administrations (Lane, 2000). As a consequence, a New Public Management (NPM) emerged as a dominant paradigm affecting public sector management particularly in North America, Europe, Australasia and the Pacific Rim Countries (McLaughlin and Osborne, 2002; Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2004 Pollitt, 2007 2010). Lane argues that NPM is 'not about politics but what happens after Parliament has decided on objectives'. Definitionally, NPM presents, according to Pollitt (Pollitt, 2007, p.1), a 'conundrum'. Whilst a 'new public management' has increasingly spread across the global public sector environment, NPM according to Pollitt (2007, p.1) is a rhetorical and conceptual construction which is open to re-interpretation and shifting usages over time. As such, Pollitt argues that a clear definition of NPM has not arisen due to considerable definitional disputes and ambiguities related to the NPM phenomenon. Part of the definitional problem is that different governments may seek differing objectives from application of a 'new public management' (Pollitt, 2003). In one country a key objective of NPM may be to improve standards of service for citizens as users of public services, whereas in others it may be to cut expenditure and lower taxes. Lane (2000, p.304) has defined NPM as 'a set of ideas about how government can get its job done'. Ackroyd (1995, p.30) has described NPM in England as 'privatising what can be privatised, and making the remaining services look and feel as close to private organisations as possible' (p.30). Pollitt (2007) has argued that NPM is a 'two level phenomenon', at the higher level being a general theory or doctrine that the public sector can be improved by the importation of business concepts, techniques and values, while at another level it can be defined as a 'bundle' of specific concepts and practices which have become referred to as 'managerialism' (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 1993; Clarke and Newman, 1997; McGrath, 2003; Mueller and Carter, 2007; Deem et al, 2007; Hedley, 2010).

## 1.2 Managerialism and ‘enabling’

There are differing views within the literature concerning whether NPM and ‘managerialism’ represent the same phenomenon. Some commentators argue that little separates NPM from managerialism (Hedley, 2010). However, this study will accept the view by Stoker (2004) who contends that NPM was in fact a concept driven by ‘New Right’ doctrine and supported by legislation, whereas ‘managerialism’ has become a catch-all label for the utilisation of private sector ‘techniques’ which underpinned the NPM ideal. Similar to NPM, managerialism presents difficulties in definitional terms. Whilst the English Collins dictionary (2008) has defined managerialism as ‘the application of managerial techniques of businesses to the running of other organizations, such as the civil service or local authorities’, Hedley (2010, p.117) argues that ‘there is no Universally agreed definition of managerialism’. Pollitt (1993) has described the managerialism which influenced the British public sector during the Conservative administration (1979-1997) as having a ‘neo-Taylorian character’ (p.27) in its adoption of techniques intended to reduce the cost and improve the efficiency of the public services. It has been described earlier Ackroyd’s contention that policy during the Conservative government (1979-97) was that of ‘privatising what can be privatised, and making the remaining services look and feel as close to private organisations as possible’. In order to evaluate how this policy impacted on local tourism management, an extensive review of the literature has identified that the managerial paradigm which has pervaded local government in England is characterised by a number of common ‘techniques’ (also referred to as ‘practices’ by Dawson and Dargie, 2002, p.34):

- ‘Outsourcing’ local authority service provision
- Cost-efficiency
- More defined business planning
- Focus on evaluation and accountability
- Focus on performance management

This framework will be used to evaluate the impact of managerialism on local tourism management, and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3.

Whilst Pollitt (2007) has defined NPM as a general theory or doctrine that the public sector can be improved by the importation of business concepts and techniques, other 'sub-theories' have arisen in relation to public sector management which include 'hollowing out' (Rhodes, 1994) and 'enabling' (Brooke, 1991; Kingdom, 1991; Deacon and Walsh, 1994; Taylor, 2000; Vernon et al, 2005; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). Rhodes (1994) has defined 'hollowing out' as a resultant effect of a number of forces which Rhodes argues have combined to 'erode or eat away' (p.138) the British state. Such forces included loss of functions by British government to European Union Institutions, and the growth of NPM which sought the application of alternative delivery systems for public services and the incorporation of 'business-type' managerialism (Rhodes, 1994). Milward and Provan (2003) have argued that the 'hollow state' may be theoretically conceptualised either as an attempt to roll back the state in order to 'cripple its capacity to govern' (p.2) or as an 'enabling state'. 'Enabling' has been defined theoretically as a shift in the role of the state from 'provider' to 'enabler' (Taylor, 2000; Vernon et al, 2005; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). The notion of 'enabling' was first coined by Nicholas Ridley, a senior Minister in the Margaret Thatcher government. An 'enabling state' promoted by the Conservative government aimed to reduce dependency on state funding and subsidy, by focusing on 'privatisation' of public utilities and services and favouring competition and contracting out (Taylor, 2000). Local government was seen as being instrumental in the enabling process, by promoting a 'contract culture', and where the 'market mechanism' could offer a variety of agencies wishing to deliver local services. Taylor (2000) argues that the notion of an 'enabling state' suggests something positive; a state that is 'enabling', 'empowering' or 'assisting'. However 'enabling' challenged the welfare state and 'collectivism' as theories of state action (Taylor, 2000). The reality of 'enabling' for local government saw 'enabling' becoming a metaphor for local authorities reducing direct service provision and instead stimulating 'action' from alternative providers in the private or voluntary sectors (Rao, 1991; Taylor, 2000; Flynn, 2007). The main function of the new 'enabling local authority' was to be a 'facilitator' of services and who contracted out services on the basis of value for money (Taylor, 2000; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). Therefore, in an 'enabling state', local authorities would not be providers but planners and purchasers of services at the strategic level. This has been described as 'outsourcing' by a number of commentators (LGA, 2001; Harland and

Knight, 2005; Schermerhorn, 2005), the public sector environment demonstrating similar characteristics of production in a 'globalised' economy where the business sector has pursued alternative delivery mechanisms for production. In the public sector environment, the managerial paradigm has witnessed 'outsourcing' including several distinctive themes such as compulsory competitive tendering (CCT), and public-private sector collaborative partnerships (Heeley, 2001; Hall and Page, 2002; Grimshaw et al, 2002). During the Labour administration (1997-2010), the notion of 'enabling', saw Labour place more emphasis on the state being an 'organiser' of services rather than a state that 'contacted out' services to the private sector (Taylor, 2000). A significant ideological difference between the Labour Party and the Conservatives had been the compulsion for local authorities to 'tender out' local services (Grimshaw et al, 2002). Labour rejected what it called 'dogmatic view that services must be privatised to be of high quality' (Labour Party, 1997, p.18), and after the election in 1997 Labour proclaimed a new 'Third Way'. Recognising that the market mechanism did produce efficiencies, the Third Way signaled an ambition for policy to try to capture the 'best parts' of both socialism and efficiencies brought about through the market mechanism (Taylor, 2000). When Prime Minister, Tony Blair coined the phrase 'out goes the big state, in comes the enabling state' (Blair, 2002), 'enabling' under Labour placed more emphasis on the state being an organiser of services and particularly encouraging public-private sector partnerships (Flynn, 2007; Cochrane, 2009). Flynn (2007) has argued that promoting public-private sector partnerships provided for Labour a more softer and 'palatable' political solution to outsourcing services, partnerships being a central pillar for Labour's ambition for more 'joined up government' (Thomas and Morpeth, 2009, p.78).

In 2008, the banner headline 'Social workers should challenge managerialism' (communitycare.co.uk, 2008) urged social workers attending a national conference to 'challenge managerialism within social care'. The argument being made was that a managerial culture was requiring social care workers 'to become care managers and budget rationers', leaving less time for working 'face to face' with clients. In an earlier posting on the communitycare website, Jones (2006) had reported unease within the social work profession with regard to what he called the increasing 'bureaucratisation of social work', and the 'rationing of financial resources'. Jones argued that such was

causing serious negative impacts on social work clients, and a 'decline in professional trust'. The thrust of the argument was that the 'values' which were intrinsically enmeshed within the social work profession, were being challenged by a 'managerialistic' working environment, which had increasingly seen 'more form-filling...performance reporting...[and]...greater performance indicators' (communitycare.co.uk, 2006). Thompson (2008, p.1) has contended that in social care, managerialism has fostered a 'disregard [for] professionalism' and 'placed power firmly in the hands of central government', the latter point being the result of government making financial settlements dependent on meeting performance targets. In the University sector, commentators have described the managerial paradigm as creating 'Declining trust and discretion...rationing of financial resources...higher workloads and long hours...finance-driven decisions...greater pressure for internal and external accountability...reduced funding...targets to aim for' (Deem et al, 2007, p.37). The reference to managerialism impacting the management of social care and other parts of public sector management raises some curiosity. The Conservatives lost power in 1997. Those arguments were being made around a decade after Labour were elected to government.

However, Labour lost power in 2010. The primary research for this study has been undertaken post-2010 in a rapidly changing picture for local tourism management. Austerity measures introduced by the Conservative/Liberal Democratic coalition government have critically impacted central government funding to local authorities. For example, Liverpool City Council have had to make budget savings of £141m between 2011 and 2013 (Liverpool City Council, 2012a). Government deficit reduction strategies may extend until 2015 and beyond (Local Government Chronicle, 2012a). Financial pressures exerted by central government on local authorities inevitably continue in a downward direction, leading to financial pressures on local authority services (Local Government Chronicle, 2012b). Whilst financial pressures can impact all local authority services, tourism is a 'non-statutory' element of local authority provision (Lunn and Whitehead, 1996). In difficult financial times, non-statutory status of services can place additional pressure on those services. Sir Ben Gill, Chairman of Visit Herefordshire, has reported that funding from the local Council to support local tourism marketing in Herefordshire has reduced in the last 2 years from £500,000 to

less than £150,000 per annum (Visit Herefordshire, 2013). Whilst policy of the new Conservative/Liberal Democratic Coalition government has been supportive of tourism (Cable and Pickles, 2010; Cameron, 2010; Penrose, 2011; Visit England, 2010, 2012), additional to financial pressures has been the decision by the government to abolish the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) (LGC, 2010). This has led to a significant realignment in public sector engagement with tourism (Visit England, 2012). Coalition government policy has signalled a clear emphasis from support for the regions, through RDAs, to support for local areas, through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) (Cable and Pickles, 2010; Visit England, 2013). The government has also demonstrated its intention to see local economic development being 'private sector-led' (Cable & Pickles, 2010). Tourism policy documentation produced by the new government has placed greater emphasis on private sector involvement in the new local tourism partnerships being formed across England (Penrose, 2011; Visit England, 2012). Therefore, the research question for this study is to understand to what extent the managerial paradigm has influenced the role of local authorities in the management of local tourism. The study will evaluate whether Labour's 'modernisation' agenda has resulted in something different from the 'managerialism' associated with the Conservatives in the literature. Furthermore, the study will explore how Coalition government policy for 'enabling' local tourism will impact the governance (Hutchinson and Foley, 1994; Hall, 2000; Benz and Furst, 2002; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009) and funding (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000; Cochrane, 2009) of the emerging local tourism partnerships.

### **1.3 The research question and objectives for the study**

The research question is:

***To what extent has the managerial paradigm influenced the role of local authorities in the management of local tourism ?***

In order to answer this question there are two objectives for the study

- ***To understand the role of local authorities in facilitating local tourism policy***
- ***To understand how the managerial paradigm has impacted organisational management of tourism at the local level***

The research question, study objectives and associated questions are identified in Figure 1.

Research question	Objectives	Associated Questions
<p>To what extent has the managerial paradigm influenced the role of local authorities in the management of local tourism ?</p>	<p>To understand the role of local authorities in the delivery of local tourism policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent are local authorities financially supporting local tourism development ?</li> <li>• How do local authorities perceive current pressures on tourism budgets ?</li> <li>• Should other funding sources such as local tourist taxes be explored ?</li> <li>• Should the public or private sectors bear the larger part of financing local tourism promotion ?</li> <li>• Do local authorities see tourism as a matter for the private sector ?</li> </ul>
	<p>To understand how the managerial paradigm has impacted organisational management of tourism at the local level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How has more defined planning impacted local tourism management ?</li> <li>• What evaluative mechanisms are in use in local tourism management ?</li> <li>• What evidence is there of alternative delivery mechanisms being used for tourism marketing ?</li> <li>• What is the impact of recent changes on local destination marketing ?</li> <li>• What is the effect of current financial constraints on local tourism departments ?</li> <li>• What is the role of the local tourism manager ?</li> </ul>

**Figure 1:** The research question, study objectives and associated questions

#### **1.4 The English cities as a 'case'**

To evaluate the extent the managerial paradigm has influenced the role of local authorities in local tourism development, English cities were chosen as a 'case' for this research. The merits of using cases in research has been made for some time (Gill and Johnson, 1997; Creswell and Clark, 2007; Robson, 2011). In order to research the current picture of local tourism management, it was considered that a case study approach would ensure an in-depth understanding of this area. A case involving one single city was not seen as sufficient to generate data that could be representative of the wider English local authority body. It was considered a larger sample group was required. Two potential sample groups that have attracted some previous research are the wider body of local authorities (Stevenson, 2002), and the local districts (Palmer, 1994; Charlton and Essex, 1996).

However, the provincial English cities were chosen for the 'case'. There are 51 cities in England. London was not included in the study. Not all of the provincial cities were considered suitable for inclusion, which will be explained in chapter 5, but 47 cities were considered appropriate for inclusion. The rationale for choosing the cities as a 'case' is supported by several reasons. The first is the importance of cities both to the overall structural fabric of England, over three quarters of the English population live within the cities (DEFRA, 2007). Second is the increasing involvement of the cities with tourism. Tourism has become a significant economic factor in city development in England (Burns, 2008, 2009). Tourism is worth £149m to Exeter (Exeter City Council, 2007), £210m to Lancaster (Lancaster City Council, 2006), £364m to York (York Tourism Partnership, 2007), £407m to Brighton, (Brighton and Hove City Council, 2008), £438m to Cambridgeshire (Cambridge City Council, 2007), and £474m to Liverpool each year (Visit Liverpool, 2009). The promotion of tourism by some of the larger urban cities (such as Birmingham, London, Brighton, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds) has been noted in the literature (Law, 1993, 1996; Burns, 2008). The Countryside Commission (1997) has argued that the rural parts of England now attract a 'huge number of visitors' (1997, summary) injecting around £9 billion into the rural economy each year. Cities in the more rural settings

(such as Canterbury, Chester, Durham, Exeter, Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, Winchester) have also attracted attention in their ambitions to attract visitors (Burns, 2008). One such example is Gloucester. In 2001 Gloucester City Council produced its first tourism strategy (Gloucester City Council, 2001) due to its recognition of the increasing numbers of tourists visiting Gloucester. Therefore, whilst some of the bigger cities have included a tourism element into the restructuring of their cities, there have also been important changes in the non-urban economy as many of the smaller cities have become attracted to tourism. Cities which have participated in this study have constituted a wide mix of almost 40 very different urban or rural places which have included Birmingham, Brighton, Liverpool, Wolverhampton, Bristol, Bradford, Southampton, Nottingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Wakefield, Leicester, Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne, Brighton, Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Southampton, Salford, Westminster, Portsmouth, York, Cambridge, Chichester, Lichfield, Exeter, Gloucester, Lancaster, Preston, St Albans, Chichester, Winchester, Worcester, Bath, Durham, Carlisle and Lichfield.

## **1.5 Methodology**

In order to understand to what extent the managerial paradigm is impacting the role of local authorities in the management of local tourism, the objectives for the study have been addressed by using a methodological triangulation conducted in two 'stages'. These stages have included contact with those directly involved in local authority engagement with tourism; two groups of 'key actors' (Krutwayshe and Bramwell, 2010) at different levels within the local authority structure. Local authority chief executives were contacted, via an e-mail survey, in order to evaluate the local policy context and how local authorities perceive their support for tourism in a difficult financial and political environment. This data has been triangulated with data from a questionnaire and interviews with a sample of tourism managers holding positions in local authorities. Whilst the chief executive strand of the study wished to understand the local tourism policy context, the data from the tourism managers' stage wished to understand the impact of the managerial paradigm on those managing local tourism. The data has been generated from responses from 25 local authority chief executives,

33 self-completed questionnaires from tourism managers, and interviews with 10 tourism managers.

These are difficult times for local authorities, with local authorities currently experiencing an unfolding but significantly turbulent public sector environment (LGC, 2012a). Since 2010, the tourism sector has witnessed the biggest structural change in public support for tourism in England since the 1969 Development of Tourism Act (Visit England, 2012). The mix of regional tourist boards, Destination Management Organisations (DMO), tourism partnerships and other sub-national arrangements have been subjected to a 'realigning' process in response to funding challenges and policy of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government policy (Visit England, 2012). At the local level, new local tourism partnerships are emerging. The researcher's previous experience working in 'highly charged' political environments, has influenced the methodological approach in recognising that in a period of 'closures, changes and cuts' (TMI, 2011) this is a sensitive period for those working in local authorities. Therefore, the methodology was carefully chosen in order to secure co-operation (and thus data) from respondents working in public sector tourism management, whilst recognising such sensitivities. This will be further discussed in chapter 5.

## **1.6 Arrangement of the thesis**

The literature is presented in chapters two, three and four and which will set the theoretical and contextual framework for the study. The central argument made in early chapters is that a post-Fordist state in Britain has seen the rise of a new 'localism' (Stoker, 2004) of which exploring options for tourism development has become a key feature. Chapter 2 will argue that such 'localist' ambitions co-exist with comprehensive political forces. Chapter 2 will explore these issues in the context of policy for 'less government, and policy developments since 2010 and the new Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government. Chapter 3 explores in more depth the managerial paradigm in the British case, and discusses the literature relating to the conceptual framework which will enable analysis of the current picture concerning local tourism management. Chapter 4 will discuss the 'case', exploration of

the cities in developing local tourism. Chapter 5 will discuss the philosophical approach to the study and the methodological framework for data gathering and analysis. This chapter will argue the necessity for a methodological triangulation, which includes elicitation of views of key actors in this area such as local authority chief executives and tourism managers. Chapters 6 and 7 will present the findings of the data. Chapter 6 will present the results of data obtained from a survey of local authority chief executives. As an important element of the study, here the objective was to form an important part of the picture by eliciting the views of the most senior managers in local authorities. This was in order to provide important signposts concerning tourism policy of local authorities. Chapter 7 will present the data exploring how the managerial paradigm has impacted organisational management of tourism at the local level. In Chapter 7 data will be presented from a questionnaire sent to tourism managers and, later, from interviews with a representative group of local tourism managers. Chapter 8 will present a discussion of the main findings from the triangulation. Chapter 9 will present a conclusion and discuss the contribution this study has made to current knowledge concerning the picture of public sector management of tourism in England.

# **CHAPTER 2: LOCAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY**

## **2.0 Introduction**

Whilst tourism can be associated with 'fun' and 'entertainment' (Hall and Jenkins, 1995), political forces mitigate tourism policy at the local level and which can highlight the dynamic between central government and actors within the local policy environment (Church et al., 2000; Kerr, 2003; Thomas, 2009). The first part of this chapter will discuss the impact of the post-Fordist economy, as a catalyst for encouragement of localities harbouring ambitions for developing tourism. The second part of the chapter discusses how local ambitions for tourism are impacted by a number of significant forces including government ideology, national legislation, local policy, and perceptions of local citizens (Elliot, 1997; Torkildsen, 1999; Howie, 2003; Burns, 2008). The latter part of the chapter will review policy change impacting the public sector management of tourism in England since the 2010 General Election, and the effect of Coalition tourism policy on the new arrangements for local tourism partnerships.

## **2.1 Localism and English tourism development**

Localism has been a driver in the development of English tourism for over a century (Gill, 1988; Waters, 1994). For some local areas, history for encouragement of tourism goes back over a hundred years. In others, such as Brighton, interest goes back over two hundred years. The fledgling English tourism industry developed around inland spas and seaside towns, the latter giving up their dependence on fishing in order to develop as tourism resorts (Gill, 1988). Industrialisation provided a major spur for

localities interested in developing tourism. The expanding railway system linking urban areas to resorts such as Blackpool, New Brighton, Scarborough, Brighton, Bournemouth and Southend, and popularity of trips by entrepreneurs such as Thomas Cook did not go un-noticed. The masses presented a new and rapidly expanding market compared to the small number of wealthy and aristocratic visitors, and what the new tourists lacked in individual spending power they more than compensated in terms of numbers. Witt and Moutinho (1995) argue that the longest running activity of local authority association with tourism is in making provision for tourism infrastructure. Local authorities implemented plans for the construction of facilities to accommodate increasing numbers of tourists. As the Industrial Revolution developed, and the masses were attracted to tourism, the number of seaside resorts grew from 7 in 1750 to 145 in 1911 (Walton, 2000).

Investment in tourism witnessed local authorities in the resorts developing various features such as piers and promenades. In many cases these formed the very basis of the tourism product being sold (Gill, 1988). It is perhaps significant in a discussion concerning modern-day 'localism', to see local authorities over a century ago undertaking investment in non-remunerative projects in the expectation that such investment would benefit both visitors and the resident community (Walton, 2000). But such investment reflected local ambitions. Seaside resorts vied with wealthy industrial towns to finance provision that would attract the new wave of visitors. Industrial towns became renowned for building concert halls, art galleries, museums and libraries which became Victorian status symbols (Waters, 1994; Walton, 2000). In the resorts, local authorities invested in infrastructure such as sea fronts, piers and in some cases towers. Walton (2000) describes entertainment provided on Morecambe's Central Pier in 1906 which included 'dancing all day with two bands daily, a morning promenade concert...and variety entertainments daily (p.105). The burgeoning tourism market saw fierce competition as local authorities endeavoured to make their attractions 'on a grander scale than in other kinds of town' (p.17). In some cases, the resorts invested heavily in what were perceived as 'status symbols'. Towers built in Blackpool and New Brighton, were both modelled on the Eiffel Tower. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the provision of tourism-related infrastructure was an essential public sector contribution to the early success of many English destinations (Davidson and Maitland, 1997).

Coalter (1990, p.3) argues the longevity of such public sector investment made during this period 'in respect of the public sector, many of the contemporary facilities which account for a large proportion of local government current expenditure, are products of decisions taken in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – for example, many urban parks, museums, swimming baths and libraries date from the 1870s'.

## **2.2 The new localism and the post-Tourist**

More recently, structural change in the British economy has seen the picture of tourism in England further dramatically transformed. Urry (1995) has defined post-Fordism as demonstrating a 'new spatial fix' in British society where 'flexible accumulation' presents 'significantly new ways in which time and space are represented' (p.22). Post-Fordist British society offers consumers opportunities to access news via mobile phones, watch TV 'on-demand', arrange holidays or flights via the internet, listen to music via telephones, and record television programmes on their TV or computer hard drives. Post-Fordist change has enabled British consumers to more easily pursue 'their own individual pathways and life courses' (Haywood *et al*, 1995, p.255). Changes in society which have demonstrated a movement away from 'mass production', have also been mirrored in the tourism environment. A shift in tourism consumption has seen consumers move away from 'Fordist' mass tourism towards a post-Fordist consumption of tourism and the 'post-tourist' (Selby, 2003). This has led to a gradual decline in demand for long holidays in Britain, but also an increase in demand through what Urry (1995) notes are consumers seeking 'alternative sights and attractions' (p.151).

Post-Fordist Britain has seen a reduction in manufacturing and 'industrial' processes, leading to a resultant decline in agricultural, industrial and inner-city areas. Such places have needed to seek new revitalisation opportunities. These impacts have encouraged local authorities to strategically move to being organisations accepting greater responsibility for tackling local economic problems, rather than as organisations solely responsible in delivering statutory functions of government (Thomas, 2009). A result has seen many places particularly encouraging service sector activities in order to provide new economic horizons, with increasing numbers

of English localities placing tourism and leisure central to their economic development strategies (Hartley and Hopper, 1992). A survey by Richards and Wilkes' (1990) of non-metropolitan councils in England and Wales found that the number of local authority departments which had 'tourism' in the title increased from 1984 to 1990, suggesting that increasing numbers of local authorities were becoming attracted to tourism development. However, Hall and Page (2002) argue that tourism can be difficult for policymakers to grasp conceptually. Richards and Wilkes (1990) found the tourism department 'residing' in a varied mix of 'parent' local authority departments including chief executive's, leisure services, planning, and economic development. Furthermore, Palmer's (1994) study of 333 district councils in England and Wales in 1991, found that tourism most frequently was situated within the 'chief executives' or 'leisure/entertainments' departments. A survey by Burns and Nash (1999 unpublished) indicated tourism residing within the 'leisure services' departments in Liverpool and Leeds City Councils, 'development and planning' in Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and 'economic development' in Chester, Newcastle and Birmingham City Councils. Palmer (1994) has argued that where a local authority places tourism within its structure may reflect the authority's prime view of tourism. For example, if tourism is placed within an 'economic development' or 'regeneration' type of department, this can suggest that the authority perceives tourism primarily as an economic activity. If an authority places tourism with a 'leisure' department, the authority may perceive tourism primarily as a 'leisure activity'. Long (2000) argues that a council-supported tourism partnership in Islington in London reported to a 'council policy' committee rather than a 'service delivery' committee. This was being seen as important as this gave the organisation a higher profile in the Council and arguably made it less vulnerable to budget cuts. This research wishes to ascertain where local authorities promoting tourism from within their authorities place tourism within their structures.

Therefore, whilst it's not a recent innovation that local authorities have promoted the virtues of their places to tourists, what is distinctive in recent developments is significant variation in places trying to sell themselves to tourists on a widening range of dimensions (Hudson and Townsend, 1992). As Martin Winter the Mayor of Doncaster (2004) has argued 'It seems that these days every local authority in the country is marketing itself as different, as the place to be'. This has seen the English

landscape significantly transformed by new developments in, for example, theme parks, concert venues, cultural attractions, industrial museums, retail developments, outlet villages, shopping malls, aimed at attracting the 'increasingly mobile' post-Fordist visitor. Some local authorities have encouraged tourism by financially supporting arts, sporting and cultural events. Others have become operators of facilities such as leisure centres, swimming pools, sports facilities, concert halls and conference centres (Gill, 1988). One part of local development strategy in a number of areas has been support for local tourism attraction development; for example the Museum of Photography, Film and Television (Bradford), Magma (in Doncaster), the Museum of Science and Industry (Manchester), the Royal Armouries (Leeds), the National Football Museum (formerly Preston), and Sea Life Centre (Birmingham). Local places have also sought to encourage visitors around particular themes such as industrial history (Ironbridge), 'art and culture' (London and Newcastle), 'literary' tourism (Stratford-on-Avon), 'music history' (Liverpool and Manchester), 'food and drink' (Tenderton), 'Robin Hood (Nottingham), Roman history (Chester) and 'football' (Derby) (Enjoy England, 2010). In some of the larger post-industrial areas, redundant industrial buildings have been converted into leisure use to house museums or tourist attractions, such as the Maritime Museum in Liverpool. In some of the smaller urban-industrial towns, who may have also seen contraction of local industry, tourism has also come onto the agenda. Disused coal mines have been made safe and turned into heritage sites, redundant industrial buildings have been converted into museums or tourist attractions, demonstrating old industrial skills and the working and living conditions of the past (Buckley and Witt, 1985; Ball and Stobart, 1998; Voase, 1995).

Therefore, post-Fordist change has had two impacts on English tourism. The 'post-Fordist' tourism consumer in Britain has moved away from the 'traditional' one or two week 'sun, sea and sand holiday', and is increasingly shifting towards taking more shorter holidays of 1-3 nights duration, otherwise known as 'short breaks'. Visit England (2009) reported that the short break market in Britain grew to 45 million trips in 2009, an increase from 37 million in 1997. Therefore, one effect has been a reduction in visitors to some of the traditional tourist areas. Whilst some continue to attract large numbers of visitors - Blackpool attracts over 17 million tourists per year, Bath 5 million and Stratford-upon-Avon 4 million for example – there has been an

overall gradual decline in the number of visitors to the English seaside resorts (Voase, 1995). The second has been an increase in variety and type of tourist offering in England (Burns, 2009). One such area of tourism growth has been in the cities, and in chapter 4 a more comprehensive discussion will be made concerning the development of tourism in the English cities.

### **2.3 Local tourism development within the statutory framework**

Whilst local authorities have been keen to engage with local tourism development, a critical feature of such engagement is the legal framework which surrounds public sector organisations (Lunn and Whitehead, 1996). The basis for the English constitution is founded within statute law, common law and conventions passed by Parliament (Massey, 2005). Government is exercised by delegation of functions by Parliament and delivered by organisations on behalf of the state. Local authorities derive their powers from acts passed by Parliament to whom ultimately they are responsible. Both 'statutory' and non-statutory duties' are defined by Parliament (Torkildsen , 1999). Promoting tourism at the local level is not a statutory duty of local authorities, and therefore local authorities are not compelled to provide tourism services. London is the only 'local' area in England where promotion of tourism exists as a statutory duty. The Greater London Authority, via a statutory duty arising from the Greater London Authority Act 1999, has statutory duty to promote London as a tourism destination. The duty requires London to be promoted as a 'gateway' to the rest of the United Kingdom and to encourage the provision and improvement of visitor amenities and facilities in Greater London (OPSI, 2009). Whilst promotion of tourism at the local level does not have statutory status, local authorities have received encouragement from governments of different political persuasions to promote tourism. But whilst central government encourages tourism, it is left to individual local authorities to decide if tourism has a place within local development policy.

Whilst increasing numbers of places are engaging with tourism, support for tourism may require substantial funds (Burns, 2008). In some places local authorities may have responsibility for other attractions or facilities such as woodlands, theatres, concert halls, art galleries, museums, historic houses (Gill, 1988; Waters, 1994). In

many cases these facilities may form the very basis of the tourism product being 'sold' to prospective visitors. The case of Victorian piers, built as part of strategies to attract visitors to the resorts, serves to highlight the dilemma that local authorities in the resorts have faced. Piers can be subject to neglect when proprietors find their upkeep an expensive liability. As Walton (2000) notes, piers are vulnerable to storm, fire and maritime collision. Figure 2 illustrates a vivid example of the changing fortunes of British seaside piers. Hastings Pier opened in 1872 and closed in 2006 after many years of reduced use and because of fears it had become unsafe. It was then decimated by fire in 2010.



**Figure 2:** Hastings Pier. Opened in 1872 closed in 2006 because of fears it had become unsafe and then decimated by fire in 2010. Source: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/oct/29>

Where local authorities were keen to invest in such infrastructure often over a century ago, the post-Fordist economy has seen a shift in tourists away from the resorts leaving many local authorities in the resorts in positions not to be able to support such facilities. Such amenities for tourists, such as beaches, piers, woodlands for example are often the types of facilities for which the public expects to receive either free, or low-cost access (Grant *et al*, 1998). Whilst in some cases there may be an opportunity for a small charge for entrance to facilities through entrance fees, in many cases these types of tourism amenities are 'loss making' (Torkildsen, 1999). Grant *et al* (1998) note that facilitating the tourist experience through, for example, providing tourist provision,

maintaining and cleaning the local area, providing public conveniences, providing disabled access provision, providing access to the countryside, nevertheless bears costs. Cost for such provision often has to be picked up through local authority revenue streams such as local taxes and business rates (Benington and White, 1988; Waters, 1994; Torkildsen, 2000).

Financially-supporting such provision places financial pressures on local authorities in those destinations. Local authorities are currently impacted by additional financial pressures, linked to the recession in the UK and major reductions in central government grant (LGC, 2012a). The non-statutory status of tourism at the local level places tourism in a competitive environment for funding with other departments within authorities (Lunn and Whitehead, 1996; Stevenson, 2002; Burns, 2009). Lunn and Whitehead (1996) have portrayed tourism as competing with 'big statutory battalions of education, social services and highways (A-129). Lunn and Whitehead (1996) have argued that if tourism was to have statutory basis at local level, local authorities adopting the duty would demonstrate a clear commitment from a local authority that it takes 'tourism seriously' and provide resources 'to do the job properly' (A-131). Nevertheless, tourism at the local level does not have statutory status. This places tourism at particular risk in times of resource constraints, as Flynn (2007) has argued 'during times of spending cuts those services that are not by described...by statute will be cut first' (p.59). Such a dilemma was highlighted by a city local authority tourism department in its tourism strategy. It argued that due to its non-statutory status, its funding was 'therefore constantly under threat from budget cuts' (Chester City Council, 2000, p.16). Elsewhere, following a resolution by Caradon District Council (2005) to undertake 'a scrutiny of tourism marketing in order to seek economies' (p.8), a cut of £35,900 to the tourism budget and deletion of the tourism marketing assistant post in 2006/7 was submitted as part of the local authority budget setting process for 2006/7. Therefore, without a statutory basis for engagement, in times of resource constraints tourism can be politically vulnerable. Therefore in a clearly difficult period for local authorities financially, this study wishes to understand the views of local authorities concerning their financial support for the non-statutory function 'tourism' in the light of current resource constraints and competitive pressures.

## 2.4 The public-private sector balance and the role of the state

The appeal of tourism destinations is that each place may provide unique tourist experiences for visitors, the variation of each experience forming each destination's individual character. Godfrey and Clarke (2000) categorise a destination's resources as *principle* and *supporting* resources (Godfrey and Clarke, 2000). Principle resources often represent the key motivating factor in people's decision to travel to that area, and can include natural attractions such as beaches, coral reefs, glaciers, and ski slopes. Supporting resources are 'those which supplement a destinations' principle resources...but do not represent a prime motive for travel (Godfrey and Clarke, 2000, p.65), and commonly include infrastructure and 'services' which form the *tangible* element of the visitor experience. It is the mix of attractions and support facilities that create the *tangible* and *intangible* dimensions of the visitor experience (Palmer, 1994).

Tourist places present complex challenges for local management and development (Penrose, 2011). The tourism industry in England consists of around 200,000 organisations of which around 80% are small firms (Tourism Alliance, 2010). Whilst funding and implementing development projects, such as new hotel development, the private sector clearly takes a financial risk. Nevertheless, public sector involvement is also crucial for the development of tourism. Tourism development may require local authorities being called upon to be involved with a number of tourism-related interests and concerns. As the statutory authority for local planning, strategy and policy of the local authority may indicate the relative importance of tourism within the local area (Witt and Moutinho, 1995). Local plans represent the main statutory mechanisms through which local authorities can take steps to preserve resources, often those, such as the local environment, which can provide the main attraction for visitors in many cases (Witt and Moutinho, 1995). Local authorities also hold statutory responsibility for the management of the local public realm, and responsibility for the management of visitor flows, provision of car and coach parking, and local traffic management including traffic signing (Davidson and Maitland, 1997; Grant et al, 1998). Figure 3 identifies areas where local authorities may be involved with tourism.



**Figure 3:** Areas of involvement of government with tourism at the local level. After South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council, 1997; Grant et al, 1998; Darlington Borough Council, 2000

Elliott (1997) has noted that the tourism industry is a highly dynamic industry and therefore needs freedom to be able to respond quickly to market changes. This philosophy was heavily promoted by the 1979-1997 Conservative government, who argued that government responsibility for tourism was only to provide a positive environment for the tourism industry to develop in response to the demands of the market. However, local tourism destinations are mixed economies with public sector involvement important for the development of tourism (Thomas, 2009). Local authorities have a long history of commitment to developing tourism particularly in the resorts. Figure 4 illustrates the bandstand and promenade at Eastbourne, important supporting resources of tourism provision in Eastbourne.



**Figure 4:** Supporting resources: the Bandstand and promenade at Eastbourne. Image: <http://www.coastalconnect.co.uk/Eastbourne.html>

Governments acknowledge that they need the economic returns from the tourism industry in terms of number of visitors, resultant income and investment. As tourism grows it can have positive, negative, direct, and indirect impacts, not only on the consumers and producers of tourism services, but also on the people who live in the areas where tourism is consumed (Davidson and Maitland, 1997; Brown, 1998). Local authorities have a duty to protect the 'public interest' and their areas from possible negative effects of tourism, and to ensure that benefits of local development are spread across the community (Elliot, 1997; Howie, 2003). Partnerships were heavily promoted by the Labour government. In tourism, the tourism industry is large and multi-faceted and, even in the smaller places, the local industry can include many stakeholders including large numbers of hotels, attractions, restaurants etc (VisitEngland, 2012). Therefore, partnerships are commonly encouraged to ensure a wide range of stakeholders play an active role in initiatives (Caffyn, 2000; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). But whilst encouragement of a partnership approach involving interested players is seen as a positive development, Elliott (1997) suggests that in the case of large collaborations, careful management is also crucial to success (Howie, 2003). Managing a local tourism destination requires striking balance the relative priorities of what may be many differing stakeholders (Howie, 2003). The tourism industry is powerful, and there may be strong elements of self-interest involved in the local scene (Elliot, 1997; Brown, 1998). Since 2010, a significant policy change as a

result of a change of government has seen much more emphasis placed on private sector participation in local tourism development (Penrose, 2011; VisitEngland, 2012), consistent with the 'enabling' philosophy promoted during the 1979-1997 Conservative government. But as Hutchinson and Foley (1994) argue governance of such partnerships can be 'fluid' insomuch that in a collaborative partnership in one of the English cities, reduction in public sector involvement saw governance change from being where the public interest prevailed to one heavily influenced by private sector motivations. Therefore, in local tourism destinations, pressure from a managerial paradigm for less involvement of the public sector, raises questions concerning the extent to which collaborative partnerships can ensure a balance of interests amongst partners.

## **2.5 Local politics**

During the Labour government, Labour argued that a focus of its modernisation agenda would be more 'empowerment' of communities at the local level. Local authorities were required to engage in more comprehensive consultation with local communities, in order to give local residents a stronger voice in the provision of local services (DETR, 1998a). During the process of the Lyons Reports into Local Government (Lyons, 2005, 2007), 'empowerment' was a key theme which ran through both Reports. Lyons argued that there was 'an acceptance across the political spectrum of the need once again to empower communities' (2007, p.i), and that a change of balance of power at the local level was needed to redress the balance 'between citizen, community and government in terms of both power and voice' (2007, p.i). Lyons suggested local communities 'want the ability to influence the shape and delivery of services and take decisions locally' (2007, p.i).

Local authorities may use various factors such as how tourism supports employment and how pleasant, clean and well maintained areas can benefit both the visitor and the local resident to justify financial support for tourism (Gill, 1988). However, in times of financial pressures on local authorities there can be a question as to whether such arguments are strong enough to the local electorate. Howie (2003, p.193) argues that 'public opinion is a powerful force', and may present a difficult scenario for those

promoting tourism, if local voters perceive money spent on tourism is taking funds from 'essential' services such as education or housing (Davidson, 1998). Consultation exercises are undertaken under various banners such as 'have your say', 'you choose' (East Sussex County Council, 2010; Leicestershire County Council, 2010) or 'tough choices' (Devon County Council, 2010). However this raises the question that for services which residents don't rate as important compared to others, whether this spells danger for those services particularly if they are, like tourism, non-statutory. This dilemma was seen in a 'budget consultation' exercise in a city, where some residents felt that promoting the city would 'generate more income and make the city more vibrant', yet in another part of the survey residents were against promoting the city to tourists, and 'would prefer the money to be spent on services that have a direct impact on residents' (Chester City Council, 2005). A survey of local residents conducted for Mendip District Council (2008) found that 'promoting and supporting tourism' came joint 20<sup>th</sup> out of 21 local council services that residents rated as 'most important', with only 11% of residents considering promoting tourism as a most important service. Elsewhere, in a consultation exercise undertaken with local residents for Bristol City Council (Bristol City Council, 2009), a 'main theme' reported in the final report was 'disquiet about £400,000 for marketing the city' (executive summary), with one respondent replying 'I can't tell you how angry I am that you want to encourage tourism and business in the city. That £400,000 could be spent on something useful not advertising'. Therefore, tourism is impacted by perceptions (McGee and Meng, 2006). In times of financial pressures, local tax payers may be unsympathetic to money being spent on what they see are services for tourists. 'Cost versus public good' argument may have to be made convincingly if there prevails a perception that local taxes (such as council tax) may be higher because money is being spent on 'visitors' rather than local services (Elliot, 1997; Gill, 1988). Therefore, perceptions of local tourism both by the local electorate and local decision-makers are significant, and makes tourism vulnerable to changes in perceptions particularly of local political figures or the local community (Elliot, 1997). In the current difficult financial circumstances in which local authorities find themselves, this study wishes to gauge local authority perceptions of tourism within the wider picture of local authority provision.

One suggestion for raising local funds which may have, in some way, taken some financial pressure off local authorities supporting tourism, was the possible scenario of an introduction of local tourist taxes. Accommodation taxes, or 'bed taxes', have become popular amongst governments although they are not universal. Arguments supporting these 'tourist taxes' are usually founded on two main pillars; that they can both help to reduce the financial requirement on local authorities for tourism marketing (by monies raised through tourism taxes contributing to tourism marketing costs), plus they satisfy most requirements for 'good' taxes, that is they are easy to administer, have low costs of collection and, particularly, fall to a large extent on non-residents of a locality (Forsyth and Dwyer, 2002; Gooroochurn and Sinclair, 2003). In England, to date, governments have resisted the opportunity to introduce accommodation taxes. However, the Lyons Inquiry floated the scenario of the possible introduction of local 'tourist taxes' during its consultation process. During submissions to the Inquiry, a number of organisations lobbied strongly against the proposal, the main argument being that further taxes on the tourism industry would make Britain more uncompetitive and lead to a reduction of visitors to Britain (Tourism Alliance, 2006). However, in the final report, Lyons noted that some local authorities had supported proposals for some form of 'tax on tourist pressures' (2007, p.31). However, it was clear that Lyons had found some interest amongst local authorities, and in an atmosphere of multiple pressures and demands on local authority funding, there is a question as to what extent a tourist tax may be an attractive proposition for English local authorities. This study will seek to answer this question.

## **2.6 Post-2010 and the Coalition government**

The 2010 General Election and the accession of the Conservative/Liberal Democratic government has led to the biggest structural change in public support for tourism in England since the 1969 Development of Tourism Act (Visit England, 2012). Policy for tourism is significantly impacted by the overall perception of tourism by the party in power. During the period of the 1979-1997 Conservative government, the notion that tourism is labour-intensive and can provide local economic multiplier effects, saw the Conservatives encouraging local authorities to engage with this 'new' industry. However, whilst the Conservatives provided various modes of financial assistance to

tourism, tourism retained its status as a non-statutory function of local authority provision. As Jeffries (1999, p.102) has argued, tourism was not viewed by the Conservatives as something that it should be involved with and was more 'a matter for the private sector'. The managerial paradigm prevailing during the Conservative period drove a curtailment of government activity towards tourism and a reduction in financial support, particularly for the national tourism organisations (NTOs). Elliot (1997) suggests the 'unstated' objective of reviews of the English NTOs was essentially to cut expenditure, Page (2003, p.303) further arguing that the Conservatives wished to see tourism as 'a self-financing activity'. The Labour government (1997-2010) was also keen to be seen to promote tourism. Tony Blair argued that 'people want to see Britain, to know Britain and to understand Britain' (DCMS, 1999, p.1). The impact of post-Fordist structural change in Britain was recognised by Labour, with Labour promising support for tourism development in local areas which had been affected by de-industrialisation. This is further discussed in chapter 4. Labour argued that tourism presented those local areas with new economic opportunities, tourism having 'tremendous potential to benefit local residents, especially in areas where traditional industries or agriculture are in decline' (1999, p.53).

When the Conservatives came to power (1979) they particularly targeted the Labour stronghold of London, and abolished the Labour-controlled Greater London Council (Stewart, 2000). Various other Acts of Parliament followed creating restructures in local administrative boundaries forming new local authorities and abolishing others. In Stevenson's (2002) research, Stevenson identified that there were 389 local authorities in England. Recently, this had been reduced to 326 (Defra, 2009). The case of the RDAs also highlights the power of central government over public sector organisations. The RDAs were a conceptual child of Labour's agenda for devolution and regionalisation (Mawson, 2007; Houlihan, and Green, 2009). The RDAs were tasked with being the 'strategic drivers of regional economic development' (DTI, 2003a), with a tourism element becoming commonplace in RDA development strategies. The creation of RDAs signaled the end of most of England's Regional Tourist Boards (RTBs), who in most cases were replaced with RDA-financially supported sub-regional Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) (BRA, 2005; Palmer, 2009). In some cases the DMOs were newly created, and in others they were

re-jigged forms of pre-existing organisations. Before the 2010 General Election, the Conservatives pledged to abolish the RDAs if they took power. Following the election of the Conservative/Liberal Democrat government in 2010 it was announced that the RDAs would close (LGC, 2010). Coalition strategy for economic development has signalled a clear change in emphasis from support for the regions to support for local areas, with clear emphasis being placed on 'local' economic growth. 'Local Enterprise Partnerships' (LEPs) would be created and based in the cities and sub-regions (Department For Business Innovation and Skills, 2010a). Membership of LEPs would consist of local councils and local businesses, but unlike RDAs LEPs would not receive core central government funding. Government intention would be that LEPs would self-fund administrative costs and lever-in private sector investment. However, LEPs are able to bid for Regional Growth Fund monies intended to help areas and communities particularly affected by public spending cuts. However, government policy has also demonstrated its intention to place more emphasis on economic development being 'private sector-led' and to 'rebalance' (Cable & Pickles, 2010) the economy towards the private sector.

The Coalition government have emphasised the importance of tourism to Britain (Cable and Pickles, 2010; Cameron, 2010). In its 'Programme for Government' document (HM Government, 2010, p.10) the government committed itself to taking 'steps to improve the competitiveness of the UK tourism industry, recognising the important part it plays in our national economy'. In an early speech after becoming Prime Minister, David Cameron (Cameron, 2010, p.7) argued that tourism was 'underplayed' and 'presents a huge economic opportunity'. The government's national tourism policy was outlined in the 'Government Tourism Policy' document (Penrose, 2011). John Penrose, the Tourism Minister, again recognised tourism as being labour-intensive compared to other sectors of the economy, and having the ability to create further new employment opportunity as it expands. Penrose promised a new £100m marketing campaign co-funded by the government and the private sector, aiming to attract 4 million extra visitors to Britain, and which would 'create 50,000 new jobs' (p.20). However, John Penrose, also argued that the tourism industry had a 'high level of market failure' (2011, p.8), which had resulted in the public sector often having to 'step in' to support initiatives. Penrose argued that

such failures left the industry particularly dependent on public funds, and large-scale government funding for tourism was seen in the current fiscal climate as 'unaffordable and unacceptable'(p.19). Penrose argued that the 'taxpayer should not be expected to pay for marketing for a large and successful sector of the economy' (p.19). Therefore, coalition policy for 'less government' in the tourism arena was made clear. Government has set it stall for local tourism promotion for the new tourism bodies being 'highly focused, industry-led partnerships between tourism firms and government' (p.8). The government also made it clear that in new DMO arrangements, the private sector would be expected to contribute a much greater proportion of DMO costs, with DMOs being 'less reliant on public funds' (Penrose 2011, p.24).

The election of the Conservative/Liberal Democratic government has led to the biggest structural change in public support for tourism in England since the 1969 Development of Tourism Act (Visit England, 2012). Visit England has been charged with setting and overseeing the Strategic Framework for Tourism development in England for the period 2011-2015 (Visit England, 2010a). The existing mix of public sector tourism organisations have been subject to a realigning process in response to funding challenges posed by austerity measures and the post-RDAs landscape (Visit England, 2012). A criticism of DMOs during the Labour period had been their over-emphasis on tourism marketing to the detriment of the wider 'tourism management' responsibility (Penrose, 2011). Coalition tourism policy has advocated that DMOs should be responsible for tourism management as well as marketing (Penrose, 2011). In guidance, Visit England (2010b, p.2) have also recognised that destination management 'is not solely about marketing'.

Partnership has been strongly promoted by Visit England, particularly in new destination management action planning (Visit England, (2010b). Partnership working between the LEPs and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) has also been heavily stressed (Penrose, 2011). An evolving body of theory of collaboration in tourism argues that partnership working and co-operation between partners may bring a number of benefits including 'political independence' (Bramwell and Lane, 2000), 'dynamism', or a sense of urgency, in progressing projects (Law, 2002), enhanced

opportunity for problem-solving brought about through a number of organisations resolving problems together (Vernon et al, 2005), and efficiencies through 'pooling' of partner resources (Cochrane, 2009). However, policy seeking a reduction in public sector involvement in the emerging tourism bodies raises questions concerning the governance and financing of tourism partnerships. Partnerships can experience difficulties, including the issue of balance of power amongst stakeholders (Hall, 2000; Benz and Furst, 2002). Benz and Furst (2002) have argued that private sector stakeholders in collaborative partnerships tend to veer towards commercial preferences, whereas public sector stakeholders are predisposed towards 'cooperative orientations' and the 'public interest' (Elliot, 1997). As Lawless and Ramsden (1990) have argued, a change in balance of power between public and private sector collaborators in partnerships can impact the motivations of the partnership. Hutchinson and Foley (1994) cite an example of a partnership in an English city, which moved from governance emphasising a 'public sector-driven ethos' to one where key leadership strategies were being dominated by the motivations of the private sector. Thomas and Morpeth (2009) argue that 'systemic imbalances' of power between stakeholders can impact the leadership and funding of such arrangements. It is for this reason that Cochrane (2009) has argued that the role of the public sector in tourism partnerships is critical in providing the leadership role. As policy of the Coalition government is promoting local authorities adopting a supportive rather than a dominant leadership role in the new emerging partnerships, it is unknown how the effect such policy may have on the balance between the public interest and the market interest in local tourism promotion (Hutchinson and Foley, 1994; Elliot, 1997; Jeffries, 2001).

## **2.7 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has argued that local authorities financially supporting tourism reside within complex and volatile political environments. The post 2010 transition period from Labour to Conservative/Liberal Democratic government, has seen tourism impacted by a rapid move from a period of what Visit England (2012) have described as 'high public investment' to 'a more challenging financial environment'. A significant

policy change from the Labour administration has placed a clear emphasis on more greater private sector participation in local tourism development (Penrose, 2011; Visit England, 2012). This is consistent with the 'enabling' philosophy promoted during the 1979-1997 Conservative government of 'less' government and more private sector involvement (Thomas, 2009). However, it is not apparent at this point how the tourism sector may be able to deliver the government's aspirations, and in the future fund its own collective marketing (Penrose, 2011). Policy discourse so far has stressed government ambition for tourism to be 'industry-led' with a 're-balancing' the economy towards the private sector' (Cable and Pickles, 2010). However, this may result in the motivation of local partnerships moving from having 'pluralistic' objectives towards more 'exclusive' needs of the local industry (Hutchinson and Foley, 1994). An issue for the emerging local bodies is securing an appropriate balance in power amongst stakeholders (Hutchinson and Foley, 1994; Cochrane, 2009; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). Therefore this raises questions concerning the new local arrangements for tourism which this study will explore.

# **CHAPTER 3: THE MANAGERIAL PARADIGM AND ENGLISH PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT**

## **3.0 Introduction**

Chapter 1 argued that in order to improve efficiency of the public services, the managerial state in Britain has been defined as being characterised by a 'set of practices' (Dawson and Dargie, 2002, p.34) or 'a set of rules of action (Clarke and Newman, 1997, p.86) which have been 'imported' from the business world (Hood, 1991; Pollitt, 1993, Pollitt, 2003). In the British case, it is possible to distil a number of significant driving forces characterising the managerial paradigm. This chapter will discuss these themes, before discussing Labour's 'modernisation' agenda.

## **3.1 Unpacking managerialism: doctrines of change in the British case**

A review of the literature has identified a number of 'doctrines of change' which have impacted the British public sector. These are presented in Figure 5.

<b>Hood (1991)</b>	<b>Pollitt (1993)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline in resource allocation</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial management</li> <li>• Decentralization of public services</li> <li>• Competition in the promotion of public services</li> <li>• Emphasis on private sector styles of management</li> <li>• Explicit standards and measurement of performance</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on output controls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cutting costs, capping budgets and greater transparency in resource allocation</li> <li>• Disaggregation of bureaucratic organizations into separate agencies</li> <li>• The decentralisation of management authority A clear separation of purchaser and provider roles</li> <li>• Introduction of market and quasi-market mechanisms</li> <li>• Introduction of performance targets and output objectives</li> <li>• Increased flexibility in pay and conditions; performance-related pay linked to appraisal</li> </ul>
<b>Stewart and Stoker (1995)</b>	<b>Deakin and Walsh (1996)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial constraint, cost-centre management and value for money</li> <li>• Fragmentation of local government</li> <li>• Enabling role of local authorities with reduced involvement in direct service provision</li> <li>• Increased role for competition</li> <li>• Consumerism</li> <li>• Emphasis on business-type management such as strategic management, performance management</li> <li>• Greater accountability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial constraint and budgeting</li> <li>• Purchaser and provider roles</li> <li>• Emphasis on contracts</li> <li>• A stronger emphasis on performance and quality</li> <li>• Specification and formalisation of services</li> <li>• More accountability</li> </ul>

**Figure 5:** 'Doctrines' of change associated with public sector reform

A review of the literature has also identified that the doctrines for change have manifested in a managerial paradigm characterised by five significant driving forces:

- 'Outsourcing' local authority service provision
- Cost-efficiency
- More defined business planning
- Focus on evaluation and accountability
- Focus on performance management

Theme	Evidenced as	Author(s)
Outsourcing local authority service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Privatisation' of existing services</li> <li>• Use of mechanisms such as partnerships or trusts for delivery of services</li> </ul>	Rhodes, 1994; Ackroyd 1995; Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1996; Heeley, 2001; Flynn, 2007
Cost-efficiency and financial stringency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost-cutting</li> <li>• Capping local authority budgets</li> </ul>	Jones, 1995; Lyons, 2005; Flynn, 2007;
More defined business planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of strategic management techniques</li> <li>• Increased use of targets and outputs</li> </ul>	Chape and Davies, 1993 Johnson and Scholes, 2001; Joyce, 2008
Focus on evaluation and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced reporting</li> <li>• Increased audit and inspection of services</li> </ul>	Henkel, 1991, Hepworth, 1995, Power, 1997, Deem et al, 2007
Increasing concern with performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased use of performance information</li> <li>• Benchmarking against other organisations</li> </ul>	Boyne, 1997; Tichelar, 1998; Can Thiel and Leeuw 2002; Deem, et al 2007

**Figure 6:** Themes of the managerial paradigm in the British case

Therefore this study will examine the impact of these driving forces on the management of local tourism. The remainder of this chapter will explore the driving forces in more depth.

### **3.2 Outsourcing local authority service provision**

Management in a 'globalised' business sector has witnessed the development of companies pursuing alternative delivery mechanisms for elements of production, commonly referred to as 'outsourcing' (LGA, 2001; Harland and Knight, 2005; Schermerhorn, 2005). Within the wider pressure to reduce the size and role of the state, 'contracting out' (Rhodes, 1994, p.140) has become a prominent feature of the British public sector. The drive for a smaller state sought 'a more decentralised, less bureaucratic, 'post-Fordist' state in which the government's role was more 'one of steering, not rowing' (Kirkpatrick and Lucio, 1996, p.3). Osborne and Gaebler (1992) identified 36 different options for alternative delivery mechanisms for provision of state services. Flynn (2007) refers to the use of alternative delivery mechanisms as 'outsourcing', and argues that outsourcing services from the public sector to the private sector has become a common feature of provision in areas including prisons,

the National Health Service, central government, and local government (Flynn, 2007). In the British case this has included options such as CCT, creation of 'Trusts', and public-private sector collaborative partnerships (Robinson, 1999).

In the case of public-private sector collaborative partnerships, Terpstra and Simonin (1993) have described a 'taxonomy of alliance types', where at one end collaboration may be informal gatherings and with little formal objectives, and at the other those with formal status in law and which may have very clearly defined goals and responsibilities between members. The literature suggests a number of key benefits for the creation of such types of collaborations including 'risk reduction' (Jeffries, 2001) 'economies of scale' (Bramwell and Rawding, 1994), and 'political independence' (Palmer, 1994). Tourism is an increasingly competitive tourism marketplace, and the need to create higher levels of market awareness may be needed in order to attract more visitors in such an environment. Therefore a collaborative arrangement may create a larger collective pool of funding towards a project, or campaign's cost, by drawing in resources from the various partners, both in the public and private sectors (Bramwell and Rawding, 1994). Politically, it is argued that the 'political independence' of collaborations created outside of local authority control may give encouragement to the private sector to become more involved and invest financially (Palmer, 1994). This may inject a sense of urgency and dynamism, mobilising partners to commit resources if it is perceived that resources and efforts are funding initiatives and not 'bureaucracy' (Law, 1993). For local authorities under severe financial pressure, the opportunity for making tourism resources go further is an attractive proposition. However, the literature has cautioned against overly optimistic expectations of private sector engagement in such arrangements. It has been noted that in some cases local tourism partnerships may only receive limited support of the local tourism business community in memberships (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Long (2000) has noted difficulty to engage the private sector in a collaborative partnership in London, particularly the large-scale national private sector tourism organisations. Therefore expectations of high participation from private sector businesses in collaborations may not always be realised. Case studies by Caffyn (2000) and Long (2000) for example have noted arrangements in several individual tourism collaborations, however we do not know the extent to which

pressure for alternative delivery mechanisms has affected local tourism. This study will investigate the incidence of alternative delivery mechanisms being used within local tourism, and the role of local authorities within such collaborations.

### **3.3 Cost efficiency and financial stringency**

Etzioni in 1984 (p. 7) argued that *'In the years to come, resources in both the public and the private sector will continue to be in much demand – that is, scarce. Hence, the commanding need to use them wisely'*. Financial pressure within the public sector environment is an international trend. In a study of public sector management which included a number of countries across the world, Flynn (2000) reported financial cuts as part of reform measures in New Zealand, Sweden, France, Japan, China and Malaysia. The financial situation for local authorities in England has been mentioned in chapter one. Local government expenditure in England is roughly one quarter of all public spending, with the vast majority coming through central government via Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and business rates (Lyons, 2005). The difficulty for local authorities in England is that financially they have very little room for manoeuvre. A local authority's level of RSG is determined by government, which in turn is interwoven with both the wider national economic position and local/national politics. How a local authority utilises its resources locally can also be subject to political pressure from the Centre (Flynn, 2007), with central government having at its disposal 'a fairly complex network of controls, pressures and incentives' to persuade local authorities to meet central government objectives (CIPFA, 1991, p.18). Apart from RSG and business rates, a local authority's ability to raise its income level is limited only to changes to its level of charges and local (council) tax (Flynn, 2007). However, local authorities wishing to raise additional income from council tax rises, may find themselves at odds with central government policy with regard to council tax increases.

Financial pressure on local authorities creates pressure on funded services. Financial allocations specifically supporting tourism are commonly referred to as the *tourism budget* (Stevenson, 2002; Burns, 2008). A tourism budget may be that provided by one specific organisation, or a fund provided by a number of contributors (Burns,

2008). The promotion of local tourism may be a function within local authority structures or via alternative delivery mechanisms such as public-private sector collaborative partnerships (Heeley, 2001). In such cases, the financial support for tourism could be described as a 'mixed funding' model where budgets allocated by several contributors contribute to an overall tourism development fund (Burns, 2008). The genesis of such can be traced back to early public-private sector partnerships of the early 1980s in the form of Tourism Development Action Programmes (TDAPs) (Heeley, 2001). Heeley (2001) noted the situation in Birmingham, where the tourism marketing fund of the Birmingham Marketing Partnership consisted of financial contributions from the local authority (36%), the commercial sector (3%) external grants (15%) and 46% provided by commercial income.

Nevertheless, whilst local authorities have increasingly been attracted to supporting tourism, the government's deficit reduction plans are presenting significant pressures on local government finances. In previous research, Stevenson (2002) found that tourism budgets amongst local authorities varied from zero to £1,000,000, of which the average tourism budget was approximately £258,000. However whilst Stevenson's paper reported average size of tourism budget, it did not specifically apportion tourism budgets to specific types or sizes of authority, whether they be, for example, a larger London borough, a metropolitan council or a county council. Nor has previous research sought to gauge how financial pressures on tourism budgets are perceived by those local authorities supporting tourism policy. Flynn (2007) has argued that in times of financial constraint non-statutory local authority services are particularly vulnerable to financial cuts. This study will seek to understand the current financial picture concerning local authority support for tourism, and how current pressures on tourism budgets are perceived within local authorities. It has been discussed in chapter two, that an idea recently which in some way may support local authorities' in making financial provision for tourism, could be the introduction of local 'tourist taxes' (Leisure News, 2004; Lyons, 2007). Whilst after the publication of the Lyons Report (2007) the Labour government argued that it did not intend to pursue such an initiative through legislation, Lyons did find some appetite amongst local authorities for local tourism taxes to be considered. Therefore, this raises the question as to the strength of feeling amongst local authorities as to whether local tourist taxes

would be explored by local authorities if given a local power to do so. This study will seek to answer this question.

### **3.4 More defined business planning**

Farnham and Horton (1993, p.47) have described managerialism as 'founded upon economistic, rationalistic and generic approaches...aligned to planning systems driven by objectives and targets'. The setting of objectives and targets has become a common feature of 'more defined' management in the English public sector (Flynn, 2007). The view of the Conservatives was that the performance of public organisations should be judged against targets, thus comparisons could be made either year-on-year for the same organisation, or against other organisations (Rogers, 1990). The Audit Commission (1996) argued that that effective management involved being clear about a local authority's aims and objectives. These should be expressed as targets which would provide a framework for assessing performance. Targets gained significant prominence during the Conservative years in office. Areas of public service provision which already had existing national performance targets, for example the health service, social services, housing, the police, schools, all had their targets enhanced (Stewart and Walsh, 1992). Stewart and Walsh (1992) argue that the Benefits Agency had their performance targets increased, but linked more closely to the speed and accuracy of payment of social security benefits.

An explicit feature of the managerial paradigm has been an emphasis on strategic management of public services. This is evident both in Britain (Joyce, 2008) and other countries, for example the Maldives (Asim, 2004). The strategic planning process in a number of organisations including the Prison Service (Eden and Cropper, 1992), Liverpool City Council (Chape and Davis, 1993), the National Trust (National Trust, 2001) has demonstrated a number of common features which include

- Mission Statement (or some other statement of purpose)
- Aims or objectives
- Identification of targets
- SWOT or other type of situational analysis
- Ana analysis or commentary of recent trends

- Performance Monitoring system

Joyce (2008) has argued that Labour were also keen to promote strategic planning in public sector reform during the Labour government. However, in relation to local promotion of tourism a number of commentators have argued that despite increasing local authority involvement with tourism, the use of strategic planning in tourism has occurred at a slower pace (Law, 1993; Ball and Stobart, 1998). Holloway (2002, p.319) has argued for example that tourism development in England has been 'curiously piecemeal', and that less than 50% of local authorities included any sort of tourism strategy in their local planning. In the larger cities, Law (1996) has argued that during a period of developing interest in tourism (1980s and early 1990s), very few cities demonstrated comprehensive plans for tourism. Law argues that strategic planning in tourism was limited to a handful of cities who produced strategic plans (including Belfast, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow and Merseyside) or 'tourism development action programmes' (including Bradford, Sheffield and Tyneside) (p.31). However, Law does acknowledge that in a number of cities tourism has only recently been chosen as an opportunity for development. With the managerial regime promoting the use of targets and objectives, and an emphasis on strategic management within the local authority environment, this study wished to gauge whether local tourism policy was being driven by strategic planning and, if so, the content of such plans.

### **3.5 Focus on evaluation and accountability**

Sanderson (1998, p.4) has referred to 'the rise of managerialist accountability'. Evaluation and accountability has constituted a significant thrust of managerialism in England (Sanderson, 1998). Whilst the argument for a more defined 'strategic' approach to public sector management had been made, systems that were capable of delivering clear and focused information that were likely to provide guidance and accountability of organisations were needed (Flynn, 2007). 'Consumerism' promoted the view that users, or 'consumers', of public services were entitled to 'high quality' services (Jones, 1996). The 'citizen interest' argument was that governments (and

local government) are voted into power by citizens, and therefore should be accountable to citizens or their representatives (Hepworth, 1995). The Thatcher government had a particular fondness for 'league tables'. The objective of publishing league tables was to improve performance and 'accountability' of services, with targets identified corrective measures could be introduced for those performing badly. The Major government continued to emphasise the 'citizen interest' argument, but under Major accountability took a turn towards citizens having 'rights' to better services, and accountability delivered through 'Citizen's Charters' programmes (Robinson, 1999). The 1992 Local Government Act required public services to establish local 'charters' ('Citizen's Charters') stating commitment to 'standards' of local service. The Local Government Act required local authorities to publish locally, together with audited information, the results achieved against targets set (DETR, 1998b; Audit Commission, 1998, 1999c). The intention was that Charters would inform citizens of their entitlement to public services, and make clear to providers the level and standard of service they were committed to meet. By stating such commitments, it was argued that service providers would improve standards and responsiveness to service users. The managerial paradigm under John Major took a turn towards more emphasis on accountability and audit. Evaluation and accountability increased during the 1990s with the largest growth in performance indicators in local government coming in the form of 'Citizen's Charter Indicators' (Boyne, 1997). Nevertheless, the Citizen's Charter programme came in for criticism, the main argument being that promises to service users made in 'charters' were often so vague that often they rendered them meaningless. Nevertheless, Charters emphasised the need for services to focus on the experience of service users, in order for services to be responsive to the people using them. However, the Citizens Charters also heightened the requirement for performance information. Whilst an emphasis on performance had been a key part of the managerial paradigm during the 1980s, the 1990s witnessed a renewed emphasis on performance information (Lane, 2000). The next part of the chapter will discuss the emphasis on performance management within the managerial paradigm.

### **3.6 Increasing concern with performance management**

During a documentary made by the BBC, a police superintendent in discussing the changing role of the police service in the UK commented '20 years ago I can't remember anyone asking me about performance' (Police Superintendent, West Yorkshire Police, BBC, 2005).

Attention to performance management has become a central pillar of the managerial paradigm, not only in England but also in the public sector environment internationally (van Thiel and Leeuw, 2002). Van Thiel and Leeuw (2002, p.276) have argued that governments have spent 'more attention, time and money on performance measurement and evaluation in the public sector than ever before'. Political pressure for more control over, and greater accountability of, public services, has seen a significant emphasis placed on performance management (Henkel, 1991; Stewart and Walsh, 1992; Lawton and McKeivitt, 1995; Sanderson, 1998; van Thiel and Leeuw, 2002). Pressure for heightened evaluation and accountability against objectives and targets, required more robust processes for assessing performance (Henkel, 1991). Nevertheless, importation of private sector performance management systems into the public services may not always run smoothly. Evaluating performance in public services may not be equivalent to measuring performance in the private sector (Tichelar, 1998). Assessment of the performance of 'services' may not be reduced down to an equivalence of a 'sale' or a 'profit'. Public services are also dissimilar, therefore targets and outputs for public services may also be dissimilar because of the variation in public service provision. As Stewart and Walsh (1994) have argued outputs delivered by social services will be different from those delivered by the prison service. Therefore, this highlights an argument that managerialism may not always provide a perfect the solution to performance management in the public services, because evaluating the performance of a service may be open to different interpretations of different users of public services. This issue did come to be recognised by the Audit Commission (1989a) who argued that measuring cost and efficiency may be a relatively easy proposition, but measuring quality and efficiency of public services can much more difficult .

Therefore, as Armstrong (2000) notes individual organisations or sectors may have different approaches to measuring performance (Armstrong, 2000). Performance standards have been used in industry to provide a benchmark ‘against which an organization can compare organizational activities’ (Daft, 1994, p.623). Performance standards may, for example, be centred around improving the amount of products that are rejected after production, or improving retention of staff. Performance against targets can include regular (weekly, monthly or yearly for example) monitoring or by a single or more comprehensive, evaluation (Boyle,1989). Performance assessment may involve a ‘comparative’ process, for example a service may be judged against a referent such as achievement of outputs over time (for example a school’s position in league tables over a 5 year period), or comparison against specific targets (Boyle, 1989). Whatever method is chosen, measuring performance will require the establishment of a starting point, or base line, and the collection of data in order to review performance against that referent. During the Conservative administration the number of PIs for public services grew to several thousand, and which fell into roughly 20 different categories (Boyne, 1997). Stewart and Walsh (1994, p.46) illustrated how various types of performance indicators could be used within education services.

	<b>Example</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>Cost/pupil</b>
Customers	numbers of pupils net outflow from country, parental choice/appeals satisfied.
Service delivery (organisation)	school size average, average school occupancy, class size average, sixth forms/class size – schools colleges.
Services delivered	Services delivered, for example-pupil/teacher ratio: teacher/contact ratio-generally/sixth forms: books equipment per pupils; curriculum delivered: subjects.
End results (outcomes)	Examination results, exit patterns – university/FE/employment, truancy levels, complaints, HMI and Local Inspectorate reports.

**Figure 7:** Performance indicators for education

The nature tourism presents some complexity when discussing performance management. Local tourism is not a ‘service’ in the same sense as a ‘prison service’, Library Service, or ‘refuse collection’ service. With refuse collection, the service could be ‘outsourced’ to external companies wishing to tender for the contract as was

evidenced when The Local Government Act (1988) identified refuse collection as a local authority service that local authorities had to contract out. Local tourism management is a different scenario. Local tourism management is dissimilar to other local authority service areas such as social services or schools. Whilst a tourism department may be part of a local authority's funded provision, it may not have the direct contact with 'customers' in the way that those working in social care or education may. Tourists come and go to places, and therefore it is difficult to accurately measure impacts of tourism at the local level (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997). The value of tourism as an economic activity to local areas has been made strongly across a breadth of local authority documentation (Stoke-on-Trent City Council, 1998; Derbyshire County Council, 2002; Sheffield City Council, 2003; Blackpool Borough Council, 2006; Cambridge City Council, 2007). However, performance measurement in local tourism management, is an area relatively unexplored in the literature. Therefore this study will seek to understand how local areas evaluate the performance of tourism within their areas.

### **3.7 Labour, 'modernisation' and 'enabling'**

So far, this chapter has discussed the key driving forces which have characterised the managerial paradigm surrounding the English public sector during the Conservative period in office. This part of the chapter will discuss Labour's 'modernisation' platform in the context of 'modernising' local authority services.

When Labour came to power after John Major's defeat in the 1997 General Election, the main features of the Charter regime inherited by Labour included:

- 41 national Charters covering the major public services, for example the Patient's Charter, the Courts Charter, the Taxpayer's Charter
- Over 10,000 local charters prepared at local level (for example doctor's surgeries, hospital trusts, schools, local authorities) in consultation with service users and
- An annual Charter Mark award scheme which encouraged excellence and innovation in public service provision

When elected in 1997, it had been 18 years since Labour had last been in government. Flynn (2007) argues that in order to win the General Election, Labour recognised that it needed to 'modernise' itself, re-branding itself as *New Labour*. The realisation that during their time in opposition the role and management of government in a post-Fordist economy had irreversibly changed, Labour re-focused its political view of the welfare state (Taylor, 2000). 'New' Labour argued that its 'modernisation' agenda (Labour Party, 1999) would offer a 'Third Way' (Taylor, 2000), a slogan which signaled Labour's aim to tread a path which captured the 'best parts' of socialism and market forces (Taylor, 2000; Flynn, 2007).

But as Shaw (2009) argues any programme of change is inevitably complex and multifaceted and can rarely only be reduced to a single ideological theme. This was true of the host of legislative and other initiatives affecting public services set in motion by both the Conservative and Labour governments. However the dominant motif for Labour's approach for reform was 'modernisation' (Shaw, 2009). But similar to 'managerialism' modernisation can also be a loose term. Debate has centred around the polar opposites of whether modernisation has involved new innovative methods for public sector reform, or a slogan depicting the dismantling of the welfare state whilst encouraging a new market state under the dominance of private monopoly capital (Shaw, 2009). In formulating its policy the Blair government were influenced by 'new public management', and which challenged the old-style bureaucratic model of public services delivering 'basic no-frills one-size-fits-all services' (Osborne and Gahler, 1992 p.14). Discourse concerning Labour's objective for 'entrepreneurial' government included the promotion of competition between service providers, empowering citizens by pushing control out of the state into the community, more emphasis of measuring performance of agencies, focus on outcomes, redefining clients as customers, and preference of the market mechanism to the 'bureaucratic mechanism' (Shaw, 2009). However Labour rhetoric was careful to distinguish itself from the privatisation /marketisation of the Conservatives. Labour reform was grounded in a strong commitment to collective activity with public services such as schooling or healthcare being provided equitably according to need and free at the point of consumption.

However a break with traditional Labour thinking lay with Labour arguing that the techniques of the private sector, and in some cases use of commercial providers, should be harnessed to improve the delivery of public services. Labour's interpretation of 'the market' saw extension of market forces into public services in areas including welfare, dentistry and the prison service (Flynn, 2007). Labour rebranded the Conservative's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to what may be a more politically acceptable title Public-Private Partnerships (PPP). Flynn (2007) argues that when elected Labour seemed content to continue the with the drivers of managerial state as something which was economically or politically irreversible. Labour continued the Conservative squeeze on public spending, reducing it from 1.3% of GDP under John Major to 0.6% during the 1997-2001 period. Whilst a large bulk of the 'privatisation' of public companies and utilities had been undertaken by the Conservatives, Labour sold public sector provision in the energy, nuclear and defence sectors, as well as the London Tube infrastructure companies. Labour also extended 'targets' for public organisations. At the 1999 Labour Party conference Tony Blair claimed that 500 new targets would be introduced in areas relating to hospital waiting lists, reducing truancy rates, increasing literacy and numeracy levels (Flynn, 2007). More attention to performance was paid. Legislation required the Audit Commission to devise new national performance indicators for local authority services, with local authorities required to set targets and publish both targets and performance against them in annual local performance plans (DETR, 1998c; Audit Commission, 1999a). Flynn (2007) argues that the 'modernisation' agenda impacted different parts of the public sector, such as the civil service or the NHS, in different ways. For example NHS reform strategies had different objectives from reform of the Civil Service. Tones of the managerial paradigm can be seen in sports management, and the impact of the modernisation agenda on the management of England's national sports organisations, Sport England and UK Sport. Houlihan and Green (2009) have argued that these organisations have had to become 'more business-like' (p.12), subject to more intense auditing and control by government, and management processes in those organisations involving a 'more strategic' approach to management, reduction of costs, with more attention to performance management and indicators - typical features of managerialism highlighted in this chapter. Clearly this example has a sport and recreation context, but tones of the managerial paradigm are clearly in evidence,

suggesting that management of national sports organisations has also been subjected to the managerial influence mirroring comments made at the start of this work concerning public sector areas of social work and education.

Labour had its own take on 'the enabling state'. Tony Blair (2002) coined the phrase 'out goes the big state, in comes the enabling state'. 'Partnerships' were very heavily promoted as part of Labour's strategy for reform (Newman, 2002). An element of the wider 'partnership' agenda was the public to be more involved in local decision-making; the perception being that greater community participation was an essential element of local area development. Labour wished to bring 'government closer to the people' (DETR, 1998a, p.3), intending to create a more plural set of 'enabling' partnerships between the state, service providers, users, citizens, and other 'stakeholders'. However, in arguing that local authorities would not be forced to contract out public services, Labour included the option of services being provided by 'external' agencies (Taylor, 2000). As Taylor (2000) argues, Labour's Third Way included the state being both a provider of services and as an 'organiser' of services (Taylor, 2000).

An example of how this has impacted the provision of local authority services, the Audit Commission in 2002 (five years after Labour were elected to government) identified four ways that the management of sport and recreation in local areas may be conducted:

- Continuation of previous in-house provision. The local authority was continuing with its provision of the service
- 'Externalisation' of services to a private sector provider. The local authority had contracted out the management of a service to a commercial company
- Creation of 'Trusts'. A facility had been transferred into a company for a specific period and the Trust is then responsible for the delivery of the service
- Public-private sector partnerships. The local authority had entered into an agreement with other participants from the private and/or voluntary sectors to form a collaborative partnership which provides the service (Robinson 2004, p.14)

For Labour, 'collaborations' provided a softer and more palatable solution. Flynn (2007) argues that encouraging public-private sector collaborative partnerships offered Labour a political solution to being associated with market-type processes which Labour had criticised when in opposition.

Several authors have suggested that a 'new managerialism' (Robinson 2004; Deem *et al*, 2007) may have emerged under Labour offering some support for comments made at the start of this work. However, like 'managerialism' modernisation is a loose term with little agreement in the literature concerning precisely what the contours of 'modernisation' have meant to public services. Shaw (2009) has argued that modernisation came to be distilled to a mixture of four main elements; focus on performance management, choice, competition, and diversity of supply. Whilst it is clear from Shaw's argument that distinct similarities between the 'managerialism' described in this chapter and 'modernisation' are in evidence, ideologically it has been argued that 'modernisation' was not comparable to the 'New Right' style of privatisation/marketisation of the Conservatives. Shaw (2009) argues that Labour increased monies to public services such as healthcare and education in order to attempt a major refurbishment of the fabric of the welfare state. However, some of the methods used to reform public services have been controversial for Labour, notably the use of management techniques drawn from the private sector (Flynn, 2007; Shaw, 2009)

### **3.8 Concluding remarks**

During the Conservative years, the 'managerial agenda' (Flynn, 2007, p.40) was driven by an ideological belief in the superiority of the private sector. The managerial paradigm which has surrounded local authorities has emphasised a reduction in state provision and importation of 'business-type managerialism' (Rhodes, 1994). Labour's 'Third way' claimed an 'agnostic' stance towards the 'superiority of the private sector', arguing that 'traditional values' should be the guide to decision-making not ideology (Flynn, 2007). But, as Flynn (2007) argues, Labour policies often pushed managers in the public sector towards working with the private sector or outsourcing services.

However, Labour presented this as a pragmatic approach to 'modernisation' and not something ideologically driven. In the case of local tourism management, it is unknown to what extent the managerial paradigm has influenced the role of local authorities in the delivery of local tourism policy, and impacted organisational management of tourism at the local level. The following chapter will discuss the 'case' for the study, the development of tourism within the English cities.

## CHAPTER 4: THE 'CASE'. ENGLISH CITIES AND TOURISM

### 4.0 Introduction

The English cities are an area of significant recent change in tourism terms (Law, 1993, 1996, 2002). This may appear a curious scenario, particularly in the case of the post-industrial cities aiming to attract more tourists. It was in 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain when the developing rail network was used by factory workers to escape, if only for brief periods, from the squalor and deprivation in the cities caused by rapidly unchallenged urbanisation. 150 years or so later circumstances turned full circle, and the de-industrialisation that affected many English cities has seen them trying to improve their economic fortunes by seeking to attract more visitors. Whilst some of the more historic cities, such as London, Brighton, Chester and York, have a longer history of encouraging tourist visitors, others have awakened to pursue tourism encouraged by post-Fordist structural change. Some of the larger post-industrial cities, such as Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle, have integrated a tourism 'element' within regeneration plans, and whose city centres have been transformed by significant economic investment often of many hundreds of millions of pounds (Burns 2008). Such developments to the superstructure and infrastructure of those places have significantly changed their physical presence, carefully driven by ambitions of image re-orientation and civic 'boosterism' (Judd and Fainstein, 1999). But what is significant is that such ambitions have not just been the preserve of the larger places. The post-Fordist structure in England has witnessed, on a smaller scale but arguably critically important in terms of economic value to local economies, a number of the cities in rural parts of England attracting attention in their pursuit of attracting more

tourists (Burns, 2008, 2009). A consequence has been the English tourism landscape significantly changing through an increasing number of cities of differing sizes and make-up exploring the option of tourism development. This chapter will focus on the growth of English cities as tourist places, and tourism as a 'regeneration' tool for those places in a post-Fordist economy.

#### **4.1 Definitions and typologies of English tourist cities**

Globally, cities have functioned as important locations of visitor activity for thousands of years. Fuelled by motivators such as commerce, religion or as places to visit or 'Gaze' (Urry, 2002), cities feature strongly in the history of global tourism. Two of the world's oldest cities, Aleppo and Damascus, have accommodated business travellers since the 18<sup>th</sup> century BC through their history as Middle East trading posts.

The designation of city status varies across nations. There is no global agreement with regard to a definition of a city, or limiting figures regarding city population size (Law, 2002). In Europe, historically, a city has been deemed to be an urban settlement with a cathedral. In England, city status is not granted automatically because a town is endowed with a cathedral or becomes large. Major towns such as Swindon, Northampton, and Milton Keynes all have populations over 170,000, but do not have city status. Brighton and Hove is a city but does not have a cathedral. City status is awarded irrespective of the size of the settlement or presence of a cathedral. City status in England is granted by the monarchy (Department for Constitutional Affairs, 2004). From around the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in the United Kingdom a place can only be granted city status by royal charter. According to the Department for Constitutional Affairs (2004) 'City status is a rare mark of distinction granted by the Sovereign and conferred by Letters Patent. It is granted by personal Command of the Queen of England, on the advice of Her Ministers'. Therefore the royal connection with granting city bestowal is an historic one. The small town of Ripon was granted city status in 1836 to coincide with the creation of the Diocese of Ripon, but also more in recognition of its long-standing role as a supplier of spurs to the royal family. Therefore it is for the Monarch to decide when a competition for city status should occur, and such are usually held on occasions such as important Royal anniversaries.

There are 51 cities in England, Chelmsford became England's youngest city in 2012 to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year. Geographically the cities span across England, from Newcastle in the north, to Canterbury in the south-east and Truro in the south-west. Some of the larger city metropolitan areas may have more than one 'city' within their region. For example, Westminster is located within the Greater London Metropolitan region, and Salford within the Greater Manchester Metropolitan region. The district of Cambridgeshire has two places with city status, Cambridge and Ely. Some of the cities may have relatively small populations, for example Wells which has a population of 10,000, but the six largest cities in England based on population size are London (7.4 million), Birmingham (1.1 million), Leeds (740,000), Sheffield (535,000), Liverpool (440,000) and Manchester (418,000)<sup>1</sup>. Accumulatively, of the 59 million people that live in England over three quarters live within the cities (DEFRA, 2007). The 51 English cities are identified in Figure 8.

Bath	Coventry	Lichfield	Preston	Wakefield
Birmingham	Derby	Lincoln	Plymouth	Wells
Bradford	Durham	Liverpool	Ripon	Westminster
Brighton and Hove	Ely	London	Salford	Winchester
Bristol	Exeter	Manchester	Salisbury	Wolverhampton
Cambridge	Gloucester	Newcastle upon Tyne	Sheffield	Worcester
Canterbury	Hereford	Norwich	St Albans	York
Carlisle	Hull	Nottingham	Stoke-on-Trent	
Chester	Lancaster	Oxford	Southampton	
Chelmsford	Leeds	Peterborough	Sunderland	
Chichester	Leicester	Portsmouth	Truro	

**Figure 8:** The 51 cities in England

<sup>1</sup> Rounded to the nearest 1,000 and based on 2000 census information

Page (1995, p.14) argues that post-Fordist urban destinations display a number of characteristics which may be helpful in identifying distinctive features of urban tourist places such as:

- Geographically different in patterns of land use
- Symbolically different through the use of images and symbols to promote the built environment as places for consumption of 'pleasure'
- Characterised by population and Labour growth
- Characterised by flexible forms of production
- Displaying state intervention having a 'boosterist' tendency to promote inward investment
- Characterised by mass and 'customised' production of pleasure
- Characterised by socially distinct resident populations

Page (1995, p.16) has suggested a number of different 'typologies' of urban places as tourist destinations, these include:

- Capital cities (e.g. London, Paris and New York) and cultural capitals (e.g. Rome)
- Metropolitan centres and walled historic cities (e.g. Canterbury and York) and small fortress cities
- Large historic cities (e.g. Oxford, Cambridge and Venice)
- Inner city areas (Manchester)
- Revitalised waterfront areas (e.g. London Docklands and Sydney Harbour)
- Industrial cities (e.g. nineteenth century Bradford)
- Seaside resorts and winter sports resorts (e.g. Lillehammer)
- Purpose-built integrated tourist resorts
- Tourist-entertainment complexes (e.g. Disneyland and Las Vegas)
- Specialised tourist service centres (e.g. spas and pilgrimage destinations, e.g. Lourdes)
- Cultural/art cities (e.g. Florence )

Page's (1995) and Ashworth and Tunbridge's (2000) descriptions of 'tourist historic' cities, include *walled historic cities*, *small fortress cities*, *large historic cities*, *cultural/art cities* (Page, 1995) or *art cities*, *heritage cities* or *festival cities* (Ashworth and

Tunbridge, 2000). This highlights different conceptual distinctions of tourist cities between different commentators. Whilst such depictions may be helpful for some purposes in attempting to classify cities, they also have their limitations. For example whilst Liverpool is a cathedral city (Liverpool has two cathedrals), and is a port-city, it may also be deemed a festival city (Liverpool has around 30 festivals per year), an art city (Liverpool's artistic history played a major part of Liverpool's successful Capital of Culture bid) and a sports city (includes two Premier league football clubs). Due to Liverpool's recent industrial decline, Liverpool could be also be classed as being what Law (1993) and Page and Hall (2003) have called the 'post-industrial' city.

Whatever is the case, whilst some of the larger (such as Birmingham, London, Liverpool, Manchester, Leicester, Leeds) and 'tourist-historic' cities (for example Nottingham, Bath, Bristol, Plymouth and Portsmouth) have a record of tourism involvement a number of cities in the more rural settings have also recently attracted attention in their ambitions to attract more tourists (Burns, 2008). However despite such development, city-based tourism in England is an area relatively unexplored in research terms, and presents an appropriate and timely research opportunity.

#### **4.2 Government encouragement for 'city' tourism**

Law (1993, p.1) suggests that large cities are the most important type of tourist destination in the world. Some of the world's most historic cities have accommodated visitors for many centuries often as a result of trade, religion or commerce. In the major tourism cities - such as New York, Paris, Las Vegas, Venice, Rome, London - the tourism industry is firmly established and a recognised contributor to the city economy, being responsible for providing thousands of jobs (Law, 1993; Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Judd, 2003). A significant change has been in increasing numbers of post-industrial cities attempting to place themselves within the development of tourism (Law, 1993; Judd and Fainstein, 1999; Page and Hall, 2003). In many cases this has followed a downturn in manufacturing industry. In America, a number of post-industrial cities such as Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh embarked on journeys of promoting themselves as tourist places, through the development of specific amenities or events for clearly defined markets (Law, 2002). Major sports stadia have been constructed,

maintained and improved with public funds (Law, 1993). In such cases local government in these places will have financially supported the building of infrastructure in order to support sports development, driven by the objective of enhancing city status and receiving economic benefits from visitors to the city for sports occasions. In Chicago, the development of a new stadium for the White Sox baseball team was part of an economic development package that was intended not only to keep the team in Chicago, but also to bring improvement to quality of life to residents in that area (Hall and Jenkins, 1995).

Furthermore, Judd (1999) argues that in the urban renewal of many US cities, a strong feature of the redevelopment of physical infrastructure was the inclusion of leisure and tourism facilities, and retail and convention-based amenities. Judd (1999) quotes Frieden and Segalyn's picture of the 'new' American city consisting of 'Every mayor's trophy collection made up of an atrium hotel, festival mall, a convention centre, a restored historic neighbourhood, a domed stadium, an aquarium, new office towers and a redeveloped waterfront' (1999, p.39). Nevertheless, convention-based tourism has been high on the list of facilities for city development in America, and Judd (1999) argues that between 1976 and 1986 some 250 convention centres and arts facilities were constructed within North American cities. Strong public sector commitment has also been a feature of such developments. An example of city regeneration which included a clear leisure and tourism element is in the re-development of Baltimore during the 1980s. Key objectives were to improve and revitalise Baltimore's inner-harbour area as well as developing a significant tourism and convention trade (Page and Hall, 2003, p.257). It is argued that a key factor in Baltimore's regeneration was strong political commitment to development, both in public sector leadership and financial terms (Page and Hall, 2003). Baltimore's redevelopment strategy received large public sector financial support in the form of government grants in order to assist developments, for example, an inner city hotel development was part-funded by a \$10 million urban development grant (Law 1985). The availability of government funds, as a contribution to the 'public good' alongside private capital, was a significant feature of Baltimore's regeneration strategy.

### 4.3 English city regeneration and public sector support

The post-Fordist environment in Britain has witnessed the economic base of many English cities significantly change away from manufacturing. Therefore new employment opportunities have been a critical requirement in city development strategies (Law, 1993). The growing service industries, including tourism, were seen as something that could help in some way to resolve problems the cities were experiencing. Government circulars such as *Pleasure, leisure and jobs* (Department of Employment, 1985) and *Tourism in the UK: Realising the Potential* (Department of Employment, 1992) promoted 'employment-intensive' growth industries such as tourism. Perhaps more significantly such circulars were produced by the Department of Employment. Hoping to emulate the success of some of the American cities - such as Baltimore, Cleveland, Detroit and Pittsburgh – a tourism element has become as essential part of local economic regeneration plans in the cities (DOE, 1990; Burns, 2008). Glasgow was an early adopter of this 'new type' of strategy. From being, according to Sneddon, the 'workshop of the world' (Sneddon cited in Burns, 1999), Glasgow has seen manufacturing employment reduce from around 250,000 jobs to around 60,000. Requiring a major turn-around in city fortunes, Glasgow City Council commissioned the American *McKinsey and Company* international management consultants to evaluate the picture in Glasgow and propose a strategy to take the city forward. McKinsey essentially proposed four strands to Glasgow's regeneration strategy:

- Regenerate the fabric of the city centre so that people would wish to once again live in the city centre
- Develop the retail sector
- Attract companies to relocate their headquarters to Glasgow
- Develop tourism (Burns, 1999)

McKinsey's argument was that a redeveloped urban city centre (bolstered by leisure and tourist amenities) could encourage inward investment and attract new tourist revenue. Furthermore, reconstruction of the city centre and infrastructure improvement could attract commercial activity, providing new employment opportunities which itself could then attract in-migration, thus slowing population decline or possibly creating

population growth (Law, 1993). The argument for integrating a tourism element in regeneration plans was also being made elsewhere. The Department of the Environment (1990) was arguing the 'ripple effect' of economic impact from tourism projects, and that economic evaluation of tourism projects 'must include the secondary as well as the primary effects. The primary effects are threefold; the employment created in the construction phase; the direct employment at the project itself; the staff involved in its operation; and the indirect and induced employment generated by the ripple effects of spending of the project. Secondary impacts arise because visitors spend money outside the projects in other businesses in the City' (Department of Environment, 1990, p.15).

English Central Government's response also financially supported both local and national initiatives through various urban regeneration schemes, urban development grants and urban programmes (Bovaird, 1994). Inner-city regeneration corporations were created by the Conservatives in individual cities or areas with particular remits. On Merseyside, the Merseyside Development Corporation (MDC) was the country's first urban development corporation, opening in 1981 and closing in 1998. One objective of the MDC was to stimulate tourism around the Liverpool waterfront area, through a mixture of events infrastructure, development and marketing. From 1993 to 1996, the MDC provided £42m towards the redevelopment of the Albert Dock area, £13m towards an International Garden Festival and provided £100,000 grant-in-aid per year to the Merseyside Tourism Board (MDC, 1998). Liverpool was designated an European Union (EU) Objective One area in 1994, entitling the Liverpool area to receive European Objective One structural funds. Other urban areas such as Birmingham, Clydeside, and Dublin also received financial assistance through the European Commission's (EC) 'Objective One' process (GOM, 1994 and 1999).



**Figure 9:** The derelict Albert Dock, Liverpool in 1966. © Bernd & Hilla Becher By kind permission <http://arttattler.com/archiveliverpool.html>

Figure 9 illustrates the derelict Albert Dock waterfront area in Liverpool during the 1960s. During the 1990s Liverpool received substantial public sector financial support for regeneration. This also included EU structural funds. Between 1994 and 1999 almost one billion pounds of public and private sector investment was allocated to regenerative projects in the Liverpool area (MELU,1993; GOM, 1994 and 1999). Of this was a major tourism and leisure element. As Mersey Tourism, the promotional agency for tourism on Merseyside, argued 'Capital investment of some £500 million is currently taking place or planned for Merseyside's tourism and leisure industry. Over half of all development projects underway in Merseyside are tourism and leisure related' (Mersey Tourism, 1997, p.1). Figure 10 illustrates the rejuvenated Albert Dock.



**Figure 10:** The rejuvenated Albert Dock. Photo taken by author.

Other regeneration programmes in areas, such as London, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, and Sheffield, have all included a tourism and leisure element (Department of Employment, 1990; Jackson, 1995). Whilst the exploration of tourism has seen increasing tourist numbers as a common objective of inner-city urban regeneration programmes, it is perhaps useful at this stage to more precisely re-visit the perceived benefits of tourism to city 'regeneration'. As Page and Hall (2003, p.263) argue the potential benefits of inner city tourism developments hinge around three key factors: the creation of new employment, the creation of physical and environmental improvements to the inner-city, and the benefits of tourism bringing improvements and opportunity to access new leisure facilities for local residents. Whilst manufacturing has declined in many places, Law (2002) argues that the number of jobs created is often regarded as the most important type of regeneration impact. For example the objective of the five year English Tourist Board programme 'Vision for Cities' (ETB, 1989) was to create 250,000 new jobs in the urban areas.

Whether leisure and tourism could in fact fill the huge void left by manufacturing in cities is questionable, however the relative low-cost of providing new employment opportunities has been seen as a major plus for tourism. Urry (1995) has argued that providing a 'new' job in the tourism industry in the UK costs £4000 compared to £32,000 in manufacturing. Thus for cities with high unemployment, providing new

relatively low-cost jobs in the tourism industry has been appealing. Therefore, for cities with high unemployment levels integrating a leisure and tourism element into urban regeneration planning offered an additional tool to directly help address urban problems; and a new industry to help replace lost manufacturing jobs. Employment provided by tourism in a number of cities is shown in Figure 11.

City area	Employment related to tourism	Source
York	9,900	York Tourism Partnership (2007)
Bradford	7,736	Bradford District Council (2002)
Lancaster	4,000	Lancaster City Council (2006)
Southampton	4,000	Southampton City Council (2002)
Exeter	3,870	Exeter City Council (2007)
Winchester	3,700	Winchester City Council (2004)

**Figure 11:** Local employment supported by tourism in some British cities

#### 4.4 City restructure and attracting the Post-Tourist

*‘In the 1980s many Britons were amazed to discover that older industrial cities, like Bradford, were promoting themselves as tourist centres. By the end of the decade and the beginning of the 1990s nearly every British city could boast of at least one new major tourism resource’*

(Law, 1992, p.599)

For the cities, a significant element of the catalyst for change has been in the attitude of ‘post-Fordist’ society towards old or redundant buildings. Places with an abundance of old buildings, such as redundant docks, factories and warehouses, required re-evaluation for new use. A major feature of the post-Fordist structure in the cities has been the re-use of such infrastructure for shopping, leisure, even residency (Howie, 2003). In waterfront cities - such as Bristol, Hull and Liverpool, all of which needed new leases of life as their traditional roles linked to sea trade catastrophically reduced

in the changing global economy - inclusion of leisure and tourism facilities has been a key part of waterfront redevelopments. Post-Fordist development has seen redundant industrial buildings and old warehouses in many cases turned into either flats and apartments, restaurants, or leisure and tourist facilities (Howie, 2003). Voase (1995) describes regeneration of the Hull waterfront, a story not distinctly dissimilar from a number of other UK maritime cities. In Hull, a large amount dock area became redundant as traditional sea-based industries contracted or disappeared. Here, docks dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were converted to leisure use as a marina. The success of the marina saw a former warehouse nearby converted to provide low cost accommodation for young people, but soon found the apartments changing hands at 'commercial' prices (Voase, 1995). The 'pump-priming' effect of tourist development saw the commercial sector reacting further, providing other secondary resources such as restaurants and bistros (Voase, 1995). Somewhat similar scenarios have occurred in London's Docklands and Liverpool's Albert Dock area. Figure 12 illustrates Liverpool's Albert Dock waterfront area, where refurbishment of redundant dock buildings into commercial and residential property encouraged the Tate Gallery to open *The Tate North* in Liverpool, the first Tate gallery outside of London.



**Figure 12:** Post-Fordist cities. Refurbished maritime warehouses in Liverpool. Photo taken by author.

It is not just the larger cities that have responded to post-Fordist changes. For example, Gloucester has seen its city infrastructure change as much of its Victorian

heritage has been converted to modern use. Gloucester Docks have become a visitor attraction of shops, bars, restaurants, apartments, and waterfront viewing areas. Victorian Warehouses have been restored and turned into offices, apartments and visitor attractions (Gloucester City Council, 2001).

The ability to reconfigure central cores has become a major developmental advantage for a number of the larger cities such as Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Newcastle Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. Tourism can play its part in local economic development if tourism infrastructure and shops, restaurants and other facilities are geared up to the needs of visitors (Law, 1993). Therefore, a city must ensure that it has the ability to supply a range of easily accessible and highly competitive tourist products (Van Den Berg et al, 1995). However, how city inner cores are presented can affect the attractiveness of the overall tourist product (Van Den Berg et al, 1995, p.16). Tourists seek 'quality' environments (Van den Berg et al, 1995), in that tourists are unlikely to comment favourably to friends or family, who may also be potential tourists to the destination, about a city with a poor appearance (Howie, 2003). Cities with an adequate supply of primary and secondary tourist products but poor internal accessibility to their urban core, may need to strategically invest to improve internal accessibility. A feature of the larger urban areas is that they are not as clearly defined, both geographically and in tourism terms as, say, the traditional seaside resorts (Shaw and Williams, 2002). Therefore an advantage for a number of the larger cities, has been that city centre redevelopment has been assisted by the ability to substantially redesign central-urban cores. Some of the larger cities have made use of substantial amounts of redundant buildings or derelict land for new development, as in the case of arena development in Manchester and Liverpool. In Liverpool, a large part of Liverpool's redundant dockland was used in order to build the Liverpool Arena and Convention Centre which was opened in 2008. In Liverpool, the 'Liverpool One' development was strategically designed to link the waterfront area to the major part of the city centre and to try to achieve this primarily through leisure shopping. Leisure shopping has become a feature of post-Fordist Britain and a major driver for tourism in the 1990s (Law, 2002). For the smaller urban places actively seeking retail-focused tourism, this may involve smaller groupings of specialist outlets, such as the antique shops, or factory shops as evident in Stoke-on-Trent for example. In Liverpool large

parts of the city's inner core was redesigned in order to create the Liverpool One development which was completed in 2010, and costing just over £1 billion to create.

Ashworth and Voogd (1990) have argued that an advantage for the larger cities is that a 'whole' city could be deemed as a single 'product', but the product could also comprise a range of facilities, activities or other resources which could give rise to marketing opportunities. Therefore urban areas have sought to promote themselves as attractive places to live, work, invest and play (Law, 1996). It has been argued that large infrastructural developments can raise the profile and visibility of a city, and may also persuade commercial executives that the area is a good place in which to live with the 'right' lifestyle opportunities for executives (Law, 1993; van den Berg et al, 1995). As Law (1996) notes 'business location decisions are not made simply on the basis of narrow economic advantage, but take into account the lifestyle opportunities of executives'. City environments can have a leaning towards the arts and culture, and these are attributes increasingly sought by executives and more highly skilled employees (Howie, 2003). This means that specific amenities or geographical districts could be given prominence in city marketing, enabling the city to be sold simultaneously to different customers for quite different purposes. This could help marketers to promote the city in a way that meets the needs of specific markets, including tourists, conference organisers, commercial companies looking to relocate, companies looking to start up a business, or even central government relocating a government department. Tourism development therefore was congruent and supportive of these wider economic development strategies (Law, 1993).

One advantage of their lack of 'seasonality' for cities compared to the resorts is that business tourism, conferences and sporting events such as football, do not experience major seasonal variations, potentially generating visitors to major cities most of the year round. As Law (1996) notes, 'many activities such as business travel, conferences and exhibitions and cultural and sporting events take place throughout the year and if there is any seasonality it is not only much less marked but may be inverse to the usual trends' (p.12). For some of the larger cities another notable feature is that they may also serve as gateways, via airports or seaports, for tourist entry into a country as well as being destinations in their own right. Growth in

international arrivals through airports, has assisted a number of cities to form elaborate marketing campaigns as places for leisure visits. Marketing campaigns by 'low-cost' airlines have encouraged people to forget about the stresses of working life, and take a short break as a reward for hard work, or even a way of celebrating an anniversary or other special event. Low-cost airlines offering flights from England to Europe for £1.99 each way plus taxes has driven a new form of post-Fordist 'leisure break'. Such growth in passenger numbers has stimulated local airports, passenger arrivals to Liverpool airport grew to 5.4 million in 2008 and Liverpool was the fastest growing European airport in 2010. A number of cities, for example Birmingham, Liverpool and Derby have targetted 'football tourists' (Huw-Davies, 2004b), trying to encourage overseas football supporters to watch a football match and to stay longer as part of the trip. The larger cities may also be headquarters for national companies, sites of national buildings, homes to popular football teams, or act as venues for significant events. This leads to opportunities for cities to bid for and host large-scale sporting or cultural events. For example, Liverpool secured the hosting of the MTV television awards in 2008 as part of its Capital of Culture celebrations.

An advantage for the larger cities is that their urban core can bring together a larger mix of business, leisure or shopping opportunities, plus they could also be key locations for theatre, culture, nightlife and entertainment. Therefore, unlike the seaside resorts, cities may be used by a variety of different consumers in different ways, post-Fordist visitors may use the city in an individualised way driven by their individual needs. Voase (1995) described the post-Fordist city as being 'a leisured city, its facilities exceed resort facilities in every way' (p.76). Additionally, Law (1996) has argued that post-Fordist urban areas have advantages such as often having good transportation links, a large stock of hotels and attractions, including entertainment, night life and sporting events. The large modern city may attract visitors because of its wide choice of attractions representing the 'ultimate post-Fordist, post-modern tourist destination' (p.7). Therefore, larger cities can use the advantage of having a variety of potential facilities to attract visitors, enabling marketing the city as a 'whole product' but with particular facilities, themes, or specific geographical districts.

#### **4.5 The cities and the English tourism picture**

With the larger cities embarking on strategies to embrace tourism, tourism has become an increasing part of the fabric of English tourism (Law, 1993, 1996, 2002; Burns, 2008, 2009). As argued earlier, some cities are considered 'tourist-historic' (Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000) including places such as Nottingham, Bath, Bristol, Leeds, London, Plymouth and Portsmouth because of their history of encouraging tourism. As Human (2008) argues, the historic cities offer unique identities arising from the individual cultures of those places. For example, the academic history of Oxford and Cambridge are key drivers for tourism those cities. Oxford receives over 7 million visitors per year, of which almost 400,000 are overseas visitors (Oxford City Council, 2003). Canterbury's place in the history of Christianity in Britain helps to attract over 3 million people per year. Brighton's royal history also assisted by Brighton being one of the few resorts which still has a functioning pier with a mix of entertainment facilities. York is one of England's most historic cities with a history dating back almost 2,000 years. York city centre is encapsulated within an almost complete medieval wall, with a street pattern developed from Roman, Viking and medieval times. York Minster is the largest medieval church in Northern Europe, and its history has proven attractive to visitors for many years. However, York's recent economic history is one similar to that found in many other post-Fordist English cities. In the late 1970s, York witnessed major loss in employment within manufacturing, and enabled the city to become more dependent upon the service sector. However, post-Fordist shifts which have witnessed an upsurge in cultural and heritage tourism have also contributed to economic restructuring of York. York receives just over 4 million visitors to the city each year, and it is estimated that tourism generates £364 million of income each year which supports 10,646 jobs directly linked to tourism (York Tourism Partnership, 2007). Like York, Chester has a history which dates back to Roman times. Chester's economic footprint encompasses North Wales, Wirral and Cheshire. Chester's main economic drivers are tourism, retail, and financial services, and just outside the city the Airbus factory at Broughton is the largest employer in the area (Chester City Council, 2010). It is argued that Chester receives around 8.7 million visitors per year, with tourism contributing around £370m to its economy.

Of the larger cities, one city experiencing an upturn in 'post-Fordist' tourism is Newcastle upon Tyne. With a population of 266,000 Newcastle is part of the Tyne and Wear sub region, along with Sunderland and Gateshead. Whilst the city only reached prominence during the Industrial Revolution, Newcastle is similar to other cities in England in having a history of around 2,000 years through being a regional capital and chief defensive point in the north of England during the Roman and Saxon periods. Historically, Newcastle's economy has been strongly related to heavy industry such as ship building and manufacturing. Like other cities in England, Newcastle has a recent history of population decline, particularly linked to major decline in shipbuilding on the River Tyne. Decline in manufacturing and rise in the service sector, now sees the service sector providing 80% of employment in Newcastle (Newcastle City Council, 2012). Newcastle is a university City with over 43,000 students. One of Newcastle's key post-Fordist structural changes has been development of both the retail sector and tourism. The MetroCentre opened in 1986 which at the time was the largest shopping centre in the United Kingdom. The area surrounding the River Tyne is an area which has undergone significant change centred around Newcastle's ambition to create a 'cultural' visitor area centred around the River. Arguably, Newcastle is one of the strongest examples of post-Fordist change in terms of conversion of redundant buildings to stimulate cultural regeneration. Former industrial buildings on the River Tyne waterfront have been turned into tourism attractions including the BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art. The Sage concert development resides close to the Gateshead Millennium Bridge which arches across the River Tyne and links Newcastle to the Gateshead Quays.



**Figure 13:** Quayside at Gateshead, Newcastle. Source: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/16/Newcastle\\_Quayside\\_with\\_bridges.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/16/Newcastle_Quayside_with_bridges.jpg)

Newcastle's post-Fordist inner-city structure aims to portray a cosmopolitan city environment which includes shopping, restaurants, modern art, museums, galleries, live performances and sporting events (Newcastle City Council, 2012). The tourism promotional organisation for Newcastle '*Newcastlegateshead*' resides within the Tyne waterside area and it is argued that tourism is worth £1.2 billion to the Newcastle and Gateshead area, and supports 19,000 jobs.

Elsewhere, other cities such as Durham, Exeter, Gloucester, Hereford, Lancaster, Peterborough, Worcester, Wakefield and Winchester (along with some of the smaller English Cathedral cities such as Canterbury and Truro) have attracted attention in their pursuit of tourism (Burns, 2008). Cochrane (2009) has argued the importance of tourism to the rural areas. Tourism has increasingly been integrated into the rural economy. Whilst cities in the more rural settings have relatively smaller numbers of inhabitants compared to their urban counterparts, one common feature that links tourism with cities of varying size, is the part tourism plays in the economy of those places (Human, 2008). One such city is Exeter, situated in the rural parts of the West Country, and is seen 'as a traditional heritage destination within the South West' (Exeter City Council, 2007). Exeter is both a cathedral and university city, and the cathedral has played an important role in attracting visitors since medieval times. Post-Fordist changes linked to consumption of recreational leisure has benefited Exeter in a

number of ways. It has an advantage of having an airport, which has experienced recent rapid growth mostly due to the 'low-cost' airline phenomena and the ability of the post-Tourist to engage in short recreational 'breaks'. Exeter's post-Fordist credentials are also in evidence with the conversion of redundant buildings in Exeter's historic quayside to mixed use facilities and related water-based activities. Such developments have benefited tourism in Exeter, Exeter City Council arguing that Exeter receives around 1.9 million visitors per year, who inject around £149 million into the local economy (Exeter City Council, 2007).

Cities with a longer history of attracting visitors have in recent years faced competition from other places who have responded to post-Fordist changes by including tourism and leisure in local development strategies. Therefore some cities are relatively new entrants to the tourism development scene. One such city is Gloucester. It was reported at the start of this work, the introduction of strategic development of tourism in Gloucester. Such strategic change was in recognition that Gloucester was receiving 6 million visitors per year, who generated an economic value of £91m. However Gloucester City Council argued that tourist expansion in the city would require a more robust planning strategy. Conversion of redundant industrial buildings in post-Fordist Britain for tourism or leisure purposes, has become a common factor in many of the cities. Redundant factory premises have also been converted in Gloucester, and a redundant glove factory in Worcester has been converted into a hotel.

#### **4.6 Concluding remarks**

This chapter has argued that the English cities constitute an important 'case' for evaluating the effect of the managerial paradigm on the management of local tourism. Post-Fordist change in Britain has seen a significant change in the landscape of English tourism, with more post-industrial cities becoming attracted to tourism development. However, it is also the case that tourism has increasingly been integrated into the rural economy (Cochrane, 2009). Therefore, the cities present a timely and appropriate 'case' for investigating the impact of the managerial paradigm on the management of local tourism.

## **CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY**

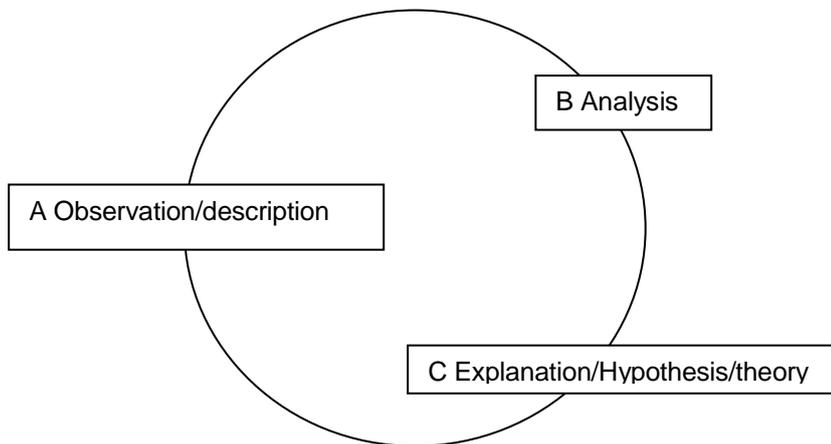
### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter will outline the methodology used for the study. The main research question and study objectives were identified in chapter 1. This chapter will discuss the role of theory, the research philosophy, and methodological challenges when engaging in management research. The selection of the respondents, triangulation method, research ethics and piloting of the research techniques will also be discussed before closing with a review of the data analysis methods.

### **5.1 Role of theory**

Debate within the research community has concerned the role of theory in research, and if theory should come before or after data collection (Gill and Johnson, 1997; Easterby-Smith *et al* 2008; Robson; 2011). For Gill and Johnson (1997), during our everyday lives we attempt to understand the events that surround us. For example, we may have expectations of how friends or colleagues may react or behave in the ways that they do. Such expectations may be tied to previous experience of how they may have behaved before. Therefore, such processes might be seen as attempts at constructing and evaluating explanations, or theories, from which predictions or expectations may be generated. As Gill and Johnson (1997) argue theory may 'be used to guide our practical actions, e.g. if we do A then B will happen, if we don't do A then C will happen' (p.25). The argument is that by using research it should be

possible to evaluate the accuracy of theories, an outcome of the research may be change in the nature of the theory so as to make it more accurate. By way of explanation, Veal (1997, p.29) offers a 'circular model of the research process' in figure 14.



**Figure 14:** Circular model of the research process. After Veal (1997, p.29)

Here Veal argues that the research process generally involves three main stages; the observation/description stage (A), analysis stage (B) and the explanation/theory stage (C), at equal points apart on the circular model. Veal argues that because it is a circular model, the research process could begin at point A (description) and work (via B) to point C (explanation/theory), or the process could begin at point C and work (via B) to point A.

Veal argues that if the research process begins at point C and proceeds to point A, gathering data, and then to point B, testing the data against the hypothesis, then the process is referred to as *deductive* i.e theory or explanation is deduced from the data or otherwise data is collected to develop a theory. If the research process begins at point A and proceeds to point C (via B) then the process is referred to as *inductive* i.e analysis is induced based on prior logical reasoning or otherwise developing a theory and testing it through research. However, Veal does concede that data is rarely collected without some explanatory model in mind, plus it is very difficult to develop hypotheses or theories without some initial information on the subject. However whilst

the model identifies an argument for theory in research, it also additionally serves as a platform to highlight the major disagreement within the research community concerning the place of theory within the research investigation. As such, we may discriminate between different research methods in terms of their relative emphasis on induction or deduction, their degree of structure, and the kinds of data they generate (Gill and Johnson, 1997). Thus Veal's model can be used as a platform to explain the philosophical differences between two main arguments as to whether theory should come before or after data collection.

## **5.2 Philosophical arguments and merits of mixed methods**

The merits of mixed methods designs for investigations in the social and behavioural sciences had been made for some time (Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009). To investigate changes in public sector management, from public 'administration' towards 'more managerialized and marketized forms' of organisation (Ferlie and Mark, 2002, p.311), commentators have argued that complementary data sets may be more appropriate than seeking 'one authoritative voice' (Ferlie and Mark, 2002, p.311). The methodology chosen for this study will be that of a mixed methods design (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009).

Gill and Johnson (1997) argue that there exists a 'continuum of research methods' (p.37) where, at each end, it is possible to distinguish between opposing logics supporting arguments for what Gill and Johnson call *ideographic* or *nomothetic* methodologies (p.37). Advocates of 'nomothetic' methodologies emphasise the importance of research being based on 'systematic protocol and technique' (Gill and Johnson, 1997, p.37). Supporters of such tradition argues that the researcher should seek facts, look for causality and fundamental laws, and formulate hypotheses that can be tested (Gill and Johnson, 1997). Such approaches are commonly found in natural science research, where research protocols are firmly structured in order to allow 'replicability', usually including the generation and analysis of 'quantitative' data (Gill and Johnson, 1997). The argument in this case, is that with systematic protocols and techniques it should be possible for a research project to be replicated by the

same or different researchers in order that similar conclusions may emerge (Shipman, 1972). However Shipman (1972) argues that, in fact, it is misleading to suggest that such investigations always demonstrate such rigidity, and emerge with 'facts' that are irrefutable. Shipman argues that the process of scientific research may not always follow a logical pattern, and that 'scientists make their work public in a way that omits false starts, dead ends and changes in direction' (p. 12).

The research community also contains those who are willing to be more flexible in their research approaches, supported by a philosophical belief that systematic protocols may be fallible or be unsuitable for investigating certain phenomena (Gill and Johnson, 1997; Creswell and Clark, 2007; Robson, 2011). 'Ideographic' approaches have as their philosophical foundation a rejection that the social world can only be measured through 'scientific' methods, (Veal, 1997; Easterby-Smith *et al*, 2008). For example, in social science investigation, Veal (1997) argues that 'the scientific model must be adapted and modified and in some cases even abandoned' (p. 2). The emphasis with ideographic techniques is the importance of interpretation of subjects' meanings and explanations of their own situations. Such have been described through several labels such as 'post-positivist', phenomenological, 'ethnographic', neo-Marxist or 'qualitative' (Ferlie and Mark, 2002; Robson, 2002; Creswell and Clark, 2007). The main point of contention between the two camps is not that the objective of science is to uncover a 'truth', rather that we are always able to obtain a 'truth' using purely nomothetic techniques. The criticism of positivism, and the perceived weakness of the positivist approach, is in its inability to recognise or capture, for example, emotions, thoughts and views; which may be deemed insignificant to the nomothetic logic because they are either difficult or impossible to be measured. Therefore, the 'interpretist' logic (Veal, 1997) argues that explanation can also be provided by understanding, and understanding in some situations can only be achieved by 'getting inside situations' (Gill and Johnson, 1997, p.37). Techniques at the ideographic end of the research continuum therefore favour more reliance on 'subjective accounts' (Gill and Johnson, 1997, p.37), the researcher being in contact with subjects being studied in order to provide, what Veal (1997) calls 'see[ing] the world from their point of view' (p.31). To the ever-growing spectrum of ideographic techniques of 'qualitative' methods

including documentary analysis, participant observation, focus groups, can now be added, for example, blogs and on-line chatrooms.

The ideographic approach may also be subject to critical discussion and philosophical arguments with regard to, for example, the amount of involvement or detachment of the researcher (Easterby-Smith *et al*, 2008; Robson, 2011). Interpretive methods, such as direct observation, are not always easy or trouble-free options (Issues can concern the extent to which an observer - in an observation setting - may affect the situation under observation. It is argued that such may be overcome by, for example, by seeking to ensure that the observed are unaware of the observation scenario, but such practice may also raise ethical considerations. There is also the element of 'predictability'. Humans are less 'predictable' than other phenomena (Veal, 1997), insomuch that people can be aware of research being conducted around them, and may not therefore be purely 'passive' subjects insomuch that they can react to the conducting of research and change their behaviour accordingly. However supporters of interpretist approaches argue that interpretive approaches 'relate to real people', and small-scale studies using in-depth interviews, whilst they may be considered low on internal validity because of, for example, relatively low numbers of participants, can rate high on external validity because they relate to people in everyday settings. Therefore, supporters of techniques within the ideographic spectrum retain the fundamental objectives of positivism i.e the possibility of, and search for, an objective 'truth' for example - but the key argument is that in cases, such as for example in the social sciences, the post-positivist investigation may also need be receptive to other measures (including multiple measures) in order to obtain a firmer understanding of 'reality'.

In the study of NPM, both quantitative (Walker and Boyne, 2006) and qualitative (Enticott and Entwistle, 2007) approaches have been used. In some studies (for example Downe and Martin, 2006), the research technique has drawn together both quantitative and qualitative techniques in a mixed methods or 'triangulation' design (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p.62). Whilst the quantitative and qualitative logics have been portrayed as like trying to mix oil and water, there are many who support a research philosophy that several complementary methods of data generation may be

required in order to try to produce conclusive results in a particular case (Ferlie and Mark, 2002). Therefore by adopting a mixed methods 'triangulation' the researcher seeks to 'obtain different but complementary data on the same topic' (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p.62). Other commentators, such as McMenemy (2007) have argued that in researching the 'managerialism' phenomenon, a triangulation of methods was appropriate. Therefore, a triangulation has been used in this study. As an exploratory study investigating change in local government working, the investigation has sought as a fuller picture as possible of the current situation.

The approach argued for this study was a triangulation incorporating an 'embedded' design (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p.67). There are two advantages of an embedded design for the researcher, especially those who may be at PhD level and in full time employment and who may not have sufficient time or resources to embark on large-scale quantitative or qualitative data collection. An 'embedded' design may incorporate several different but complementary data sets, which may be collected at different times. It was felt at an early stage in this research process that a single data set may not be sufficient to explore the managerialism thesis in tourism. The embedded design used for this study has also provided the advantage of being able to incorporate a 'multi-level' system of data collection (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p.65). Multi-level models can be common in management research (Gill and Johnson, 1997), for example in a study of an employee counselling service in England, Elliot and Williams (2002) incorporated quantitative data at the organisational level, and qualitative data at the client, counsellor and director levels (Gill and Johnson, 1997). It will be seen that the embedded design for this study incorporated multi-level research at several different levels within the local authority working environment with senior managers at several levels within specific local authorities.

### **5.3 Validity**

A key aspect of research is validity, and validity raises two important aspects of consideration in relation to this, or any other, study. The first is in regard to the overall output of the study. Validity in research is based on the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from the study (Bryman, 2012.) Therefore, the validity of an

investigation is dependent upon the extent to which the data collected gives a true measurement or description of 'reality'. The argument for using a triangulation for this study, is that a triangulation will create a data gathering process where analysis and conclusions are valid and reliable. Whilst recognising that the individual elements of the triangulation may have weaknesses, by using multiple methods this study seeks to claim objective validity. The second aspect of validity with regard to this study is the need to recognise the author's status as a former tourism manager, and thus conducting a study in an area of which the researcher was conversant and even previously professionally experienced. A criticism with familiarity of an area under investigation is that it may lead to the researcher developing a 'myopia', in their approach to the research investigation possibly leading to compromise with regard to 'objectivity'. The author has not been involved in local government working for over a decade, therefore it is hoped that any myopia was not evident and an objective perspective prevailed. There is also the argument that there is an advantage of a researcher having insights to a research area, and being able to understand meanings, and dimensions of the area under study. Robson (2011) calls it demonstrating that you 'know the lie of the land' (p.402). This argument suggests that this may enhance the understanding of the context of the participant's 'social, political and economic environments' (Robson, 2011, p.199), and can help to making meaning of the participant's social reality. Marshall (1984) argues that researchers can overcome barriers if they appear as 'valuable, politically knowledgeable people' (p.239). It was hoped that when the researcher contacted the tourism managers requesting questionnaires to be completed and interviews requested, that the conversation convinced the respondents that the researcher, and the research study, was a valuable investigation of change in local tourism management. Almost every respondent contacted has requested some form of 'copy' of the research findings.

#### **5.4 A symmetry of outcomes: merits of the case study**

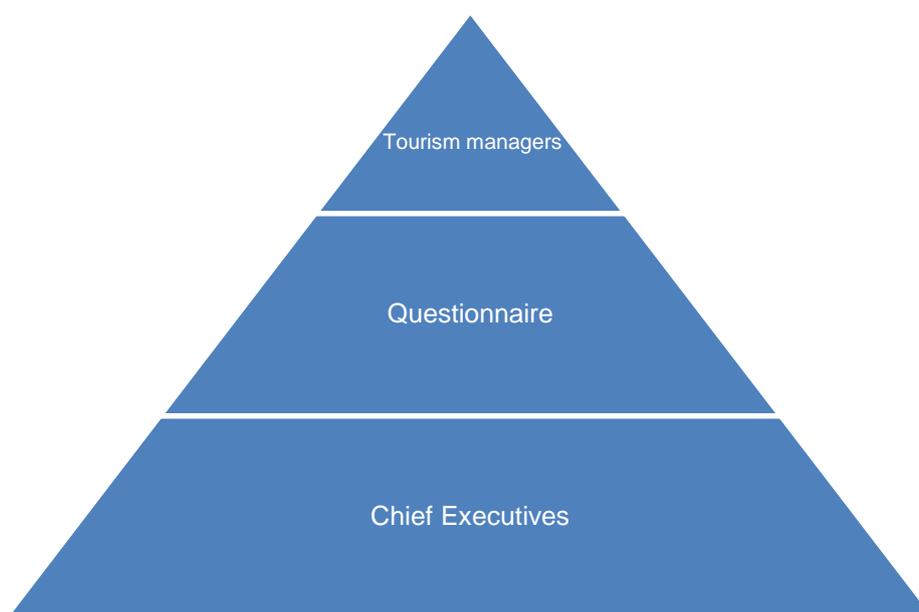
All research involves risk, and it is therefore advisable to try to build some protection into the work in order to yield worthwhile findings if difficulties arise. Gill and Johnson (1997) argue that a 'symmetry of potential outcomes' (p.14) is a desirable feature of a

research design, because such may provide some insurance against the consequences of things going wrong. Gill and Johnson argue that a symmetry of potential outcomes can be a 'characteristic of a good research topic' (p.13), because with a symmetry of outcomes if less data evolves from an inquiry than expected, the findings may still be 'equally valuable' (p.14). Therefore, for this study, selection of an appropriate methodology required careful consideration in order that whatever data evolved from the inquiry presented findings of value. As the aim of the study was to evaluate the effect of policy on local tourism management, a sample group of 'appropriate' size and nature would need to be identified where respondents may have common features, but additionally be large enough for conclusions to be representative of the wider local authority body.

The rationale for using the cities as a 'case' has been made earlier in this work. At the onset of the study an analysis was conducted of the entire list of English cities, in order to identify realistically which places should be included in the study. It had been decided at an early stage that the triangulation would involve contact with local authority chief executives. This is because this investigation particularly wished to secure the views of local authority chief executives, in regard to the study objective of understanding the role local authorities see themselves as playing in the delivery of local tourism policy. Therefore, two criteria were set for inclusion of a city in the study: chief executive status and size of the city. Cities who do not have a chief executive and were deemed too small (population less than 15,000) were not included in the study. London as a city and Ripon (population 24,000) as authorities do not have chief executives. Wells (population 10,000), Ely (population 14,000) were also not included in the study. The chief executive in Harrogate District Council was contacted as an alternate for Ripon. As both Cambridge and Ely fall in the same district, the view of only the chief executive in Cambridge District Council was sought. In 2012, Chelmsford was announced as the 51<sup>st</sup> city in England, but this announcement was too late for Chelmsford to be included in the study. Therefore, potentially there were 47 cities which could make up the sample group. It was considered that using a case of this wider group of cities could provide an opportunity to produce important insights not only in the case of English cities, but also across the wider picture of English local authorities.

## 5.5 The triangulation

The study has sought the current picture of local authority involvement with tourism, and in order to build such a picture figure 15 identifies the 3 main sources of primary data which have constituted an embedded research design used in this study.



**Figure 15:** Sources of primary information for the study

The selection of chief executives and tourism managers was a 'purposeful' sample (Creswell and Clark, 2007, p.112) of potential participants who play a critical part in phenomenon being explored. The inclusion of documentary analysis was to provide information which may be of importance to the investigation, for example providing data linked to policy implementation, current or future strategy, decision-making, resource allocation, performance for example, and which may not have been available from contact with chief executives or tourism managers. An advantage with documentary analysis is that there may be relatively low costs apart from accessing the material (an advantage is that nowadays a lot of relevant material produced by organisations such as local authorities can be found on the Internet). However disadvantages of documentary analysis can include the inability to secure from documents respondents views, opinions or even emotions, and furthermore

documents which are critical to a study may be sensitive and/or not publicly available. The objective of the triangulation was that data from contact with key players in the tourism process may provide data which can form a more complete picture of what is actually happening in practice. Therefore, it was felt that greater validity would be achieved by using multiple methods and not just a survey or interview with tourism managers.

### **5.5.1 Local authority chief executives and considering access issues**

The involvement of senior management at two different 'levels' of local authority with an involvement in tourism was a deliberate strategy in order to secure data from respondents working 'at the coalface' but in slightly different ways. The views of chief executives were considered as being important because, as the *Chief Operating Officer* (CEO) of a local authority, chief executives are at the heart of the local authority policy process with a responsibility of ensuring that services provided by the authority are balanced with available resources. The views of chief executives were important in providing an understanding of the role local authorities see themselves as playing in the delivery of local tourism policy, in the face of prevailing pressures on local authorities. Contact with chief executives could provide a gauge of personal 'attitudes' towards tourism, insomuch that chief executives may provide an 'unbiased' opinion with regard to their authority's involvement with tourism vis-à-vis other local authority services - views which may not otherwise be available or articulated within documentation. Therefore, the data generated from contact with chief executives was designed to fulfil objective 1.

However, the issue of 'access' posed a clear potential problem. Access is a methodological challenge in management research (Gill and Johnson, 1997; Robson, 2011). Wishing to involve senior managers including chief executives meant the issue of access was one which needed to be given careful consideration at a very early stage. The management research literature highlights that a major potential problem for researchers is securing access to senior management. Gill and Johnson, (1997) note 'boardrooms are notoriously difficult to access' (p. 105). In this case it was not

boardrooms particularly but chief executives. Reasons for access difficulties can include disinterest in the particular study, lack of time to respond, or 'gatekeepers' denying access to the potential respondent (Robson, 2011). Lever (1996, p.7), whilst conducting a study investigating urban cultural regeneration reported that

*'attempts were made to speak to City Council members and individuals to gain access to other primary data. Unfortunately access was blocked with the result that the level of primary data gathered was very disappointing.'*

Lever does not articulate any further on how precisely access was 'blocked', but in the case of chief executives 'gatekeepers' may provide a major hurdle. Access to chief executives is usually via secretaries. During the author's time at Liverpool City Council, the tourism development department was involved in a number of high-profile initiatives to drive tourism forward (including the very early stages of what would eventually be the bid to be European Capital of Culture in 2008), and the author experienced a very positive working relationship with the Council's chief executive. As the most senior officer within the local authority, requesting meetings with the chief executive had to be made via his secretary. It is also important to note that the time of the author's tenure at Liverpool City Council (mid-1990s) was before e-mail, nowadays a positive working relationship may involve e-mailing someone directly. But at this time, appointments with the chief executive had to be made via his secretary, and many days in advance. As chief executive he was extremely busy and had an almost permanently full diary. Therefore, for a successful research outcome for this study, access to chief executives was a hurdle which would need to be overcome. If gatekeepers were present between chief executives and the researcher, the cooperation of gatekeepers, or avoidance of gatekeepers, had to be addressed.

Mail, telephone or requesting a face-to-face meeting would have inevitably involved some form of gatekeeper potentially blocking access, the method used to contact chief executives was by e-mail. Through an Internet search of the websites of the local authorities in the cities, it was possible after an intensive period of searching, to identify e-mail addresses of either the chief executive directly, or an e-mail address for their office, for the 47 chief executives. Therefore, 47 chief executives were contacted

by e-mail. It was recognised that local authority chief executives are intensely busy professionals, and the survey was designed carefully in order to encourage responses, rather than being ignored. Therefore, in consultation with my supervisors, it was decided to limit the questions to only 8 questions (of which some had several parts), as it was felt that more questions may discourage potential respondents from participating. The overall objective of securing chief executives views was the priority, and therefore the number and wording of questions were chosen carefully in order to try to maximise participation. Chief executives were able to give simple answers (yes/no or figures) to the questions, but respondents were also encouraged to make further comments should they wish. A limitation is recognised in that with a proportion of the questions requiring yes/no answers, the data produced from the chief executive element of the study may not be comprehensive or 'rich'. Nevertheless, the questions were based around key themes identified in the literature in previous chapters concerning the role local authorities see themselves as playing in the delivery of local tourism policy. This included key themes from the literature such as levels of financial support for tourism, how their city 'operationalised' tourism promotion, and role of the local authority in local tourism development. When finished, respondents could reply to the researcher by simply returning the e-mail instantly. This method was particularly chosen in order to make responding to the survey as easy as possible for busy chief executives, and to try to avoid access problems mentioned earlier such as 'gatekeepers'. Chief Executives were promised anonymity in all answers. Appendix 1 is an e-mail response from a chief executive which has been anonymised.

Clearly there is a risk to this type of strategy. There is the possibility that very busy chief executives may not choose to reply for reasons such as work pressure, the feeling that they may not need to reply to this type of request, or simply that their city is not involved with tourism (or they may just miss the e-mail). Additionally, just using e-mail communication (and no other forms such as questionnaires sent by mail) risked obtaining a low sample if a poor response was received. Response rates can be linked to perceived importance of the research, and low responses may present limitations in conclusions from limited data. Response rates can vary considerably in researching public sector management. For example Ball and Monaghan (1996) reported that a response rate of 55% from chief executives in their study of

performance review systems was 'creditably high' (p.44). In the area of tourism, Richards and Wilkes's (1990) survey of tourism in local authorities achieved a response rate of 66%, Gilbert and Tung's (1990) survey of rural marketing in England and Wales achieved a response rate of 65%. Hudson and Townsend's (1992) work on policies of tourism employers gained a response rate of 20% (Witt and Moutinho, 1995). Out of the 47 chief executives contacted for this study 25 responses were received, giving a response rate of 53%. Furthermore, using the Internet highlighted an advantage over other methods such as postal surveys; as a response was received from a chief executive in a 'rural' city just 22 minutes after the original e-mail was sent.

### **5.5.2 *Tourism managers***

Contact with managers in local authority-funded tourism departments was critical in understanding to what extent the managerial paradigm has influenced the role of local authorities, and has impacted organisational management of tourism at the local level. A dual method was used to fulfill this objective of the study. A questionnaire was devised (appendix 2) which sought data concerning their authority's support for tourism services, delivery mechanisms for tourism marketing, methods of business planning, financial allocations for tourism (tourism budgets), and modes of evaluation and performance management.

In order to make contact with tourism managers and send the questionnaire, the method for identifying and contacting tourism managers was slightly different from that of chief executives. The initial stage of the primary research had involved an internet search made of the websites of English cities in order to establish contact with local authority chief executives. Within the survey to chief executives was a question asking chief executives whether their authority promoted local tourism from within the authority structure. If chief executives replied 'yes', they were asked the name of the department and lead officer. Of the chief executives who responded to the survey and replied 'yes', all of the respondents further identified the lead officer for tourism. For any cities where the chief executive did not respond to the survey, local authority

websites and documentary material were examined. This was in order to try to identify if the authority engaged with tourism and, if so, the name of the tourism department and the lead officer (tourism manager). In some cases this required a very long-winded and lengthy exercise. In these cases, the method of using the internet had to be extended to contacting Council call centres and Tourist Information Centres in order to try to ascertain if the local authority currently had a tourism department.

It was possible to establish there were 38 cities where tourism managers could be identified. All were contacted either by phone or e-mail. Where it was possible to make initial contact by phone, this was the preferred method. In most cases this proved to be successful. In others it was not, so e-mails were sent. All were asked if they would partake in a research study investigating change in the management of local tourism with a particular focus on the cities. It was explained that this involved a questionnaire which would be sent to them. In all 38 questionnaires were sent. A section in the questionnaire at the end asked respondents if they would agree to be further contacted as part of the study. 10 interviewees were chosen in either urban or rural areas across England. The objective of seeking interviews with tourism officers was to produce important 'qualitative data' (Denscombe, 1998). Denscombe (1998) argues that 'qualitative data...is the product of a process of interpretation' (p.208) and only becomes data when it is interpreted by the researcher. This qualitative data was considered to be 'soft' and individualistic and aimed to explore the lived experiences of tourism managers, but with the clear intention that the professional history of the researcher (mine) would not colour any interpretations of the data. This would therefore hopefully support any claim that this study could make of the research being impartial and objective.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen (Creswell and Clark, 2007). This was in order to set an 'agenda' of questions around the subject area, but also to be able to ask new questions as the interview progressed inviting interviewees to share further views. There can be criticism of the semi-structured approach insomuch that being semi-structured may lead to it not being focussed (Veal, 1997). However there is also the argument that this method can be appropriate in situations when a researcher has a specific topic area that he/she wishes to examine, but where it is also possible to

explore relevant topics if they emerge (Veal, 1997). Being semi-structured and conducting the inquiry in a semi-systematic way, can also still preserve similarity between the interviews and allow comparisons to be made. Following the questionnaire being sent to tourism managers, interviews were based around themes designed particularly to explore the experience of tourism managers. Questions were grouped in themes, although it was possible to revisit themes should respondents raise issues that were significant to previous themes. The themes for the interviews can be found in appendix 3 Interviews were conducted on the premises of the respondents during the period September to December 2012.

## **5.6 Ethics**

Ethical considerations for research can include areas such as consent, potential coercion or harm or risk to participants, privacy, confidentiality, disclosure or anonymity of participants, and ownership of data (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Robson 2011).

Ethics has been a major consideration in this study. This research seeks to uncover the impact of policy on the day-to-day management of tourism, and thus contact with senior personnel in local authorities has been part of the research strategy. However, this is a difficult time for those involved with local authority support for tourism. In an environment of 'closures, changes and cuts' (TMI, 2011), respondents may be facing very difficult decisions affecting their professional lives. This study may be coinciding with very difficult working environments. The author of this study is a member of the Tourism Management Institute, and protection of the professional integrity of fellow professionals has been of paramount concern throughout the study. The study has had to strike a very difficult balance between the requirement to generate appropriate data, whilst at the same time not compromising, or causing any embarrassment at any time, to respondents positions in a very professional and political environment. In a study concerning the managerial paradigm in English universities, Deem *et al* (2007) argued 'the need for utmost confidentiality' is required together with 'the need for individuals to be confident that they would not be identifiable in any way' (p.34). Deem *et al* 'ensured that there was anonymization of individuals...and institutions' (p.34).

Therefore, from the earliest stages of this investigation, protection of respondents has been a prime consideration. The policy used for this study has mirrored that in Deem *et al's* investigation. No individuals or their local authorities are identified in this study. All of the data received personally from respondents (chief executive survey, questionnaire and interview data), has been anonymised. However, for any information which has been used in this study which has been published in some manner (for example tourism strategies or information on websites) is not anonymised and the sources cited.

Contact with chief executives was made through the internet. Clearly, such offered no harm or risk to participants, but such an approach made the task of securing chief executives to sign consent forms impossible. However, in the contact e-mail to chief executives, chief executives were informed of the purpose of the research, exactly what was required in their case and informed respondents that all responses would be treated anonymously. Therefore, in the presentation of the chief executive data (chapter 6), all of the respondents or their cities have been anonymised. In order that a chief executive, their authority, city, or region cannot be identified, respondents were grouped into one of two groups:

Chief executive, urban city

Chief executive, rural city

How the cities were designated as 'urban' or 'rural' will be explained later in this chapter.

The questionnaire to tourism managers was specifically designed to fulfil objective two and thus requested information which would generate data in the specific context managerial paradigm. However in areas such as identification of tourism budgets, there could be a case where disclosure of such information maybe in breach of confidentiality or identify a specific city or participant. Respondents were promised anonymity, and therefore data generated from the questionnaire has been anonymised. In terms of the interviews, tourism managers chosen as potential respondents for interview were contacted initially by e-mail. A request for an interview

was made. Again they were assured that all interviews were confidential. At the start of the interview process, all interviewees were given a brief verbal description of the objectives of the interview. They were also given a 'participant information sheet' (appendix 4) with more information concerning the study and were invited to sign the form. Interviewees had previously been informed that the research was part of a PhD investigation, and as such the information and comments they shared could be used in the final written thesis. However, the procedure of preserving anonymity was also explained. They were all asked if the interview could be taped purely for accuracy reasons. Respondents did not seem to be perturbed by being recorded. Oliver (1997) argues that subjects may be unsettled by unfamiliar procedures such as tape recording interviews, but if interviewees are 'fairly familiar with such procedures these are less likely to effect the research procedure' (p.117). Perhaps as tourism managers they are often asked for such interviews and/or are confident in one-to-one situations. All audio tapes have been catalogued and filed to ensure trustworthiness and validity of data.

A critical important ethical issue related to those in professional positions is disclosure and presentation of information which may be politically sensitive. In a time of severe pressures on local authorities, and views of managers may be deemed politically sensitive particularly if the current environment includes possibilities of funding being cut (politically sensitive) or the department or employment being put at risk (personally/professionally sensitive). It was mentioned earlier in this chapter that researchers conversant in a particular area, and who may 'know the lie of the land' (Robson, 2011, p.402), may also appear as 'valuable, politically knowledgeable people' (Marshall, 1984, p.239), and give some reassurance to respondents that the researcher understands sensitivities involved.

When first contacted to request an interview, all potential respondents were informed that all views would be confidential. At the start of the interviews, all respondents were reassured again that their views would not be attributed to them personally. It was hoped that anonymity would put respondents at ease, and feel that they could be as candid in their responses if they wished. All interviews have been anonymised. Interview data has been presented in such a way that a respondent, their department,

local authority, city, or region cannot be identified. Pseudonyms have been used for the interviewees as one of four groups:

Manager, urban area, northern England

Manager, rural area, northern England

Manager, urban area, midlands

Manager, rural area, midlands

Manager, urban area southern England

Manager, rural area southern England

## **5.7 Piloting**

Blaxter et al (1996) refer to piloting as 'reassessment without tears' (p.121). The survey to chief executive's was difficult to pilot with chief executives themselves because of the relatively small number of potential respondents, and the unknown of how many surveys would have to be sent out in order to receive a 'pilot' survey back with comments. Therefore, the chief executive's survey was not piloted but the questions formulated then shared and agreed with my supervisors. The e-mails were sent out in several 'batches'. Initially, the first batch included only a few e-mails to 'test the water'. This led to a nervous time. However e-mails starting returning fairly quickly. 3 were received back within 24 hours which gave the author a boost in confidence that I had pitched things (in terms of type and number of questions and length of the survey) correctly. In order to further test whether the questions were appropriate, the early responses were checked for any comments regarding appropriateness of the study or suitability of the questions. It was found within the first few responses that chief executives had answered the questions and several had also additionally provided a few (if only brief) comments. This gave the author the confidence to send the remaining e-mails immediately.

In terms of piloting the design of the questionnaire sent to tourism officers, Blaxter et al (1996) refer to 'informal piloting' (p.42) where questions are tested on 'friends' but this approach was rejected. It was considered that the data required was specific: linked to the key themes identified in the literature. Therefore the questionnaire was devised

being informed and structured from key themes from the literature. The pilot questionnaire was sent to a long-standing professional contact (tourism manager) based in a non-urban large town in mid-England. The pilot questionnaire included an amended non-city version of question 1, as the pilot destination chosen was a non-urban place. A hard copy was sent to the pilot 'volunteer' who was asked to do several tasks:

- to fill in the questionnaire
- make comments with regard to the structure and appropriateness of questions
- make comment as to whether the questionnaire was the right length and which would encourage respondents to fill out the questionnaire
- give other feedback on the suitability of the questionnaire by writing on any further notes or comments.

The questionnaire was returned with all of the questions answered and a comment from the respondent written on the top of questionnaire saying 'didn't have any problem with these !!'

Further inspection indicated:

- That the respondent had not appeared to have had any problem understanding the questions as all of the questions had been answered in some way
- Some additions had been added to a small number of the questions
- Some small changes had been suggested to several of the questions
- Some comments had been written in several areas

After careful consideration, some changes were made to the questionnaire before being sent to tourism managers.

Piloting the interview in Liverpool was rejected. This was because when responding to the questionnaire, the tourism manager in Liverpool indicated that they were also

available to being contacted further. Therefore, the interview was not piloted in Liverpool. A professional contact (tourism manager of long-standing experience) was contacted. When contacted, it was found that in fact they had recently retired from local authority management, but because of our professional association in the past they were quite willing to take part in a pilot of the questionnaire. It was considered that the experience and recent knowledge of this person could provide an appropriate scrutiny of the interview questions and proposed themes. A pilot interview was conducted over the phone, and then transcribed, a copy of which can be seen in appendix 5. However, the respondent in the pilot study also suggested another contact, a long-standing tourism manager contact in a rural area. This manager was contacted and asked if they would participate in a pilot interview. The respondent readily agreed and the pilot interview was conducted. The information from the second pilot interview was substantial and confirmed that the interview questions were appropriate for the study. However, it was considered that not to incorporate such important substantial interview data would be wasteful and therefore the data has been incorporated in the rural area category.

## **5.8 Analysing the data**

### ***5.8.1 Grouping the cities***

It has been described that in order to anonymise respondent views and information, the cities have been placed into an urban or rural category. Therefore, a 'cut-off' point was also required. Law (2002) and Defra (2009) and have argued that identifying 'cut-off' points can be difficult. Defra (2009) report that for the urban/rural classifications in their report, cut-off points were in most cases chosen on the basis of evidence (statistical and visual) of a 'natural break' in the relevant distribution. In a study of urban tourism in France, Cazes and Potier (cited in Law, 2002) used population size as criteria for distinguishing between urban and rural classification of city. 25,000 was the cut-off point for lower limit of urban status. This study has also chosen population size as the distinction between urban and rural classification. City populations clearly vary over time, and population size on various websites does not always identify the appropriate year. This study used city populations sizes identified in the UK Census of

2000. Using such data, there was evidently a clear gap between the population size of two particular cities; one being around 160,000 and one around 180,000. Therefore a cut-off point for lower limit for urban size for this study was set at 180,000. This led to 24 cities being categorised as ‘urban’ and 23 as ‘rural’. Figure 16 identifies the classification of urban or rural city in this study.

Classification	City
Urban	Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bradford, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Wakefield, Coventry, Nottingham, Leicester, Sunderland, Newcastle upon Tyne, Brighton, Hull, Plymouth, Stoke-on-Trent, Wolverhampton, Derby, Southampton, Salford, Westminster, Portsmouth, York
Rural	Peterborough, Lancaster, Oxford, Preston, St Albans, Norwich, Chester, Cambridge, Salisbury, Exeter, Gloucester, Chichester, Winchester, Carlisle, Worcester, Bath, Durham, Lincoln, Hereford, Canterbury, Lichfield, Ripon, Truro,

**Figure 16:** Classification of urban or rural city based on population

It is acknowledged that the cut-off point in this study is an arbitrary decision and some cities, for example, classed as ‘urban’ in this study may not consider themselves as ‘urban’. This argument is acknowledged, however the objective of the study is to provide a deeper of understanding of cities as tourism destinations which has hitherto been un-researched and such a cut-off point provides two groups of cities with at least 23 members in each.

### **5.8.2 Chief executive surveys**

The survey to chief executives was a ‘simple survey’ (Robson, 2011) intended to collect mostly standardised data from a group of respondents over a short period of time. As articulated, the survey was contained within an e-mail to chief executives in order to try to encourage busy chief executives to respond. It should be emphasised

that the survey of chief executives was intended to provide a gauge of chief executive views towards tourism and not a comprehensive survey of all chief executives in all local authorities. Therefore, as Robson (2011) notes, for relatively simple surveys, specialist statistical software is not essential and for the chief executives data, analysis was able to be carried out 'by hand'. From the overall responses from the group, individual responses to each question were grouped and analysed. This enabled further data to be produced, such as percentages of answers to particular questions to be calculated in order to produce semi-quantitative results which is presented in chapter 6 as either figures or tables. Chief executives were also invited to make further comments should they wish, of which a number did.

Data can also be analysed by methods such as content analysis, semiotics, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and interpretive analysis (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Robson, 2011; Bryman, 2012). Whilst semiotics seek to understand the underlining messages in visual texts, for example marketing media analysis, in discourse analysis the production of meaning through language and texts is explored. With discourse analysis, the way language is expressed and how people use language to construct their accounts of the social world is important and viewed as important to the research. Interpretative analysis aims to capture hidden meanings or messages that may be encoded, latent or hidden. Analysis of the additional comments by chief executives was undertaken (via an interpretive process) to identify commonalities or themes - for example chief executives expressing similar views, raising similar themes or using similar words or expressions – which could identify explanations or meanings in the context of the research (and the cause-effect relationship of such meanings in the wider context of public sector management).

### **5.8.3 Interview data**

With qualitative data, analysis will usually involve some form of 'coding, indexing, sorting, retrieving, or otherwise manipulating data' (Coffee and Atkinson, 1996, p.6). For the interview data, immersion with the data involved a protracted process of first transcribing the interviews, then listening a number of times to the tapes and reading and re-reading the transcriptions; a process of working back and forth through the data

(Creswell and Clark, 2007). The research literature argues that *domain analysis* and *taxonomic analysis* can assist the social science researcher in systematically moving from engaging with a social situation to understanding it, through identifying patterns that exist in data. Within the data may be cultural patterns of behaviour or knowledge that a group has learned or created, or ways that people talk or express themselves; described as cultural domains (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). These can be described as 'folk terms,' the task of the researcher being to search through field notes or transcriptions looking for terms that participants consistently use, or relationships between words or terms. In this sense, the researcher is seeking to understand and recognise patterns rather than just describe them. All interviews were explored for 'meaning and patterns' (Robson, 2011, p.477). An 'open coding' process (Robson, 2011) started with the pilot interview. This was transcribed, and read several times looking for, and making a note in the margins of, words seen as key words (may have been mentioned several times in the interview or discussed in the literature), or short phrases or themes, referred to as 'initial codes' by Robson (2011, p.478). These were noted during each reading and re-reading of the pilot transcript. After a number of readings of the pilot transcript, it was apparent that there were around 30 words or themes which appeared to be significant within the interview (appendix 5). After a number of readings of the pilot transcript, it was felt that all of the themes that were appearing to be relevant had been identified and, additionally, notes made.

During the interviews, detailed notes were also taken as well as the recording. This was in order to note down key words which may have appeared in other interviews or which may suggest a further exploration of the word or theme sometime later in the interview. By the end of the interview stage the author had 10 audio tapes of interviews. The interviews were transcribed as soon as possible after the interview with the transcriptions being used and kept for future reference. The interviews were also transcribed and coded in the same way as the pilot. As the interviews were carried out several more (but not many) 'key words' appeared, and it was interesting to see that the themes and key words from the pilot appeared 'representative' of the current picture i.e almost all of them later appeared in the tourism manager interview transcripts suggesting that the pilot had been appropriate in setting an 'accurate scene' for the later interviews. Therefore the

analysis has been constructed through a building process of identification of themes and connections ‘thematic networks’ (Robson, 2011, p.483) of ‘global themes’ or sub-themes, and which could also identify dissimilarities or differences, for example in the case of the two different types of cities. Following this, a process of ‘integration and interpretation’ (Robson, 2011, p.483) was conducted where global themes and sub-themes were explored in context of the interview data order to understand more about what the data is specifically trying to say.

# **CHAPTER 6: THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN THE DELIVERY OF LOCAL TOURISM POLICY. VIEWS OF CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

## **6.0 Introduction**

It has been argued that the cities in England have become increasingly attracted to tourism development (Law, 2002; Burns, 2008). However, local authorities supporting tourism reside within complex political environments. The current economic climate is placing considerable financial pressure on local authorities (Local Government Chronicle, 2012a). It is with this background that this chapter seeks to understand how tourism is perceived within local authorities, and the impact of the current climate upon support for local tourism policy. McGee and Meng (2006) have argued that perceptions of tourism, particularly those amongst policymakers, are extremely important, particularly in times when difficult financial decisions are being made.

Therefore, local authority chief executives were contacted. The views of chief executives were sought because of chief executives' overarching position over all services provided within their authority. Therefore, the intention is that chief executives could provide a gauge as to how local authorities are supporting non-statutory functions such as tourism, in a difficult climate. Whilst encouraging personal views, the researcher was aware that opinions of respondents may not be the same as that of policy of their authority, and therefore respondents were promised anonymity. As

discussed in chapter 5, in order to ensure anonymity respondents or their local authorities have not been identified in the presentation of the data. Responses have been categorised as being from an 'urban' or 'rural' area.

Therefore, within the first objective of seeking to understand the role local authorities see themselves as playing in the delivery of local tourism policy, the data in this chapter will be presented under two sub-themes:

- *Perception of tourism within local authorities.*

Should local authorities financially support tourism? What financial provision is their authority making for tourism development? How do local authorities perceive current pressures on financially supporting tourism? Do local authorities perceive that tourism budgets should be limited in the face of other financial pressures? Should other funding sources such as local tourist taxes now be explored? Should the public or private sectors bear the larger part of financing local tourism promotion?

- *Provision for tourism development.*

Are those authorities involved with tourism development promoting tourism 'in-house' (within their authorities) or outsourcing their tourism marketing? For those who promote tourism 'in-house' where does tourism 'sit' within their authorities? How do local authorities perceive the parts played by the public and private sectors in funding collaborative partnerships. How do local authorities perceive the importance of financially supporting tourism compared to other services? Are local authorities considering exiting from supporting tourism and leave tourism as a matter for the private sector?

All percentages have been rounded.

## **6.1 Response to the survey**

Figure 17 illustrates the response to the survey.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>No response</b>
Urban	10	14
Rural	15	8
<b>All cities</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>22</b>

**Figure 17:** Responses to the survey

Of 47 executives e-mailed, 25 replies were received, a response rate of 53%. The highest proportion of replies came from respondents in the rural cities. 15 (65%) chief executives in the rural areas responded to the survey, compared to 10 (42%) of those in the urban areas.

## **6.2 The perception of tourism within local authorities.**

Within the wider objective of understanding the role local authorities are playing in the delivery of local tourism policy, the earlier part of the survey sought to elicit views of chief executives with regard to financial support for tourism.

### **6.2.1 Should local authorities be financially supporting tourism ?**

Given the history of local authority involvement with tourism, such a question may appear to have been considered inappropriate. However, in the light of difficult financial circumstances in which local authorities find themselves, this study wished to gauge local authority views in the current climate. Respondents were asked 'with prevailing pressures on local authorities, in your view should local authorities financially support tourism ?' This question was particularly designed to elicit personal views as to whether chief executives are of the view that their local authorities should be financially supporting tourism. Figure 18 illustrates responses.

Classification	Yes	'Yes, but...'	No
Urban	8	2	0
Rural	8	6	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>

**Figure 18:** 'Should local authorities financially support tourism ?' (n=25)

96% of respondents argued that local authorities should financially support tourism. In 33% of cases (where all, apart from one instance, were in the rural cities) respondents argued that local authorities should support tourism, but added some form of additional comment. These included *'only to a point'*, and *'in part'*, and *'we only support tourism marketing'*. Others made more comprehensive additional comments, a respondent in a rural area commenting that *'Yes - in principle, but on a proportionate basis. As part of our power of well-being I think that all local authorities should consider and plan for how they can attract visitors to their area as part of their wider and primarily economic (development)/inward investment agenda. Clearly this support has to be relative to the value of the sector; in Blackpool – [it's] critical, and with wider social impacts; for [name of city omitted] - less so, but nevertheless still an important contributor to the local economy'*. A sense of 'proportion' is raised in this response. This chief executive appears to be arguing that tourism should be supported, but more on a proportionate basis. In the rest of the comment, the chief executive appears to suggest that support for tourism should be gauged on the comparative relative value of tourism to the particular area, as the respondent compares their city to Blackpool, where in Blackpool (he argues) tourism plays significant part (in terms of 'critical') to the economic fabric of the resort.

A respondent who argued that local authorities should financially support tourism, provided an additional comment which stated that in fact their authority (a rural area) would be phasing out financial support for tourism *'the Council recently took the view that it could no longer support this sector (to the tune of nearly £500,000 PA) when it doesn't support any other key sector in this way. The council took the decision that it would phase its funding out whilst at the same time establishing a company (DMO) made up of industry reps that could attract and spend funding as it determined was*

*necessary*'. The decision by this local authority to cease funding for tourism highlights one of a number of pressures on non-statutory local services such as tourism. However, whilst phasing out funding for tourism and establishing a DMO of industry partners, it is unclear from the comment whether this local authority would or not be part of the newly-formed DMO. However, Heeley (2001) argues that in such arrangements each stakeholder 'is looking for its quid pro quo' (p.275) in exchange for financial and other support. The phased reduction of tourism funding to zero, raises a question concerning the role this authority may play in the future development and promotion of this city as a tourism destination, in the eventuality of local authority funding for tourism being reduced to zero. The respondent who argued 'no' to this question, added a further comment 'only tourism marketing'. Therefore, this suggests that in fact this respondent supports financial support for tourism marketing but not other elements of tourism promotion.

Whilst it has been argued earlier, that the Conservatives were keen to be seen to encourage tourism, a pressure on local authorities arising from the Conservative period (1979-1997) was the ideological belief in less government and promotion of the market economy (Lane, 2000; Stewart, 2000). In the tourism environment, Jeffries (2001) argues that the Conservatives saw tourism as 'a matter for the private sector' (p.102). However, what is clear is that many local authorities have resisted such pressures, and used discretionary powers to financially support tourism development in their areas (Torkildsen, 1999; Burns, 2008). Whilst the respondent had argued that local authorities should financially support tourism, it is clear that in this case the local authority has adopted a policy of 'exiting' from financially supporting tourism and leaving the promotion of tourism to the private sector in the form of a DMO. Heeley (2001) has argued that DMO partnerships involve the public sector 'letting go' of some of its interventionist and leadership responsibility. A respondent in an urban area argued that local authorities should financially support tourism, but also appeared to be arguing that the local authority should play a major part in the shaping of places as tourism destinations *Local authorities play an important role in shaping the development of tourism policies in the localities. They deliver tourism activities such as promotion/information planning, visitor and attractions management, and are also involved in infrastructure and service provision that impacts upon visitors and overall*

*experience*'. However the respondent argued that external circumstances are presenting difficulties for authorities wishing to maintain significant engagement with tourism *'In the present climate is difficult to play a significant role'*. A respondent in a rural area perhaps suggested, in an additional comment, a reason if local authorities were resistant in 'handing over' responsibility for the promotion of an area to the private sector. The comment questioned the leadership credentials of the private sector in promoting areas as tourism destinations *'there is no evidence in the UK that I am aware of that the private sector can provide the joined-up strategic level co-ordination required to promote destinations or provide free access tourist information centres'*. The respondent who argued that local authorities should not financially support tourism, added an additional comment *'no to tourism, only support marketing'*. In this case the respondent made a clear demarcation between what they perceived as 'tourism' and 'tourism marketing'.

Whilst one respondent did not feel that tourism should be financially supported, 96% of respondents arguing that it should, suggests a very high level of importance placed on tourism by chief executives as part of their local economies. Respondents included representatives from a wide group of urban and rural areas of varying size, and this suggests a clear statement of the importance that local authorities are placing on tourism in cities of very differing size across England. However, as seen, in one case that whilst the chief executive argues for tourism to be financially supported, their local authority has made the decision to exit from financing tourism. Elsewhere, several chief executives (in response to other answers in the survey and which will be articulated later in this chapter), referred to the difficult financial climate and the pressure this is placing on local authorities. This also raises a question as to whether more local authorities may be pressured to withdraw from financing tourism, if the current financial pressures on local authorities continues.

### **6.2.2 Levels of financial support for tourism development**

Allocation of funds by local authorities to support local tourism marketing is an area relatively unexplored in research terms (Burns, 2009). As discussed in chapter 2, the

picture in England may be gauged in loose terms from occasional published documents. This study wished to gauge the financial commitment of city local authorities towards tourism. Whilst the question earlier asked respondents whether they thought local authorities should financially support tourism, a question followed which was set not to gauge attitudes, but to ascertain information from respondents concerning levels of financial support for tourism in their authorities. However, in seeking to understand in more detail local authority financial support for tourism, it was expected that this part of the study may have been one area where the later triangulation of data may have been required to paint a fuller picture. Chief executives were asked 'Does your local authority financially support tourism in your city/area ?'

All of the respondents answered that their authority financially supports tourism. The respondent who argued previously that local authorities should not financially support tourism (only tourism marketing), reported that their authority allocates £10,000 towards tourism marketing. The respondent in a rural city who reported a change of local policy insomuch that their authority was phasing out financial support for tourism, made a more detailed additional comment with regard to their current allocation '*Circa £25,000 capital for DMO website development and marginal revenue costs for remaining TIC function (say £20,000). We are exploring ways of reducing these with income generation and partner involvement we also have a member of staff in the economic development team with strategic responsibility for tourism alongside other key sectors in our district such as high-value manufacturing, horticulture and marine*'. Having already responded that their authority is reducing their financial support for tourism to zero, what is also suggested in this comment is that the local authority seeks to make up the reduction in local authority funding through '*income generation and partner involvement*'. In this case, it appears that more private sector involvement, particularly in terms of funding, is the suggested way forward for funding tourism in this particular city.

Respondents, who had replied that their authority financially supports tourism, were asked to state their authority's tourism budget. 64% of respondents provided a figure. Several added either 'approx' or 'circa' to their figure. 16% of respondents did not answer the question, and 8% replied that they were 'unsure' or 'not exactly sure'. 64%

of chief executives providing a tourism budget figure suggests a high level of understanding amongst chief executives (some with extremely large local authority budgets) of precisely how much their authority is spending on tourism. The highest number of respondents providing a figure were in the rural cities, 73% of chief executives in the rural cities identified their tourism budgets. This compared to 50% in the urban cities. Of those who identified budgets, there was a moderate amount of variation in the population sizes of the cities, in both urban and rural categories, who identified their budgets. Cities in the urban category who identified their budgets ranged in size from populations of just under 200,000 to over 500,000. Cities in the rural category who identified their budgets ranged in size from populations of just below 100,000 to just under 150,000.

Respondents were promised anonymity in their answers. Therefore in presenting the data and ensuring anonymity for respondents, whilst each city has been categorised as 'urban' or 'rural', their reported budgets have been placed within financial categories ranging from £0 to £501,000+. The choice of financial category for presentation of data was determined following identification of the reported budget figures. These ranged from £10,000 (rural city) to 'around £1m' (urban city). In all, 89% (figure rounded) of reported tourism budgets fell below a £500,000 figure. The size of the categories (£0-100,000 for example) were arbitrarily chosen in order to present the reported budgets in clearer detail for analysis, but without identifying the individual cities. Two reported budgets were in excess of £600,000, and have been presented within a £500,000+ category. The incidence of reported tourism budgets are presented in figure 19.

Tourism budget amount (£)	Type of city		
	Urban	Rural	All cities
501,000+	1	1	2
401,000-500,000	1	2	3
301,000-400,000	1	1	2
201,000-300,000	1	2	3

101,000 -200,000	1	2	3
1-100,000	0	3	3
0	0	0	0
<b>All cities</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>

**Figure 19:** Reported tourism budgets by (n=16)

The bulk of reported budgets fell below £500,000, and fell almost equally into one of five categories. The most common categories for reported tourism budgets were £1-101,000, £101-200,000, £201-300,000 and £401-500,000, with 19% of respondents reporting tourism budgets falling into each of these categories. Below this were two categories, £301-400,000 and £501,000+, with 13% of respondents reporting tourism budgets falling into each of these categories. Roughly an equal number of cities reported tourism budget allocations either side of £300,000, with 9 cities reporting budgets below £300,000 and 7 seven cities reporting budgets above. A higher number of rural areas reported budgets below £300,000, with 64% of the rural city’s budgets being £300,000 or below. In the case of the urban areas, 60% of the urban areas budgets were above £300,000, whilst 40% were below £300,000.

The data revealed a number of findings which both may and may not have been expected. Respondents in the rural cities reported budgets which were the four lowest budgets reported; £10,000, £30,000, £45,000 and £50,000. This may have been expected. Whilst it has been discussed in earlier chapters how some cities in the rural areas have a history of seeking to attract tourists, the vast majority of the local authorities in these areas are small districts, some very small. Cities in a ‘rural’ category for this study have populations of below 180,000. The majority of the rural areas have populations of more similar size to each other, predominantly ranging from around 50,000 to around 150,000. However, despite being ‘smaller’ places, data earlier from chief executives reported all of the cities in the ‘rural’ category currently allocating some form of financial resource to tourism. But within the data, there were some unexpected results within the rural category. In the rural areas it was found that size of the city is not a determining factor of allocation of tourism funding. Perhaps this may not be expected, however what was unexpected was in some cases was a

significant variation in allocations for tourism both across the range of rural cities, and in some cases amongst cities of very similar size. The populations of rural cities whom responded to the survey ranged in size from just under 100,000 to just under 160,000. The rural city with a budget in excess of £500,000 has a population significantly below 180,000 cut off point for urban classification. Similarly the city with the second highest budget in the rural cities, and third highest allocated budget overall, have population significantly below 180,000 cut off point. For example, for three rural cities of roughly of similar size (population), two of the cities had financial allocations for tourism over £300,000 and one had an allocation of less than £50,000. In this case, as indicated earlier some of the rural cities are considered 'tourist historic' reflecting their history of promoting themselves as tourist places. Allocations supporting tourism development may reflect a local authority's perception of the value of tourism to their rural city economy.

A wide variation in budgets in the urban areas was not expected. Previous research by Burns and Nash (1999 unpublished) and Sheffield City Council (2003) had identified variation in budgets in small samples of the larger cities. If a £300,000 figure is used, reported budgets in the urban areas fell into two equal groups either side of £300,000. The average budget in the urban cities was approximately £396,000. Without other research to gauge these levels of expenditure, it is difficult to evaluate whether around £400,000 is a common or 'appropriate' amount for an urban city to be allocating to tourism. Again this is one area where it was anticipated that the later triangulation of data may paint a more complete picture. The question concerning size, and if there is a relationship between city size and financial allocation, in the case of the urban cities suggests some weak evidence that city size may relate to size of tourism allocation. But there are exceptions. The populations of urban cities whom responded to the survey ranged in size from populations of just under 200,000 to over 500,000. The smallest reported budget was from a city at the lower end of urban group in terms of population size. However, the second smallest tourism budget allocation in the urban category was made by a city with a population of over 400,000, twice the size as that of the first. The largest reported budget from an urban city was from a city with a population of less than 400,000. Therefore, in the case of the urban cities, size of the city does not appear to be a strongly determining factor. So therefore in the case of

both urban and rural cities, this data suggests that the size of the city is not a determining factor of allocation of financial support for tourism. But clearly some urban cities are allocating significantly more finance to tourism than others. This may not be unexpected. But additionally, and what may have been unexpected, is that the data has also revealed that in some cases financial support for tourism in some of the rural cities is higher than some of their urban counterparts. In figure 21, both a rural and urban city reported a financial allocation to tourism falling in the £500,000+ category. The precise reported budget from the rural city was £650,000. Therefore, this rural city reported a budget allocation for tourism higher than all of the allocations reported by urban respondents apart from one. Furthermore, figure 21 also illustrates that cities in two rural areas, allocate more resources to cities in four urban areas. Therefore, the suggestion that larger cities may automatically allocate larger funds for tourism development compared to other large cities because of their size is also not supported by this data. In some cases, smaller urban cities are allocating more than their larger urban counterparts. Variation (in some cases in terms of hundreds of thousands of pounds) was also found in allocation of budgets in the urban city category between urban cities of roughly similar sizes. Neither is any suggestion that larger cities may allocate larger funds compared to smaller cities supported by this data. This data suggests that a number of rural cities in some cases are allocating more financially to tourism than some of their urban counterparts.

A limitation of this survey is that it sought no further information from respondents which would illustrate the intended outcome of the financial allocation. Several chief executives referred to participation in DMOs, one chief executive reported that he had '*a directorship on the board of our DMO*'. Therefore it is unknown whether an allocation of £100,000 for example, is intended to be the local authority's contribution towards a larger DMO fund and intended to demonstrate to the private sector a financial commitment from the local authority (Heeley, 2001). One chief executive in an urban city provided an additional comment that their authority was participating in a local DMO and he felt that '*more onus needed [to be] on DMOs and regional sub regional collaboration*', however also referred to financial pressures continuing that '*differing financial pressures can hinder this approach*'. It is also acknowledged that this analysis has been conducted on a relatively low number of chief executive views.

However the data has given a snapshot of local policy towards funding tourism across a range of urban and rural cities of considerable variation in size and, again, the results of the triangulation are expected to present a more comprehensive picture concerning tourism funding.

### **6.2.3 *Perceived pressures on tourism budgets***

Within the wider picture of financial pressures on the public sector, there are major financial pressures on tourism funding (Caradon District Council, 2005; TMI, 2011). Commentators such as Lunn and Whitehead (1996), Stevenson (2002), and Burns (2010), have argued that non-statutory services are under competitive pressures for funding from other departments within authorities. Lunn and Whitehead (1996) describe tourism as having to compete with the 'big statutory battalions of education, social services and highways (A-129). Lunn and Whitehead (1996) have argued that if tourism was to have 'statutory' basis at local level, local authorities adopting the duty would be demonstrating a commitment that they take 'tourism seriously'. Additionally, a statutory duty may provide local authorities with a legal basis to provide sufficient financial resources 'to do the job properly' (A-131). Nevertheless, tourism at the local level does not have statutory status, which places tourism at risk in times of resource constraints. Flynn (2007) has argued 'during times of spending cuts those services that are not by described...by statute will be cut first' (p.59). The decision by a local authority to cease funding tourism altogether, reported by a respondent earlier in this chapter, is a clear signal of the financial pressures on local authorities funding non-statutory local services such as tourism.

In the light of the current financial environment and pressures upon local authorities, it was of interest to gauge how chief executives perceived pressures on tourism budgets. Chief executives were asked if they thought that there is greater pressure for providing value for money from tourism budgets compared to ten, five and two years ago Figure 20 indicates responses.

Classification	10 years ago		5 years ago		2 years ago	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Urban	9	1	9	1	8	2
Rural	14	1	14	1	13	2
<b>All cities</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>

**Figure 20:** Value for money from tourism budgets (n=25)

It is acknowledged that inclusion of the word '*greater*' in the question, may have led respondents who felt that pressures were the same to reply 'no'. 92% of respondents expressed the view that there is greater pressure for providing value-for-money from tourism budgets compared to both 10 and 5 years ago. 84% of respondents expressed the view that there is greater pressure for providing value-for-money from tourism budgets compared to 2 years ago. A slightly higher proportion of respondents in the rural areas articulated pressure on their tourism budgets than in the urban areas. 87% of respondents in the rural areas reported greater pressure on tourism budgets than 2 years ago, compared to 80% in the urban areas. It is clear that chief executives perceive tourism budgets to be under severe pressure, even compared to 2 years ago, and particularly those in the rural areas. One respondent from a rural area provided a particularly insightful further comment, which may serve to highlight some of the difficulties local authorities may have when financing tourism '*Our citizen surveys always show locals wanting us to spend less on tourism*'.

#### **6.2.4 Is there a case for tourism budgets to be limited or fixed ?**

The comment that 'our citizen surveys always show locals wanting us to spend less on tourism', serves to highlight a problem for tourism in terms of its perception. As argued earlier, perceptions play an important part in the tourism arena (McGee and Meng, 2006). Whilst local authorities have become attracted to developing tourism, local authorities can come under financial and political pressures, if money spent is

perceived by the local electorate as money not well spent, or is taking resources away from other local services. As argued earlier in this work, local authorities reside within highly political local settings (Howie, 2003; Burns, 2008). As those at the helm of local authorities, chief executives are aware of the need to recognise and balance the relative priorities of differing stakeholders (Howie, 2003). Lunn and Whitehead (1996) have argued that ‘in too many quarters...tourism is seen as a lightweight issue’ (A-130). A difficulty for tourism, in common with other non-statutory services, is when tourism is judged against schools or fighting crime (Lunn and Whitehead, 1996). In the current climate this study sought to gauge chief executive’s perceptions of funding tourism, by asking respondents if they thought tourism budgets should be limited or fixed in order to try in some way to reduce pressures on local authorities. The question was deliberately worded and intended to draw from respondent’s views concerning funding tourism vis-à-vis other local authority service areas.

Figure 21 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No answer (but comment)</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	3	5	2	
Rural	4	8	2	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

**Figure 21:** Should tourism budgets be limited or even fixed each year ? (n=25)

In answer to this question, a firm view was expressed by 80% of respondents. 20% of respondents either did not express a firm view (but made an additional comment) or preferred not to answer the question.

Overall, 52% of respondents were against tourism budgets being strictly limited or even fixed each year. Views were similar across both the urban and rural respondents, 50% of urban respondents and 54% of rural respondents arguing that tourism budgets should not be strictly limited or fixed each year. Therefore little separated views

between those in the urban and rural areas in those arguing against tourism budgets being limited or fixed each year. 28% of respondents argued that tourism budgets should be strictly limited or fixed each year. Again, in this case little separated the views between urban and rural respondents. For those arguing that tourism budgets should be limited or fixed each year, 30% of urban and 27% of rural respondents argued for tourism budgets to be limited or fixed. Perhaps in the current difficult financial climate, the data that just over 50% of respondents were against tourism budgets being limited or fixed could be seen as surprising. As Flynn (2007) has argued, during times of pressure on budgets discretionary services are those which are often cut first. With almost twice as many respondents arguing that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed, appears to suggest that chief executives are supportive of tourism funding being maintained. Within the urban and rural categories, responses demonstrated a slightly stronger feeling amongst respondents in the rural cities against tourism budgets being limited or fixed, with twice as many respondents against the suggestion.

Respondents offered a number of insightful comments in support of their answers and which perhaps helps to further illustrate the perception of tourism by respondents. Of the respondents who were against tourism budgets being limited or fixed, further comments fell into several themes. A number of respondents gave the impression that despite being a discretionary local authority function, tourism was seen by them as a significantly important part of their authority provision. In several cases, respondents linked tourism to the wider strategic picture of the local authority. A respondent in a rural city argued that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed, but *'a strategic approach to tourism along with everything else needs to be taken'*. A respondent in an urban city, also arguing that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed, raised the *'value-for-money'* environment pervading all council services in that tourism *'should represent value for money in relation to supporting the delivery of the council/city's strategic objectives'*. A respondent in a rural area took the opportunity to make the comment that tourism in their view has a significant part to play in the economic fabric of their city, arguing that *'tourism needs to be regarded as an economic development activity not as a leisure function'*. Clearly, in this instance the chief executive is making the case for tourism to be considered as an important economic driver in their

particular (rural) city, contrary to an alternative perception of tourism being seen a 'leisure' activity and perhaps not as important as other activities (Davidson, 1998). Other respondents who argued against tourism budgets being limited or fixed, in further comments also gave the impression of perceiving tourism on a 'par' with other services areas within their authority. A respondent in a rural area argued that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed *'more than any other service area'*. A respondent in a rural city did not answer the question, but provided a comment *'No more than any other service'*.

The word 'priorities' was used in several further comments made by respondents with different views as to whether tourism funding should face limitations or be fixed. For those arguing against tourism funding facing limitations or being fixed, again several respondents appeared to place tourism function on a 'par' with other service areas. In these cases, respondents appeared to use the word 'priorities' in the sense that tourism should not be seen as a relatively 'unimportant' discretionary function, but should be considered equally with other local authority provision. For example, a respondent in an urban city argued that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed each year, rather the merits of all local authority service areas should be *'based on [the] business case and overall [authority] priorities'*. A respondent in an urban city argued that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed, rather the decision should be determined by *'each local authorities' priorities'*. A respondent in a rural city offered a similar view, arguing that all local authority budgets should be *'determined annually on priorities'*. Several respondents, in a similar vein of arguing against budgets being limited or fixed, introduced a local 'political' element in their comments that *'councils need to judge this in accordance with the needs and political priorities of their area'* and *'should be a political decision'*.

This data suggests a strength of feeling amongst respondents of the importance of tourism within the picture of their wider local authority provision. Tourism's status as a discretionary function was referred to in an additional comment. A respondent in an urban area, having argued earlier in the survey that local authorities should financially support tourism, highlighted the difficulty for discretionary services in the current funding scenario *'as a discretionary activity fixed budgets is the only practical way to*

*fund tourism*'. The overall difficult financial pressures on local authorities was also raised in additional comments. A respondent in an urban area replied that in terms of local authority budgets *'in the present climate there is no growth'*, and tourism budgets in effect were experiencing *'therefore reduction after inflation'*. Another respondent again referred to the current economic climate *'yes of course there is a strong case given the current economic climate and with severe deep cuts to budgets'* but also appeared to recognise the value of tourism to the city *'that said, tourism is one of the only growth sectors which is vitally important to [name of city omitted]'*

### **6.2.5 Is there now case for local visitor taxes ?**

The growth of tourism internationally has provided a taxation revenue opportunity many have found hard to resist (Durberry and Sinclair, 2000). One form is local accommodation taxes, or 'bed taxes', and whilst bed taxes have become increasingly popular they are not universal (LGA, 2004). The arguments supporting such 'tourist taxes' are usually founded on two main pillars; that they can both help to reduce the financial requirement on local authorities for tourism marketing (by monies raised through tourism taxes contributing to tourism marketing costs), plus they satisfy most requirements for 'good' taxes, that is they are easy to administer, have low costs of collection and, particularly, fall to a large extent on non-residents of a locality (Forsyth and Dwyer, 2002; Gooroochurn and Sinclair, 2003). The latter point supports the tax 'exportability' theory, where a tax can be shifted to individuals from outside the jurisdiction that imposes it, and therefore taxation of tourism may be exportable in the sense that tourists, not locals, will bear the burden of the taxation (Gooroochurn and Sinclair, 2003).

In England, to date English governments have resisted the opportunity to introduce accommodation taxes. However, as discussed earlier in this work, the Lyons Inquiry floated the scenario of possible introduction of local 'tourist taxes' in England during its consultation process. During submissions to the Inquiry, a number of organisations including the Tourism Alliance, Visit Britain and the British Hospitality Association lobbied strongly against the proposal (Burns, 2009). The main arguments presented

by these organisations were that further taxes on the tourism and hospitality industry would make Britain more uncompetitive and thus lead to a reduction of visitors to Britain (Tourism Alliance, 2006, p.7). However, in the final report, Lyons noted that some local authorities had supported proposals for some form of ‘tax on tourist pressures’ (2007, p.31). As the government of the time, the Labour Party rejected pursuing such a proposal. However, in an atmosphere of multiple pressures and demands on local authority funding becoming more intense, there is a question as to what extent a tourist tax may be an attractive proposition for English local authorities. If a local authority were to consider such an option, then the view of the chief executive would be important in local political discussion concerning such an issue. Chief executives were asked ‘Do you think that there is a strong case that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds’. Figure 22 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No answer (but comment)</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	3	5	2	
Rural	5	7	2	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

**Figure 22:** The case for visitor taxes (n=25)

In answer to this question, a firm view was expressed by 80% of respondents. 20% of respondents either did not express a firm view (but made an additional comment) or preferred not to answer the question.

Therefore, if these non-responses are included in the calculation, overall 48% of respondents do not think that there is a strong case that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds. Of these, views were similar across both urban and rural respondents, 50% of urban respondents and 47% of rural respondents arguing that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds. Therefore little separated views between those in the urban and rural areas in arguing that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from

local authority funds. 32% of respondents argued that funding for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes. Again, in this instance little separated the views between those in the urban and rural areas in those arguing that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds. For those arguing that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds, 30% of urban and 33% of rural respondents argued for this case. However, if the data of those who expressed a yes or no opinion is examined, a slightly different picture emerges which suggests more appetite amongst those respondents for visitor taxes. 40% of chief executives argued that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes. Of these a slightly higher proportion of chief executives were in the rural areas. A respondent in a rural area did not provide an answer, but make an additional comment suggesting that future exploration of visitor taxes was an option that could be explored because of future restrictions on local authority funding *'not sure, I do not know enough about this proposal to comment at present. It is certainly an option that should be explored as I believe it is clear that LA funds will not exist to the scale that they have in the past'*.

What is clear is that views are clearly mixed. Perhaps this is a commentary on the current difficult financial climate, that almost a third of respondents argued that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds. But what is clear is that there are not stronger feelings either within the rural or urban areas for either argument. But this question, above all others, appeared to motivate respondents to justify their answer, a number of respondents qualifying their answers with further comments. A number of themes emerged around the contrasting views. For those against tourist taxes, several respondents raised the issue of 'risk' in introducing such a tax. As Law (2002) argues tourist taxes may deter visitors. Displacement and competition worries were raised by respondents. In terms of displacement, some respondents were concerned that introduction of such taxes may cause displacement of tourists. The Tourism Alliance (2006) had argued that an introduction of such a tax would make Britain more 'uncompetitive' (p.7) and thus lead to a reduction of visitors to Britain. A respondent in a rural city whilst supporting the proposition for tourist taxes, also expressed the view that such a tax would need to be

implemented 'across the board' for displacement not to occur '*this will displace visitors if not universal*'.

Others against an introduction of bed taxes appeared to be so by being 'supportive' of the tourist, inasmuch that they did not perceive that tourists should pay anything 'extra' as part of their visit. One of the respondents in an urban city who was against the proposition, asked '*why should the visitor pay more than his visit costs to encourage other people to visit?* Clearly such a view is at odds with tax exportability theory, which argues that 'bed taxes' are fair because they are paid only by tourists and not the local community. Some respondents appeared to support more generally the idea of locally-determined taxation. A respondent in a rural city who supported the idea of tourist taxes, argued that '*Local government should have a range of locally determined taxes and a visitor tax could be one*'. Another respondent argued that a tourist tax should be '*a locally-based tax*'. A respondent in an urban city recognised the difficulty surrounding different arguments concerning taxation, in arguing for '*a hotel bed tax or something similar*' but also recognising '*this is a complex argument*'. Some respondents argued in support of local tourist taxes, but supplementary to local authority funding. This suggests that these respondents are arguing that local authorities should continue to financially support tourism, and such support not be replaced by alternative funds such as taxes. One respondent argued that tourist taxes should '*in-part*' fund tourism services, and another arguing '*yes-but as well as*'. Some respondents in additional comments, referred to the role of the private sector in funding local tourism. An additional comment from a chief executive in an urban city who argued against tourist taxes, argued that the private sector should be contributing more to local tourism promotion '*whether through compulsory levies or voluntary contributions*'. A respondent in an urban area paid reference to the current economic climate in their response.

A number of respondents appeared to be at odds with the view of the Labour government, that advancement of discussion concerning giving local authorities a power allowing local tourist taxes to introduce a local tourist taxes should not be continued. After the publication of the Lyons Report (2007), the Labour government argued that it was not an area in which it intended to pursue legislation. However, it is

an area in which some local authorities would appear to anticipate activity in the future. With 38% of respondents arguing that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds, others appeared to 'leave the door open' for consideration in the future. A respondent in an urban area commented '*Not in the present climate, maybe a consideration in the future when the economic climate improves*'. Another respondent in an urban city commented that '*this is a case which may need further exploration*'. A chief executive who argued against local tourist taxes, also gave the impression of future change by commenting '*at the present time, no*'. A respondent in a rural city perhaps was calling for change in how local authorities are funded, by commenting that '*there is a need for a wider debate about how visitor taxes...[and]..local income tax play out at local authority level*'. It was reported earlier that a respondent commented that this is a complex area. One respondent possibly took this view much further by commenting '*now there's a mine field*'. The range of additional comments from chief executives reflect the controversial nature of tourist taxes, but suggests that whilst tourist taxes are a controversial issue they may not have fully left the agenda.

### **6.3 Provision for tourism development.**

Within the wider objective of understanding the role local authorities see themselves as playing in the delivery of local tourism policy, this part of the chapter will turn the enquiry to the implementation of tourism policy. It has been argued that the managerial paradigm has promoted less government and more involvement of the private sector in public sector management. Within such a prevailing culture, the investigation sought to understand how chief executives perceived the implementation of local tourism policy. Therefore, the data in this part of the chapter presents the findings from the survey which particularly sought to understand chief executive's views on how local tourism promotion should be facilitated, the role of the local authority within the picture of local tourism development, and the role of the public and private sectors when collaborating in tourism partnerships.

### 6.3.1 'Enabling' local tourism

It has been argued that the managerial paradigm which has surrounded local authority management has emphasised a reduced state and alternative delivery mechanisms for provision of local services (Elliot, 1997). In the tourism sphere, Heeley (2001) has argued that for local tourism marketing, public-private sector partnerships have received increasing acceptance as alternatives to the 'traditional' manner of tourism promotion being undertaken within local authority structures.

Some support for this development was found in data presented during the earlier part of this chapter. In answer to other questions, a number of chief executives made reference to their authority's policy of engaging in a collaborative partnership for tourism marketing (in the form of a DMO) or are in the process of encouraging the formation of a DMO with interested local partners. A chief executive reported that he had '*a directorship on the board of our DMO*'. Heeley (2001) has argued that in some of the larger cities tourism promotion is facilitated via a collaborative partnership, *but* the extent to which such alternative delivery mechanisms are being incorporated in local tourism marketing within the wider group of cities is unknown. Therefore the question to chief executives was worded carefully 'if your local authority supports tourism development, is it through a department within the council?'

Figure 23 illustrates responses.

Classification	Yes	No
Urban	5	5
Rural	9	6
<b>All cities</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>11</b>

**Figure 23:** 'Is tourism promoted from within the council?' (n=25)

56% of respondents replied that they promoted tourism through a department within the council. Within the urban and rural categories, a slightly higher percentage of the

rural cities promoted tourism through a department within the council. 50% of respondents in the urban cities promoted tourism through a department within the council, whereas in the rural cities it was 60%.

Therefore, across both groups of cities, 56% of the cities promote tourism from within the local authority structure, with 44% having engaged with an alternative delivery mechanism for tourism marketing. Despite pressure for more private sector involvement in public service delivery, for the 56% of cities promoting tourism from within their authority this study was interested in specific reasons for such decisions. For places which reported that their authority promotes tourism from within the authority, chief executives were asked if there was a key reason for such. Around 50% of respondents provided additional comments. Comments varied, but themes included 'long-standing' arrangements, 'control' over how the city was marketed, as part of the 'leadership' role required for the destination, and as part of the 'holistic' overview needed to manage the tourism destination. A respondent in a rural area appeared to suggest that the reason was because of 'long-standing' arrangements, that is tourism has been promoted from within the local authority for many years. The respondent commented that their provision '*reflects a historic model where this [tourism] sits in individual local authorities*'. Several others in urban cities provided slightly more detailed comments in answer to why their authority promotes tourism within the authority. One respondent appeared to suggest that by promoting tourism within the authority this increases the element of 'control' over how their city is marketed '*by keeping in-house the marketing [name of City Council omitted] can maintain control of how the city is marketed to visitors including the tourism information centres and tourism publications*'. Another respondent in an urban area provided an additional comment which comprised of several themes, but which made a reference to what they saw as the importance of the part played by local authorities in promoting local tourism for the wider benefit of their areas. Here the respondent argued that their authority retains the tourism marketing within the authority as part of a 'holistic' view by the local authority of the needs of the area as a whole '*[local authorities] also ensure that the needs of the whole destination...are represented and considered in the management of tourism*'. The chief executive also suggested that local authorities have an important leadership and co-ordinating role within tourist places, again

stressing the important part that the respondent believes local authorities play within the wider 'holistic' role of places as tourist destinations.

Some respondents in additional comments suggested their particular local circumstance may also involve some form of additional arrangement with an external tourism marketing organisation. A respondent in a rural area reported that they have a tourism department within the Council, but also that the local authority '*also support[s] the tourist board and have partnerships with key players*'. Some respondents of whom their authorities did not promote tourism within the authority, also provided additional comments. A respondent in a rural area reported that they promoted tourism '*through the local district*' and another in a rural city commented that they promoted tourism '*across several organisations*'. A respondent in an urban city who reported that their authority did not promote tourism from within the authority, also provided an additional comment confirming that their authority was engaged with a DMO for tourism marketing but also provides other tourism services. The chief executive commented that their authority was a '*client for an external destination management company and as a provider of services*'.

Transition to an alternative delivery mechanism was suggested in additional comments from a number of respondents. A respondent in a rural city reported that they have a tourism department within the Council which is a '*service area, which is equivalent to a department...but we also now have a tourism board which is increasingly taking this over as their prime role in partnership with us and others*'. A respondent in an urban city who reported that they have a tourism department within the Council also commented that '*we promote tourism through the council and just recently established a DMP which we envisage will become a DMO in time*'. Another respondent in an urban city reported that they are '*currently establishing a sub-regional DMO*'. Furthermore, two respondents in rural cities commented '*At the moment*' and '*to date yes but under review*'. Together with comments made earlier in response to other questions, these comments from these latter respondents further suggests that the managerial paradigm will continue to influence how local authorities engage with alternative delivery mechanisms to undertake tourism marketing within the city environment.

### **6.3.2 Location of tourism departments within local authority structures**

Palmer (1994) has argued that where a local authority places tourism within its structure can be an indication of the type of activity that the authority views tourism as being. For example, if tourism resides within an 'economic development' or 'regeneration' type of department, this suggests that the authority perceives tourism as an economic activity. If tourism resides within a 'leisure' department, the authority may perceive tourism primarily as a 'leisure activity' (Palmer, 1994). It has been argued earlier that the perception of tourism is important because, as a non-statutory function, the perception of tourism within local authorities in some cases may offer it some protection in times of budget cuts. For example, Long (2000) has argued that a council-supported collaborative partnership in Islington reported to a 'council policy' committee rather than a 'service delivery' committee. This was seen as important as it was argued that it gave the organisation a higher profile in the Council and made it less vulnerable to budget cuts. Other commentators have argued that governments are primarily drawn to tourism because of the economic importance of the industry (Elliot, 1997).

Therefore an element of wishing to understand how local authorities perceived tourism, was to ascertain where local authorities in the cities who promoted tourism from within the authority, placed tourism within their structures. For those respondents who reported that their authority promoted tourism from within their structures, they were asked who was 'head' of tourism within their authority. The reason for this was two-fold; identification of tourism managers would provide potential contact details for the second stage of the research, and it would also be possible via the internet to identify tourism departments. Of the 20 respondents who reported that tourism resided within their authority, 16 identified the head of tourism within their authority. In some cases the chief executive named the head of tourism and the department name. In others, the chief executive identified the head of tourism only. In these cases it was possible via an Internet search to identify names of departments and where they resided within local authority structures.

It was found that there were some loose patterns evident within the data, based on common themes or common key words in departmental titles. The themes fell into three main groups: departments with titles which suggest an 'economic' or 'development' role (within this is a regeneration or enterprise theme), those with 'culture' or leisure in the title, and those with a 'marketing' theme. Figure 26 illustrates where the tourism department resides in local authority structures in the urban or rural areas. For illustration purposes, the data has been grouped into the common themes or key words in departmental titles. For example, in the first two columns (left) it can be seen that tourism resides within departments with 'economy' or have a 'development' theme in the title. However, this is only for illustrative purposes, as it can be seen that one department has both 'leisure' and 'culture' in the title, and another with 'development' and 'culture' in the title. Figure 24 illustrates where departments reside within local authority structure

Economic Development and Tourism (Rural)	Assistant Chief Executive (Urban)	Culture and Tourism (Urban)	Marketing Communications and Tourism (Urban)
City Development and Economy (Urban)	Commercial and Visitor Economy (Urban)	Culture Tourism and sport (Rural)	Distinctiveness and Place Marketing (Rural)
Economic Development and Tourism (Rural)	Enterprise and Civic Environment (Rural)	Tourism, Leisure and Culture (Urban)	
Economy and Tourism (Rural)	Regeneration, Community and Leisure (Rural)	Cultural Services (Rural)	
City Development and Cultural Services (Urban)		Leisure and Community Services (Urban)	

**Figure 24:** Departments where tourism resides within local authorities

It is evident that there are some 'loose patterns' within the data. In the rural areas tourism tends to reside in departments with titles with an economic or development theme. In a rural area tourism resides in a department with 'enterprise' in the title which may be seen as a similar theme to 'development'. 'Marketing' and 'culture' also feature in department titles in the rural areas. In the urban areas, the patterns are 'looser'. In the urban areas, there is stronger evidence for tourism residing in departments with a 'leisure' or 'culture' theme. Palmer (1994) has argued that where tourism departments reside within local authorities can present a gauge as to the perception of the tourism function within a local authority. What may also be significant is tourism residing in the assistant chief executive's department in one case. Palmer (1994) has argued that tourism residing in a chief executives (or assistant chief executives) department demonstrates politically the importance an authority places on the tourism function authority-wide. It can be seen from the data that tourism resides in departments with 'economic', 'development', 'regeneration' or 'enterprise' themes or the assistant chief executive's department in almost half of the cities. Limitations are acknowledged in that such analysis is only based on department titles, however this does suggest some clear economic or regenerative importance placed on tourism within these cities. It will be seen later in this chapter a chief executive in a rural area arguing, in response to another question '*Tourism needs to be regarded as an economic development activity not as a leisure function. It is consequently treated and driven in a different manner*'. For respondents who answered 'no' to the question, they were asked a subsequent question 'If no, who is the organisation to whom your authority tasks this responsibility? This question was designed to gauge the type of organisation that local authorities who are contracting tourism marketing to. Of 5 respondents who initially indicated that they do not promote tourism from within their authority, three offered further comments '*A partnership led by the private sector and including the main attractions*' (urban area), '*Public private partnership* [followed by name omitted]' (urban area) '*Partnership* [followed by name omitted]' (Rural area).

### **6.3.3 Financing tourism promotion**

Data presented in the earlier part of this chapter found that the majority of respondents arguing that local authorities should fund local tourism development. However, from additional comments it was clear that in some cases local authorities have a policy of reducing their financial commitment over the next few years, in at least one case to zero. But it is unclear to what extent the current financial climate is having on such decisions, and a strand of the tourism manager’s element of the study would explore this issue further.

This part of the study wished to gauge chief executive’s views concerning, in the current environment, how they perceive the relative responsibility of the public and private sectors in funding local tourism promotion. How do local authorities perceive the relative funding contributions made by the public and private sectors in collaborative tourism partnerships ? Chief executives were asked the question ‘Do you think that in collaborative partnerships involved in tourism promotion, private sector financial contributions should

- a) be less than public sector contributions
- b) be more than public sector contributions
- c) match public sector contributions ?

Figure 25 illustrates the incidence of responses

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Less than</b>	<b>Be more than</b>	<b>Match</b>	<b>No Answer</b>
Urban	1	5	4	
Rural	1	10	3	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>

**Figure 25:** Public- private sector financial contributions (n=25)

The majority of respondents argued that the private sector should contribute more financially to collaborative partnerships than the public sector. 60% of respondents argued that the private sector should contribute more to collaborative partnerships than the public sector. 28% of respondents argued that the private and public sectors should match contributions. Therefore, 88% of respondents argued that the private

sector contributions should be more than or at least 'match' public sector contributions. 8% of respondents argued that the public sector should contribute more, and 4% did not answer the question. Therefore it can be seen over half of respondents argued that the private sector should be bearing the largest contribution to tourism marketing. This is more than double the number of respondents who argued that contributions should match. Within the two groups of cities, a higher proportion of respondents in the rural cities argued that private sector contributions should be more than the public sector. 67% of respondents in the rural cities argued that private sector contributions should be more, compared to 50% of respondents in the urban areas. Proportionately more respondents in the urban areas argued that the private and public sectors should match contributions. 50% of respondents in the urban areas argued that the private and public sectors should match contributions, compared to 20% in the rural places. Perhaps it is the case in the urban areas that respondents feel that the local authorities in those cities have more financial capacity to fund such partnerships compared to those in the rural areas. It is unknown whether the current financial climate has influenced views as there has been no previous research which explores this issue. Given the current financial climate, it may have been expected that respondents would argue for the private sector to contribute more to tourism funding. However, the strength of the argument for the private sector contributing more in collaborations compared to public sector was noticeable, with 60% of respondents arguing that the private sector should contribute more against 8% arguing that the public sector contribute more.

A number of respondents qualified their answers with additional comments. The respondent in a rural area who did not provide an answer, provided an additional comment which raised several issues around the 'wider picture'. The respondent appears to suggest that the wider promotion of an area should be undertaken by the local authority, with the private sector contributing towards this *'What's more relevant is whether private sector funding should contribute to the wider promotion of an area, and the running costs of a TIC for example. Traditionally, and with very few exceptions, local private sector tourism fora accounts for less than 5% of tourism business in any local authority area. Most seem happy to undertake their own bespoke investment and advertising in the absence of wider knowledge about what's going on*

*in their catchment*'. This comment seems to suggest that the local authority should hold responsibility for the wider promotion of the area, and that the issue is the level of private sector funding to this wider promotional activity. What is also noticeable is the respondent's inclusion of the comment 'running costs of running TIC for example' in the task of wider promotion of the area. Within the literature, a number of commentators have argued that the private sector favours more specific short-term projects, where benefits and returns can be readily demonstrated (Long, 2000; Law, 2002). In this case, the respondent is appearing to make the case that tourism promotion not just concerns marketing, but also other elements such as making provision for providing tourism information for visitors. Two other important issues appear to be raised in this comment. The first is that whilst tourism destinations can be complex places with large numbers of interested stakeholders, local tourism partnerships may only have limited support of the local tourism business community in memberships (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000). Therefore expectations of high participation from private sector organisations in collaborations may not be realised. This chief executive appears to be arguing that private sector tourism organisations engage with their own forms of investment and marketing, but it would seem without participation or understanding of the wider issues at destination level.

Whilst governments are primarily drawn to tourism because of the economic importance of the industry, tourism can have negative as well as positive impacts on host communities (Elliot, 1997). In an additional comment, a chief executive in a rural city raised the issue of differing impacts of tourism on a locality, in what the respondent referred to as 'benefits and dis-benefits' associated with tourism *'Clearly there are benefits and dis-benefits associated with visitors and, whilst it's a sweeping statement, the business community tend to be the more direct beneficiaries and local authorities less so. I'm thinking of traffic congestion, litter etc as dis-benefits which the local council has to address but does not get any financial recompense from, particularly as the business (NNDR) rate, whilst collected locally, is pooled nationally*'. The respondent makes the argument that it is the private sector organisations in the guise of the business community which tend to be the direct beneficiaries of increased tourism in terms of increased business. However the respondent is clearly arguing that there are local costs associated with tourism (*dis-benefits*) which have to be borne by

the local authority. A respondent in a rural city commented that funding is a *'complex issue'* and *'It's not that simple. A strategic approach should be taken, identifying what investment (short, medium term, capital, revenue) & ideally a partnership between the private & public sectors will work to deliver all of that. Most investment in tourism assets tends to come from the private sector if you think of hotels, restaurants, leisure attractions, which suggests answer (b), but what about a new road, subsidised bus or rail services, sweeping the streets covered in litter partly from tourists?'* Again the complexity of tourism destinations as places with a large number of interested stakeholders is highlighted in this comment. A respondent in a rural area commented in what could possibly be seen as an 'overview' of local policy *'A strong and effective public and private partnership is required with the aim to achieve an increasing level of investment from the private sector exceeding that of the public whilst proactively also looking to remove duplication'*. In a rural area, a respondent commented that *'Our experience is that our modest public sector [budget] is appropriate. We would want this to be more than matched by private sector investment'*

#### **6.3.4 Are local authorities able to continue support for tourism ?**

It was argued at the beginning of this chapter that historically local authorities have played an important part in development of English tourism, encouraged by tourism's economic significance and ability to generate local employment (ADC, 1988; LGA, 2000; DCMS, 2000). However, these are difficult times for local authorities. Against a backdrop of significant economic pressure on local authorities, and pressure to extend private sector involvement in public service delivery, questions are raised concerning support by local authorities for non-statutory services such as tourism. Therefore, is tourism a function that local authorities can continue to support? This particular question was aimed at chief executives (rather than tourism managers), as it was felt that chief executives' answers could provide a gauge of future tourism policy. Chief executives were asked *'Do you think that there is now a strong case for local authorities to concentrate on core non-discretionary functions, such as education, and leave the promotion of tourism locally to the private sector?'*

Figure 26 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	1	8	1
Rural	2	10	3
<b>All cities</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>

**Figure 26:** Promotion of tourism locally (n=25)

The majority of respondents argued that local authorities should not leave tourism promotion solely to the private sector. 72% of respondents argued that local tourism promotion should not be left solely to the private sector. Proportionately more respondents in the urban areas argued that local tourism promotion should not be left solely to the private sector. 80% of respondents in the urban areas arguing that local tourism promotion should not be left solely to the private sector, compared to 67% in the rural areas. Only 12% of respondents argued that local tourism promotion should be left solely to the private sector.

This question, possibly controversial, was designed to elicit from chief executives their views concerning how they saw the role of the local authority in the future in supporting tourism. This question also generated a number of additional comments from respondents, almost exclusively from those who argued that the public sector should not retract from supporting tourism promotion. A respondent who argued that local authorities should focus on 'statutory' functions explained their view, arguing that that local authorities should leave tourism promotion solely to the private sector *'if attractions are mainly in the private sector'*. All of the other comments were made by chief executives arguing that local authorities should retain engagement with tourism. A respondent in a rural area argued that *'local authorities should concentrate on what matters locally'* Other comments from respondents in the rural cities included *'definitely not'*, *'not in a place like [name of rural city deleted] where we have to manage 4 million visitors a year to a small city'*. A respondent in an urban area who argued that local authorities should not leave tourism promotion to the private sector appear to support their comment through an economic argument *'the private sector have traditionally*

*failed to provide the level [of funds] needed'*. Additional comments also appeared to bring to the surface the argument concerning the roles of the sectors. It was seen, in additional comments earlier in this chapter, a number of respondents referring to what they saw as the importance of the part played by local authorities in 'the public interest' (Elliot, 1997) by promoting local tourism for the wider benefit of their areas. It has been seen earlier, a respondent arguing that local authorities '*also ensure that the needs of the whole destination...are represented and considered in the management of tourism*'. A respondent in a urban area, who argued that local authorities should be involved with supporting tourism, saw tourism promotion as an important part of an authority's '*duty to promote well-being of residents*'. Another respondent who argued against commented that '*promoting a destination is key to the economic wellbeing of cities like [name omitted]*'. A respondent in a rural city paid reference to tourism's 'economic' qualities, and also made a comment recognising that tourism '*cuts across*' a number of sectors within destinations '*No more than any other economic development function where the local authority role is to promote a healthy economy. Tourism is important across a wide cross section of an economy like ours where the "marginal" additional income generated and the additional profile achieved from tourism based activity are important elements of the jig-saw. Tourism needs to be regarded as an economic development activity not as a leisure function. It is consequently treated and driven in a different manner*'. A respondent in a rural area caustically commented that '*if the private sector thought there was money to be made they would just do it*'.

#### **6.4 Concluding remarks**

Local authorities currently face very difficult financial circumstances. Despite such circumstances, respondents argued very strongly that local authorities should financially support tourism. Several respondents reported that their authority only supports tourism marketing.

Chief executives' views were compared to whether their authorities had a local policy of supporting tourism (evidenced through documentation such as by a current tourism

strategy, marketing plan or inclusion of tourism in their authority's local economic development plan). In all cases the chief executive's view was consistent with local policy for support for tourism within their authority. However, financial pressures on local authorities were evident in additional comments made by respondents. One chief executive, whilst arguing that local authorities should support tourism and reporting that their authority currently does financially support tourism, reported that their authority had made the recent decision to 'phase out' financial support for tourism. The reason given was that in such difficult financial circumstances, politically the local authority could not financially support tourism, whilst it did not financially support other business sectors. A respondent in a rural area also provided a particularly insightful comment, which again serves to highlight difficulties in terms of 'perception' of local authorities financing tourism *'Our citizen surveys always show locals wanting us to spend less on tourism'*. Whilst these comments do not suggest a 'tidal force' of local authority disengagement with tourism, it does serve to highlight difficult political scenarios those local authorities supporting tourism currently face in justifying support for tourism to the local electorate.

The data revealed some unexpected findings. In some cases, financial support for tourism in some of the rural cities is higher than some of their urban counterparts. The precise reported budget from the rural city was £650,000. Therefore, this rural city reported a budget allocation for tourism higher than all of the allocations reported by urban respondents apart from one. Furthermore, cities in two rural areas allocate more resources to cities than in four of the urban areas. Therefore, any suggestion that larger cities may automatically allocate larger funds for tourism development because of their size is not supported by this data. Additionally it was found that some of the smaller urban cities are allocating more than their larger urban counterparts. Variation (in some cases in terms of hundreds of thousands of pounds) was also found in allocation of budgets in the urban city category between cities of roughly similar population sizes.

Nevertheless, pressure on tourism budgets was clear, with 84% of respondents expressed the view that there is greater pressure for providing value-for-money from tourism budgets even compared to 2 years ago. A slightly higher proportion of

respondents in the rural areas articulated pressure on their tourism budgets. However, whilst local authorities are clearly in difficult financial positions, just over half of chief executives argued that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed. This view was stronger in the urban areas. However, just under a third of respondents did argue that budgets should be fixed with more acceptance in the rural areas that budgets may have to be fixed or limited in the future. However additional comments were very 'supportive' of tourism. Chief executives gave a clear impression of an 'equity' that they perceived between tourism and other local authority services. Chief executives argued that local authority decisions should not be based on not whether a department has statutory or non-statutory status, but rather on overall priorities or strategy of the authority. Perhaps, unsurprisingly, the majority of respondents argued that the private sector should contribute the majority of funding of tourism promotion rather than the public sector. The strength of feeling with regard to this issue was higher in the rural areas was higher than in the urban areas, which was consistent with views concerning pressure on tourism budgets. The issue concerning visitor taxes produced one of the most mixed responses. Overall the majority of chief executives argued that there is not a strong case for visitor taxes, however almost a third of respondents argued that funding for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes. The controversial nature of tourist taxes was highlighted in comments, and several respondents argued that this is an issue which may need further exploration in the future.

This part of the study was designed to gain an understanding of local authority intention for future support for tourism. It has been seen that chief executives strongly argued that local authorities should financially support tourism, despite considerable pressures acknowledged on tourism budgets. However, the vast majority of chief executives do not think that local authorities should in the future solely focus on statutory functions and leave tourism promotion to the private sector. This view was made more strongly in the urban areas. Local authorities concern for the 'public interest' (Elliot, 1997) was made clear in comments. These included that local authorities have a '*duty to promote well-being of residents*', and that local authorities '*ensure that the needs of the whole destination...are represented and considered in the management of tourism*'. Views were also made that local authorities engage with

tourism to promote the '*economic wellbeing*' of the whole city. Respondents argued that local partnerships were the most appropriate vehicle for tourism promotion in their areas.

# CHAPTER 7: THE MANAGEMENT CONTEXT AND MANAGING LOCAL TOURISM POLICY

## 7.0 Introduction

Chapter six presented the data from the chief executives' strand of the investigation, concerning chief executives' views as to how they perceived the role of local authorities in the delivery of local tourism policy.

This chapter presents the data from a triangulation of questionnaires and interviews conducted with tourism managers. The objective is to understand the impact of the managerial paradigm upon those managing local tourism policy. Local tourism management finds itself in a period of significant change impacted by the wider picture concerning public sector management of tourism (Visit England, 2011, Visit England, 2012). Local authorities are under severe financial pressures. Both the 'chief executive' and 'tourism managers' strands of this research have been conducted during what has been described as a 'transition period' (Visit England, 2012) following the exit of the Labour government and the earlier stages of the new Conservative/Liberal Democrat government. Closure of the RDAs during the earlier stages of the new government has led to an evolving picture of 're-alignment of the existing mix of Regional Tourist Boards, Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), tourism partnerships and other sub-national structures' (Visit England, 2012). Combined with financial pressures on local authorities, there currently exists a period of considerable uncertainty for local tourism departments.

Therefore, the primary data has been collected in difficult and sensitive times for those managing local tourism. In the process of securing views which could enlighten understanding of the current picture, the researcher recognised that opinions of respondents may not be the same as that of their employers. Some detail, for example that an authority may be spending less money on tourism, may also be politically sensitive. Additionally, in a period of reductions in local authority workforces, these are sensitive times, if potential redundancy scenarios are being raised in local authority tourism departments. Therefore, respondents were promised anonymity during both the questionnaire and interview stage, and the researcher has been extremely careful to treat all contact with tourism managers with utmost 'sensitivity'. However, if respondents sent published information directly to the researcher or directed the researcher to information on websites this information, as already published was not considered confidential and has been sourced. In order to ensure the anonymity of respondents, their departments, local authorities, cities, local area names, or names of organisations which could be identified with a particular area or city have not been identified. Respondents have been identified as, for example 'Manager A', or 'Manager B'.

38 questionnaires were sent to tourism managers in the cities, 33 were returned, an 86% response rate. Of those returned, 18 were from managers in the urban areas and 15 from the rural areas. Of those who did not complete the questionnaire, one referred the researcher for information to the organisation's website and to their tourism strategy, one responded that they were not able to 'fill in numbers for the sake of it and give you a false report' and others, after 'gentle' reminders, did not return the questionnaire. Following this stage, 10 interviews were carried out with tourism managers in urban and rural areas across different parts of England. In order to build the picture concerning how the managerial paradigm is impacting organisational management of tourism at the local level (objective two), the data in this chapter will be presented under two main themes. The first presents the data from the questionnaires and the second presents the data from the interviews with tourism managers.

## 7.1 Data from questionnaires

The questionnaire was designed to generate data that included information which would provide an overall indication of tourism in the cities. The data in this part of the chapter will be presented in the sub-themes of how the cities perceive themselves as tourist places, the economic value of tourism to the cities, employment supported by tourism in the cities, and which tourism services local authorities in the cities are supporting.

### 7.1.1 Perceptions of their cities as tourist places.

It is clear that tourism has become an area of much interest to the English cities (Page, 1995; Law, 1996; Law, 2002; Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000; Burns, 2008). However, cities as tourist places can be perceived in a number of ways such as metropolitan centres, urban areas, and 'tourist-historic' cities (Page, 1995; Law, 1996; Ashworth and Tunbridge, 2000). This study was interested in gauging how managers perceived their cities as tourist places. Respondents were offered a number of categories of tourist cities, which they were asked if described their city. Respondents were also given the opportunity to describe their city themselves in tourism terms, if they felt that none of the descriptions were appropriate. In some questionnaires managers indicated several categories.

Figure 27 illustrates responses.

Classification	Number
Metropolitan tourism city	5
Urban tourism city	9
Tourist-historic city	16
A rural tourism destination	2
A developing tourism destination	4
None of these	1
Not really a tourist centre	0
No answer	1

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**Figure 27:** Descriptions of their city by tourism managers

All respondents perceived their city as a tourist centre. The most common description was a 'tourist-historic' city, with almost half of the 33 respondents describing their city as 'tourist-historic'. Several respondents perceived their city as being in two categories, and in one case three. A respondent described their city as being 'rural', 'tourist-historic' and a 'developing tourism destination'. In other cases, a respondent described their city as being both 'urban' and 'tourist-historic', two managers described their city as being both 'tourist-historic' and 'rural', and one described their city as 'developing' and 'tourist-historic' and one as a 'developing' metropolitan tourist area. One manager described their city as 'other' and described their city as an 'urban/coastal' destination.

16 respondents argued that their city was a 'tourist-historic' city. What is particularly of note, is that 14 of the 15 rural cities (93%) argued that their city was a 'tourist-historic' city. All of the cities classed as 'rural' in this study have a population size of less than 180,000, with at least 10 having populations below 120,000. Clearly a number of managers are suggesting that despite being relatively small cities, those places have a history of involvement with local tourism development.

### **7.1.2 Economic value of tourism to the cities**

From 33 questionnaires returned, the economic value of tourism was able to be identified for 27 cities. Some respondents had preferred to refer the researcher to documents forwarded with the e-mail, and several others (whilst completing other parts of the questionnaire) referred the researcher to local authority or organisational websites for further information. It is recognised that whilst respondents were asked for figures for their 'city', in some cases respondents may have supplied figures for wider areas, for example a county or metropolitan area. Therefore this, as a potential limitation in the data is recognised for figures 31,32, 33 and 34.

Based on this information, for those 27 cities tourism is worth a total of around £17.3 billion. This is around £14.16 billion to the urban cities, and around £3.14 billion to the rural cities. Figure 28 identifies the value of tourism reported in the urban areas.

City	Value (£m)	Source
Birmingham	4,600 (2011)	Marketing Birmingham (2012)
Leeds	1,400 (2008)	Leeds City Council (2011)
Liverpool	1,300	The Mersey Partnership (2011)
Newcastle/Gateshead	1,260	Newcastle/Gateshead (2012)
Bristol	1,000	Visit Bristol (2012)
Brighton	732	Brighton City Council (2012)
Portsmouth	550	Portsmouth City Council (212)
Leicester	475	Leicester Promotions (2012)
Nottingham	450	Visit Nottinghamshire (2012)
Salford	445	Salford City Council (2012)
York	443	Visit York (2012)
Coventry	351 (2009)	Coventry City Council (2012)
Sunderland	349	Sunderland City Council (2012)
Wakefield	323 (2008)	Wakefield City Council (2012)
Derby	280	Destination Derby (2011)
Stoke	204 (2010)	Visit Stoke (2012)

**Figure 28:** Reported economic value of tourism in the urban areas<sup>2</sup>

The highest reported economic value of tourism was reported in Birmingham where tourism is worth £4.6 billion. Figure 29 identifies the reported value of tourism in the rural areas.

City	Value (£m)	Source
Hereford	423	Visit Herefordshire (2012)
Cambridge	393 (2010)	Cambridge City Council (2012)
Bath	373 (2010)	Bath Tourism Plus (2012)
Carlisle	362 (2011)	Carlisle City Council (2012)
Lancaster	270	Lancaster City Council (2012)
Exeter	183	Exeter City Council (2012)
Durham	174 (2010)	Durham County Council (2012)
St Albans	160 (2010)	St Albans City Council (2013)
Gloucester	126 (2010)	Gloucester City Council 2012

<sup>2</sup> Questionnaires were conducted in 2012. In some cases respondents may have reported figures for wider areas e.g. a county or metropolitan area. In some cases respondents may have referred to the researcher to other documentation for information which has been acknowledged. In some cases, the date of the source, and the year for which the information is applicable vary, and in such cases both have been acknowledged.

Lichfield	95	Lichfield City Council (2012)
Worcester	80	Worcester City Council (2012)
Chichester	60	Chichester District Council (2012)

**Figure 29:** Reported economic value of tourism in the rural areas

### **7.1.3 Employment supported by tourism in the cities**

From 33 questionnaires returned, employment supported by tourism was able to be identified for 28 cities. Again, some respondents had preferred to refer the researcher to documents forwarded with the e-mail, and several others (whilst completing other parts of the questionnaire) referred the researcher to local authority or organisational websites for further information. Based on this information, for those 28 cities tourism supports around 360,000 full time equivalent jobs. This is around 297,000 for the urban areas, and around 64,000 in the rural cities.

Figure 30 identifies the reported employment numbers (FTEs) supported by tourism in the urban areas.

City	FTEs	Source
Birmingham	66,000	Marketing Birmingham (2012)
Leeds	44,100 (2008)	Leeds City Council (2011)
Liverpool	24,000	The Mersey Partnership (2011)
York	23,000	Visit York (2012)
Newcastle/Gateshead	18,321	Newcastle/Gateshead (2012)
Bristol	18,500	Visit Bristol (2012)
Brighton	13,500	Brighton City Council (2012)
Liverpool	24,000	The Mersey Partnership (2011)
Wakefield	9,000	Wakefield City Council (2012)
Cambridge	8,874	Cambridge City Council (2012)
Coventry	6,580	Coventry City Council (2012)
Leicester	8,000	Leicester Promotions (2012)
Portsmouth	7,913	Portsmouth City Council(2012)
Salford	5,789	Salford City Council (2012)
Stoke	5,617	Stoke City Council (2012)
Sunderland	4,927	Sunderland City Council (2012)
Nottingham	4,500	Visit Nottinghamshire (2012)
Derby	4,272	Destination Derby City (2011)

**Figure 30:** Reported tourism employment (FTEs) in the urban areas

Figure 31 identifies the reported employment numbers (FTEs) supported by tourism in the rural areas.

City	FTEs	Source
Durham	10,682 (2010)	Durham County Council (2012)
Chichester	8500	Chichester District Council (2012)
Hereford	8420	Visit Herefordshire (2012)
Bath	8345 (2010)	Bath Tourism Plus (2012)
Carlisle	5258	Carlisle City Council (2011)
Cambridge	5154	Cambridge City Council (2012)
Exeter	4255	Exeter City Council (2012)
Lancaster	4000	Lancaster City Council (2012)
Gloucester	2933 (2010)	Gloucester City Council (2012)
St Albans	2500 (2010)	St Albans City Council (2013)
Lichfield	2294	Lichfield City Council (2012)
Worcester	1744	Worcester City Council (2012)

**Figure 31:** Reported tourism employment (FTEs) in the rural areas<sup>3</sup>

#### **7.1.4 Provision to support local tourism policy**

Local authorities may support local tourism policy in differing ways (Witt and Moutinho, 1995; Charlton and Essex, 1996; Stevenson, 2002). This may include supporting tourism marketing or special events which may bring large number of tourists to an area. Previous research by Witt and Moutinho (1995), Charlton and Essex (1996) and Stevenson (2002), explored how local authorities support local tourism policy in the counties and districts (Witt and Moutinho, 1995), the districts (Charlton and Essex, 1996) and the wider body of local authorities (including the London Boroughs, the larger metropolitans, counties, districts and unitary authorities) (Stevenson, 2002). Each confirmed such diversity. Witt and Moutinho (1995) found support for local tourism policy evidenced through such activities as tourism marketing, providing tourism business advice and support, provision of facilities (which may include tourism information centres, or attractions), provision of infrastructure, and encouraging the

<sup>3</sup> Questionnaires were conducted in 2012. In some cases respondents may have reported figures for wider areas e.g a county. In some cases respondents may have referred to the researcher to other documentation for information which has been acknowledged. In some cases, the date of the source, and the year for which the information is applicable vary, and in such cases both have been acknowledged.

private sector to work partnership development. In Stevenson’s (2002) research, support for tourism policy was evidenced by such activities as the development and/or management of visitor attractions, the development and management of special events, marketing and promotion, provision of visitor information services, policy-making in conjunction with other local authority departments (such as advice on tourism signage), coordination and development of public/private sector partnerships and tourism research.

This study sought to further understand the involvement of local authorities with tourism functions in the cities. Using categories derived from Witt and Moutinho and Stevenson’s research, the questionnaire asked respondents to identify involvement of their local authorities with specific tourism functions or services.

Figure 32 identifies incidence of reported local authority support for identified tourism functions.

<b>Tourism provision</b>	<b>Number of cities</b>
Tourism marketing	31
Special Events	26
Public relations	25
Tourist attractions	21
Market research	23
Tourist Information Centres	29
Tourism skills or training	15
Other	2

**Figure 32:** Tourism provision supported by local authorities in the cities

The category supported the most by local authorities was tourism marketing. 31 respondents out of 33 reported that their local authority supports tourism marketing. In Witt and Moutinho’s study (1995) tourism marketing was the most important aspect of local authority’s engagement with tourism. In this study, 22 respondents reported that the local authority promotes tourism via a department within the local authority

structure. 9 respondents reported that local tourism marketing undertaken by an organisation outside of the local authority structure. The issue of tourism marketing will be further discussed later in this chapter.

The second-highest element of tourism provision was tourism information centres. 29 managers reported that their authority directly supports provision tourist information centres. Of the remaining 4 authorities, 3 respondents argued that tourist information centres were provided by an external company or agency on behalf of the local authority. One respondent did not answer.

### **7.1.5 The tourism department and local authority structures**

During the chief executives' stage of the research, it was found that there were some loose patterns evident within the data, based on common themes or common key words in departmental titles. The themes fell into three main groups: departments with titles which suggest an 'economic' or 'development' role (within this is a regeneration or enterprise theme), those with 'culture' or leisure in the title, and those with a 'marketing' theme. During the tourism managers stage of the research it was possible to identify where tourism resides in 30 local authority structures. Figure 33 illustrates where the tourism department resides in local authority structures in the urban or rural areas.

Economic Development and Tourism (Rural)	Economic Development (Rural)	Economy and Tourism (Rural)	Economy (Rural)
City Development and Economy (Urban)	Economic Development and Tourism (Rural)	Regeneration, Community and Leisure (Rural)	Regeneration (Urban)
Commercial and Visitor Economy (Urban)	Economic Regeneration (Urban)	City Development and Cultural Services (Urban)	Regeneration and Economic Growth (Urban)

Inward investment (Urban)	Chief Executive (Urban)	Assistant Chief Executive (Urban)	City Renewal (Urban)
City Development and Cultural Services (Urban)	Enterprise and Civic Environment (Rural)	Cultural Services (Rural)	Culture and Tourism (Urban)
Leisure and Community Services (Urban)	Tourism, Leisure and Culture (Urban)	Leisure and Culture (Urban)	Culture Tourism and Sport (Rural)
Marketing (Urban)	Communications (Rural)	Distinctiveness and Place Marketing (Rural)	Marketing Communications and Tourism (Urban)
Operations (Rural)	Community Services (Rural)	Customer and Support Services (Urban)	

**Figure 33:** Departments where tourism resides within local authorities

For illustration purposes, the data has been grouped into the common themes or key words in departmental titles.

However in this data, it is argued that the patterns are slightly stronger leaning towards tourism residing in an ‘economic’ or ‘developmental’ department. Again, in the rural areas tourism tends to reside in departments with titles with an economic or development theme. ‘Marketing’ and ‘cultural’ themes also feature in department titles in the rural areas. In the urban areas, the patterns are slightly stronger than in the chief executive data. In the urban areas, there is stronger evidence for tourism residing in departments with an ‘economic’ or ‘developmental’ title. Limitations are acknowledged in that such analysis is only based on departmental titles, however this does suggest some clear economic or regenerative importance placed on tourism within these cities.

### **7.1.6 Tourism Marketing**

It has been seen earlier in this chapter, that when asked to identify which tourism services were supported by their local authority, 'tourism marketing' was the common activity cited. 31 respondents out of 33 reported that their local authority supports tourism marketing. Within the wider pressure to reduce the size and role of the state, 'contracting out' (Rhodes, 1994, p.140) has become a prominent feature of the British public sector (Rhodes, 1994; Elliot, 1997). In the tourism environment, Heeley (2001) has argued that for local tourism marketing public-private sector partnerships have received increasing acceptance as alternatives to the 'traditional' manner of tourism promotion being undertaken within local authority structures. Bramwell and Rawding (1994) in a study of five industrial cities found a number of different types and mix of tourism marketing approaches:

Bradford	Type of marketing: Public sector
Stoke-on-Trent	Type of marketing: Public and private collaborations
Sheffield	Type of marketing: Public and private collaborations
Birmingham	Type of marketing: Public and public-private collaborations
Manchester:	Type of marketing: Public and public-private collaborations

However, it is unknown to what extent the cities are engaging with tourism marketing and, if so, to what extent 'alternative delivery mechanisms' (Rhodes, 1994) may be incorporated in local tourism marketing. This picture was built up via a triangulation of data. During the chief executives' stage of the research, chief executives were asked if local tourism was promoted from within the authority. The data from the chief executives survey provided a foundation of the local picture. Chief executives had reported that in 14 out of 25 cities tourism marketing was undertaken from within the authority. In 11 out of the 25 cities, tourism marketing was undertaken by an organisation or department outside of the local authority structure. After making contact with tourism managers, during the questionnaire stage of the research tourism managers were asked if local tourism was promoted through a department with the city council. Of 31 respondents who reported that their local authority supports tourism marketing, 22 reported that the local authority promotes tourism via a department within the local authority structure. 9 respondents reported that local tourism marketing was undertaken by an organisation outside of the local authority structure. Clearly,

responses to the chief executive survey and tourism manager questionnaires may have not have been from the same city, but data has been triangulated from the chief executives and tourism managers' stages of the research. Figure 34 illustrates incidence of tourism marketing conducted within or outside of the local authority structure.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Urban	13	7
Rural	11	9
<b>All</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>16</b>

**Figure 34:** Tourism promotion within the local authority structure

From triangulation of data it is possible to identify the local scenario for 40 cities. It was found that 60% of the cities promote tourism from within the local authority structure, and 40% of cities use an alternative mechanism for tourism marketing. 65% of the urban areas promote tourism from within their authority, and 55% in the rural areas. Some respondents who reported that tourism marketing was not undertaken within the local authority structure referred the researcher to websites of organisations that undertake the tourism marketing function. A number of respondents commented that tourism was marketed by an organisation which they described as being 'a public/private sector partnership', a 'destination management partnership' or a 'destination management and marketing agency organisation'. Two examples are Visit Winchester and Visit Worcester. Visit Winchester (2012) describes its objectives 'The Visit Winchester and Heart of Hampshire Destination Management Partnership (DMP) is a partnership founded by Winchester City Council, Tourism South East, East Hampshire District Council and the South Downs National Park to develop and maintain the successful provision of industry support and marketing opportunities for Winchester and the Hampshire area of the South Downs'. Visit Worcester describes itself as a company limited by guarantee and whose objective is 'the development and delivery of tourism and city centre management services for the benefit of stakeholders in the city of Worcester' (Visit Worcester, 2012).

The data appears to confirm that the use of alternative delivery mechanisms has become a feature of tourism marketing, in the cities 40% of cities are using alternative delivery mechanisms for tourism marketing and some chief executives reporting that their current situation is 'under review'. During the questionnaire stage of the tourism managers' element of the research, a respondent in a rural city completed the questionnaire but added in an additional comment '*The issue for tourism in [name of city omitted] is that it is currently led by the LA for whom tourism is not a political priority. The focus of the LA is to "manage" not to encourage tourism and to reduce the cost to the public purse. Therefore the aim over the past 2-3 years has been to develop a more partnership approach to delivering tourism and to operate more commercially in order to reduce the cost to the public purse*'. In a later comment this respondent reported that the target set by the local authority was to reduce local authority tourism funding to zero in the next 3 years.

### **7.1.7 Finance and local tourism**

During the pilot study, the respondent referred to what could be seen as a 'fundamental' of destination marketing '*You cannot undertake destination marketing or business support without at least one member of staff and a budget of some kind*' [Pilot Study: 167-170]. However, financial support for tourism in the cities is an area unexplored in research terms. In order to secure the picture, several routes were employed; the chief executive survey and questionnaire to tourism managers. During the chief executive stage of the research, 19 chief executives identified tourism budgets within their authorities. Within the 33 questionnaires returned, 27 tourism managers identified tourism budgets. Of the 27 responses, one respondent reported that their local authority makes no financial provision for tourism. In this instance, in almost all cases the chief executive and the authority's tourism manager had participated in each separate stage of the research. Therefore the triangulation of chief executive survey and questionnaire, did not lead to significantly more information concerning allocated budgets. Triangulating the data from the chief executive survey and questionnaires, it was possible to identify tourism budgets in 29 of the cities.

The area of allocation of budgets by local authorities may raise potential issues in terms of disclosure of confidential information. In order to gauge current pressures on local authorities supporting tourism, respondents were also asked if this figure is more or less than the previous year's allocation. Figure 35 illustrates the incidence of reported tourism budgets based on urban or rural classification.

Tourism budget amount (£)	Type of city		
	Urban	Rural	All cities
501,000+	4	1	5
401,000-500,000	3	3	6
301,000-400,000	2	1	3
201,000-300,000	1	2	3
101,000 -200,000	1	4	5
1-100,000	3	3	6
0	1	0	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>29</b>

**Figure 35:** Reported tourism budgets by category (n = 29)

During the chief executives' stage of the research tourism budgets fell almost equally into one of five categories. However comparison of questionnaire data and chief executive data demonstrated tourism budgets slightly more spread across the categories. The most common categories for reported tourism budgets were £1-101,000 and £401-500,000, with 21% of respondents reporting tourism budgets falling into each of these categories. Following this were two categories, £101-200,000 and £501,000+, with 17% of respondents reporting tourism budgets falling into each of these categories. Roughly an equal number of cities reported tourism budget allocations either side of £300,000. 15 cities reported budgets below £300,000 and 14 cities reporting budgets above. As was the case with the chief executives data, a higher number of rural areas reported budgets below £300,000, with 64% of the rural cities having budgets of £300,000 or below. In the case of the urban areas, 60% of the urban areas budgets were above £300,000, whilst 40% were below £300,000. The highest financial allocation to tourism reported was £2.5m in a large metropolitan city.

The lowest tourism budget was zero reported in an urban area. After this, the second smallest tourism budget allocated by a local authority was £10,000 in one of the smallest rural cities. The average tourism budget across all of the cities in this study was around £310,000, with the average budget in the urban areas around £407,000 and £253,000 in the rural areas. When aggregated together, the allocations local authorities in the cities are making for tourism total almost £9.25 million.

The data from the chief executive stage of the research had revealed a number of findings which may not have been expected. One is the variation in tourism budget allocations across both the urban and rural categories. The data in the chief executive stage of the research suggested that some of the smaller rural cities are allocating significantly more resources to promote tourism than their urban counterparts. The data in this part of the research has revealed similar scenarios. In one case, a rural city is allocating more to tourism than 11 of their urban counterparts. 3 rural cities are allocating more to tourism than 8 of their urban counterparts, and 1 rural city is allocating more to tourism than 6 of their urban counterparts. In the chief executives' strand of the research, respondents in the rural cities reported the four lowest budgets allocations; £10,000, £30,000, £45,000 and £50,000. This may have been expected, the vast majority of these areas are small districts, some very small. However, after the triangulation this scenario has changed for two reasons. First, an urban city has reported that it allocates no financial resources to support tourism. Secondly, after this the three lowest budgets were then found in the rural cities £10,000, £30,000, and £45,000. However, a tourism budget of £40,000 was reported in an urban area. Therefore, the five lowest allocated budgets were to be found in two urban and three rural areas if the zero allocation is included. These allocations would appear to be very small amounts to allocate for tourism marketing. In the rural areas it may be argued that it is proportionate to the size of the area. However, £40,000 would appear to be a very small amount to allocate for promoting tourism in an urban area.

There were other unexpected results. Both in the urban and rural categories, it was found that size of the city is not a determining factor of allocation of tourism funding. Perhaps this may not necessarily be unexpected, however what was unexpected was that there were significant variation in financial allocations across the range of rural

cities, and in some cases amongst cities of very similar size. The population of rural cities who responded to the questionnaire survey ranged in size from around 40,000 to just under 140,000. The rural city with a budget in excess of £500,000 has a population significantly below the 180,000 cut off point for urban classification. Yet this city allocates more to tourism than 73% of the urban areas. Similarly the city with the second highest budget in the rural category has a population size significantly below all of their urban counterparts yet allocates more to tourism than 8 of the urban areas. In the urban category, in some cases a relationship between the size of the city and financial apportionment to tourism was found. For example two cities of similar size reported similar financial allocations to tourism. However, in other cases this was not found. For example, in the case of two particular cities of similar population size one city allocates more than ten times the financial allocation than the other. In the rural areas, for three cities of roughly of similar size (population), two of the cities had financial allocations for tourism of over £300,000 and one had an allocation of less than £50,000.

Respondents were asked if their tourism budget was more than, less than, or equal to last year. Figure 36 illustrates incidence of responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>More than</b>	<b>Less than</b>	<b>Equal to</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	0	12	5	2
Rural	1	5	5	2
<b>All cities</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>

**Figure 36:** Is your tourism budget more than, less than or equal to last year ?

Perhaps the figures are indicative of the current financial environment within local authorities. One respondent reported that their budget had increased. This was to coincide with the publication of the new tourism strategy in 2013. If the 'no answer' are omitted, almost 90% of respondents reported budgetary allocations of either less than or equal to last year. 61% of respondents reported budgetary allocations less than the

previous year, and 28% equal to last year. Within the categories, reduction in tourism budgets was found to be more evident in the urban areas. 63% of respondents in the urban areas reported tourism allocations less than the previous year.

### 7.1.8 Tourist taxes

It has been argued that local tourist taxes may offer some financial benefit to local authorities. During the chief executive stage of the research, 40% of chief executives felt that there is now a strong case for investigating the local tourist taxes option. Feeling amongst chief executives was stronger in the rural areas. Managers were asked ‘Do you think that in the future some of the funding for tourism promotion in English destinations may come from visitor taxes?’ Figure 37 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	12	6		
Rural	5	7	2	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

**Figure 37:** Future funding for tourism promotion and visitor taxes (n = 33)

40% of chief executives had felt that there is now a strong case for investigating the local tourist taxes option. 52% of tourism managers feel that visitor taxes will support funding for tourism promotion sometime in the future. 40% of respondents do not. What was interesting was the strength of feeling amongst the urban respondents. 67% of respondents in the urban areas feel that visitor taxes will support funding for tourism promotion sometime in the future. This is compared to 33% in the rural areas. If the ‘no answers’ or ‘don’t know’s are removed then, 57% of tourism managers feel that visitor taxes will support funding for tourism promotion sometime in the future.

Respondents who answered yes, were asked when they thought this was likely to be. Respondents were given a choice of answers; 2-5 years, 5-10 years, and 10+ years.

Figure 38 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>2-5 years</b>	<b>5-10 years</b>	<b>10+ years</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	6	2	2	2
Rural	2	3		
<b>All cities</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>

**Figure 38:** 'When do you think this will happen?' (n=17)

The majority of respondents would expect to see visitor taxes supporting tourism marketing in some way within 2 -5 years. 47% of tourism managers feel that visitor taxes will support funding for tourism promotion in 2-5 years, with 29% expecting visitor taxes to support funding for tourism promotion in 5-10 year's time.

### **7.1.9 More defined business planning and strategic development**

It has been argued that more defined business planning, incorporating the use of objectives, targets and strategic planning has become a feature of the managerial paradigm (Chape and Davies, 1993; Joyce, 2008). This study wished to gauge whether tourism policy was supported by strategic planning and, if so, the structure of such plans.

#### ***Incidence of strategic planning***

Respondents were asked if there was currently a tourism strategy or similar plan running for developing or promoting tourism in their cities. Figure 39 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>In preparation</b>
Urban	12	7	1
Rural	7	5	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>

**Figure 39:** Currently tourism strategies or similar plans running (n=33)

58% of respondents reported that their authority has a tourism strategy or similar plan running for developing or promoting tourism in their city. 38% do not. Two respondents reported that a tourism strategy was 'in preparation'. One manager reported that they had until recently a tourism strategy in place but which had run out. Prevalence of local tourism development strategies was neither found in the urban or rural areas. 60% of urban and 54% of rural areas have a tourism strategy or similar plan currently running.

### ***Structure of tourism strategies***

Respondents who reported that their authority has a current tourism strategy or similar plan in place, were asked to indicate the component features of their local tourism strategy. Figure 40 identifies the incidence of content of tourism strategies.

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Type of city</b>		
	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>All cities</b>
Mission statement	9	8	17
Specific objectives	11	8	19
Specific targets	10	8	18
SWOT or similar analysis	10	6	16
Recent trends analysis or similar commentary	10	7	17
Action Plan	9	7	16
Performance indicators	9	8	17

Other (reported by respondents)	0	0	0
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**Figure 40:** Content of tourism strategies (n = 19)

The structural content of tourism strategies reported in this study share a number of common features with strategies produced in other areas of business. Tourism strategies in most cases included a mission statement, specific organisational objectives, specific performance targets, a SWOT or similar analysis, a narrative concerning recent trends or similar commentary an action plan, and indicators for measuring performance. In a few cases respondents reported that their tourism strategy does not contain a SWOT analysis. No respondents offered suggestions for other content which was contained within their local strategies. Generally, the structural content of tourism strategies is similar in both urban and rural areas.

### ***Duration of tourism strategies***

Respondents were asked how long their tourism strategy runs for. Figure 41 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>1-3 yrs</b>	<b>4-5 yrs</b>	<b>6-10 yrs</b>	<b>10 yrs+</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	1	6	2	1	2
Rural	2	4	1		
<b>All cities</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>

**Figure 41:** Length of tourism strategy implementation (n = 19)

The most common timeframe for tourism strategy implementation was 4-5 years. If the 'no-answers' are removed, 53% of the cities have a tourism strategy that runs for 4-5 years. This was more common in the urban areas. A slightly higher proportion of urban

areas have tourism strategies running for 4-5 years. More rural areas have tourism strategies running for a shorter period for example 1-3 years.

***Local or sub-regional/regional strategic context***

With the literature highlighting the development of sub-regional local tourism marketing (BRA, 2005), this study was interested to see if strategic development also focused at the sub-regional level. Respondents were asked whether their tourism strategy was produced at the local or sub-regional level.

Figure 42 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Local</b>	<b>County/sub-regional</b>	<b>Regional</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	5	4	0	1
Rural	6	2	0	1
<b>All cities</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>

**Figure 42:** Tourism strategy at regional or sub-regional level? (n = 19)

The most common focus for tourism strategy was the local area. If the ‘no-answers’ are removed, the focus for tourism strategy being the local area was found in 65% of cases. In 35% of cases tourism strategy was produced at the county or sub-regional level. A higher proportion of rural areas have tourism strategies produced at the local level, 75% of rural areas have tourism strategies produced at the local level, compared to 56% in the urban areas.

***Review of strategic objectives***

Respondents were asked how often strategic objectives are reviewed. Figure 43 illustrates responses.

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Every year</b>	<b>Every 2 years</b>	<b>Longer than 2 yrs</b>	<b>No answer</b>
Urban	2	3	4	3
Rural	4	2	1	0
<b>All cities</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

**Figure 43:** Timeframes for reviewing strategic objectives (n = 19)

The most common timeframe for reviewing strategic objectives was every year. However, there was not found to be a great deal of difference between strategic objectives being reviewed either every year, every two years or more than 2 years. However it was found that a higher proportion of rural areas review achievement of strategic objectives every year.

#### **7.1.10 Evaluation**

The questionnaire was designed to understand two specific aspects in relation to tourism performance evaluation. Firstly, what indices the cities are using for evaluating local tourism. Secondly, how those indices are used in evaluative regimes. For example, benchmarking has grown in increasing acceptance within the tourism environment (Young and Ambrose, 1999). An inspection of tourism documentation was undertaken in order to identify the usage of evaluative indices in the tourism process. It was found that local authorities variously use around 14 types of indices in evaluating local tourism. These indices were incorporated into the questionnaire as a framework in order to gauge how the cities evaluate local tourism. Figure 44 illustrates incidence of indices reported to evaluate local tourism.

<b>Indices</b>	<b>Type of city</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	
Total number of visits (volume)	18	9	27
Number of domestic visits	15	5	20
Number of overseas visits	11	3	14

Total number of day visits	18	8	26
TIC visits	17	9	26
TIC enquiries	18	9	27
Total number of overnight stays	17	8	25
Overall visitor receipts (value)	18	9	27
Visitor spend per day visitor	14	7	21
Visitor spend per overnight visitor	12	6	18
Tourism value to local GDP	10	5	15
Employment supported by tourism	13	5	18
Quality factors		5	5
Improved Image of the City	3		3
Others	1	1	1

**Figure 44:** Incidence of indices reported to evaluate local tourism (n =33)

The most common indices reported was ‘total number of visits’ (volume), ‘overall visitor receipts’ (value) and ‘TIC enquiries’. This was followed by ‘total number of day visits’ and ‘TIC visits’

### **7.1.11 Performance management**

Respondents were asked to identify performance indicators that their cities are using to evaluate tourism. Whilst respondents were invited to identify performance indicators via the questionnaire, a number of respondents referred the researcher to tourism strategies or other documentation which was e-mailed to the researcher or available on websites. Figure 45 illustrates the incidence of performance indicators used to evaluate local tourism.

<b>Indices</b>	<b>Type of city</b>		<b>Total</b>
	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	
Total number of visits (volume)	18	9	27
Number of domestic visits	10	5	15

Number of overseas visits	6	3	9
Total number of day visits	9	9	18
TIC visits/enquiries	11	7	18
Total number of overnight stays	4	1	5
Overall visitor receipts (value)	18	9	27
Others	3	3	7

**Figure 45:** Performance indicators used to evaluate local tourism

The most common performance indicators were those linked to ‘volume and value’ of tourism. Others included TIC (visits or enquiries), coach visits, bed occupancy figures, and web-related figures.

Benchmarking is common practice within the private sector as a method of measuring products or services against a standard or a competitor in order to lead to an improved performance. Young and Ambrose (1999) have noted benchmarking exercises being incorporated in English visitor attractions. This study was interested to gauge benchmarking being used as an evaluative mechanism for tourism management. Figure 46 illustrates methods of evaluating performance reported by the cities.

Feature	Type of city			
	Urban		Rural	
	Yes	No	Yes	no
Against performance indicators set locally	16	1	6	4
Against performance indicators set nationally	11	7	2	7
Benchmarking with other similar destinations	13	5	6	4
Against performance objectives in our strategy	11	4	6	3
Others	1		2	

**Figure 46:** Methods of evaluating performance

The most common method for evaluating the performance of tourism was against performance indicators set locally. The second most common reported method for evaluating tourism was benchmarking with other tourism destinations. This was closely followed by tourism performance being evaluated against performance objectives identified in tourism strategies.

## **7.2 Tourism manager interviews**

This part of the chapter will present the data from the tourism manager interviews. The interviews were semi-structured, and the data has been grouped in key themes either from the literature or which may have arisen from the interviews. The earlier part presents the data concerning how tourism managers perceive the impact of 'politics' on their role, in particularly Labour policy and the impact of the regionalisation agenda on local tourism. The second part presents data from the interviews under the general theme of operational management and manager's views concerning impacts that policy changes post-2010 have had on local tourism management. In some of the interviews, respondents referred to sub-regional tourism organisations as Destination Management Organisations (DMOs), and in others as Destination Management Partnerships (DMPs).

### ***7.2.1 Regionalisation and power***

The primary research for the study has been conducted during a 'transition period' for public sector engagement with tourism in England, and as the new arrangements for local tourism are unfolding (Visit England, 2012).

What was clear from the interviews, was that the closure of the RDAs and resultant uncertainty is still very 'live' amongst those involved in local management of tourism. Some respondents were keen to reflect back to the period immediately before the 2010 General Election, and referring to a sense of 'nervousness' amongst public sector tourism managers in England generally concerning what a new government may bring. Despite pledges to the contrary by the Conservatives, respondents suggested that pre-2010 there was a sense within the public sector

environment that if the Conservatives were returned to power that they may not actually completely close down the RDAs. However, this respondent had not subscribed to such views *'it was like 'are they going to get rid of the RDAs or are they going to get rid of half of them?' No, they really are going to get rid of them, they said they were going to get rid of them and they got rid of them'* [Manager F: 250-256]. This manager alluded to the feeling across the public sector *'[from summer 2010] literally the world turned upside down...you would get a list of the 'quangos' that were going...it was mayhem'* [461-464]. Managers argued that the speed of the RDA closures was not anticipated. A manager commented *'It was frighteningly quick, a lot of them went within 6 months'* [Manager E: 164-165]. Another manager argued *'With regard to the RDAs, the scale and the speed of the change was extraordinary'* [250-256].

When asked to reflect on Labour policy for tourism, respondents in general saw Labour as being supportive of tourism. The common theme was that respondents perceived Labour's support for tourism came through its financial support for the RDAs. Several managers of long-standing experience in local authority management particularly mentioned support of local tourism in their area by their RDA. One commented *'from the dialogue we had with the regional development agency...they were supportive of tourism and the [name of local regional development organisation omitted] they were supportive of that as well'* [Manager I: 98-102]. A respondent in a rural area also thought Labour policy as generally supportive of tourism, and citing financial support for the RDA which then 'tricked down' to tourism as being a major support for tourism in their region. A manager argued that in their area support for tourism was still being progressed as the new government announced the RDAs would be abolished, and with the RDA closure causing a dramatic halt to progress. Referring to their RDA, and how it financially supported some major tourism-related capital projects in their area, this manager argued that *'they [RDAs] created quite a lot of jobs in the industry...from our point of view the capital projects were something that we could clearly not deliver on without major funding...small streams of funding but not in terms of big capital projects...I think it was getting going a bit really before it fell away'* [Manager E: 138-145]. A manager in an urban area argued that Labour policy

supported tourism in two major ways. One was support for the post-industrial areas, which has made a significant improvement to those areas. Whilst this respondent was not in a post-industrial city, this manager recognised the benefits of tourism in those cities. This manager summed up Labour policy for tourism *'For me there are 2 two things that happened, whether intended or not, over that period which we should reflect on as being broadly positive, but not that we here didn't particularly benefit from. One is the support for post-industrial urban regeneration and the impacts on those cities that raised the ambitions of those cities as destinations, some of which had started before, but I genuinely think under that tenure it moved forward at a greater pace than under the Conservatives...through both politically and funding... a lot of that through the RDAs and the work they did'* [Manager G: 384-397]. The second benefit for tourism from Labour policy was support for major events. This manager argues that major events may not have been supported as strongly if other parties were in power *'The other one is raising ambitions around major events... that's not to say that may not have happened anyway....But Manchester Commonwealth Games, Olympics 2012, some regional through the RDAs some national through government but there was a collective sense of raising our profile on the international stage, a lot driven by events, and I am not convinced that that would have happened if we wouldn't have had a Labour government in power'* [400-410]. A manager in a rural area was more cautious. To this respondent tourism did not appear a priority to Labour, there did not appear to be a tourism policy from national government driving tourism forward. Rather, this manager thought that 'devolving' tourism responsibility down to the regions was an easy option, giving the RDAs the 'problem' of deciding how tourism should be supported in the regions *'I don't think it was a priority... when I started to work for [name company omitted] is seemed like it was an industry in a process of change...all of a sudden this term DMO had emerged, and all of a sudden it became the buzzword but not by design'* [Manager H: 151-156].

The BRA (2005) has argued that the restructuring of implementation of tourism policy during the Labour administration, created a 'top-down' system where the balance of power in the regions favoured the RDAs. The BRA argues that it was probable that the

government underestimated the power that the RDAs would exert within the regions concerning tourism. An example is that the government thought that the established patterns of regional tourist board activities would be continued with the RDAs adding new funds for the evolving new tourism structures and related tourism projects (BRA, 2005). Several respondents agreed. A manager in a rural area commented '*I don't think the government looked and 'thought 'this is the way things needed to be done'...I think DMO's came out of the regionalisation agenda'* [Manager H: 156-159]. One respondent argued that 'regions' were inconsistent with the needs of tourism marketing. To this manager, emphasis should not have been placed on the regions, but more support given to the localities '*At the regional level... it felt like it was introduced for reasons of scale of organisation rather than any market-based rationale...we used to have 12 regional tourist boards and they went to 11... but none of them ever made sense in destination terms...what is the 'north-west' in tourism terms ?'* [Manager G: 332-340].

In some areas, this saw RTBs closing (BRA, 2005; Palmer, 2009). To one manager, the closure of the Tourist Board in their area appeared to be a combination of neither the RTB or the RDA wishing to give ground, but the power of the RDA leading it to become the 'winner' and the tourist board closing '*Here in this area they [the RDA] created 4 DMOs... they tried to work with the [name of tourist board omitted] but they had different ways of working and the RDA's remit was quite specific...the [name of tourist board omitted] had been established for quite a long time and was possibly a little bit antiquated in the way it did things and did not want to change and would not meet the RDA halfway even'* [Manager H: 138-146]. In another area, the manager referred to the situation in their region where '*the RDA kept the tourist board and the tourist board created some sub-regional organisations who were loose agglomerations of authorities and other interested groups'* [Manager G:300-304]. What is clear is that there was variation across Britain in how the RDAs perceived tourism in their regions. One manager in an urban area argued that the RDA in their area didn't really understand tourism '*The RDA here didn't get tourism - in other parts of England yes – but they never got tourism here ever - which is why they turned around and said 'we don't know anything about tourism you tell us what*

*we should tell you to do in tourism and here's a bit of money'* [Manager G: 310-317].

The RDAs were seen by respondents generally in positive terms with regard to supporting regional tourism, however the power of the RDAs in setting their own mandates within their regions was not seen by respondents in the local areas generally as being a positive development for the local areas. A manager in an urban area was keen to stress the power of the RDAs in being able to set their own regional mandates '*Each RDA had their own agenda*' [Manager F: 88]. This manager argued that a large part of the power that the RDAs had, came from the substantial amount of finance allocated nationally by Labour to the regions. The manager was keen to stress that their local RDA's budget per annum '*was around £130 million a year*' [Manager F: 615-616]. This respondent argued that RDA funding saw RDAs '*wandering around with enormous wallets full of money*' [Manager F: 440-441], and this gave the RDAs substantial power over the local authorities who had increasing pressure on tourism budgets. Additionally, respondents argued that political support from the centre for the RDAs allowed the RDAs to set their own regional mandates '*the RDAs...they were very strong organisations and within their regions they pretty much called the shots because they were protected...and politically of course they had strong political backing so [for local authorities] it was always a rearguard action*' [38-44].

Such power meant that local authorities found it difficult to influence the agenda as 'key players' (BRA, 2005). One respondent explained their relationship with their RDA and the power the RDA held '*the RDA wants us to do this and the RDA wants us to do that... as a local partner you could find your ability to influence or access could be quite limited*' [Manager F: 350-355]. Respondents saw Labour policy as being supportive of tourism, but disappointment was expressed that Labour did not favour tourism involvement by local authorities. A manager in a rural area argued 'they set up the RDAs and '[name of RDA omitted] *decided to have a tourism remit... but they felt that local authorities should not be delivering many aspects of tourism*' [Manager C: 319-324]. In an urban area, a manager argued '*the [Labour] government was clearly pushing tourism away from local authorities, so it might still be supporting tourism but not as run by local authorities, the emphasis was for*

people to join DMOs and funded by the private sector...so when we talk about the Labour government there was a push for you to stop doing it [tourism] as a local authority' [Manager I: 104-111]. One manager thought that Labour wished that local authorities 'to stop doing' tourism. A manager in an urban area thought that local authorities were 'marginalised' by RDA policy in their area 'If we go back to pre-May 2010 the agenda was very much being driven the RDAs who had either established or funded DMOs...where those organisations were separate to local authorities the local authorities had been marginalised and there was a definite momentum away from local authority direct involvement with tourism' [Manager F: 18-26]. This manager simulated a conversation between the RDA and local authorities in their area 'the agenda here was quite clear 'you cut the grass and sweep the streets and the DMOs will deliver the marketing and the product services'...the role of the local authorities was very much downgraded at this level' [Manager F: 88-93]. Other managers also shared such a view 'it was the case that the RDA wanted the local authority not to be involved in marketing' [Manager H: 190-191]. A manager in a rural area used the words 'downgraded' and 'backseat' when describing the perception they felt that their RDA had for local authorities. The manager also paid reference to their city not being supported financially in tourism promotion 'it was clear they [RDAs] wanted to give their [marketing] money to the DMPs...they wanted local authorities to be the place-makers in terms of building up the welcome and the product development...and keeping the toilets open...which it felt like we were being downgraded really in our role... they wanted to give us a backseat really' [Manager E: 126-134]. However, at the time of RDA creation, some respondents recalled an air of 'expectancy' that some RDA financial support could go the way of local authorities supporting tourism. A manager recalled being very optimistic that the creation of DMOs was a positive move 'when they came along and said that 'actually we are going to have an umbrella DMO and promote the brand that people know' I was quite pleased, this seemed common sense...thank goodness for that !' [Manager D: 134-139]. Another respondent raised her hands in a positive manner and smiled 'the RDAs are giving us loads of money !' [Manager A: 81-86]. The manager then lowered their hands and stopped smiling in a gesture of disappointment and shook their head 'the RDAs never gave us any money anyway, they gave it all to [name of DMP omitted] anyway'. Therefore, the ability of the RDAs to set the regional

agenda, led to different models of tourism support across Britain by different RDAs (Tourism Insights, 2009). When Labour left power, and the RDAs closed by the Coalition government it left a varied picture of RDA engagement with tourism across Britain. Manager 'G' summed up the tourism picture for the new emerging tourism bodies '*every area is arranged differently and everywhere has a different set of circumstances*' [93-95].

### **7.2.2 Sub-regionalisation and organisational politics**

Palmer (2009) and Thomas and Morpeth (2009) have described how the move from a regional to sub-regional focus saw DMOs representing sub-regional level interests in tourism. During the pilot interview, the respondent commented on how the RDAs restructured the regions under the RDA regimes '*The RDAs looked at setting up Destination Management Partnerships (DMPs) for the main marketing brands in their area rather than working with the individual LA areas ie the Lake District rather than Cumbria, or the Peak District rather than Derbyshire. LAs were then expected to put their funding into the local DMPs rather than promoting their own areas on the assumption that any economic benefit would roll-down. For some areas this worked, for lesser known areas it often didn't*' [Pilot study: 62-64]. What is significant here is the notion of promoting 'the main marketing brands'. Budden (2009) has argued that an aim of sub-regionalisation was to create two main objectives:

- Consumer or 'brand-led' organisations in smaller geographical areas
- Economies of scale requiring potential synergies with other public programmes and larger organisations closely aligned to regional agencies.

The focus on 'branding' of the sub-regional areas reflected a focus on marketing by the RDAs (BRA, 2005; Budden, 2009). Palmer (2009) has referred to this as 'market-focussed destination marketing'. The RDA's arguments were that in an increasingly competitive international market, regional tourism development had to become much more 'marketing savvy' than the regional tourist boards had been (BRA, 2005). This

led to DMOs evolving as 'brand-focused' marketing organisations, focusing on the most recognisable 'attack brands' in the sub-regional areas (BRA, 2005).

Views were mixed concerning the promotion of 'sub-regional' brands. In some cases, respondents reported that in promotion of their city, the sub-regional 'brand' had provided a positive vehicle for marketing both the sub-regional area and the city. A respondent in a rural area commented that *'the DMO works with us and picks up the iconic brand...and the [name of wider area] is the iconic brand... we can sit quite comfortably underneath that brand'* [Manager C: 103-110]. The benefits of sub-regional promotion was highlighted by a respondent in an urban area who argued that the benefits of having a DMO included smaller places being able to 'buy into' larger campaigns *'For a relatively small amount of money you can be part of a much larger campaign'* [Manager J: 81-82]. The literature has also noted tightly defined sub-regional boundaries may also negatively impact the local level (Palmer, 2009). For a number of respondents, development of sub-regional tourism promotion also brought its difficulties. Three main arguments that were forwarded were that creation of sub-regional brands had created too much 'brand development' which had caused confusion for the tourism market, sub-regional branding had led to less focus and promotion for the city and, thirdly, sub-regionalism has reduced the influence of the local areas in partnership decision-making.

The literature suggests that 'branding' can create customer loyalty and recognition (Keller, 1998). The BRA (2005, p.4) have argued that the 'sub-dividing' of regional tourist board areas into smaller sub-regional areas around DMO brands created too much brand development and a 'confusing new jargon' of 'Attack brands, Slipstream Brands, and Brand Clusters'. This argument was supported by a number of respondents. Several respondents used vocal tones, looks, or gestures to indicate irritation when discussing their experiences. Manager 'A' shook their head in what appeared to be an exasperated way and responded *'people are getting hung up everywhere about branding'* [Manager A: 132-133]. What is the reason for such 'brand development' ? This Manager responded *'there is a feeling that everybody needs to have their messages going out'* [129-130]. A number of respondents argued that too much 'brand' development; may have a negative effect on tourists. To manager 'A'

'too much' brand development '*actually can be completely confusing [to tourists]*' [130-132]. In another manager's view, an over-emphasis on 'brand development' is having a negative impact on the tourism consumer '*there is no consistency, people constantly changing things...then people [consumers] don't recognise things*' [Manager A: 175-178]. Manager 'D' argued that too much brand development can cause 'confusion' for visitors. To manager 'A' development of different 'brands' in sub-regional areas prohibits a consistency of '*everybody talking in the same language and not mixed messages*' [Manager A: 165-167]. Manager 'D' argued that in their view there had been too much 'brand development' in their region and only the ones that visitors actually recognise should be promoted '*We have a massive confusion here in trying to make sure only the brands that are crucial for the visitors to know are the ones that are portrayed*' [Manager D: 359-361]. A manager expressed irritation that when the DMO was created the city 'brand' came into question. Manager 'A' argued that their city '*have a strong enough image out there*' [Manager A: 143] but the marketing of the city region came to be questioned by the DMO, the interviewee recalled the time '*Then what happened other people came in and started to question it [the city brand] because they hadn't agreed to do it...they weren't here when it was all agreed...and they want to change things and they wanted another logo, and then they wanted another brand*' [145-150]. Some managers appealed for a 're-evaluation' of sub-regional brand development. '*I think that we need to get more savvy on what brands and place marketing is actually about*' [Manager A: 158-160]. During the interview this manager argued that that whilst 'branding' is an important development in marketing, the overall tourism development 'package' includes a number of elements 'working together' and which provide the customer experience in tourism destinations. In their view, there needed to be less emphasis on brand development and more emphasis on the support needed locally to support brand awareness '*I say to people it isn't about the logo it's what's underneath that...what is the service we provide ? It isn't about what your logo looks like but everything else underneath it...it's about staff using it, and the industry using it*' [Manager A: 160-167]. This respondent argued that marketing is important, but as well as the support mechanisms required including that provided by tourism information centres '*Marketing is about the service...its what's underneath that [logo] because at the end of the day if people wish to visit [name of city omitted] and ask for a brochure and it doesn't get sent out...it*

*doesn't matter what your logo says it's about the people in the TICs servicing that enquiry'* [Manager A: 189-198]. To this manager the DMOs *'don't understand that actually it's all about consistency'* [Manager A: 150-151]. In some cases, respondents argued that the tourism market may not recognise the brands of the sub-regional areas. A respondent in an urban area argued that potential tourists would have some form of understanding geographically where the city was in England, but would quite likely not know where the county 'brand' was *'What is people's perception of that county ? 'Well it's a county somewhere in England, but I'm not sure where'* [Manager A: 273-276]. The manager continued by supporting their argument by suggesting that a major national tourism attraction in their city area would be more strongly recognised by potential tourists as being in their city rather than in the DMO region *'but for our major attraction [name omitted] they [tourists] have an idea where that is...actually in our area !'* [Manager A: 276-278]. A respondent in a city in a rural area concurred *'I have the same problem here with [name of organisation omitted]...we've had to work really hard trying to get people to understand...I can't go to France or Germany and say do you want to come to [name of wider area omitted] ? Where's that ? If you start with [name of city omitted] they say 'yes I've heard of that'* [Manager G: 373-381].

During the interviews the argument was made that sub-regionalism had not led to significant promotion of the city area. It has been argued earlier in this work that English cities (particularly the post-industrial cities) have increasingly financed tourism promotion in order to shed the image of being 'difficult areas' to attract tourists (Palmer, 2009). One manager, whilst making the argument that benefits of sub-regionalism meant that local areas could save money and increase coverage by buying into sub-regional campaigns, they also argued that the move to sub-regional tourism promotion had not always mean that the local areas (the cities) were necessarily sufficiently promoted in sub-regional marketing campaigns. This respondent also commented that they had formed this view from conversations over a number of years with other tourism managers in other areas *'how much of that [sub-regional tourism promotion] is about the local areas, unless it's a big attraction or a 'must see' they are not promoting the smaller areas'* [Manager J: 601-602]. Other respondents also had similar views. The main point, which appeared to be

stronger in the urban areas, was that the city was not seen by the DMO as complementing the 'sub-regional' brand. Therefore, within the wider promotion of the sub-regions, the feeling was that the cities did not receive as much coverage in the promotion of their area as they felt they should. Irritation with regard to this issue was clear during interviews. One manager argued *'our DMP don't really want to talk about [name of city deleted] because they see it as a mucky urban area... they want to talk about [description of wider area omitted].. I put quite a lot of money into the DMP, but I have a real struggle to get them to talk about the city'* [Manager A: 237-240]. Later this manager continued quite bluntly and almost despondently *'in our area [name of DMO omitted] only promotes the county'* [271-273]. Other respondents also argued 'under-representation'. In a rural area where the DMO had not survived since the closure of the RDA, the respondent referred to the previous scenario and sub-regional promotional where this city also felt very under-represented in sub-regional campaigns *'we felt that we were under represented in the [name of regional promotional organisation omitted]'* [Manager B: 133-135]. The manager went on to give an example where they felt the DMO campaigns focussed on the wider area and ignored the city *'what use to me is a seaside campaign ? Other resorts such as [names omitted] loved it... we felt that we were a main player [in the region] but very often we didn't feel that [name of regional promotional organisation omitted] was marvelous for us'* [Manager B: 136-140].

After the creation of the DMO, a manager argued that their city then had to alter its marketing position because of the creation of a new 'sub-regional brand'. After the formation of the DMO, the city did not find that it 'naturally fitted' into the sub-region 'brand' *'in our area it was to develop the 'attack brands-slipstream' strategy where the 5 main areas had their attack brands – our problem was that we felt that the attack brand was [name of large resort omitted] and the rest of us didn't naturally slipstream into that'* [Manager E:150-156]. The power of the RDAs and DMOs are evident in this instance, in that the development of the sub-regional 'brand' meant that the city either had to either 'sit' under this 'brand' or choose to market the city itself. It has been noted earlier, that in another area a rural city was content to 'sit under' the sub-regional brand. However, in this case, this 'rural' city did not feel that the new sub-regional

brand represented or promoted their city, so the city had to reposition itself 'so they set them [the DMOs] up and we had to re-position ourselves' [Manager E:110-111].

A number of respondents argued that, before inception of DMOs, they had successfully promoted their city and that the existing 'brands' for their cities were 'strong' brands. A manager in an urban area argued that the existing 'brand' for their city was 'a very positive logo that we find that works for everything that we do' [Manager A: 141-142]. Another manager argued that in their area, the city 'brand' had been developed after a thorough market research process 'we have developed a brand for visitors [strapline omitted]' recognising that all the research we have done suggests that the people who come to [name of city omitted] to explore the nationally significant attractions on our boundary' [Manager D: 373-378]. For a manager in an urban area, the city was the 'compelling' brand much more strongly than the sub-regional brand however, the city had 'battled' for some years to secure this recognition and which still the city did not receive 'I have a real struggle to get them to talk about the city' [Manager A: 253-261]. A manager in another urban area expressed a similar view '[here] the visitor economy/tourism by and large is about [name of city omitted]... they [the DMO] lost their way and confused their geographical footprint with their customer base...it was set rigid and it was 'this is the way forward and the local authorities need to be left behind' [Manager F: 365-373]. A respondent in a rural area argued that the strategy of the RDA was to take marketing away from local authorities to DMOs, but their city did not feel that the DMO brand would portray the importance of the 'city'. However, similar to several other respondents experiences, this city felt that the sub-region did not represent the city and therefore that is why the city had retained its tourism marketing function 'the marketing rationale [of the RDA] was they would give over a lot of our marketing resources to [name of DMO omitted] in order to deliver all marketing for this district.. but this district feels that it has enough unique characteristics on its own that [DMO name omitted] can't deliver on... that has kept our team and department here... if not our key destination messages would be lost' [Manager E: 298-307]. A respondent argued that in their area 'It is always a struggle to get any kind of urban representation...I absolutely don't see, not for one second, that [name of wider region omitted] should have primary

coverage in publications' [Manager D: 143-146]. This manager argued that both the sub-region and the city can benefit from the promotion of both areas in tourism marketing, as tourists often may not always stay in one place during visits *'let's not overlook the fact that visitors to the [name of regional area omitted] do in fact to come to [name of city omitted] for a day trip, or the other way round...they stay in the cosmopolitan cities [such as city name omitted] and then go out to the [name of regional area omitted]'* [Manager D: 147-154]. A similar scenario was described by a respondent in an urban area who argued that the local tourism industry supported marketing initiatives by the city because the DMO did not promote the city to the extent that the local tourism industry felt was needed. Therefore the local tourism industry supported tourism marketing initiatives driven by the city council *'the problem is if I didn't promote this city it wouldn't get promoted'* [Manager A: 258 -261].

Did the local tourism industry understand the changes to sub-regions etc ? A number of respondents referred to the tourism industry in their areas being made up of mostly small organisations, and whose focus can often be on their own businesses rather than the bigger picture of tourism development in their cities. Some managers referred to local destination management being complex, a respondent in a rural area arguing that *'I think it's just a question that our industry don't seem to understand destination management at all'* [Manager H; 120-122]. A manager in an urban city argued that their tourism industry is made up of mostly SMEs who *'really do not understand at all the difference between the local authority tourism team and the DMO'* [Manager D: 333-335]. This respondent described their tourism industry as *'blissfully ignorant'* [328] in their understanding of the respective roles of the local authority and the DMO *'they may have got a form through offering advertising on the [name of DMO omitted] website, and they will phone us up and try to book, or they will phone us up and try to complain that their photograph isn't on it [the DMO website]'* [Manager D: 328-333]. A respondent in a rural city argued that some of the 'marketing' terms used, were terms that small businesses like 'Bed and Breakfasts' did not understand *'I think one of the biggest problems is the use of terms like destination management organisation, the tourism industry do not understand it...if you call it the tourist board they know exactly what you're talking about....being a 'visitor information centre' they know what the role of that centre is'* [Manager C: 390-397]. This respondent laughed *'I work in it, and I just*

*about keep up with it !'* [401-402]. But, to this manager the tourism industry in their area are also confused by the changes *'I think it's been confused now because they get lots of information about publications from the DMO and then they come in ask for information in the tourist information centre...so I think the industry are a bit confused about what is going on'* [Manager C: 406-412]. This perception was articulated by respondents in the interviews. A respondent in an urban area was keen to stress that in their view, the 'marketing of destinations' (destination marketing) was a 'unique' area of the subject of marketing, which needed advanced marketing skills in conjunction with an understanding of places as 'destinations'. The respondent argued that the newly formed organisations were promoted as experts in marketing, but who may have lacked experience in marketing tourism destinations *'I think that everybody thinks that they are an expert in marketing...in a way they think they understand it...they don't understand the depth of marketing needed...they don't have any experience...[of marketing destinations]...but people [in the DMPs] think that they are experts...and they are the ones at that level commenting and changing things that we don't need changing'* [Manager A: 185-187]. Concerning the last point and *'things that we don't need changing'*, earlier in the interview the respondent had referred to the marketing of their city *'we have a great brand here in [name of city omitted] and lots of money was spent developing this brand'* [Manager A: 135-137].

The literature has argued that sub-regionalism may also negatively impact tourism at the local level (Palmer, 2009). The notion of the power of the RDAs and DMOs to set the agenda was noted earlier in this chapter. A number of respondents argued that the power associated with regionalism and sub-regionalism had reduced the influence of the local areas in several ways, particularly in decisions made by DMOs. The notion of 'under-representation' of the cities in sub-regional tourism promotion has been discussed. This was referred to by a manager in one of the urban cities *'the problem is that they [the DMO] only want to promote what they want to promote'* [Manager A: 304-305]. In the context of 'governance', and the way that business 'was done' within the sub-regional partnerships, this issue had been of great concern to some respondents, particularly in being able to (or not being able to) influence decision-making. Respondents were concerned that in their view the importance of the public sector to DMOs was 'played down' by DMOs. A number of respondents commented

that without local authority funding the local DMO was not sustainable. This manager argued *'we've got a DMO in this area, and the they work closely with Visit England and they have some regional growth fund money to take forward campaigns for the next few years but they depend to a great extent on finances from the local authorities'* [Manager C: 353-359]. Palmer (2009) has noted that in the case of tourism promotion in Yorkshire, the level of public sector influence in the sub-region had 'waned'. One respondent suggested that this may be because if local authorities are able to contribute less financially to partnerships then this could impact the level of influence of the local authority in the decision-making process *'Sometimes in a partnership you get a clash of wills in how the funding bodies [organisations] see their roles versus how they see their funding... the businesses view is that if you put £20,000 in you get £20,000 worth of influence, and if you put in £5000 you get £5000 worth of influence'* [Manager F: 616-662]. Palmer (2009) has argued that this could also be because whilst local authorities may have a representative on the DMO board, in the Yorkshire area not all local authority representatives (elected members) had a tourism policy background. This was also particularly mentioned by one respondent in a rural area, but in the context of their local politicians sitting on the Board of the DMO but the private sector being in the majority of Board members. Therefore had led to, in this respondents opinion, a reduction in public sector influence on local tourism policy despite local authorities financially supporting DMOs *'members sit on the boards but they are in the minority... so they [local authorities] have less and less influence on policy'* [Manager C: 76-78].

Another respondent in an urban area argued that despite their local authority financially contributing to the DMO, the local authority did not have significant influence in the DMO decision-making process. This, again, was seen as the power of the DMO to set the agenda. The respondent commented several times during the interview, that whilst their DMO was a membership organisation, consultation amongst partners in decision-making was 'lacking' *'There is no consultation !'* [Manager A: 338]. This manager argued that 'members meetings' with the DMO often followed a routine of the DMO announcing to members what decisions had been made, rather than consulting with members and securing their views on issues *'we only have meetings with them once a quarter but why not send an e-mail around saying 'what do you think of this*

*idea ?' but having meetings just ticks a box as far as I am concerned'* [Manager A: 329-333]. Tongue-in-cheek' this manager appeared to describe their DMO decision-making process *'it's like 'this is what we've [the DMO] done, this is our marketing plan which you haven't seen beforehand' so you [then] see it at the meeting and it's a fete accomplis'* [Manager A: 308-311]. This manager expressed intense frustration with this scenario *'you say 'but couldn't we have had a discussion first ? I am part of the marketing group !'* [Manager A: 88-95]. In making their argument this manager commented with regard to a 'new technology' initiative that their DMO were discussing at a members meeting. However the manager knew that the decision had been taken and the technology had already been purchased before the meeting *'I knew before they'd announced it that they'd already purchased them before the discussion'* [Manager A: 327-328]. Therefore, this respondent was unhappy with the distribution of power within the partnership *'We are a member of [name omitted] DMP...they are public/private partnership apart from it isn't much of a partnership because they do really what they want'* [Manager A: 88-95]. Later in the interview this manager argued that a description of their DMO (and others) as a partnership would be an exaggeration *'DMPs may as well just be [sub-regional name omitted] tourism' and stop branding them as a destination management partnerships because I'm not really convinced'* [338-341].

### **7.2.3 Regionalisation and the managerial paradigm**

More involvement of the private sector was sought in RDA tourism policy (Tourism Insights, 2009). It has been seen earlier in this chapter that the views of respondents generally was that the reduced role for local authorities in tourism development was a direct effect of Labour policy for tourism. This policy had impacted at the regional level, where Labour's regionalisation agenda had given power to the regional and sub-regional level at the expense of the local level (BRA, 2005; Palmer, 2009). This view was shared by a number of respondents who painted a picture of an environment seeking a reduced role for local authorities in tourism development. A manager in an urban area commented that *'they [the government] wanted something that was private sector led and private sector driven. There was a view that as a political issue it*

*[tourism] was vulnerable to changes in political set-ups...so they wanted more consistency and with enough businesses in the product to give it the critical mass to make it work* [Manager F: 333-339]. This manager further argued that this policy was supported by the RDAs in their regions *'It was driven by the RDAs, they we're looking for it to be private sector-led'* [30-32].

Tones of managerialism are also suggested in the creation of the DMOs. DMOs were intended to bring in more 'expertise' into destination marketing within the regions, whilst providing greater effectiveness through benefits of less duplication and economies of scale (BRA, 2005). This was mentioned during the pilot study where the respondent argued that DMOs (DMPs) were formed to bring an element of expertise into regional tourism marketing *'at that point, the DMPs were seen as being the 'experts' in tourism and the LAs were just multi-functional organisations'* [Pilot interview: 75-76]. However the BRA (2005, p.4) did question how much proportionately the funds released to RDAs were spent on hiring consultants to telling organisations such as local authorities how inefficient they were, and how the new 'strategies and structures' were needed. Tones of managerialism were also evident elsewhere in the interview data, in discussions concerning the regionalisation agenda. The objective of securing improvements in organisational efficiency dominated public sector management of tourism in England during the Conservative period (Page, 1995; Elliot, 1997). Elliot (1997) has argued that during the 1980s, the British, Scottish and Welsh tourist boards had been accused of being inefficient by undertaking marketing activities which duplicated with each other. Duplication (or reduction of) in resource terms is an important consideration in business management (Schermerhorn, 2005). During the lifespan of the Regional Tourist Boards, it was argued that the promotion of tourism in the regions had produce duplication of effort and marketing activity by organisations such as local authorities, Regional Tourist Boards and other agencies such as National Park Authorities (Tourism Insights, 2009). Therefore, reduction of 'duplication' was a problem that would be targeted by the RDAs (BRA, 2005; Tourism Insights, 2010). The solution of sub-regionalising tourism marketing was intended to reduce duplication and thus increasing efficiency. A respondent in an urban area portrayed how the sub-regional argument promised less duplication in terms of marketing publications *'So rather than have one for [name*

*omitted]* and one for *[name omitted]* you just have one for *[sub-regional name omitted]*' [Manager F: 337-339]. Clearly tones of managerialism are suggested in the objective of the process being to achieve greater organisational effectiveness. The BRA (2005, p.4) argued that a focus on improved efficiency and avoidance of duplication 'sounds very logical and businesses like', and would be difficult to oppose 'withoutout being attacked as a 'backward looking reactionary'. Tones of 'managerialist efficiency' were highlighted during the interviews. A manager in an urban area argued that their DMO sought to reduce marketing in the sub-regional area to '*one guide and one website and not really any other messages going out*' [manager A: 285-286]. Duplication (or reducing duplication) was raised by a number of respondents. A manager with long-standing experience of destination management recalls the pressures put on local authorities engaging with tourism *promotion* '*over the years we had been told we were duplicating*' [Manager C: 371-372], and if duplication was reduced savings in resources could be used '*in different ways*' [374]. A number of respondents argued that the 'duplication' argument was laid at the door of local authorities, and because the RDAs perceived duplication as being created by local authorities therefore tourism marketing was taken out of the hands of local authorities.

Was efficiency increased and duplication reduced by the sub-regional structures ? During the pilot interview, the respondent argued that the sub-regional structures worked well in some areas, and in others they didn't. A respondent in an urban area argued that in some areas duplication was reduced and in others it did not '*in some cases some of this worked, in other places it hasn't*' [Manager F: 337-339]. Manager 'J' also referred to the strategy of aiming to reduce duplication '*I don't think that's worked particularly well in some areas*' [Manager J: 76-77]. Manager 'F' argued that the objective of reducing duplication through sub-regions was undermined in several ways. One was in the amount of finance that the RDAs had and was distributing to the DMOs '*You can't have a situation that the RDAs are wandering around with enormous wallets full of money and saying 'we want to reduce duplication'... organisations just looked after their own interests and you just got more [duplication]*' [Manager F: 439-443]. A manager in rural city argued that there has been a reduction in duplication, but more recently and not during the main period of the Labour administration. This manager argued that whilst the RDAs were financially supporting DMOs, DMOs

tended to look after their own interests and a lack of coordination meant that duplication was not reduced as much as it could have been *'I think during the height of Labour (5 or 6 years ago) they put money into organisations which was really good but there wasn't that co-ordination between the different ones really'* [Manager E: 508-510]. Manager 'F' supported this argument, because in their region some local authorities continued with existing marketing initiatives. Did this reduce duplication? *'No, in fact you just got more, because you got some local authorities who were reluctant to go with the flow, and others with their own agendas'* [Manager F: 379-382]. Another respondent in an urban area commented that the duplication argument had been raised a number of times in their area. However in their case, the local authority argument for continuing local authority support for tourism was because of a lack of marketing support from the DMO. This respondent raised their voice in an exasperated tone *'Duplication ! How many times have I heard duplication ? 'Oh there's so much duplication !'...and they wanted to get rid of this 'duplication'* [Manager A: 262-264]. Was duplication occurring in their area? This manager argued not occurring because in the city's view the DMO was not representing the city as the city thought it should be *'the reality is that if that the DMP doesn't promote you, then sorry you are not taking away any duplication'* [Manager A: 264-267]. Later, this respondent 'simulated' a conversation between the city and the DMO *'we don't duplicate with you because you don't produce our guides'... and I distribute my literature to different places that other people distribute their literature to, so it's not duplication'* [Manager A: 287-291]. The respondent suggested an air of 'tension between the 'city' and the DMO in terms of tourism marketing, and whilst the 'city' had argued that there was not duplication occurring, there seemed to be tension between the respective roles that each organisation saw themselves as fulfilling *'[they said] I was producing exactly the same things and doing the same things as they do, but I don't...so its not duplication...but they think that'* [Manager A: 293-298]. To another manager, it was the way that tourism marketing programmes were presented that was the bigger problem *'we didn't present it in a cohesive fashion and if we had of done that I think there would have been less of the duplication...it was very easy for people to stand up and say 'look at all these brochures and look at all these people doing all of these things'* [Manager C: 325-33]. A manager in an urban city referred back to the 'brands' argument made earlier, that there had been too much 'brand development' in the

areas *'It wasn't duplication necessarily that caused the problem...it was all these 'brands' that didn't actually exist in consumer's mind, no visitor knows where [name of rural place omitted] is... it was totally artificial brands'* [Manager D: 171 -175].

A manager in an urban area particularly questioned the extent to which duplication was removed during the RDA period. An aspect of this was the 'creation' of new tourism teams within the RDA structures, which oversaw the sub-regional picture. The BRA (2005) had argued that the creation of RDAs/DMOs had created another tier of bureaucracy in public sector support for tourism, because although in most cases Regional Tourist Boards had gone, two levels, regional and sub-regional level, had in effect been created. This manager argued *'although the RDAs set them [DMOs] up, the RDAs maintained their own in-house infrastructure which led to duplication (or perceived duplication) at regional and sub-regional levels'* [Manager F: 340-345]. This was supported by a manager in another part of the country *'They [the RDA] had their own tourism team and it was a regional tourism team and we found that we were working quite often in competition with them'* [Manager H: 195-196]. A manager in an urban area argued that duplication had not been removed because, as the DMO was not truly representing the promotional needs of the city, the city needed to promote itself *'in our area [name of DMO omitted] only promotes the county'* [Manager A: 271-273]. Other respondents argued that the DMO scenario has not removed duplication *'No, there is duplication... [name of place omitted] has its own website, [different name of place omitted] has its own website and they both have their own brochure...arguably they could be targeting different markets, but there is overlap... so I have staff who advertise events on our website but [name of place omitted] direct visitors to their website, [name of place omitted] directs visitors to their website, and [name of organisation omitted] directs visitors to their website !'* [Manager D: 388-398]. To this manager though the principle of DMOs is still sound *'I still believe a destination management organisation is better than eight different local authority tourism organisations going their own way'* [Manager D: 536-539]. Tones of managerialism during the RDA period was suggested in other comments by respondents. A respondent in an urban area described life during the RDA period *'a lot of it was about filling in forms, outputs and funding agreements'* [Manager F:351-352]. Another respondent, this time in a rural area, also argued that their relationship with the RDA

was good but very much controlled by the RDA *'the problem we have here was that our RDA was very very prescriptive...we would have to do things because they were our paymasters that didn't necessarily fit with our destination and what we wanted to do for our area...it was a good relationship but it was a somewhat difficult relationship at times because they were constantly trying to control what we did at the local level'* [Manager H: 200-203].

A manager in an urban city made a remark concerning Nicholas Ridley the Minister in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet and the current scenario. This manager of many year's experience in local government, compared the scenario for local authorities to that during the Conservative period, and the ideology of the Margaret Thatcher government that the state should only 'enable' services to be provided by the private sector. The respondent argued that the political environment today reflects that period *'it certainly feels like that to me...it was Nicholas Ridley's model [that] councils would only meet once a year to confirm their contracts and that was it...not dissimilar to where they are now, just doing it in a better way now more effectively'* [Manager I: 116-121]. This manager argued that the 'managerialist' philosophy still prevailed to this day in their authority *'managerialism is the dominant ethos here'* [Manager I: 190]. When asked how they perceived the expression 'managerialism' a manager made an insightful comment *'I think maybe 15 years ago I may have struggled to understand what that expression meant...but now we are very driven by performance indicators...about proving what you are doing...your outcomes and outputs... but also delivering the service in a different way... how can we deliver the service in a different way in order to achieve all of the objectives but maybe not incurring all of the costs'* [Manager C: 492-500]. A manager in a rural area argued that managerialism had increased under Labour *'[We were] more so probably managerial under Labour than the Conservatives. I think a hangover from that period is we've probably got more strategy and less focus on the day job'* [Manager G: 425-429]. A manager in a rural area directly perceived local authority services, including their tourism service, more closely with private sector businesses *'We are run more like businesses now, we are not just a public authority running services anymore, we are series of businesses'* [Manager B: 425-428].

A common theme during the interviews was the setting of targets in local tourism management. A respondent in a rural area commented how management of tourism had changed in their area, and how targets and evaluation of outputs had become part of local strategic planning for tourism *'Ultimately in our plans/strategies there is a column there that says how you will measure the outputs...you can't now get away with not having targets and them not being measurable...it's just a fact of life now'* [Manager E: 464-469]. To this manager, the managerial paradigm had influenced how the department reported the 'success' of tourism campaigns. This manager argued that there was an increasing requirement to demonstrate the 'value' in economic terms of tourism marketing initiatives *'we've all got to be smarter in illustrating the return on investment on our campaigns in the past we could deliver good campaigns but now we have to deliver good campaigns and demonstrate the value that they bring'* [406-410]. A manager in another rural area commented that targets are a significant element of the strategic development of tourism in their area. This manager reported that targets are evaluated on an annual basis, however ongoing reporting of progress against targets occurs on a monthly basis *'We report back on targets to the council - that form part of the council's plan - on a monthly basis...all targets are evaluated on annual basis but also on an ongoing basis'* [Manager H: 365-368].

It has been argued that managerialism has driven an 'evaluative' culture (Henkel, 1991, p.9). This study wished to understand how the evaluative culture has impacted local tourism management. During the interviews, several respondents referred to the 'best value' period during the earlier stages of the Labour government. A manager in an urban area argued that 'evaluation' and the processes of evaluation grew significantly under the Labour regime *'Under the Labour administration the amount of red tape was ridiculous so we all collectively spent an enormous amount time and energy evaluating the impact of what we were doing rather than actually doing it'* [Manager G: 400-404]. Another manager in rural city argued that the 'best value' period saw performance indicators significantly rise for tourism, but which were later reduced *'they've cut back on the numbers ...we used to have lots then the Audit Commission came along and said 'too many, just focus on your priorities and focus on the indicators for your priorities'.....Best Value drove us down the road of loads and*

*loads of PIs... but there's been a definite shift in that...we still have them but you have them for your priorities'* [Manager C: 518-525]. Several managers mentioned how the development of an 'accountability' culture was impacting local tourism. A manager in an urban area argued that accountability increased during the Labour administration '*How to measure and be accountable has changed a lot over the last 10 years...you have to be able to measure everything now much more than 10 years ago*' [Manager I: 198-201]. The manager in an rural area that reported earlier that targets are set and reported to the local authority, commented that performance figures are discussed and evaluated as an integral part of all their local authority's performance system '*they [performance figures] are taken to chief executive's corporate management team within the council and they are reviewed and discussed as part of the entire council management team*' [Manager H: 370-373]. Several managers specifically mentioned performance management systems within their authorities, and tourism's part within their authority's performance management system. This manager in a rural area commented on the recent introduction of a performance management system in their authority '*for at least the last 5 years there's a performance management system that we are part of*' [Manager C: 521-523]. This manager described their local performance management system as being an 'electronic' system, where progress against performance indicators have to be updated monthly '*monthly...we have an electronic system that the Council where they have put in all of the performance indicators that the council have identified...and all the key projects that the council has identified...monthly you must update that...with progress reports... that has to be done monthly now and that goes through to the corporate management team who will review that*' [Manager C: 538-546].

#### **7.2.4 Management or marketing ?**

During the interviews, respondents had concerns with regard to the picture of tourism development which had emerged within the localities as a result of RDA policy. This was particularly the case of the 'separation' of tourism marketing from other elements of tourism development.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, there was strong feeling that the power that the RDAs had allowed them to set the regional agenda in terms of what activities they would engage and support. The literature has argued that local tourism development may require a number of factors, additional to marketing, which can include infrastructure investment, training, product development, market research, information services (Witt and Moutinho, 1995). This was also mentioned during the pilot interview, where the interviewee argued that local tourism development can involve marketing and promotion, product development, business support and development – and *‘running a high-quality TIC’* [Pilot study: 131-132]. However, during the pilot interview it was suggested that tourism marketing had been heavily emphasised by the RDAs and DMOs to the detriment of other factors, for example tourism information provision *‘When RTBs were superceded by RDAs, the RDAs generally only wanted to deal with the promotional side of things’* [Pilot study: 193-194]. Focus on marketing was also prominent in the DMOs *‘this attitude permeated down to the DMPs [DMOs] which were reliant mainly on the RDAs for their funding and therefore had to follow the same lines’* [194-196].

This manager argued that the strategy of the DMO in their area was *‘we’ll do the marketing and you do the tourism development’* [Manager A: 255-257]. However, the view amongst tourism managers was that whilst marketing is critically important, other elements such as those discussed above are equally important to developing the tourism product locally. A manager in an urban area supported this view *‘tourism development is all the things, such as signage...tourism development is about customer service training...doing mystery shoppers...to improve the quality for example’* [Manager A: 213-222]. However the feeling was that DMOs did not wish to be management organisations, instead purely marketing organisations. Respondents also expressed disappointment that whilst their local authority tourism funding has inevitably reduced, the DMOs, in receipt of funding from RDAs, had focused almost uniquely on tourism marketing and were not concerned with being involved with other factors such as tourism information or market research. This manager argued that their DMO had not been interested at any stage in becoming involved with any wider tourism development responsibility such as *‘visitor services’* or *‘development’* activities arguing *‘the DMOs don’t really want tourism development’* [Manager A: 197-198].

Because of reductions in local authority tourism budgets, and thus giving local authorities less opportunity of supporting functions such as tourism information or market research, respondents were both disappointed and concerned that in some areas this had produced large 'gaps' locally in their tourism development product. In an urban area, a respondent argued that TICs were an important element of local tourism provision however again due to local authority budget cuts TIC provision had reduced to a minimum. However, their DMO were unsupportive of assisting with TIC provision *'the DMPs do not want TICs...don't understand them...don't run one'* [Manager A:194-196]. This manager argued that elements of local tourism development, such as market research, were critically important and wished the local authority could engage more in these areas, but local authority financial reductions inhibited such support *'but again no money for it'* [Manager A: 222-223]. A respondent in a rural area argued that whilst their DMO focused on marketing this was to the detriment of product development or research which the local authority could not support because of budget cuts. This meant that those important functions had not been carried out for some time *'they didn't undertake product development or research, a lot of those elements have been lost'* [Manager E: 203-205]. Elsewhere, a manager in an urban city was concerned that the local authority could not fund support for training initiatives because of budget cuts and, because the majority of their tourism industry was SMEs, they were greatly worried that this was negatively impacting on the quality of the local tourism product *'the DMO are not interested in quality... the DMP had some training for quality but that's gone now... so there is no training at all... that whole model is a bit dodgy at the moment...for a destination that has so many B&Bs and cottage providers there is no quality education or quality training at all'* [Manager D: 311-320].

To some, whilst being generally supportive of the work of their RDA, the problems began with the demise of the RTBs. Manager 'C' is a manager of long-standing local authority tourism management experience. In the view of this respondent, the demise of the regional tourist boards led to a diminution of the 'strategic' picture of the regions. This manager stressed several times during the interview that the RDA/DMO situation had seen a clear emphasis being placed on tourism marketing rather than the wider tourism product. This respondent recalled the situation during the period of regional

tourist boards, before RDA inception *'The tourist boards took a strategic view...I remember the [name of regional tourist board omitted], in those days the tourist boards had wider remits ...they were interested in things like skills development, development of transport links... they were interested in quality, research and they had funding to do it...they had central government funding to do these, I think, very important aspects of the job'* [Manager C: 155-161]. Reflecting on the part played by the RDAs post the regional tourist boards this manager argued that *'the RDAs did have a role...and they did have funding which is very important... but they've gone now and I'm not sure that we are any better for it'* [Manager C: 349-354]. How did this manager perceive the situation currently in their area ? *'Our DMO does not even have a tourism strategy !'* [Manager C: 633].

Earlier this manager had described DMOs *'The DMO's are only interested in marketing and income generation, and outputs like bednights... they don't do any research, they don't do any quality aspects of the job, and they are not interested in skills development because they don't have the resources to deliver those'* [Manager C: 163-169]. This manager had commented that their RDA had financially supported activities such as tourism training initiatives, market research, and funding some tourism infrastructure. However, with the RDA in their area gone (but the DMO surviving) the manager expressed concern with regard to the future for the wider 'regional' tourism picture *'I think [the wider picture] that's gone now'* [Manager C: 340-341]. When asked why, the respondent argued that in their view DMOs do not focus on the 'wider picture', and the regional context had been 'lost' with the demise of the RDAs. To this respondent, this has highlighted a major weakness in the sub-regional scenario, particularly in terms of market research *'This is where the weaknesses is...when the RDAs were here, they did evaluation and return on investment etc...and the RDA paid for that... but since they've gone - about two years ago - we don't get that information'* [Manager C: 181-186]. This manager articulated exasperation in their voice when discussing their local situation, which to them again highlighted the weakness in the 'sub-regional' scenario *'the DMO do not even know the numbers of visitors who are going through the attractions...they don't collate it, they don't do a 'how's business' survey...that's the worrying part'* [Manager C: 206-214]. What is their DMO focus ? *'They are focused on marketing'* [Manager C: 72].

However, policy of the Coalition government has made it clear that the new local tourism bodies being formed would be expected to have a stronger management focus. Penrose (2011, p.23) has argued that 'The new Tourism Bodies should be Destination Management - rather than simply Marketing - organisations'. The title 'Destination Management Organisation' suggests an overall management responsibility of tourism in destinations. However, in a number of areas DMOs saw themselves as 'Destination Marketing Organisations' rather than as 'Destination Management Organisations'. To one respondent the title 'Destination Management Organisation' suggests a role incorporating an overarching 'holistic' view of tourism activities and the tourism product locally. To a number of respondents this was the initial intention of the role of DMOs, but by focusing on marketing their DMO did not fulfil a 'management' role. One manager commented *'they were supposed to have been umbrella organisations, but what in fact what they actually are, are just marketing organisations who want to do the sexy bits...but are not interested in anything else'* [Manager A: 242-246]. A manager in an urban area argued that with the emphasis on DMOs having a strongly private sector element, this had seen DMOs veering towards functions such as marketing which may bring a quick and observable return i.e. visitors. This had been to the detriment of functions mentioned earlier such as research and training *'I don't get an understanding that [the private sector] wants to pick up some of those items'* but rather *'they're very keen on putting money into marketing campaigns and getting their names splashed around'* [Manager I: 536-541]. Managers were keen to make the point that the title 'Destination Management Organisation' suggests a role incorporating a wider remit which DMOs generally were not keen to adopt. A particular problem for tourism is that even in the urban areas, the tourism industry in England consists of many different types of tourism businesses, mostly SMEs. An inherent difficulty with such is administering and coordinating such a diverse 'industry' (Visit Britain, 2009; Penrose, 2011). There was the perception amongst respondents that the DMOs would have an 'amalgamating' effect and DMOs would adopt a sub-regional leadership role. One respondent commented *'I think that we are and always have been a very fragmented industry...we are very fragmented anyway and they thought by bringing in the DMPs [DMOs] that they would be overall bodies which would look after this fragmented industry and make them all work together...but I don't think this has been the case...I don't think that the DMPs have*

*necessarily done what they were really brought into do'* [Manager A: 233-242]. To manager 'A', policy of reducing local authority involvement assumed that the DMOs would adopt more of a 'leadership' role. Reflecting on the period of the DMO formation this manager argues that *'The idea was to bring everybody together'* [Manager A: 303]. Some respondents were keen to stress that one effect of DMOs having a stronger private sector element, and reduced financial support from local authorities, has been a need for DMOs for 'survival', and therefore their resources have to be targeted towards business survival. One manager argued that a reason that DMOs may not become involved with functions such as market research, is because functions such as market research are not income generating and thus cannot support the business financially. This manager argued that their DMO *'is a marketing organisation, a marketing membership organisation, and a heck of a lot of their resources goes into continuing their survival'* [Manager D: 287-291]. Elsewhere, a respondent in rural area expressed sympathy for their DMO in the context of their DMO being a private sector organisation which, apart from receiving some public sector financial support, relied on membership fees and income for its survival *'because they are so driven by the resources that they have, they make decisions on the payback...what will it cost me ? can I afford it ? and 'where will I get this funding from ?'* [Manager C: 206-214].

### **7.2.5 Local politics and perceptions of tourism**

An objective of the interviews was to explore how managers' perceived the importance of tourism to their local authority. Palmer (1994) has argued that where tourism sits within a local authority structure can present a gauge as to how that authority perceives tourism, for example as an 'economic' activity or 'leisure' activity (Hall and Jenkins, 1995; Davidson, 1998). During the pilot study, the respondent commented that when managing in local tourism, they had always tried to portray tourism as an economic activity, because of the potential negative connotations associated with the word 'tourism' *'I had always seen the role of my Tourism and TIC staff as being to generate economic benefits for businesses in the city by encouraging and helping visitors to come and spend their money here. As the word 'Tourism' doesn't*

*necessarily reflect this, I preferred to refer to our role as Visitor Development'* [Pilot Study: 104-110]. The respondent in the pilot study had been professionally engaged in the local authority tourism management environment for many years. The respondent had argued that when tourism came to be encouraged by local authorities, the tourism role quite often was 'tagged on' to other responsibility *'many of the people responsible for Tourism were either economic development officers or, more likely, leisure officers who had had Tourism tagged on to their job titles and didn't have any real understanding of what benefits tourism could actually deliver'* [22-27]. In the interviews, a feeling of 'uncertainty' partially due to tourism's statutory status was common. As tourism's profile grew, where tourism was placed within local authorities was seen by some respondents as a result of tourism not being a 'statutory' local authority service. In several cases managers reported that tourism had resided within a number of different 'host' departments within their authority. In a rural city, tourism currently resided with an 'economic' department. This manager appeared to receive some comfort from this, in that their local authority saw tourism as an 'economic' activity. In this authority, this had signaled change. Previously tourism had resided in the leisure department *'10 years ago we started in the leisure and that pretty much sums it up...we are now in regeneration'* [Manager C: 462-464]. The respondent was keen to promote the argument that tourism is an economic activity *'being in [name of economic department omitted] I think shows that we are bringing money into the local economy... it's not all about tourists dropping rubbish and we picking it up...it's about the economic benefits... it's no longer the fun industry it's got a proper job and a proper role to play in bringing more income into the local economy'* [Manager C: 469-476]. A manager in an urban area also referred to this issue. This manager described where tourism had resided within their authority, with tourism now being placed within its fourth 'host' department *'it used to be in arts and leisure and then it moved to education and leisure...then it moved to be part of chief execs which raised its profile... and currently on our system we're still part of chief execs, but in reality we actually are part of [name of Council department omitted]... so the council doesn't even know where we sit ! One half of the council thinks we're in chief execs, the other half think we are in [name of department omitted]'* [Manager J: 326-338]. This manager reported that being moved to the chief executive's

department suggested some level of increased importance placed on tourism by the authority, but bringing tourism more into the 'spotlight' did *'also cause us some difficulties and challenges...all of a sudden you become on the radar of the Chief Exec'* [349-351]. Nevertheless, how local authorities 'perceive' tourism defines where tourism 'sits' within local authorities which, to this respondent, can be one of many options *'when we had best value, tourism was hidden inside the culture block... we don't sit within culture in our local authority and again all local authorities organise their structures differently... surely there must be one way to structure a local authority that could say 'you have to deliver this, this and this and these non-statutory provisions come under one umbrella'. Nobody knows where to find tourism within a local authority, its completely different in each one'* [Manager J: 311-321]. A respondent in a rural area argued that at this moment in time they did not feel under any particular additional pressure being a non-statutory service, for the reason that because tourism is part of 'regeneration' *'the reason for that is we sit very firmly under regeneration and economic development ...at the local level, tourism has been identified as their number one priority in two area action partnerships...not all have tourism as a priority but here tourism is a significant growth area for our county and for our city is well'* [Manager H: 290-296].

Uncertainty due to tourism's 'non-statutory' status was mentioned several times during interviews. In almost every case, managers felt that managing a 'non-statutory service' brought them difficulties. A manager in an urban area, referred to the political and financial climate and argued that being 'non-statutory' meant that tourism was seen by local authorities as not being as high 'up the ladder' of important local services *'so I think local authorities are having to restructure and reorganise themselves within the political climate of saving money and the problem for things like tourism, which are not statutory, kind of get forgotten and misplaced'* [Manager J: 340-345]. The financial aspect of being a non-statutory service was raised by a number of respondents. Later in this chapter it will be seen how one manager described the impact of the non-statutory nature of tourism within their authority from a financial viewpoint. The manager described the recent situation in their city where all council services were placed into categories (A, B and C) and the available finance to support services was allocated to A and B services as priorities. Tourism was in category C. Other

respondents placed tourism's non statutory status within the difficult picture that local authorities currently have in funding their statutory services. A manager in a rural city referred to pressures on all local authority services, but more so on tourism *'tremendous pressure on budgets on not just tourism in local authorities...but because tourism is a non-statutory service it gets the butt end'* [Manager B: 70-74]. Another manager in a rural city argued that all services are under financial pressures in the authority, but local authorities have duties to deliver statutory services, which places non-statutory services in the frontline for cuts *'We're first port of call for savings...absolutely...the council has to deliver statutory services...it has to provide statutory services'* [Manager C: 595- 596]. How is the situation locally for them? *'Its not good...everything is up for grabs and under pressure and of course non-statutory elements are particularly under pressure'* [Manager C: 234-237]. Another respondent in a rural area argued that statutory services are a priority, but also argued that tourism is seen as being important within their authority. Rather humourously, this manager commented *'I think local people still recognise tourism as a potential for jobs...but there's always the 'bogs, bins and burials' which are the priorities, as they call it...but tourism is still seen as a priority corporatively'* [Manager E: 285-291].

Therefore, in an atmosphere of uncertainty, do managers feel that tourism departments have to justify their existence ? A manager in an urban area shook their head *'Yes all the time, all the time...there is a constant feeling like you're justifying what you are doing'* [Manager A: 626-628]. A manager in a rural area referred again to the non-statutory status of tourism *'all of my service is non-statutory so it is important to justify your existence and to continually reinforce that message'* [Manager C: 574-576]. Several respondents referred to how political pressures on 'decision-makers' within local authorities can be exerted by departments within authorities. Some departments within local authorities can play a 'political game' by highlighting the importance of statutory services compared to non-statutory services. In a rural city, a respondent made the argument *'when savings are to be found within the Council...if you try to get savings out of the housing department...the response you get is 'if you cut housing you may well find people homeless'...you certainly feel that the discretionary areas are the ones they have to take savings from...in my department*

*we have leisure centres, theatres, tourism, museums...they are not life or death services, they are comfort services or secondary services'* [Manager B: 498-508]. The respondent simulated the difficulty for tourism in an emotive environment of local authority cuts *'if you cut a leisure centre we will all be a bit pissed off but we won't die over it'* [Manager B: 508-511]. A manager argued that reductions in local services are emotive *'because you've got SureStart centres are closing, disabled people can't access this, or people with mental health difficulties can't get support for this... that's what people see, the very emotive things... and they don't see the underlying economic benefits [of tourism] and it's very difficult to shout about that'* [Manager J: 282-288]. In another urban area, a manager recalled their experience in their authority *'The thing that social services have in their back pocket is 'you can't cut that because children will die'...you also have people like road safety doing it and highways'* [Manager F: 560-564].

During the pilot study, the respondent referred to tourism not being a statutory function, and suggested that tourism was 'grouped' with other services such as 'arts' and 'libraries' in local consultations. The respondent argued that the non-statutory nature of tourism can place tourism in some danger through the outcome of such local consultations *'people obviously vote for the services that they feel are needed, especially Health and Education...then when they see their TICs and libraries closing down they object but then it's too late'* [Pilot study 269-271]. A manager in an urban area made a similar point, that such local consultations can lead to services being reduced or closed *'But if you say 'we will take away [name of attraction omitted]' or 'we will take away [name of other tourism attraction omitted]' they will go 'oh, just a minute we like those'* [Manager J: 276-279]. A manager in another urban was concerned that being non-statutory may eventually lead to the eventual closure of their tourism department. The respondent argued that in the current climate being a non-statutory service placed the tourism service under severe pressure, and their concern worry was that this could eventually lead to 'departmental closure' pressure. *'That is always an option because you are not a statutory service...so we are not statutory and in a way we are easy to get rid of'* [Manager A: 697-699]. This manager, in a city consisting of mostly tourism SMEs, argued that the local tourism industry relied on the local authority to lead on tourism initiatives. If the local authority were to close the local

tourism department what would be the reaction be ? *I do think that there would be uproar from the tourism industry if they tried to close us completely* [Manager A: 701-703]. A manager in an urban area expressed disappointment that the 'tourism development' post had been deleted within their authority many years before, and which to them highlighted an impact of being non-statutory within their authority. However this manager also argued that being non-statutory may be to their advantage in this difficult financial climate *'Part of me thinks that if it was a statutory service we may be on the radar more'* and continued *'part of me thinks that if tourism was a statutory service we'd be a bit more susceptible to cuts...I think if politicians realise what tourism does for them they don't shout about cutting it !* [Manager J: 641-651].

Respondents generally were keen to highlight tourism as an economic activity. Manager 'I' argued that their local authority saw tourism as an important strand within the wider economic agenda in the city, and this city's economic regeneration policy was supporting the development of a new DMP in their area *'one of the strands within that is a destination marketing partnership - not a DMO but a DMP that is being been established...there's is a general view at the local level that the city can grow its visitor economy element... we want to enhance the visitor experience'* [Manager I: 46-52]. However this respondent raised difficulty 'politically' around the perceptions of tourism, in how the local electorate saw tourism. To this respondent, the difficulty tourism may have within the wider scope of local authority provision, is that other local services may appear more important to the local electorate *'to a lot of people tourism means holidays, and holidays aren't as important as educating children and keeping people safe... they don't see it in the value of the jobs so this needs to be explained properly'* [Manager I: 272-277]. This may account for respondents being keen to stress the importance of tourism as having an economic or 'regenerative' attribute. Manager 'I' argued that tourism is very firmly perceived in their city as being part of the 'regeneration' strategy for the city *'Tourism fits part of the council's Cabinet structure which is planning, regeneration and economic development and our city has a very strong focus on the regeneration agenda'* [Manager I: 22-26]. A manager in an urban area reported that when a local consultation was undertaken by the local authority,

*their department were keen to see the economic benefits of tourism highlighted to local residents 'so when we did a big consultation we made sure that in there was the positives of tourism.. yes you do want to bring hotels to this area, that's great for getting people back into work because we are looking at training opportunities and staff for the night-time economy...you might not think that working in a bar is not a brilliant job but it's better than no job...and it's a start and there's training there'* [Manager J: 221- 231]. A respondent in an urban area, argued that the economic argument had to be made in their area, but a large part of their financial resource was used for research in order to provide statistics for making the economic arguments for tourism. In a slightly 'despondent' tone, the manager argued that a lot of their budget has to be spent on research rather than being spent on promotional activity *'most of my precious budget has to go on providing stats to make them realise just how many people are coming to the city and what the spend is and how many jobs it supports... I have to provide those stats or they wouldn't be interested at all, that's the reality...we have to make those connections for them between tourism and jobs or there would be no interest* [Manager D: 214-221].

The study was interested managers' perceptions of support from local politicians for the tourism department. Respondents reported various levels of political support and understanding within local authorities for tourism. In some areas, managers felt that tourism had strong political support. A manager in a rural area felt their department had strong support politically commenting *'they do know that we are trying to do twice as much as we used to do...politically we have a great cabinet member who is very strong, general across the board we have good political support'* [Manager E: 265-268]. A manager in an urban city argued that in their city local politicians 'get' tourism [Manager G: 495]. What about their local politicians ? The manager commented that the 'benefits of tourism to the local area' argument had been won many years before both politically and to local residents *'Tourism in a place like this has never been much of a political football whether we've had Green, Labour or Conservative administration... they all broadly get it... partly because we've been doing it for [figure omitted] years so it's kind of in the DNA of the place...more so than a post-industrial sort of urban area...it's in the DNA of the place'* [Manager G: 492-501]. Therefore, what were the political pressures

? This manager had argued during the interview that financially things were not expected to get any easier for local authorities for at least the next 6-7 years *'The challenge we are facing here right now politically isn't one of the politicians fighting amongst themselves over the things we need to do, it's about a collective political will to allow us to make some of the really more important changes in order to be able to prosper 10 years from now'* [Manager G: 505-525]. This manager's argument was that his problem with politicians was getting politicians to make decisions further than the horizons of the next local elections *'so my issue with the politics isn't that they will fight amongst themselves. It's that's their horizons extend to next year and at most to the next election, and what we are saying right now is 'I need you all to move your horizons out another five or six years and understand that you if you don't make decisions right now you won't have a service, you will be responsible for its death because it won't die in 2019, it starts dying now if you don't make the changes now'* [Manager G: 511-521]. In another urban city, the manager argued that tourism does have political support where the local cabinet member is also the local MP *'The Cabinet member is a supporter of the tourism section of the council, he is also the MP'* [Manager I: 207-208]. This manager raised a concern which was also evident in a number of the interviews, whether politicians' actually 'understand' tourism *'a broader sense I don't think they really understand it...so what we've been trying to do is give them information on economic impacts...so we are giving them a lot of his information so hopefully we've increased their understanding'* [208-211]. This manager hoped that the hard work which had been put in to help politicians understand the economic impact of tourism had paid off in increasing political support for tourism when budget decisions were being made not to reduce the tourism budget as much as others *'that maybe has been reflected in that budget decision...so they haven't gone all out for a full reduction in that money...so that message has got through in some ways'* [Manager I: 211-213]. Nevertheless, this manager articulated that it has been a long and hard 'fight' trying to preserve tourism budgets in the current economic climate *'People [decision-makers] have looked at it [tourism] here. Last year we had a long dialogue and they were going to take the whole sum of money [from us]... I've been in 19 budget meetings on it and the argument has been not to*

*touch it in the main but we've had to do some adjustments but it's not been a significant reduction' [Manager I: 261-268]. A manager argued that in order to maintain political support, it was important to keep local politicians in the spotlight 'you work very closely with your portfolio holder you keep them informed of what's going on... lots of press releases...they like to see themselves in the paper' [Manager C: 580-583].*

In others areas, managers were less positive concerning politicians supporting tourism locally. Some thought this was down to politicians not understanding tourism. In an urban area, when asked what were the views of tourism by local politicians, the manager reported *'I don't think they've got many to be honest... the [name of most senior elected member omitted] seems to be tuned into how good tourism is to the city... the other ones who've been around for a long time, they know we've got a tourist information centre, some of them use it, the rest of them don't really think [tourism] happens in [name of city omitted]' [Manager J: 161-184]. This manager reported that they had recently had major change at the top level of the council politically, and that this politician has expressed political support for tourism. This manager also lamented the situation that due to cuts many years ago the city as an authority only engaged with tourism marketing but not 'tourism development' 'we have a [name of most senior elected member omitted] who seems to have embraced the idea that tourism is a great thing and it can bring an improvement but we don't have a tourism department because they cut that years ago, 15 -16 years ago when we got rid of our tourism development officer...so we have a tourism marketing department...we don't have the funding to put into developing [the tourism] product the same...here they don't do tourism they do marketing and that's the subtle difference and hopefully we may get round to thinking more of the benefits of tourism to the city where it will be shown the kind of income levels tourism brings in' [Manager J: 138-152]. Other managers reported a more favourable view of tourism by local politicians. A manager in a rural area argued that historically their city was seen as a tourism destination and despite a downturn some years ago, politically tourism is still seen as a growth area. However, whilst tourism had political support, this manager argued that there is little financial growth to support new initiatives 'Corporately within our local authority sees tourism as a key driver so with that*

*we do have confidence and backing politically...the backdrop to that is that financially there is little or no growth to help develop tourism'* [Manager E: 75-79]. In another rural area, tourism has been highlighted as the local driver for economic growth *'[tourism] has been identified as the industry with the most potential for growth in the next five years'* [Manager B: 75-77]. In this city, this development coincided with a change in ruling party *'the [name of political party omitted] administration came in 18 months ago, they focused on tourism very strongly and put tourism right at the top of their political agenda'* [Manager B: 78-82]. A respondent in a rural area argued that local politicians *'are very supportive of it and they see as a huge growth area'* [Manager H: 87]. Manager 'I' had mentioned that the day after there was to be an announcement that the local authority budget was to be reduced by £20 million in 2013/14 and a major industry in the city would be coming to a close in two year's time. However tourism was seen an area of growth for the city *'Tomorrow we will hear not only that our local authority budget is reduced, but also that [major other industry] will come to an end in the next two years... but the heritage offer that we have has real strength and has real employment opportunities and business growth opportunities'* [Manager I: 242-250].

'The 'strength' of local politics was evident in some of comments. In another rural area, the respondent argued that the current party in power had supported tourism, and this was clear to the local electorate. However this manager was concerned that there were local elections approaching. The manager was worried that as the party in power now had supported tourism, whether if the opposition were to gain control tourism would be perceived as an opposing party policy *'would tourism be considered too much of a [name of political party omitted] policy for [name of opposition political party omitted] to continue to support it ?'* [Manager C: 680-684]. Local politics were also raised by a respondent in an urban area. In this case local elections were not approaching, and therefore this respondent argued that if local politicians wanted to stop supporting tourism, politically this would be the year to do it *'If they wanted get rid of it [tourism] they would get rid of it now, they've got no elections next year, the elections are back in 2014 so this is the dirty year in that sense...this is the year that they've got to make the maximum amount of savings and there's been no political story about killing it [tourism]...some of that will be based on what*

*they are hearing on the doorstep'* [Manager I: 299-307]. In another city, a respondent argued that one of their local tourism services had recently won a national award. The respondent suggested that winning the award came 'just at the right time' because to this manager politically it would have impacted negatively on the local council closing a service that had just won a national award. Nevertheless, in this comment it is suggested that the future of the tourism service in question had been under some uncertainty with the comment 'I think they did have a look at it' *[name of service omitted] won a national award last year....during the dark period two years ago when the Tory coalition came in, winning that national prize was a great boost in terms of maintaining that resource...winning the national award kept it safe.. I think they did look at it, but politically to close a [name of tourism service omitted] that has just won an national award would have been see as daft'* [Manager E: 176-185].

Tourism provision, such as tourism information centres were reported by some managers to be closing. A respondent in a rural area had argued that when local authorities take away sums such as '*£100,000 here and £100,000 there*' [Manager G: 206-207] services such as tourism information can be put at risk. In this city, the decision had been made recently to close the TIC '*this year we've had to close our visitor information centre that's quite a big deal in a city of [number omitted] million visitors. We've got a plan in how we'll do it differently at less cost etc...but at the moment we are leading with the tough message 'we're getting out of it'*' [Manager G: 208-214]. In another rural area, the recent closure of the TIC had been an emotive issue locally '*we closed down the TICs...and that's been a very emotive issue... there was petitions signed [against the closure] and we still get residents letters in the local papers... their [local residents] feeling is they shouldn't have been closed down and they talk about investment 'surely the council values visitors enough that they put that investment in and open up the tourism information centre ?'*' [Manager H: 525-556]. Another manager in an alternative rural city had alluded to the 'political element' of service closures. The manager highlighted that closures do not reflect well on politicians, if the local electorate perceives a closure as leading to a reduction of service. This manager argued that politicians do not like to see service closures which the local electorate may see as '*a visible reduction in*

service' [Manager C: 264-265]. Therefore, when the TIC was closed, did the tourism service receive political support from local politicians ? In this case, it would appear so. The manager argued that closures were required to both to modernise the service and because market research had indicated that the service needed to 'move with the times' *'politically they haven't given in to any pressure at all... there was a lot of pressure... there was a flurry of letters between the leader of the council and members of the public... but we're doing it the right reasons... it's about modernisation and we are responding to visitor needs...it's just that our community doesn't happen to recognise that...one of the reasons they want their TIC back is because that's where they used to pick up their bus timetables !'* [Manager H: 547-546].

A respondent in an urban city argued that tourism seemed to be accepted locally. This possibly could be because tourists are more easily absorbed in larger cities than smaller areas *'We are very fortunate that we don't have that irritation factor that you can get in your [name of rural city omitted] or [name of another rural city omitted]..it may be down to population... it may be down to us being a big place and we have the ability to absorb lots of people'* [Manager F: 686-692]. This manager argued that tourism was seen as important politically, but at several points during the interview the 'perceptions' difficulties tourism faces were raised. The respondent argued that politically tourism had strong support. During the chief executive strand of the study, the chief executive in this city argued that the Leader of the Council, during a time of great pressures on the local authority budgets, had authorised a special budget to be made available to support events that could bring to the city more visitors. This manager argued that politically *'In terms of perception of politicians we have very strong support across party...I have no complaints at all...politicians are very supportive of the visitor economy and also there is recognition that [city name omitted] does not have many other options, but also it also plays very well into other local political issues like local pride...tourism goes down very well with local people and very well with the local politicians* [Manager F: 664-673]. However the respondent also highlighted that tourism may not be perceived as a 'local service' to some politicians. At a time of severe cuts to budgets in this large city, some local politicians using the 'local services for local people' mantra, may not see tourism as part of this mantra *'there are elements within the ruling group who are still on the 'local services for local*

*people agenda...and who are very focussed on that agenda'* [Manager F: 664-673]. The manager argued that whilst tourism does have political support, if cuts got worse and more local jobs were seen to be being lost, it may be difficult politically to defend money spent on tourism in such circumstances' *I think at the political level within the ruling group if it would be very hard for the leadership to defend tourism, events, investment in the arts organisations, that sort of thing'* [734-741].

### **7.2.6 Austerity, finance and the tourism department**

Respondents were asked to describe the effects of current pressures on tourism departments. These are sensitive times with departmental changes and redundancies prevalent within local authorities, so the researcher was careful not to pursue areas of sensitivity with vigour. Nevertheless a number of interviewees were 'open' in discussing their local situations during the interviews. What was found was that the last two years particularly would appear to have been a period of intense rationalisation for tourism departments. Two main themes emerged from the interviews. First, intense financial pressures and secondly restructuring within local authorities which was having a 'trickle down' effect of leading to redundancies and smaller tourism departments and rationalisation within local authorities.

When asked where they felt currently the main pressures on their department was coming from, every manager mentioned finance in some way. For almost all of interviewees, pressure on 'budgets' or some form of financial pressure was the first pressure that they identified. 'Cuts' was a word used consistently during interviews. All but two respondents referred to cuts their tourism budgets had experienced in some way. In some cases, cuts had happened within the last several years, in some cases cuts were happening very recently, and for most respondents they were expecting further cuts in the near future. A comment from a respondent in an urban area was typical of responses '*Our budget is less this year. The TIC budget has gone down from about [figure omitted] to about [lower figure omitted]...I don't think we publish our budget anywhere now...we used to benchmark with DPUK...we have about [figure omitted] that we spend supporting events to this city'* [Manager J: 476-481]. For two of

the respondents, the interview day fell either on a day, or was on the eve of a day, when more news regarding local authority budgets in their areas was to be announced. For a manager in rural city, their department had experienced a cut this year and were expecting to experience one again after this year's financial settlement. The manager was going to a meeting that afternoon and gave an expression of resignation in their voice when commenting *'We had a cut last year...and I have a meeting this afternoon'* [Manager C: 588-589].

For some managers, the size of budget cuts for their departments were described as *'swingeing'* [Manager F: 464] and *'brutal...it really has been brutal'* [Manager H: 500]. For a manager in an urban area, the future for non-statutory services in their authority was hugely uncertain *'the forward horizon is exceptionally bleak'* [Manager 56-57]. This manager reported that over the last 3 years, they had had 40% taken their tourism budget, but they argued that despite this, all of their customer satisfaction measures were 'up' *'In the last three years I have already taken out 40% of my budget, 40% has already come out over three years, now I am delivering a better service with 40% less budget...satisfaction rates are up...all of our measures are up'* [Manager G: 473-478]. Their view on this 'success' was that their department always aimed to *'do less better'* [484]. Nevertheless, this respondent referred to a 'graph of doom', which predicted the future scenario for services which their authority would provide in the future if current financial pressures continued. The respondent referred to a graph (confidentially produced within the local authority) which depicted the scenario in their authority in 2020, if reductions to local authority budgets continued at current levels. The manager 'painted' the picture in their authority in 2020 *'the wider context of local authority funding is having a significant effect on the availability of local authority resources for non-statutory services...so for us the 'graph of doom' shows that by 2020, if you don't change then apart from adult and children's social care you're not doing anything else. That's it...because there's nothing left for anything else'* [Manager G: 51-55]. Therefore, this suggests that by 2020 in this authority all local authority provision would have disappeared apart from adult services and children's social care.

A manager in an urban area made the argument that, additional to the government's austerity measures, pressures on tourism budgets had been compounded by the 'Baby P' case, and the financial impact of that case on local authorities particularly those larger urban authorities *'What also happened after the baby P case was this explosion of the cost of 'looked after children', that nobody had really seen coming, so there was millions and millions more now being spent on taking kids off their parents, so that had a massive impact on local authorities who have to foot the bill because it's got to be paid for...so that has really made a difference'* [Manager F: 583-581]. The respondent had argued that their city *received 'the worst [financial] settlement [from the government] so we are in the worst position'* [Manager F: 742-743] and the city had to lose many millions of pounds from its overall budget. The process it used was categorising its services in to several categories of 'priority'. The respondent simulated a conversation by those making decisions within the local authority *'well that's how much money we are going to have, these are all things that we've got to pay for, and these are all the things that we might have to pay for in a secondary category,...so these are the category A services, these are category B services and these are category C services'*. Following this process the budget options are then taken to elected members *'[they] then get [elected] members to sign off the 3 categories and at the end say 'well actually there's no money left for the category C services because the ones you voted for A and B take all the budget'*. The respondent continued highlighting the problem for tourism in their authority *'tourism, leisure etc is in category C'* [196-198].

For manager 'F' all services had been affected by cuts in their authority apart from the schools budget which was protected *'In the initial approach, they've called it salami slicing, was to take 41% off everybody....this excluded all elements of the council's 'controllable' budget but not the money automatically hypothecated to schools through the LEA'* [566-571]. The size of the reduction in this case articulated by the manager who 'simulated' an instruction from the local authority *'You've got find £900,000 [of savings] over the next three years'* [Manager F: 495-497]. This manager described the process of cutting their tourism budget, where the departments 'income' was taken out of the equation before the 41% reduction was applied *'what they also did here was to take the income out, so that was taken out, and then you lost 41% of your gross*

*figure...so you had a double whammy'* [495-500]. For this manager, the eventuality was that their departmental budget was reduced by 70% *'I had thought that if I met my 41% then I'd be alright, but what they did was they took the 41% and the rest...so we took 70% out of here'* [469-472]. For others also, cuts to tourism budgets have been over £100,000 or in excess of a 30% reduction. In some cases, budget cuts of several hundreds of thousands of pounds were reported. A respondent in a rural city reported that their budget had been reduced by almost £1 million over 3 years *'that is a significant amount of money to come off our budget across three years...for 2012/13/14 we are losing around £300,000 a year'* [Manager H: 299-306]. A respondent in another urban city reported that their tourism department had suffered what they described as a 'huge' budget cut several years earlier which they declined to further elaborate, but because of that since then there seemed to have led to an environment in their authority where tourism had not been 'targeted' since *'we took a huge budget cut probably around four or five years ago and we have managed to retain what they give us now'* [Manager A: 632-635].

In an urban area, the respondent reported that their local authority had to save £20 million in the next financial year. However, this respondent had gained in some small way reassurance that tourism had political backing, because the size of the cut to the tourism budget was not as big as that made to other service areas *'We are on the eve...tomorrow we announce our budget figures and it's a reduction next year of £20 million...what is interesting within that round is the reduction to the tourism budget ... which isn't extensive... is not there at the level it is across other parts of the authority, so for the first time [funding for] children centres and daycare will be reduced'* [Manager I: 173-181]. A respondent in a rural city reported that their budget had been 'frozen' *'for this last 12 months and I am expecting the same again next year'* [Manager E: 363-364]. This manager appeared to be reassured that their tourism budget would not suffer a cut the following year but at the same they could also not envisage any growth in budget *'I can't see budgets shrinking but I also can't see much growth in ability to have the next step in terms of campaigns and resources... in terms of resources I think it will stay stable the next few years'* [386-390]. For others, their budgets were already very small and to those respondents their budgets could hardly have been reduced any further. A manager in a rural city offered a smile and

described their tourism budget as being equivalent to *'two bananas and apple !'* [Manager B: 181-182]. To this respondent the scenario in previous years had been one of a continual process of reduction in tourism budget year-on-year *'We had been chipped away and chipped away until we were at the bottom of the barrel'* [Manager B: 440-442]. A respondent in a rural area described their budget as *'at an absolute minimum at the moment... there's not much out there left to trim...they've been trimming for the last six or seven years there's not much there left to trim'* [Manager E: 414-418]. Other respondents also referred to reductions in budgets over a number of years. A number of respondents referred to their authorities 'shaving' money from tourism budgets. A manager in a rural city argued that their tourism budget was *'not a significant sum of the authority's total expenditure...but when you start shaving off £100,000 here and £100,000 there that starts to make you less viable and less sustainable'* [Manager G: 204-208]. In an urban city, a manager gave their reply in an 'exasperated' tone in their voice, referring to a continual process of their tourism budget being reduced by their local authority. This respondent referred to this as 'shaving' money from their budget *'the other thing is that they cannot keep shaving off...you can't keep shaving, shaving, shaving'* [Manager A: 639-640]. 'Shaving' was an expression used by other managers *'the budget [we had] was so small... if they kept shaving there would not have been a tourism service here'* [Manager B: 464-466]. A respondent cited the case in their area where their department had reduced substantially *'I've got marketing executives to deliver campaigns but no one to deliver quality or product development programmes and manage the visitor experience across the whole destination because they are the people we got rid of'* [Manager F: 809-814]. This manager subscribed to the 'hollowing out' thesis *'Hollowing out is good because basically the stuff you can see is still there...websites and campaigns, the TICs whatever that was inside it trying to make some sense of it has gone and that's not likely to come back'* [770-774]. However, manager 'B' recalled the scenario in their city since there had been a new ruling group on their Council which signaled change *'then all of a sudden they come along...from 'find more savings... find more savings...find more savings... find more savings... now they seem to be taking tourism more seriously to develop'* [Manager B: 442-447]. This respondent reported that the tourism budget scenario had been recognised by a very senior executive in the local authority who had said in a public meeting that *'there is more money being*

*spent on the council's coffee machines than on promoting the district'* [Manager B: 185-186]. Since then, and since a change in ruling party in the Council two years earlier, the city had their first increase in their tourism budget in over 10 years *'we have just had an increase which doesn't happen often...I have had the first increase since 2002 !'* [440].

The implications of pressure on finance in the work of tourism departments was made by all of the respondents interviewed. Whilst budgets were reported to have been reduced in a number of cases, some respondents argued that a consequence of such has been a requirement to raise 'income'. In describing the main pressures on their department this manager in a rural area replied *'There are 2 main pressures – expenditure on non-statutory services, of which the main one is staff, the second is to increase income'* [Manager C: 484-486]. Similar stories came in other areas. In an urban area, a manager reported that requirement for income generation has increased whilst opportunities to develop income had decreased *'the tourism information centre has to generate income now...at one time it was fully funded...and our funding has been cut...for example we had a publication which we generated income from...that was working well and keeping things going and that was our key tourism communication it went out to residents and wider than that... that's changed now, [because] we can't sell advertising now...were not allowed to sell advertising... we can't do this and we can't do that'* [Manager J: 370-382]. A respondent in an urban area argued that that they had a good relationship with their local tourism industry, and as a consequence their local tourism industry financially supported initiatives. However, this had been recognised by the local authority, and targets for income had been raised particularly the last few years. However, this respondent argued a difficulty of increasing income with less money to try to fund income generation. In an exasperated tone in their voice, this manager explained the dilemma that their department faced *'But there is a pressure for income... the local authority see us as a tool for bringing income ...we do really well so they keep upping that... and I have said 'we can't do any more'...we do really well but if you don't give us money to bring more in we can't bring more in'...but the TIC have been told it's got to bring in more income... so there is a pressure to keep on bringing in more income'* [Manager A: 578-586]. A respondent in an urban city tied reductions in budgets to the need to raise

income *'it's all about finding money from elsewhere...when I first came here there wasn't an emphasis on my raising money... I had a budget to spend, and my budget has been cut and cut and cut, and now I have to charge fees'*. [Manager D: 259-266]. This manager returned to this issue later in the interview *'it's been very difficult the last couple of years because you have to be so focused on income generation... 50% of our focus is [how to] pay my own wages next week so we've lost direction a bit'* [Manager D: 682-686]. To a manager in an urban city, budget reductions presented difficult dilemmas for those with increasing income targets *'they want us to bring money in but they are not giving us money with which to bring more income in'* [Manager A: 635-639]. Manager 'A' referred to the upcoming budgetary process within their authority following the announcement of their authority's financial settlement from the government. The respondent argued that over the recent period, the pattern of cuts and restructure was one which was a recurring pattern and tourism departments were particularly vulnerable during these processes *'It actually feels very much like déjà vu - here we go again... I think it's all about survival'* [Manager A: 72-74]

Staffing was mentioned by almost every respondent, in almost every case managers referred to reductions in staffing in their departments or their authorities, or both. A manager in a rural area did not specifically refer to staffing in their tourism department, but referred to the wider picture in their local authority where there had been a substantial reduction in staffing but they were expecting further reductions *'the council has moved as a whole from 400 staff to 300 staff in two years but there's no let up'* [Manager B: 269-271]. In an urban area, a manager directly linked reduction in budgets to the need to 'restructure' departments in their Council *'As we all know in the public sector there's been a hell of a lot of cuts and every year within [city council name deleted] generally they have had to restructure - another name for making redundancies'* [Manager A: 52-57].

Respondents discussed the effects of reduced budgets on departments, which included in most cases various levels of structural change in their tourism departments. Some during the last 3 years, some during the last two years, and some were undergoing departmental restructure during the interview period. A manager in an urban city who had reported a reduction of 70% in their tourism budget, described

the effect of such financial cuts on the tourism service in their authority *'we have had to reduce levels of service, cut down services, the core services such as tourist information have reduced opening hours, shut down outlets, reduce staffing levels but try to maintain some level of service'* [Manager F: 450-455]. Managers had been asked what were the main pressures on their departments. The most common were financial or political. A respondent in an urban area referred to reductions in staffing over the last few years which created a pressure of *'trying to do all this work with only a few of us... it's the resources... trying to get the job done, well, with very few staff'* [Manager A: 593-596]. Another manager in an urban area described an impact of their local authority policy on their tourism service. The manager reported that their TIC manager had become so despondent with changes that they chose to take 'voluntary severance' *'I manage this [the TIC] now, our TIC manager left because of the cuts'* [Manager J: 404-405]. The result was an additional pressure on the tourism department as the TIC manager's post was then deleted *'if our TIC manager hadn't volunteered to leave they would still be in a job now because there was no request to cut staffing here [the TIC]...because he went on voluntary severance they don't replace you...they deleted the post'* [Manager J: 518-524]. Other managers also particularly mentioned redundancies. For manager 'A', cuts have inevitably led to departmental 'restructuring' in their local authority and their department but redundancies have so far been 'voluntary' *'we have been quite lucky insomuch that the redundancies that the council has had to make have been voluntary... but next year there will be another restructure coming around and in October they will start to consult with us'* [Manager A: 506-510]. In another area, the manager reported that redundancies in the city council so far have also have been voluntary *'there has been voluntary redundancies taking place here in the city council...not the last 12 months... but as people have left they don't get replaced'* [Manager E: 233-237]. Some managers linked changes in their tourism departments where permanent positions are being replaced with casual positions, organisational structures and staffing to the financial situation *'We are anticipating budget cuts... we have a pool of about 12 casuals now...because gradually as people have left and anticipating budget cuts we are replacing permanent positions with casual positions...we have lost around 2 [staff] a year over the last 3 years'* [Manager D: 23-28]. A manager in an urban area argued that it was really difficult to achieve the reduction in tourism budget because the

majority of their budget was in staffing. The manager reflected in a verbal tone of disappointment during the conversation, that the tourism development 'structure' that they had been 'built up' in the area had been 'dismantled' in a very short period of time, mostly in terms of redundancies *'I had a few vacancies and that kind of thing.... and in a way emotionally it was very difficult to dismantle the things that you had built up...and without having significant amounts of cash it was it was about people and restructures'* [Manager F: 477-482]. The manager described in such circumstances, how they tackled the effect of the budget reduction in their service *'The way which I have tried to manage it - rather than cutting off the arm we've tried to make the trunk a bit thinner – it's standard managerial techniques - deleting vacant posts to make savings...you don't automatically renew things...what you are trying to do is to sustain the things you did do, but consider whether you can continue to those things'* [Manager F: 484-493].

During discussion concerning pressure on budgets, tourism information provision was a common theme raised during the interviews. It was also an area which demonstrated mixed views amongst respondents. During the pilot study the respondent commented that 'many LAs have closed their TICs' [Pilot study: 94-99]. During the pilot study, the respondent referred to the impact of technological developments on tourism information provision *'TIC functions changed as technology developed and people started to use the internet to get their information and book their accommodation. So TIC footfall and numbers of bed-bookings declined. Again, some LAs used this as an argument to reduce TIC funding and staffing. Then the accommodation accreditation schemes got undermined by an age of Trip-Advisor'* [Pilot Study: 212-220]. During the pilot interview, the respondent referred to an initiative that the author of this study, in conjunction with several other tourism managers including the pilot study respondent, introduced that created a 'tourism information centre managers network' in a group of cities across England. The respondent argued that the TIC network had *'pretty much gone as have many individual TICs'* [Pilot study: 224-225]. The respondent did recognise that it had been several years since they had been involved in local tourism management, however such processes do not tend to happen overnight, and this therefore suggested that

there has been a dramatic change recently in tourism information provision across England.

This was explored during the interviews. What is clear is that TICs are under considerable financial pressure and requirement to raise income was a common theme during the interviews. Tourism information provision can be one of the most expensive elements of local tourism development. A respondent in a rural area argued that their RDA provided some financial assistance in setting up TIC hubs initiative, but running costs of TICs were being borne by local authorities in their area who were finding it very difficult to support costs of those TICs *'they did try to set up TIC hubs and we did get some money via the RDA to support [name omitted] but ultimately...annual running costs... it's all been local authorities delivering them year-on-year still here...they have had a very tough time'* [Manager E:169-174]. Later in the interview the respondent argued that due to running costs of the TIC and financial pressures, the local authority had looked at closing the TIC in order to make savings. A respondent in a rural city also commented with regard to TIC costs *'TICs have to be staffed seven days a week and just by their very nature are one of the most expensive elements of a tourism service'* [Manager H: 246-248].

TIC closures were a common theme. Some had witnessed TICs closing elsewhere, and for some they were closing TICs themselves. A respondent in a rural area commented on the picture in their wider-sub-region *'I have seen locally tourism information centres close...my colleagues locally for example [name sub-region omitted] used to have three tourist information centres and they are looking now to have one...one has closed and they have put a touch screen into a visitor attraction...and that's it...and they are hoping to do that with the other one and only to have only one visitor information centre in the whole area'* [Manager C: 237-246]. Did this manager feel that closing TICs and replacing with other facilities such as 'touch screens' provides an equivalent level of service? *'it will provide 'a' service, it will not deliver the same service but it will deliver a service which is adequate and within budget'* [242-252]. Another respondent in a rural city, commented that they had heard that a neighbouring city had closed their TIC, but had then recently re-opened it *'I was stunned to hear several years ago that [city name omitted] had closed theirs but they*

*have re-opened it... it has been reopened through a local TBID bid... in [name of city omitted] they have used this [a TBID] as part of funding for the tourism information centre as they felt the TIC was key to bringing people in'* [Manager B: 222-234]. Several managers reported that their authorities had recently taken decisions to close their TICs. The duality of financial costs of running TICs and financial pressures had led to a point where TICs were not financially sustainable. A respondent in a rural city reported that they had taken a decision to close their main TIC in the city *'we've had to close our visitor information centre, that's quite a big deal in a city of 8 million visitors... [but]...we've got a plan in how we'll do it differently at less cost etc etc...but at the moment we are leading with the tough message 'we're getting out of it'* [Manager G: 210-212].

The Internet and the social media revolution raised mixed views with regard to TICs. A manager in an urban area argued *'The development of technology means that there are no boundaries any more'* [Manager A: 231-232]. A manager in a rural area particularly mentioned a major difficulty that they had trying to increase tourism's profile on their Council website *'we used to be a little tiny little thing down the bottom of the council website...you know that city council websites have to be ordered in certain styles etc and we were a little tiny blip at the bottom and it was hard to find us'* [Manager B: 570-574]. However, this manager had lobbied the local authority for financial support for a new website specifically for 'tourism' which had been granted *'We have just launched our new website that has only been 'on-air' for 6-8 weeks and we are still building it !'* [Manager B: 568-570]. A manager placed social media as one of two key developments in local tourism *'the thing which has happened in tourism is the whole social media revolution...it's important that at the end of the day because social media doesn't cost anything to do and has great advantages in doing it' but cautioned 'but it takes an awful lot of resource in terms of time in order to do it and do it well'* [Manager A: 462-468]. Nevertheless, to this manager social media has provided more cost-effectiveness for promotional campaigns *'in terms of social media we are out there and it does help for your campaigns... I can't afford to do huge direct-mail campaigns or anything like that...but social media has allowed us to really embrace the technology and use it...it's given us a profile'* [Manager A: 529-535]. However, this manager also linked difficulties TICs are experiencing nationally to

developments in technology *'but TICs closing is an effect of technology'* [Manager A: 653-654]. A manager argued that they were embracing technology to provide visitor information provision, partly through funding pressures and partly as part of a 'modernisation' process. In this rural area, the decision had been made to close TICs and incorporate other means of providing tourist information. The manager explained their strategy *'We have closed the TICs and set up a contact centre which is based in this building here with 16 partners who provide information for us on behalf of the county... huge changes for us over the last two years... where people who are in the end of phones you can get in touch them with via phone, e-mail text and Skype...we have information kiosks in key attractions which has touchscreen to our website... some partners offers face-to-face and some partners have a branded information rack but it's quite substantial the network that we have set up'* [Manager H: 226-239]. For this manager, embracing developments in technology was a method of *'in effect future-proofing ourselves'* [Manager H: 260-261]. They continued *'we are living in the new age now... people access their information via mobile phones, that is increasing month on month not even year-on-year, the growth in people accessing information via mobile technology is just phenomenal'* [262-267]. Are these changes being driven by reduced budgets or modernising ? *'we can say that it's funding, but we can say that its modernising as well !'* [267-269]. For another manager, closure of TICs had been forced by the magnitude of financial cuts their department has experienced over the last two years. In a larger urban area, the taking of a 70% reduction in the tourism budget in a very short period had forced the decision to close the main TIC in the city *'I shut down the [TIC name omitted] because they took the whole lot'* [Manager F: 467-469].

For some other respondents, there may be visitors or potential visitors to their areas who do not engage with the Internet, and therefore offer a market that TICs could still benefit from. A manager in an urban area argued that *'there are still a lot of people out there who don't necessarily access the Internet...there are still a lot of people out there who don't have computers at home... the older age group with disposable income who walk into the TIC and who like talking to a person...they have money in their pockets to spend but can't buy a ticket for a concert. They have to wait for their son or daughter or granddaughter to go onto the Internet to buy it for them...some people*

*[around here] still don't have credit cards or debit cards' [Manager J: 102-112]. This manager mentioned a situation quite personal to them 'Hospitals do that now, they did it to my mother... they said to my mother 'we will e-mail you with your hospital appointment' and she said 'you won't because I don't have a computer'...there are still people in their 60s or early 70s who don't have that kind of access...I think we're all missing a trick...there are still many people who can't do that and we're not engaging people fully...we may think about people in a wheelchair but we forget about those who don't have the Internet we are excluding them because they can't communicate with us... yes it will change... but it will change in a much slower rate' [113 -130].*

During the pilot study, the respondent commented that in their experience TIC staff needed to diversify into offering other services such as tours of local attractions [Pilot Study: 147-148]. In an urban city, the manager argued that their TIC had recently experienced a 'resurgence'. In this city, plans were in place to relocate the TIC and have a more flexible service involving developments in technology. The respondent referred to TIC staff looking to create new products that could support sustainability of the TIC *'the TIC staff are creating products and creating income...we are looking to relocating the TIC into another venue....but actually the kind of plans I am drawing up are not just about one venue...but having TIC staff at different locations doing different things... so the service will be partly be made up of staff doing very human interaction things because we know that's what people want...but also made up of virtual reality tours...and that's another thing that members and industry do like...they like use of technology it's good for them'* [623-635]. This resurgence of their TIC had been a surprise. The manager had been concerned that several years earlier, the TIC faced possible closure because of financial pressures. Earlier in the interview, this manager had referred to how the tourism environment is constantly changing, and at the start of this comment the manager emphasised again how *'tourism' is a dynamic industry in a dynamic world 'we are in such a dynamic world...if you would have asked me four years ago whether the TIC was going...I would have told you to get rid of it and use that funding elsewhere thank you....but now we've got this scenario where, because people are booking last-minute on private sector booking engines, we've got a renaissance happening...because people calling up the TIC from all four corners of the world. They have booked a great rate online... you would think these people who*

*have booked online they would use an app to find out about the place but no they don't, they want to come in and talk to a person who knows the place...there has definitely been a renaissance in the TIC in this city' [500-516].*

To some respondents, the TIC represented more than a 'tourism information service' to their cities. In some cities the TICs were seen as 'politically' important. In a rural city, the local authority funded and operated the TIC, which had been brought back 'in-house' several years earlier *'I first arrived here the tourism information centre was packaged out under a leisure contract out of the council so I literally was a lonely body within the Council tourism. The tourism information centre was under a private-sector leisure services contract that came back into the council in 2005'* [Manager B: 220-226]. In difficult financial times why was that ? *'I have been fighting my corner ! Three or four years ago, we had a customer contact centre and at one point they were suggesting merging it.. but I made my case to keep them separate... principally because it [the TIC] was in the Town Hall building...it also does act as a reception for the Town Hall'* [580-588]. The respondent argued that having the TIC in the Town Hall provided a 'political' presence, but also gave a positive impression to visitors which was important *'we didn't want to mix tourists with someone enquiring about their council tax or housing benefit... if you went somewhere [as a tourist] you don't want to be in with queues of people... you can't give an image of a vibrant city and you can't deliver that image in the same place as people enquiring about their bus passes or people complaining about their council tax'* [590-599]. To this respondent maintenance and retention of the TIC was very important politically. To another manager in a rural area, the presence of their TIC was also politically important, it was a 'symbol', i.e a focal point that local people knew and used a great deal. During the interview the respondent mentioned several times about tourism being 'non-statutory', and because of the presence of the TIC it kept tourism in local people's minds, possibly offering some form of 'political protection' for tourism within an environment of financial cuts. Conversely, it was argued that if the TIC was not there in its prominent position then tourism's 'protection' could be reduced *'Here, the local authority is seen as leading on tourism because of the physical presence of the tourism information centre...its physical, its tangible... its where the small businesses come to for advice... it's there and if that didn't exist I think that would be very different situation'* [Manager C: 385-

391]. During another part of the interview, this respondent also linked the Tourist Information Centre scenario to the wider issue of 'local politics'. The respondent argued that the TIC holds a prominent position, and closure of the TIC would be a visible reminder of closure of a service of which 50% are local users *'[name of local council omitted] has been run for a long time by a [name of political party omitted] administration and about eight years ago, for just one administration, the [name of other political party omitted] got in... but they subsequently lost the power and so [name of first party omitted] are back in again and have been for [number of years]... they are due for re-election in [year omitted] so they are particularly sensitive about the public face of the services that they are offering... particularly sensitive as they want to get re-elected again...it came as a big blow to them that they didn't get re-elected... so at the moment I would say politically they would not want to see the tourist information centre close'* [264-279]. However this manager anticipated pressures becoming much stronger in future years *'but there will be a lot more pressures put on than there are right now'* [280-281]. Another respondent in an urban area highlighted the political nature of tourism and in their view wished for tourism and the TIC to continue to remain associated with the local authority. This respondent argued that *'I don't want tourism and the TIC to be at a distance from the local authority'* [Manager D: 614-616]. The manager had argued earlier that the TIC was heavily used and valued by local residents and the local industry also did value the work undertaken by the department *'Our tourist information centres are very valued by residents...they do understand us...the industry, they do appreciate us ...there's more of those that understand the environment that we work in than those that don't'* [425-429].

### **7.2.7 Austerity and the tourism manager role**

During the pilot study, the respondent argued that it had become common for tourism managers' roles to be enhanced to include more responsibility *'Tourism Officer's jobs have been diversified to include Inward Investment, City Centre Management, Arts, Events, Leisure, Markets, etc'* [Pilot Study: 97-100]. This was explored during the interviews. Respondents reported various 'rationalisation' processes within their local authorities, which fell into several themes including tourism departments being 'enhanced' to include other services, and where tourism has been incorporated into

other bigger departments. Several respondents referred to the effect of RDA closures. In a rural city, a manager explained that during the RDA period, they were mostly funded from outside the local authority *'prior to the RDAs being shut down we were funded by a single program funding stream and that was through the RDA with limited funding from the local authority'* [Manager H: 55-58]. The closure of the RDA led to the loss of this support funding *'when the decision was made to close down the RDAs we lost all of our funding'* [Manager H: 59-60]. This manager argues that the closure of the RDAs led to a significant re-evaluation of tourism not only within their region but others across the country. Many areas which had been financially supporting tourism questioned whether their tourism product was strong enough to continue support funding for tourism in what were increasingly significant pressures on public sector finances. This manager argued that the closure of the RDAs *'focused the minds of the public sector in its entirety and people really had to look and see where they should invest their money...and ask 'do we have a tourism product?' or 'do we have a visitor economy that we can develop?'* [Manager H: 28-36]. This led to, in some areas, the decision being made not to continue financially supporting tourism *'in some areas they lost their tourism strand completely, the local authority hasn't invested in tourism at all, and I'm not sure if they have a tourism officer any more'* [Manager H: 38-41]. However, this manager reported that after the RDA closed, the local authority in their area, having identified tourism as a growth area, made the decision to provide new 'replacement' support funding *'our funding ran out and the local authority which identified tourism as a priority stepped in and now funds tourism in its entirety in [name of city omitted]'* [Manager H: 61-64]. This led to a significant rationalisation of tourism in this area and 'restructure' *'we had a huge restructure...when lost RDA funding there was 9 of us with project staff we are now a team of 22 because we have visitor information included and industry services like industry support, training and engagement which used to be a stand-alone but that's now merged with visitor services'* [Manager H: 326-322]. This manager argues that the objective of this rationalisation has been to incorporate the elements of 'destination management' under the management of one organisation *'We cover all of the areas of destination management - product development, research and intelligence, marketing... we are just about to take on place marketing as well as destination marketing...we do industry engagement and support as well as training, we do visitor information...which is the*

*first time that tourism in [name of city omitted] has ever sat under that one umbrella organisation'* [Manager H: 213-221]. Manager 'A' reported that with a recent 'restructure' tourism had been integrated into a larger department which also included services such as 'events'. This manager argued that being part of a bigger team offered some form of protection for tourism inasmuch that if tourism was a department on its 'own' it may be more vulnerable to cuts or closure 'Overall we are part of a lot bigger team so in some ways that is good' [Manager A: 446- 458].

On a more personal level, for a number of respondents such change has seen their departmental responsibility increasing. A manager in a rural area reported that their departmental responsibility had 'grown', but staffing had not '*The tourism bit of the council has grown, but the whole structure of the council has changed...we are doing the same number of tasks...but there is a pressure to produce more with less staff*' [Manager B: 265-269]. A manager in a rural area reported that recently several departments had been rationalised into one, increasing their responsibility but with a smaller 'team '*we had separate marketing and festivals teams and basically we now have to do both ! One-day I can be a steward sorting out a roadblock for an event and the next I'm doing a marketing campaign...it really is we are doing things with half the size of the team*' [Manager E: 201-216]. A manager in an urban area commented '*my role has been condensed three times in five years and has definitely got another [one coming].. it's like being Doctor Who you don't know what you will be driving next*' [Manager I: 182-186]. Another manager in rural area commented '*my role has changed in that I have taken on much more responsibility*' [Manager C: 417-418]. When a manager was asked if they saw themselves as now doing the jobs of two managers, a respondent commented '*I would say three but I'm not unique*' [Manager C: 442-443]. A manager in an urban area described their local scenario '*I cover now my job and also do the TIC manager's job, I do the job of my assistant of who I used to have... now I no longer have her...and I also do the job of the [name of senior manager's post omitted].. so we've lost two managers posts and one admin post and I have had to pick up all of those bits*' [Manager J: 409-415]. This manager had described the impact of additional responsibility on their professional life '*our TIC manager left because of the cuts...so I now have to manage the TIC...I have to do the banking, and put the*

*displays out etc because we lost the post'* [Manager J: 403-407] and later in the interview *'I no longer work the hours that I used to...I've said enough is enough... I work weekends and I work evenings, but I am only doing so many in a year because if I work all the hours I need to I don't have time to take the time back. So I'm being much more selfish now'* [429-446]. This manager argued that local authorities rely on a lot of 'good will' from staff in delivering tourism services *'I think local authorities – I don't know whether this is just in tourism or across-the-board – but local authorities rely so much on goodwill but it seems to be prevalent in the tourism side, but the goodwill element of it is heavily relied on... if people withdrew that goodwill, I'm not that sure that local authorities could continue to offer [services] because most offer a very good service for a lot less money'* [439-446].

A manager reported that they were no longer a 'tourism officer' but had a new job title for their new 'wider' job role *'I am no longer tourism officer...that was my title I am now [name of job title omitted]'* [221-224]. This manager agreed with the view made in the pilot study that rationalisation of tourism job roles had become a common feature over recent years, with the role of tourism officer increasingly enhanced to include wider remits *'I don't know any other tourism officer now'* [Manager C: 225]. This manager anticipated another restructure coming soon where their role was likely to be enhanced again to include an even wider remit again *'I think we will go through another restructure and I think the job [name of job title omitted] is going to appear and that [person] will have to manage [name of wider role job title omitted]'* [Manager C: 442-447]. A respondent in a rural area reported that their department had grown insomuch they had become part of a wider bigger team *'As a team we have changed very much from being very much just tourism, with a manager and a team underneath that, we are now part of a bigger wider team...we are in the [name omitted] directorate and we are the [name omitted] team'* [Manager A: 420-425]. This manager reported that when a manager left recently they were not replaced but their job responsibilities were passed down to this respondent *'I was the [job name deleted] and there was a manager above me. That person left to go to head up another team, and I now [also] have that job... so I am doing my previous role which I've always done plus the manager's role which involves looking after the [name of service area omitted] and the*

*[name of additional service area omitted] as well...and which includes clearly a lot of other stuff' [448- 458]. However this manager was grateful that the amount of work that the department was doing had been recognised by senior management and this had led to the opportunity to recruit an additional member of staff (but on a lower scale) to assist with workloads 'we also have an opportunity to recruit an additional person which is really helpful...however my job [Manager A: 446- 448]. Elsewhere, another manager also in a rural area reported that additional other responsibility had recently been added to their remit including a theatre which was under local authority control and the town hall 'two years ago I was nothing to do with the theatre and I haven't always overseen the town hall...but yes my role has expanded' [Manager B: 349-351]. As well as services 'in-house' this respondent reported that the theatre management was via an external contract arrangement 'but recently we have outsourced the theatre...so now I am a client officer for the theatre' [Manager B: 22-24]. A number of managers made comments that increasing responsibility was not reflected proportionately with remuneration. Clearly, for such managers 'enhanced' roles will quite likely, as seen in comments, include additional responsibility or additional workload or both. However as these comments could be seen as personal comments, they have not been reported in this work. However, a comment made by one manager, which has not been attributed signals a common theme made within the interviews 'they are expecting me to take on a lot more work for a lot less money relatively speaking'*

### **7.2.8 Emerging structures and the new tourism bodies**

The accession of the Conservative/Liberal Democratic government has led to what Visit England have referred to as the biggest structural change in public support for tourism in England since the 1969 Development of Tourism Act (Visit England, 2012).

The net result of Labour policy and RDA involvement with tourism was generally regarded as positive although regionalisation had led to different levels of support and engagement with tourism within the regions (Tourism Insights, 2010). Therefore this has witnessed different impacts from RDA closure within different regions. A

respondent made reference to the effects of the RDA closures '*The disappearance of the RDAs is having an effect where RDA funding was significant...here in the [name of region omitted] we never had RDA investment into [city name omitted], there was RDA investment into the regional [tourism] board but that never really cascaded down to local authority areas ours included*' [Manager G: 40-47]. However, to this manager the demise of the RDA did not really impacted on them significantly because they had not benefited from significant RDA support '*we never really benefited from that [RDA funding] so the absence of it has made no difference to what we do*' [Manager G: 47-49]. Another respondent argued that whilst the disappearance of the RDA had an effect, it was more of a financial effect. This has not stopped the local DMO partnership continuing, but reduced funding has curtailed activities '*With the RDA going has impacted from a funding point of view...in the past we have benefitted from ERDF funding via the RDA and then down to us via [name of DMO omitted] they used organise free training that we could all feed into... the TIC managers could all go to them... it was joined up...with the RDA going everything hasn't fallen apart but it has shrunk...but not massive campaigns as they used to be...but we do all talk to each other*' [Manager J: 59-68].

Respondents were asked how they saw the future picture for local tourism. Of the interview questions, this question was the one met with a unanimous feeling of uncertainty. Initial reactions included '*Oh God knows*' [Manager J: 536], '*I really don't know*' [Manager C: 675] and '*I honestly don't know where it's going*' [Manager A: 707], and '*The forward horizon is exceptionally bleak*' [Manager G: 57]. A manager in an urban area argued that the situation for local tourism departments had become one of almost constant flux which created an environment of significant uncertainty '*I would say that it is constantly moving, changing...you feel quite unsettled and uncertain where the future is going*' [Manager A: 67-70]. During the interviews, key themes emerged relating to the structure of English tourism, an enhanced role of the private sector and local authority funding of tourism. During the pilot study, the respondent referred to the 'structure' of tourism in England where regional tourist boards and latterly the RDAs connected the local areas to national organisations such as Visit Britain and Visit England. What is

evident is that the closure of the RDAs has significantly affected the structure of public sector support for tourism in England (Visit Britain, 2012) During the interviews the word 'structure' was mentioned by a number of respondents in the context of change. Some managers perceived the closure of the RDAs as creating a break in the 'structure' that linked tourism at the local level to the national level. A manager in an urban area referred to regional structures which they saw as having 'gone' *'the regional tourism structure has gone...you've got [name of regional tourism organisation omitted] which is still hanging on and that's it...I can't think of another regional umbrella organisation that's still in place...everything else is just gone'* [Manager F: 123-128]. This manager argued that recent changes had hindered the opportunity for the country to 'cash in' on recent events *we've just had the Queen's Diamond Jubilee year followed by the Olympics and the infrastructure that had been assembled to make the most of those opportunities has just been destroyed and that's a shame'* [317-323]. In terms of 'structure', other managers made similar comments *'the structure seems to have gone...it seems that we had a hierarchy in [region name omitted] we had the regional development agency...but there's breakages now in the structure...with a lot more local authorities being guided now by national policy directly'* [Manager E: 58-64]. A manager in a urban city argued that *'we've got really defined tourism regions but with no actual structure to manage tourism...and then you've got other areas with no defined tourism product but who have through some strange budget scenario have got funding to exist...so local authorities don't have a guide nationally as to how tourism should be being managed'* [Manager D: 80-85]. Again, a manager in an urban area referred to structures and argued that after the closure of the RDAs a 'vacuum' appeared *'the structures that were in place and mechanisms that were in place just disappeared...so in terms of relationships, partnerships and structures people were thrashing around in a vacuum'* [Manager F: 130-134]. However, a manager in an urban city, argued that an all-encompassing structure that linked national tourism bodies to the local areas is not in fact necessary. The manager argued that financial pressures and the current transition in public sector tourism is forcing local authorities to evaluate whether they should be engaged with tourism or not. This manager argued therefore, that those links should only be made where appropriate *'the structure tried to have universal coverage and I*

*think there's a little bit about saying 'we don't need universal coverage, let it exist where it exists if there are big gaps there are big gaps'* [Manager G: 310-317].

What direct effect is this having on their areas ? A manager in a rural area argued that the demise of the RDA and the DMO created a completely new dynamic within their area *'with the RDA going that sucked away all of the funding from [regional tourism organisation name omitted] and with [regional tourism organisation name omitted] gone, we therefore still work closely with [name of county tourism marketing organisation] but we are almost level pegging with them now because although they represent the county [name of city omitted] is a big player in the county's tourism'* [Manager B: 102-109]. How has this affected the local dynamic for this city ? The manager commented that in the previous scenario *'it used to be a very hierarchical situation [city name omitted] tourism talked to [county name omitted] tourism and they would talk to [name of regional tourism organisation omitted] tourism, who were talking directly to Visit Britain'* [Manager B: 96-102]. What is the current scenario for them ? With the demise of the local RDA and DMO, several pieces of that hierarchical structure had now been removed *'but now we are literally talking directly to Visit England !'* [Manager B: 101-102]. The manager continued *'We now have a very different relationship...I have a meeting next week with [name of Visit England representative omitted] of Visit England next week and that would have been unheard of before... even if we would have jumped over the county before then, we would have been talking to [regional tourism organisation name omitted]. Huge changes'* [Manager B: 112-118]. Communication was a theme in several comments. A manager in a rural area referred to the closure of the local RDA and a national tourism benchmarking group as creating an environment where local authorities are feeling 'disconnected' *'we've lost that [regional development agency name omitted] voice.. so we do feel... it is a bit harder to communicate with our friends nationally... we also lost [name of local authority tourism membership organisation name omitted] so we do feel...it is a bit harder to communicate with our friends nationally'* [Manager E: 51-56]. A manager referred to structural change in terms of the effect of changes on the TIC network *'One of the things for me... there used to be the TIC network, the*

*face of tourism to your visitor, that has disappeared...there is a local one but there isn't a wider countryside TIC managers network'* [Manager J: 84-88].

Managers had mixed views concerning the current role of VisitEngland within the 're-alignment' picture, but were generally supportive. A manager argued that the demise of the RDAs lead to a picture of 'disconnection' across the country, and were it is only recently that national partnerships were starting to become established again. This manager recognised the part Visit England are playing in the process *'It's like that thing where you shake up the molecules and eventually they all gather together in 2 or 3 little groups, so you've got the TIC managers managed to find each other, and the city managers managed to find each other and with a little bit of intervention from Visit England it is sort of coming together as a picture but it's not a formal structure with layers... it's much more fluid than that, and I think that's not necessarily a bad thing but makes it more difficult to try and understand and interpret really'* [Manager F: 259 – 269]. Some managers were sympathetic to Visit England and supportive of the Visit England role in the current picture. This manager referred to the current situation where they felt *'quite disconnected but they [Visit Britain] are trying to do a good role'* [Manager E: 51-53]. A manager in an urban area was also sympathetic to Visit England *'what's ironic about the situation is that Visit England have had to basically try to pick up the pieces... they've had to establish a destination management forum...with new criteria...there's something like 47 large destinations...there's a list of people who are going to get the regional growth funding on the Visit Britain website'* [Manager F: 109-138]. However, another respondent in an urban area was concerned at what they perceived as a lack of leadership at national level *'there's no national structure there...DMOs have survived if they've got funding from somewhere...not so much because the government or VisitEngland have taken a lead in saying which areas should we have or shouldn't we have a tourism remit of some description'* [Manager D: 72-78]. This manager returned to this theme later in the interview *'national government are going to have to sort out a structure for the DMOs, they've got to look at it from a grand perspective... we've got a really good strong brand which attracts international visitors, and with no structure to manage tourism...its bonkers !!'* [637-642]. A manager argued that some cities as group had tried to influence the

agenda pre-2010 general election based on a policy paper produced by the Conservative party that perceived tourism in England as being the preserve of the resorts and the countryside *'what we did with some other cities... under the chairmanship of [name omitted]... was to try to influence the agenda...because initially a Conservative party policy paper came out in 2009 which basically said tourism is about the resorts and the countryside, it didn't mention the cities at all'* [Manager F: 109-118].

Government policy change has placed a clear emphasis on greater private sector participation in local tourism development (Penrose, 2011; VisitEngland, 2012). This is consistent with the 'enabling' philosophy promoted during the 1979-1997 Conservative government, of 'less' government and more private sector involvement (Thomas, 2009). Comments suggest that respondents acknowledge that the private sector will be called upon to contribute more to tourism marketing in the future. This manager in a rural area commented *'I see a change in the way that we run tourism and do things...we also have to spread the load more evenly across the private businesses...we have to encourage the private businesses to contribute...for example at the moment in our visitor guide - yes they can take adverts out - but they will be in the listing free of charge'* [Manager B: 538-554]. In conversation, this manager expressed some exasperation at lack of engagement of the private sector in local tourism marketing initiatives. The manager was disappointed at the time taken to try to engage the private sector to support initiatives, and was considering whether a bureau system, where all members financially contribute, may be the future *'it's getting that we might have to have a bureau system where every business contributes into the pot so we have a marketing pot that we can use...I don't think the council can sustain us forever I think those days are gone...we know we've got a difficult five years ahead in local authority financing'* [560-565]. This manager also argued that when it comes to raising finance, the private sector can be reluctant to financially support initiatives being driven by the public sector. Therefore, without a public sector element, the private sector may be more forthcoming in financially supporting programmes. This manager recalled a recent conversation with a representative of a DMO concerning raising funding for promotional programmes *'I was talking to [name of DMO omitted] the other day as they are still very much involved at the county level, and I said 'do*

*you find it easier to raise money because you're now [name of DMO omitted] and you're not seen as the county council...and the answer was because they weren't the council it was much easier ask for get money...because people don't mind, they resent giving money to the council because they have paid their council tax and they don't want to pay a penny more...but to another body they see don't see things in the same light'* [Manager B: 308-322]. To manager 'F', in line with Coalition government policy, this manager anticipates that responsibility of the private sector locally in tourism will be greatly enhanced in the future with reduced roles for the public sector '*I think you will see a huge difference... you will see a more direct relationship between the beneficiaries [of tourism] and the investment required...you see more short-term targeted activity.. you will see more specific marketing campaigns with specific targets rather than general...and you'll see reduced levels of service'* [Manager F: 745-752]. To this manager, financial pressure on local authorities has seen local authorities increasingly withdrawing from tourism services. With this reduction and an emphasis on private sector involvement, the result will be greater emphasis on tourism marketing and less emphasis on other areas of the tourism development process '*What has happened over the last two years is that people have withdrawn from non-core services...basically everyone has protected the marketing...so they are no longer involved with skills, no longer do product development and the quality agenda is under attack..and basically it's all going to be about marketing because that's what the stakeholders only want to pay for.. they will invest in marketing campaigns but they won't necessarily give funds for quality improvement or customer service skills'* [752-765].

However respondents also argued that continued involvement of the public sector is an important part of local tourism promotion. Managers appeared to suggest that in their view local authorities would retain some form of engagement with tourism in the short-term at least. A manager in an urban area argued that with the demise of RDAs '*in a number of other areas these organisations [DMOs] went to the wall or ceased to exist or shrank to point where they were no longer viable and the local authorities had to step in some cases to re-activate the role of promoting the destination'* [Manager F: 81-86]. Therefore several managers argued that there was now a more important role for local authorities to play in local tourism promotion, but one respondent mentioned

again how the non-statutory status of tourism was likely to inhibit this '*I actually think that there is now more of an important role for local authorities now, LAs must continue with tourism*' [Manager A: 349 -351]. However this manager felt that the future essentially hinged on the duality of funding and local political priorities '*but if there's no money available...again it all comes down to priorities and we're not statutory*' [Manager A: 352-353]. This manager was concerned that smaller local authorities like theirs may decide that they could not afford to engage with tourism in the future. Therefore a picture may emerge where only the bigger cities, with larger and more substantially funded DMOs, would be supporting tourism '*either local authorities will get rid of tourism completely...all local authorities other than your big ones like [names omitted]... but a lot of the little destinations like ourselves may not exist. And it might only be the 'big boys' who are playing*' [707-713].

Another respondent in an urban area thought that local authorities would continue to support tourism in some way but could not envisage in what format '*I think tourism and local authorities will survive and I think they will manage to support tourism, but just how that format it will take I really don't know...I think, like a lot of people, I am quite jaded about it*' [Manager J: 573-576]. This manager argued that a tourism information centre was the minimum that a destination should provide from a 'customer service' perspective '*I also think we would be foolish not to have a tourism information centre and I have fought, as has my boss, to keep this because it does engage with people when they get here...it is that 'in destination provision'...now if we can keep that, even if it's just an 'in destination provision' of a TIC for people coming into the city they know and its all about customer service...there is a place in local authorities for TICs but how many local authorities will keep TIC's I don't know*' [Manager J: 573-595].

A manager in a rural city was unsure of the future, but felt that the future of tourism promotion in their city significantly hinged on the local DMO '*I think it really depends on the future of the DMO*' [Manager C: 675-676]. Earlier in the interview the manager had stressed the importance of their DMO in supporting local marketing and stressed the importance of its survival. The manager gave two particular reasons for this, one political and one related to the structure of tourism in

Britain and the relationship between local areas and the national structure. This manager was concerned that if the DMO closed local politicians would see it as an opportunity for 'savings' *'at the moment we pay something like [amount of budget omitted] to the local DMO...if that DMO closed tomorrow I strongly suspect my political bosses would say 'well the DMO doesn't exist any longer so you can save that £15,000 even though it was out of my marketing budget''* [373-378]. With regard to the structure of tourism in England, on several occasions during the interview this manager referred back to the situation regarding local destination marketing of many years ago. This manager has worked in local tourism for many years and argued that if their DMO was not to survive then in their view local tourism in England would be in a 'worse state' than they have ever experienced during their career *'If the DMO closes then I think then that will make things very difficult...they work closely with Visit England and they have some regional development fund money to take forward campaigns for the next few years, but they depend to a great extent on finances from the local authorities particularly the county council... if that ceases then that's when the problems will really start because then we will be back to a worse case scenario than I have ever been in because we will have no regional structure and we will just be down to being individual'* [358-369]. This manager also suggested an additional political factor which could affect the future of tourism in their area, that is the 'politics' of the ruling party. Earlier in the interview the manager had referred to the situation concerning if a new ruling group was to take control in their area. The manager had commented that the current ruling party had 'just got in' last time but have supported tourism. The manager was concerned whether if a new ruling group were to take power *'would tourism be considered too much of a [name of political party omitted] policy ?* [683-684]. A manager in a rural area did not see a viable alternative to public sector support for tourism unless funding for tourism marketing only was directed to private sector agencies *'its what the alternative is...there is no viable alternative at the moment really...if it only got to the point where the government only financed private sector marketing agencies I don't see an end to tourism roles in local authorities'* [Manager E: 395-400].

How do managers see the role of local authorities in the future ? A respondent in an urban city *'It's hard to imagine what is going to happen... things have changed so*

*much recently with this government...I don't know if VisitEngland will remain as they are...a lot of the work they are doing is around thematic campaigns which is new to them and its pulling people in from all around the country...and they're using that to unlock some RGF money they're getting...it will be interesting to see how it works'* [Manager I: 361-371]. This manager commented that the process is evolving 'even as we speak' *'they only used to talk to a number of regional bodies around the country and now they've got this long list of people who have to talk to and consult with because it's so different now right across the country'* [373-377]. This manager was also supportive of the role Visit England is currently undertaking *'we went to a campaign meeting it was just all of the individual representatives all pitching in...so that is a lot of people that they have to work with all the time and coordinating it is quite difficult'* [379-383]. A manager in an urban area related the current scenario to the picture of many years ago during the time of the English Tourist Board this manager was supportive of the role of visit England within the culture of less financial support being available *'Visit England were a very important partner in that...they were very supportive...they engineered meetings with the Tourism Minister John Penrose... but they didn't take the lead on it...and that's what's different now, in the 'good old days' you would have gone cap in hand to Thames Tower and said 'this needs doing can you help do it ?' 'The answer now is 'no, if you want to do it then you do it, and if we think it's a good idea we will help you, we will open doors and we might come to the meetings but we're not going to fund somebody to deliver it for you because there's no money''* [Manager A: 162-174].

Another manager replied that they had seen changes evolving in other destination areas, where in some other areas tourism was being incorporated into other departments or agencies linked to economic development or place marketing *'I've looked at a few other organisations recently and seen how much they've changed...and I think it might be a possibility that tourism may sit it...it may be a strand within a wider bigger organisation...it is about economic development but not being a standalone service any more'* [Manager H: 596-602]. This manager continued that place marketing has gained much prominence recently and in some other areas tourism has been incorporated into the wider 'place marketing' remit *'I might be way*

*off mark but I am looking at what other destinations have done... such as [name of two areas omitted] we're they are responsible for place marketing and not just tourism.. it seems to me that... it's about place marketing and not just tourism marketing, a place for visitors but as a place for investors to come and live and come to study' [581-590].* What was interesting to this manager was how the remits of 'economic development' 'inward investment' and 'place marketing' organisations can be 'fluid' inasmuch that in conversation the manager specifically mentioned a particular organisation in mid-England which had undergone considerable recent change in its remit despite the organisation being almost the same in structure and personnel '*they are all significantly different from how they've been in the past...I benchmarked with some other DMOs about six years ago, and now those organisations are the same organisations with the same people and the same chief executives and the same structure but now they're completely different [organisations] now !' [615-622].*

The Coalition government have argued that large-scale government funding for tourism is 'unaffordable and unacceptable' (Penrose, 2011, p.19). Respondents particularly referred to the future funding scenario and its impact. A manager in an urban city argued that for them '*The forward horizon is exceptionally bleak' [Manager G: 57].* This respondent expressed the view that local authorities will become so financially constrained over the next 6-7 years that it will become inevitable that they will disengage from financially supporting tourism. To this manager, the strategy locally is to try to slow down the 'inevitable' '*I think they [local authorities] will dip out anyway over time...so we will just try to slow it' [Manager G: 454-455].* To this manager government policy of '*saying it wants business to have a greater role' is a message that government are saying 'we can't keep putting public money into it [tourism] - businesses you pay for it' [165-169].* To this manager, the private sector '*will never make up the shortfall that is currently there in terms of public sector funding' [175-176].* Therefore, to this manager a new 'sustainable' model is required which requires '*businesses to invest more and take a greater role' whilst persuading 'local authorities not to entirely disengage and to continue to support' [185-187].* In their city, this a manager envisages that in the future a new organisation may need to emerge '*linked to social enterprise, a company at arm's-length from the authority...and having a*

*broad base of governance; business and local government'* [441-444]. Striking a balance in terms of governance was seen by this manager as the key for success *'you want the local businesses to think that it's theirs, the politicians to think that it's theirs, and you want the people running it to have the freedoms to get on and make the best go at it...I want businesses to think they own it, the politicians to think they own it and the keeping of all of those constituents happy'* [445-452]. An objective of this company would be to *'create more commercial aspects to what you do...and [explore] different models of cross-border working jointly with other areas in order to drive up efficiencies that we've never been anywhere near achieving'* [191-195]. To this manager, the way forward is for the local authority is not to disengage from tourism, but create *'a sustainable model'* [Manager G: 188]. This was argued as the key to continuing support for tourism, in order to try to prevent, in the face of inevitable further financial pressures on local authorities, what this manager described as a continual process of 'salami slicing' tourism budgets *'how to create a sustainable model that isn't just going be salami sliced, salami sliced, salami sliced every 5 years'* [189-190]. Therefore, for this manager it was imperative that the local authority did not disengage, whilst persuading tourism businesses to engage more *'the trick in getting the right model and going forward is; how to get businesses to invest more and take a greater role, and how do you get the local authorities not to entirely disengage and to continue to support it'* [Manager G: 183-187]. During the conversation this manager argued that whatever was the outcome for tourism in their area over the next few years, commerciality and efficiencies would be major part of future survival *'can we create more commercial aspects to what you do and are there different models of cross-border working jointly with other areas in order to drive up efficiencies that we've never been anywhere near achieving'* [190-195].

### **7.2.9 New tourism partnerships and engagement of the local industry**

Coalition policy has been to place more emphasis on local economic development being 'private sector-led' (Cable & Pickles, 2010). This has been reflected in national

tourism policy which seeks more engagement of the private sector in the emerging local tourism partnerships (Penrose, 2011). Tourism in England has become dominated by the language of collaborative working and public-private sector partnerships (Heeley, 2001; Vernon et al, 2005; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). However, the literature has cautioned against what may be overly optimistic expectations of private sector engagement in such partnerships (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Long's (2000) research described difficulty in engaging private sector organisations in an urban tourism partnership in London. An inability to secure large-scale national tourism organisations within that partnership membership, was seen as creating a particular weakness in the sustainability of the collaboration. In the North of England, Caffyn's (2000) research found that engaging support from private sector tourism businesses, particularly the smaller enterprises, was problematic throughout the whole of the lifespan of a rural tourism partnership.

Respondents in this study were not overly optimistic for seeing increased involvement of tourism businesses in their emerging tourism partnerships. In some cases, managers argued that previous arrangements already contained the majority of local tourism businesses. Therefore securing even higher levels of membership would be very difficult. A respondent reported that locally they had 420 organisations in their local tourism partnership. However, this highlighted a problem in engaging private sector enterprises with partnerships is that, quite simply, some organisations do not consider themselves to be 'tourism' enterprises. Whilst the local authority may perceive them as being in the tourism industry, the businesses themselves did not see themselves as being part of the local tourism picture. Therefore, these organisations are reluctant to join a partnership which they do not feel that they belong to. This manager argued that they currently had the majority of tourism businesses who saw themselves as being part of the tourism picture in partnership. For the others, it would be difficult to engage them because they did not see themselves as part of 'tourism' *'could we go any further on that ? Possibly but only a little bit'* [Manager G: 251-257]. Elsewhere, some respondents argued it would be difficult to further engage the private sector because their local tourism industry both comprised mostly small enterprises, and was small in overall numbers. Thus, such a

scenario would not present significant scope for increased involvement. A manager commented that in their area, policy for more private sector involvement *'wouldn't work'* because *'there are not enough commercial [private sector] stakeholders in our area'* [Manager E: 251-257].

Tourism policy seeks the new emerging local tourism bodies to be 'industry-led' (Penrose, 2011, p.21). In an exasperated tone, a manager expressed frustration at policy which places the private sector 'at the helm' of local partnerships *'the government wants the private sector to lead on everything'* [Manager A: 366-368]. Whilst the benefits of collaboration in tourism have been argued (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009), in an industry of so many SMEs the literature has also argued that engaging the private sector in tourism partnerships may also be difficult (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Several reasons have been suggested including the private sector being 'too busy or apathetic to play an energetic role' (Cochrane, 2009, p.73). In their areas, respondents felt that tourism businesses were too busy rather than apathetic. Some respondents also argued that in their areas, the majority of tourism businesses being SMEs meant that they did not have large financial resources. Respondents were also sympathetic to the pressures on their local tourism businesses in a competitive and difficult economic environment. A manager in an urban area argued that in their area *'the private sector haven't got the money and they certainly haven't got the energy or the will to lead on projects'* [Manager A: 369-370].

Two main themes emerged which appear to have a negative impact on the private sector engagement in local partnerships. One is the pressure of the 'day job' on individuals tasked with a liaison role with the local partnership. Commercial pressures of the organisation in a competitive tourism industry were thought by managers as impacting the time that the private sector can allocate to tourism partnerships. One manager cited an example where the partnership representative of a commercial tourism business in their area was the marketing manager for the wider organisation *'they also have their day job...the person I liaise with is the marketing manager for the whole organisation and they oversee going to events, overseeing the marketing for the whole organisation, so she hasn't got the time or energy...the reality is they haven't*

*got the time*' [Manager A: 376-380]. Managers were keen to stress that local tourism businesses were mostly small enterprises without substantial resources, and under significant commercial pressures to remain competitive in order to stay in business. Therefore, in recognising commercial pressures on private enterprises to achieve 'results', and thus ensure their business survival, respondents were sympathetic with local businesses who may have to prioritise their time towards business survival. One respondent argued *'the reality is the private sector have day jobs to do, they've got to sell their product'* [Manager A: 385-387]. Therefore in the face of competitive commercial pressures, there was sympathy from the public sector managers for managers of local tourism businesses having to prioritise the needs of their business *'they [the private sector] have their own targets to meet so they will priorities those'* [Manager H: 584-585]. The second main theme which emerged which respondents suggest may have a negative impact on the private sector engagement in local partnerships, is available finance within the tourism businesses, and which will be discussed in the next part of the chapter.

#### **7.2.10 Financing the new local partnerships**

Finance is a critical factor in partnerships' sustainability (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Caffyn's (2000) analysis of 10 tourism partnerships found that funding significantly influenced the lifespan of the arrangement. Funding of tourism partnerships is a complex matter. This is particularly the case if there are a large number of organisations from various sectors financially contributing. An example of funding sources of a tourism partnership is Visit Worcester. Visit Worcester reports that it is funded by three funding streams:

- A tourism grant from Worcester City Council
- Core funding from local businesses
- Earned income from trading activities (Visit Worcester, 2012).

Collaboration theory argues that partnership working and co-operation between partners may bring financial benefits such as increased efficiencies brought about through 'pooling' of financial resources (Cochrane, 2009). However the number of

partners in a collaboration and the financial contributions made by partners, impacts levels of funds available for the partnership to operate, and allocate to initiatives. Thus increases or decreases in contributions can lead to 'knock-on' effects on the partnership's resources.

Instances of low engagement by the private sector can create a dependence on funding provided by the public sector (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). In a case study by Long (2000), a partnership's dependency on support funding from a single public sector source, Islington Council, was the most important factor in the partnership's continued existence. In Caffyn's case study, the partnership was heavily reliant on funding from a number of public sector agencies which included the Rural Development Commission and several local authorities. Therefore, public sector funding can come in a number of formats and guises, and as Carly (1991) has noted can often be 'tapered' or time-limited. In cases where engaging tourism businesses to financially support partnerships is at low levels, can make partnerships heavily reliant on public sector finance (Cochrane, 2009). Additionally, Caffyn's case study has highlighted that reductions in public sector funding at stages in the rural tourism partnership life cycle, also 'plunged' the partnership into significant financial difficulties.

With regard to public sector funding for tourism, policy of the Coalition government has taken a significant turn from that of the previous government. During the Labour government, the tourism sector benefitted from significant financial investment via Regional Development Agencies (Palmer, 2009). Whilst the Coalition government has recognised the importance of tourism to the English economy (Penrose, 2011), it also argues that the tourism industry had become 'particularly dependent on public funds' (p.8). Accepting current financial pressures on local authorities, the Coalition has described this situation as 'unaffordable and unacceptable' (Penrose, 2011, p.19), and the new structural arrangements for English tourism will become 'less reliant on public funds' (p.24). Tourism policy is for the tourism sector 'to organise and fund its own collective marketing in future' (Penrose, 2011, p.19). However, as noted, securing involvement and financial contribution from local tourism businesses may not always be straightforward (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000). Caffyn's (2000) research has described how the rural tourism partnership struggled throughout the course of its life

to engage local tourism businesses. Lack of engagement lead to lack of financial support, which lead to financial difficulties throughout the programme. Long's (2000) study of a collaborative partnership in London also noted difficulty in engaging the private sector to engage and financially support the partnership. Long reported difficulty in engaging both the smaller tourism businesses and the larger scale national enterprises. Such was the extent of a low 'take-up' of members in the partnership, that the membership fee was withdrawn. Whilst these case studies were in different rural and urban contexts, what is significant is that in both cases the majority of tourism businesses within their localities were small enterprises. Caffyn (2000, p.231) described the tourism businesses in the rural example as 'small, marginal and fragile'.

Given that Coalition policy seeks public sector tourism funding to reduce, and the private sector expected to contribute a greater proportion of the costs of local tourism marketing, this study was interested in eliciting views of public sector managers on this issue. A respondent in a rural city during the questionnaire stage had provided an additional comment where the objective of 'reducing the cost' of tourism to the public purse was clearly in progress *'The issue for tourism in [name of city omitted] is that it is currently led by the LA for whom tourism is not a political priority. The focus of the LA is to "manage" not to encourage tourism and to reduce the cost to the public purse'. Later,* this respondent reported that a target set by their local authority was to reduce local authority tourism funding to zero in the next 3 years. Comments from respondents suggest that the 'self-financing' objective of private sector finance replacing public sector finance is gaining momentum in a number of areas. A respondent commented that in their area the self-financing agenda had started and, in conversations with other managers across England, there appeared to be a similar picture building *'I think they [their local authority] will be looking increasingly at the self-financing agenda...I have spoken to a number of people and they are all saying that our authority have aspirations of us [tourism] being self-financing'* [Manager F: 595-598]. This respondent argued that from conversations their impression was that a number of local authorities appear to be giving their tourism departments three years which to secure income and become self-financing *'most seem to be looking at a three-year window'* [Manager F: 599-600].

Respondents did not feel that the introduction of tourist taxes were an option. This was for several reasons. A manager of many year's experience in public sector management commented *'the call to make it statutory has been made as long I've been in the industry'* [Manager C: 619-622]. This respondent also commented that *'I think you could only make it statutory if you've got resultant support funding for those services'* [614-616]. This respondent also argued, that in the global taxes argument, there was a stronger argument for a reduction in VAT on tourist accommodation *'in the financial climate I can't see that happening because I think there is a stronger lobby for reducing VAT on accommodation'* [Manager C: 629-631]. Another manager thought that monies raised may support tourism initiatives but raised the issue of taxes generally in the UK *'I think if it was uniform across the UK then it may raise some revenue, but it would have to be uniform... I suppose that the advantage of the sales tax would be that the money would be channeled in a certain way and you would actually see a pot of money at the end of the day, or the local authority would or central government would, but from an overseas perspective it would make the visitor trip to England more expensive...and somewhere along the line that decision may make people decide that coming to England is too expensive'* [Manager B: 471-481]. A manager in urban area reported that recently in their authority they had conducted research concerning the 'yield' from collection of tourist taxes *'We looked at the fact that VAT is already a factor, business rates are already a factor, that the consumer had other choices of where to go... and the collection money...we did some figures...on the collection, the collection ended up with [that] if you started off with [collecting] a £1 million you only ended up with £300,000'* [Manager I: 238-245]. This manager concluded *'I spoke to Head of Revenue and Head of Finance and we all agreed that it wasn't an acceptable means of raising revenue...[so]...we killed that dialogue with members because they were appreciating that it would significantly not lead to the benefit of the local economy'* [228-236].

Respondents were also not optimistic concerning the private sector 'increasingly funding tourism marketing' (Penrose, 2011) or filling any 'gap' from reduction in local authority financial support. In one case a respondent felt that in their area funding for marketing initiatives did need to, as one respondent put it, *'spread the load more*

evenly' [Manager B: 537] through increased contributions from private businesses. However the popular view was that local tourism marketing is not sustainable without public sector funding. A manager in an urban area involved in a local partnership of over 400 members argued that the private sector would agree in principle to a policy of less involvement of the public sector, but funding provided by the public sector would not be replaced by the private sector '*The private sector will say 'that's great, that's fantastic we want to control this because we think in the public sector is not the right place to be', but they will never make up the shortfall that is currently there in terms of public sector funding*' [Manager G: 171-176]. Various reasons were given why the private sector may not make up 'shortfalls' on public sector funding, but a common theme was the issue of the predominance of small businesses in the tourism sector. A major difficulty suggested by respondents for the emerging tourism partnerships would be local businesses replacing public sector contributions.

Being predominately small enterprises, respondents did not believe that their local tourism industry had the resources to make increased financial contributions to marketing partnerships. One respondent was quite brief '*They haven't got it*' [Manager C: 695-696]. A manager referred to the tourist attractions in their area not being large organisations, despite one being a 'national attraction' and recognised on the Visit Britain website. However, the manager argued that despite this recognition, this organisation did not have resources other than those available to promote itself at the local or regional level. The manager argued that was representative of the majority of tourism attractions in their area '*a lot of our attractions also haven't got the money to promote themselves on a national scale even though they might be a national attraction*' [Manager A: 356-360]. To support their arguments, other respondents gave examples of what they perceived were relatively small financial contributions that their tourism businesses are able to contribute to local marketing projects. A manager in a rural area explained that their tourism accommodation was mostly 'bed and breakfasts', and small family run enterprises who do not have large resources to offer to tourism marketing projects. This manager commented that it can be quite difficult to secure a £300 contribution from some of their tourism businesses towards marketing initiatives. In this instance, the local authority do not charge for listings in the local

tourism accommodation guide *'because our accommodation stock is so thin if someone says they can't pay £300 to be in the brochure then my tourism brochure will start to look very thin'* [Manager B: 542-546]. In the larger cities there may be more scope to attract the larger tourism enterprises into partnership, such as airports or larger hotel companies (Long, 2000). Consequently, such large-scale partners may bring more significant funds to the partnership. However, the rural areas in the main do not have such possibilities, and a manager in a rural area compared their plight, in trying to secure more private sector funding, to those in the larger city areas *'increasing private sector involvement is fine in some of the bigger urban areas where you've got big, big partners, you can bring in an airport, you can bring in people who may say 'I can put £1 million pounds on the table'...we haven't got that here, they are all small...I've got a 12 bedroom hotel who is paying us £6-700 a year they're not going to suddenly go 'OK, here's £10,000', they might go 'here's £800', so that's not going to change the world'* [Manager G: 238-249].

The popular view was that funding provided by local tourism businesses could not exclusively finance the costs of local marketing partnerships. A manager in a rural area's comment was representative of views concerning policy requiring destination marketing to be increasingly funded by the private sector *'the private sector can't finance it'* [Manager C: 385-386]. The manager argued that despite increased business generated by marketing campaigns, this often does not raise sufficient income to ensure that tourism marketing partnerships 'can pay the bills' and remain solvent. In their local area, their local tourism partnership (DMO) could not raise sufficient resources to remain 'solvent'. In this case, the public sector provided many thousands of pounds towards the fixed costs of the DMO. The manager argued that proportionately this was a substantial amount of the DMO 'income' and the DMO would not survive without this (public sector) contribution. Commenting generally, this manager of many year's experience in local tourism management argued *'DMOs are not sustainable without public sector funding...DMOs can't survive without public sector funding because...marketing campaigns often do not bring in sufficient income, therefore DMOs use public sector financial support for their overheads, wages etc'* [Manager C: 387-392].

### **7.2.11 Governance**

It has been argued that the tourism industry is 'fragmented' consisting of many different types and sizes of organisations (Law, 2002; Penrose, 2011). This makes it difficult for the sector to come together as a single 'trade body', but nevertheless the public sector has a history of playing a key role in initiation, organisation and funding of local tourism collaborations (Vernon *et al*, 2005).

Government tourism policy has argued that governance of the emerging local tourism partnerships 'must give majority of power over hiring, firing, and directing management to local private and third sector visitor economy organisations instead of the local authority, Local Enterprise Partnerships or other government bodies' (Penrose, 2011, p.24). However, an issue for the governance of such partnerships is the relative balance of power amongst stakeholders (Hall, 2000) and, furthermore, impact of change upon the governance of such arrangements. Benz and Furst (2002, p.26) have argued that private sector stakeholders in collaborative partnerships favour commercial considerations, whereas public sector stakeholders may be predisposed towards 'co-operative orientations', what Hall and Jenkins (1995) and Elliot (1997) refer to as the 'public interest'. In a 'pluralist' decision-making environment whilst inequalities of resources may exist, no single group or actor will monopolise the decision-making process (Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). However, there is almost inevitably be competition and conflict in partnership working and business elites can often shape decision-making. This means that highly capable small firms may struggle to influence the agenda whilst participating in partnership arrangements (Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). Thomas and Morpeth (2009) have argued that the ability of powerful interests to 'shape the agenda', suggests that partnerships working should not simply be accepted as a 'holy grail' and potential imbalances of power across stakeholders must be recognised. Nevertheless, a change in the balance of power between public and private sector partners in collaborations can affect the motivations of a partnership (Lawless and Ramsden, 1990). Lawless and Ramsden (1990) cite an example of a partnership in an English city, where reduction of public sector involvement witnessed governance

promoting a 'public interest ethos' shifted significantly to one where commercial interests were being favoured by the partnership.

Cochrane (2009) has argued that tourism partnerships, particularly the larger partnerships, require public sector involvement to provide the leadership for such arrangements. However, in order to encourage private sector engagement with local partnerships the public sector may have to 'let go' (Heeley, 2001) of some of its leadership responsibility. In an environment of government seeking less public sector involvement in tourism, what effect did respondents envisage of 'industry-led' (Penrose, 2011) local tourism partnerships? Views fell into two main themes. One main theme related to 'leadership'. Respondents argued that commercial businesses in their areas (most of which are SMEs) look to the public sector (local authority) to provide leadership. A manager argued that in their area, their local tourism industry recognised that the tourism department did not have large tourism budgets, but it was the leadership role that the local authority played in local tourism development which their tourism businesses sought *'as much as we don't have the financial clout to deliver marketing campaigns, our role is more about leadership and coordinating the private sector which is what they want from us'* [Manager E: 211-215]. Elsewhere, a manager argued that the private sector in their area was predominately small businesses, and who looked to the public sector to co-ordinate and lead the local tourism businesses as a 'coherent' group *'Local authorities provide the 'glue' for local tourism partnerships...[they] provide a mechanism to amalgamate the tourism industry, because tourism businesses are small'* [Manager G: 630-636]. To a manager in an urban area partnerships need strong leadership which should be provided by the public sector, who would assume the role of being a partner but without a 'vested interest'. This 'neutrality' of a local authority in the context of wishing to support all organisations was made during the chief executives' stage of the research, where a chief executive argued that their local authority 'is neutral in terms of marketing all attractions/events/hotels etc fairly and equally which is a more harmonious way of promoting the city'. Manager 'F' also made the point that if partnerships are not developed and destination marketing becomes more of a picture of 'individual' campaigns or initiatives then the destination message may become weaker or lost *'it can be hard for a group of businesses to 'lead' themselves... one of*

*the lesson learned from the TBIDS in America is that the TBIDs are often about individual campaigns or projects but not often coordinated together, therefore in isolation they may not be saying the same thing'* [Manager F: 852-857].

In another city, the local authority was in the process of 'leading' the creation of a new local tourism partnership (DMP). The manager argued that the public sector had been the catalyst in setting up the emerging tourism partnership, however if the public sector had not engaged in such an exercise the private sector would not have undertaken the role. The argument was that seeing the local authority leading the development of the partnership would then give the partnership a form of 'legitimacy' that the tourism businesses would wish to be part of. The manager argued *'The local authority needs to be part of the partnership, it needs to play that coordination role...the local authority needs to be there in order to persuade the businesses to buy into the partnership – if it is seen that the local authority is not there [in the partnership] then why should they buy into it ? It may be seen as a sign that it's not important'* [Manager I: 571-578]. Here the eventual objective was that the private sector would take 'ownership' of the partnership and that the public sector would be able to reduce its role. However, the manager reported that engagement of the private sector with the partnership was slow. This was a frustration to the local authority, as the local authority hoped that the private sector would have adopted a more of a leadership role to date *'we were hoping that it would balance out with less [emphasis] on us [the local authority] really... that's what we were hoping, but so far we seem to be leading'* [95-97]. In this case, slow progress would seem to be made towards government policy for the private sector taking more responsibility 'for organising and funding its collective marketing in the future' (Penrose, 2011, p.19).

A second significant theme in comments concerned the motivations for the new emerging partnerships. The literature has highlighted that a drawback with tourism partnerships can be that larger groups or stronger individuals may wield disproportionate influence in decision-making or resource allocation (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). An argument for a public sector involvement in collaborative arrangements is to ensure a balance in conflicting demands of partners, and that the benefits of partnerships serve both public and private sector interests

(Elliot, 1997; Bramwell and Lane, 2000). Ensuring a balance in the interests of commercial and non-commercial partners was a strong theme in comments. In one area, the tourism partnership had many stakeholders of differing size of tourism business. Here, the respondent argued, such variation can 'bring to the table' many differing views and strengths of influence '*there are always strong voices...and lots of voices*' [570]. In this case, this manager argued that ensuring a balance in interests was a difficult task, but such responsibility fell to the local authority. The feeling generally was that private sector smaller tourism businesses wished to see a strong public sector involvement in partnerships in order to maintain a balance in interests of members. A manager argued that in their area '*tourism businesses like to see the public sector involved, there are a lot of vested interests in partnerships and the private sector [here] like to see the public sector involved*' [Manager F: 847-851].

A feeling of a sense of 'community' came across in responses. A manager particularly stressed during the interview that '*We [the local authority] look after the 'little people' and the residents as well...income levels and skills are low here so therefore there is a range of people that we should be endeavouring to support*' [Manager I: 154-157]. To this manager, local authority responsibility was to support small organisations who may not have the size or financial ability to 'help themselves' '*we have a number of smaller [tourism] organisations in this city that our role is to support [them]...they don't have those means or ability, whether it's the small guesthouse of 3 bedrooms or small restaurants dependent on visitors*' [Manager I: 160-165]. Elsewhere, a manager commented that their local tourism industry was mostly small businesses, and they needed the support of the local authority in order to help them promote themselves to a wider market. The manager particularly that a lot of local attractions were small '*so therefore we have to be there to help them*' [Manager A: 364-365]. The expression 'so therefore we have to be there to help them' was a theme common across the interviews in how the public sector representatives wished to see development benefit the whole community. In this case, the local authority was engaging in a national promotional campaign which helped smaller tourism organisations who would normally not have been able to financially support themselves. Being able to 'buy in' to the local authority marketing

initiative provided an opportunity for small tourism businesses to promote themselves on a wider national stage.

The issue of developing tourism to benefit both local businesses and the local community was a significant theme in comments. Respondents were concerned that policy for tourism partnerships to be 'industry-led', may result in a change in balance in the governance of local tourism partnerships. Strong views were expressed that in such cases the 'holistic' or community principle promoted by the public sector for the wider benefit of the community may be negatively affected. Concern was raised that if levels of public sector involvement in local tourism partnerships were to reduce, consideration for the wider area, 'the destination', may also be reduced in favour of more emphasis being placed on private sector needs. One manager argued that without any public sector involvement in local tourism promotion, the wider notion of the 'tourism destination' would cease and a local tourism area '*would stop being a destination entirely*' [Manager G: 623-624]. The word 'holistic' was used by several respondents. In some cases respondents argued that their local authority acted in a 'holistic' or community manner. In other cases respondents perceived that the private sector may not act in a 'holistic' manner in that consideration of the wider community may not be a priority. In the latter case, a manager argued that '*the private sector don't have a holistic view...they are very 'singular'*' [Manager C: 398-400]. It was argued that if the public sector were to become less involved in tourism partnerships, the private sector may not support the community or 'public interest' principles promoted by the public sector. The 'bigger picture', and in this case wider strategic development objectives of local areas, such as securing new economic development or raising the profile of the particular area, was argued as being a critically important consideration for the public sector. Whilst the private sector sharing such wider objectives was also seen as being critically important, respondents argued that in general the wider economic development of a locality was not as important to the private sector. One respondent argued '*local authorities support tourism to support inward investment, profile...private businesses may not be really interested in the bigger picture*' [Manager F: 835-839]. A manager compared the motivations of the public and private sectors in partnerships '*the private sector, by its very nature, will do what is best for its particular kind of organisation...we [the local authority] have got an overview of the*

*whole picture...we look at the bigger picture...our day-to-day work isn't dependent on whether we make money at the end of it...we do what we do for the good of the whole area'* [Manager H: 459-470]. With regard to destination marketing, this manager argued *'If you left it to the private sector it won't get done...all they'll do is promote themselves with the small bit of money that they've got, but it won't be the whole picture it will only be themselves'* [Manager A: 405-409]. Other respondents agreed, one manager commented *'They [the private sector] would look after themselves'* [Manager G: 622-623].

The argument was made that the private sector would only engage with initiatives if those initiatives were seen as serving their interests. To some managers concern for the wider development of the locality was seen as relying on strengths of 'vested interests' of those organisations. A manager argued that commercial, or 'vested', interests influence level of private sector engagement. This manager argued that generally tourism destinations do not benefit from a strong private sector concern for the wider development of the area *'in current manifestations few destinations have a lot of private sector businesses with a strong vested interest in the destination – that's the difference'* [Manager F: 827-831]. One reason suggested why the private sector may not have a strong sense of 'community' or support for the wider local picture in the larger areas, was that the tourism industry could have a significantly higher proportion of larger tourism enterprises such as 'brand' hotels or attractions. As opposed to small tourism businesses, which are often owner-managers, managers of the larger facilities may see their careers requiring them to move from area to area as their careers progress. As such they may not reside in the larger tourism destinations for a long period of time. Therefore developing a strong partnership culture in the larger areas may be more difficult. This manager explained *'it also depends on the composition of the tourism business sector... city compositions are different...the larger brands have 'transient' managers who may not really have a 'holistic' perception of the city'* [Manager F: 831-835]. If local authorities are only able to offer reduced financial support to tourism partnerships, may this reduce their influence in the governance of such arrangements ? A manager in an urban area replied *'Absolutely. Sometimes in a partnership you get a clash of wills in how the funding bodies see their roles versus how they see their funding... the businesses view is that if you put*

*£20,000 in you get £20,000 worth of influence and if you put in £5000 you get £5000 worth of influence'* [Manager F: 616-662].

Participating in collaborative partnerships may involve the public sector having to 'let go' of some or all of its leadership responsibility (Heeley, 2001). An issue for collaborative partnerships is that larger groups or stronger individuals may wield disproportionate influence in decision-making or resource allocation (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Against the backdrop of pressure to extend private sector involvement in tourism (Penrose, 2011) respondents have expressed concern where policy requires extending the role of the private sector in the emerging tourism bodies. Respondents made the argument that the majority of tourism businesses in their areas wished for strong public sector leadership of local tourism. In fact the local tourism industry in their area was predominately small businesses who looked to the public sector to co-ordinate and lead them as a 'coherent' group. The literature has highlighted that governance of collaborative partnerships, the relative balance of power amongst stakeholders and impact of change in balance of power amongst stakeholders is of critical importance to the motivations of such arrangements (Hutchinson and Foley, 1994; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009; Cochrane, 2009). With policy for the private sector having the 'majority power' (Penrose, 2011, p.24) in the emerging tourism partnerships, this raises a question concerning the motivation for the emerging local partnerships to maintain the public interest. It was of concern to respondents that if the private sector having the 'majority power' in emerging tourism partnerships, negatively impacted the on the 'public interest'. Concerns were expressed that if the emerging 'industry-led' local partnerships were to witness the public sector becoming less influential in the partnership arrangements, a 'pluralistic' local tourism policy environment may be difficult to maintain. This may result in the emerging local partnerships moving having less 'pluralistic' objectives and more the 'exclusive' needs of the local industry.

## CHAPTER 8: DISCUSSION

### 8.0 Summary of main findings

This chapter will present a summary of the main findings from the triangulation of chief executive and tourism managers' data. It will discuss these findings in relation to the current literature in the area of the management of English tourism services and, more specifically, in the context of 'enabling' as a theory of state provision of services.

The main findings are:

- Tourism is worth over £17billion to the English cities, and supports around 360,000 jobs. This is around £14.2billion to the urban cities, and around £3.1 billion to the rural cities. The highest reported economic value of tourism was reported in Birmingham where tourism is worth around £4.6billion. Tourism supports around 360,000 full-time equivalent jobs in the English cities, around 297,000 the urban areas, and around 64,000 in the rural cities.
- A strong sense of support for tourism is present amongst local authority chief executives, despite the 'non-statutory' nature of tourism and financial pressures
- Tourism is seen within local authorities as an 'economic' rather than a leisure function
- The significant driving forces that characterise the managerial state are impacting the management of local tourism

- Reduction in financial resources is leading to significant changes in department structures, tourism managers' roles and significant pressure for tourism departments to raise income in order to make tourism departments financially viable
- There is no correlation between allocation of financial resources by local authorities and the 'size' of the city
- 'Outsourcing' tourism marketing is a significant feature of tourism development within the cities, with 40% of local authorities promoting tourism from outside their local authority structure
- Intense financial pressures on local authorities are impacting tourism budgets, and in some cases local authorities are exiting from funding local tourism
- Concerns with regard to the ability of the private sector in local areas to adopt an increasing role in local tourism partnerships
- Concerns regarding the impact of 'industry-led' local partnerships on the governance of the emerging local tourism partnerships

## **8.1 Managerialism**

It has been argued in the literature that managerialism has become a dominant template for public sector organisational design and management practice (Deem et al, 2007: Hedley, 2010). The argument for a 'more managerial' public sector has been that the incorporation of 'private sector' management techniques is required to improve the efficiency of the public services and improve 'value for money' (Rhodes, 1994, p.144). 'Outsourcing' public services was intended to reduce the costs of public services through competitive tendering (Flynn, 2007). More defined business planning, or being 'strategic' (Rao, 1996), would enable public sector organisations to be focused by putting structures and systems in place which would help to deliver identified goals, objectives or targets. Additionally, a 'performance-based' orientation would see outputs defined and systems of measurement devised.

Whilst the literature acknowledges that there are clear organisational efficiencies to be gained from a 'managerial culture', the extent to which managerialism has pervaded

the British public sector has been subject to come criticism in the literature (Jones, 2006; Deem *et al*, 2007; Moore, 2008; Hedley, 2010). The ethos of public services is that they should be flexible and responsive, and providing equality for all who receive those services. This can include those with disabilities, minority groups, or with difficulty in paying, such as the unemployed (Benington and White, 1998). Whilst a 'management state' has placed significant emphasis on departments being judged on their efficiency and effectiveness, the question is raised 'effective for who?' as the many different stakeholders who public services provide for may also have different ideas about what services are supposed to achieve and how they should be provided (Stoker, 2004). There is the argument that organisations that are target-driven can tend to focus on 'short-term' goals, as these are often the ones against which organisational outputs and performance are measured (Rao, 1996). Therefore, if 'effectiveness' is reduced down to achieving a narrow set of goals or targets managers, under inevitable pressure for providing improved performance and efficiency, may find providing equality or equity for all stakeholders difficult. Additionally, a narrow focus on specific targets or outcomes may reduce the capacity of organisations to respond to emergent critical issues which they face (Rao, 1996). Nevertheless, the management paradigm in England has increasingly witnessed public sector organisations being required to more focus on outputs, in many cases this is because the managerial paradigm pervading public sector organisations and departments has made financial support reliant on achieving 'outputs' (Moore, 2008).

Labour's 'Third way' claimed an 'agnostic' stance towards the 'superiority of the private sector', arguing that 'traditional values' should be the guide to decision-making not ideology (Flynn, 2007). However, in a break with traditional Labour thinking, Labour also argued that the techniques of the private sector, and in some cases use of commercial providers, should be harnessed to improve the delivery of public services. Flynn (2007) argues that Labour policies thus often pushed managers in the public sector towards working with the private sector or outsourcing services anyway. However, Labour presented this as a pragmatic approach to 'modernisation' and not something ideologically driven. Labour rhetoric was careful to distinguish itself from the 'privatisation /marketisation' associated with the Conservatives (Flynn, 2007). Labour argued that its reform agenda was grounded in a strong commitment to collective

activity with public services such as schooling or healthcare being provided equitably according to need, and free at the point of consumption. Shaw (2009) has argued that Labour did increase funds to public services such as healthcare and education, in order to attempt a major refurbishment of the fabric of the welfare state.

Nevertheless, Deem et al (2007) argue that the picture of English public sector in general terms has become dominated by the building of corporate commitment to specific organisational missions or purposes, which have driven internal management processes reflected in the rubrics of financial effectiveness, business planning (more clearly linked to objectives and target setting) and performance management. Managerialism is difficult concept as there no agreed definition within the literature concerning precisely what managerialism 'is' (Hedley, 2010). An extensive review of the literature has identified that the managerial paradigm is characterised by a number of common 'techniques' (also referred to as 'practices' by Dawson and Dargie, 2002, p.34) which have become trademarks of the managerialism impacting management of English public services

- 'Outsourcing' local authority service provision
- Cost-efficiency
- More defined business planning
- Focus on evaluation and accountability
- Focus on performance management

It is this framework which will be used to evaluate the data concerning the impact of managerialism on local tourism management.

The triangulation of questionnaire and interviews was designed to understand the impact of the managerial paradigm on the operation of local tourism policy. It has been found that local authority tourism departments in England have been significantly impacted by the managerial paradigm. The management culture prevading the wider public sector environment, has significantly impacted the working of local authorities and in the ways that local authority tourism departments manage local tourism.

Tones of managerialism are suggested in the organisation of sub-regional tourism marketing and the DMO setup. It has been argued earlier, that public sector organisations have increasingly been subjected to funding being reliant on achieving performance targets (Moore, 2008). The contracts that DMOs had for securing funding from RDAs, have been described by the BRA (BRA, 2005, p4) as a picture of 'evidence-based performance targets strategies, visions [and] ambitious goals'. The BRA (2005) have argued that an objective of sub-regional tourism marketing was to enhance efficiency through reducing 'wasteful duplication (p.4), a message to local authorities and tourist boards had been how 'inefficiently' they had been managing tourism (p.4). As the BRA (2005, p.4) have argued, focusing on improved efficiency and avoidance of duplication 'sounds very logical and business-like' and 'would be difficult to oppose without being attacked as a backward looking reactionary'. During the interviews a number of managers argued that the creation of DMOs was intended to bring in more expertise into destination marketing within the regions, whilst providing more effectiveness through less duplication and greater economies of scale. Clearly tones of managerialism are suggested in any such drive for greater organisational effectiveness. But managers interviewed in this study were divided in opinion concerning whether creation of DMOs had increased efficiency. A manager in an urban area of long experience in local tourism management argued that a weakness in the regionalisation strategy was the significant amounts of funding that RDAs allocated to DMOs. This manager argued that RDAs 'wandering around with enormous wallets full of money and saying they wanted to reduce duplication', had not worked in their RDA area. DMOs, supported by the power of the RDAs, looked after their own interests and used such funding for marketing which, in fact, did not reduce duplication but in some instances increased duplication. Whilst tones of managerialism are suggested in DMO structures reducing duplication of marketing activity, a number of managers argued that in their area this had not been the case. A manager in an urban area suggested that DMOs would have preferred to reduce tourism marketing to 'one brochure and one website'. However, this manager argued that tourism destinations are complex areas, and therefore an objective of a reduction in marketing down to 'one brochure and one website' is always likely to cause problems because differing tourism interests may not always feel that they are being best represented. Therefore, organisations may 'go out on their own'. This had been the case in a

number of the cities. The reason given was that their DMOs had not heavily promoted their city because their city had not have been seen as complimentary to the 'brand' portrayed by the DMO. Therefore, these managers argued that duplication was not reduced because those cities had to be engaged in tourism marketing themselves.

'Outsourcing' of local authority services is a common feature of the managerial state (Taylor, 2000; Flynn, 2007). Within the wider pressure to reduce the size and role of the state, 'contracting out' (Rhodes, 1994, p.140) has become prominent within the British public sector. An objective of 'outsourcing' local authority services was to produce financial efficiencies through lower tenders for services. However, separation of government from provision of public services has been perceived as a contributor to a 'hollowing out' of the state argued by Rhodes. Under Labour, public-private sector partnerships were preferred to the compulsory tendering of local services. In the case of local tourism development, Bramwell and Rawding (1994) had noted the 'outsourcing' of the tourism marketing function from other elements of the tourism development process (such as tourism planning, tourism information provision, tourism research) in a number of the post-industrial cities. Here, the tourism marketing function was undertaken by public-private sector collaborative partnership arrangements. The BRA (2005) have called this the 'prising away' of tourism marketing from local authorities. Nevertheless, whilst Labour abolished compulsory competitive tendering, the findings of this study suggest that under Labour's regionalisation policy, in the specific context of tourism, a managerial culture of 'externalising' tourism marketing from local authorities has continued. Bramwell and Rawding's (1994) case study involved only a small sample (5) of English cities. Data from this study of over 30 English cities, has found that 40% of local authorities in the cities are promoting tourism from outside their local authority structure. Furthermore, comments from chief executives and tourism managers suggest that this figure will significantly rise in the near future. It has been argued that the prominence of collaborative partnership approaches confirms a shift in the public sector environment from direct service provision to an 'enabling function' (Bramwell and Lane, 2000, p.2; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). Later in this chapter 'enabling' will be further discussed in the current context of local tourism marketing.

A 'managerial culture' was a key theme raised during the interviews. A manager in an urban city made a remark concerning Nicholas Ridley and Ridley's views for 'outsourcing' local authority services. With respect to the management of their local authority, this manager argued '*managerialism is the dominant ethos here*'. When asked how managers perceived the expression 'managerialism', one respondent made an insightful comment '*I think maybe 15 years ago I may have struggled to understand what that expression meant*'. Another manager in a rural area argued that managerialism had increased under Labour '*[We were] more so probably managerial under Labour than the Conservatives. I think a hangover from that period is we've probably got more strategy and less focus on the day job*'.

The literature has argued that a significant driving force of the managerial paradigm is cost-efficiency. Earlier in this work Etzioni (1984) argued that in the future, resources in the public sector would continue to be in much demand and scarce. Financial pressure within the public sector environment is an international trend. Flynn (2000) reported financial cuts as part of reform measures in a number of countries in Europe and Asia. Financial pressures were the strongest theme arising out of the triangulation of the data. 84% of chief executives perceived more pressure on tourism budgets than even two years ago, proportionately higher in the rural areas. Response to the questionnaire survey found almost 90% of tourism managers reporting budgetary allocations of either less than or equal to last year, the majority being less than. However, interestingly, reduction in tourism budgets was reported by more managers in the urban areas. During the interviews, every manager mentioned finance as the main, or one of the main pressures on their department. For almost all of the interviewees, pressure on 'budgets' or some form of financial pressure was the first pressure that they identified. All but two respondents referred to cuts their tourism budgets had experienced in some way. In some cases, cuts had happened within the last several years, in some cases cuts had happened very recently, and for most respondents they were expecting further cuts in the near future. For two of the respondents, the interview day fell either on a day, or was on the eve of a day, when more news regarding local authority budgets in their areas was to be announced. In a time of budget cuts, what was found was a high proportion of tourism departments having to source new income. In almost every case, this was to ensure that budgets

balanced. However respondents expressed frustration that a large proportion of their time is spent seeking new sources of funding rather than in their tourism development role. In the light of current financial pressures, engaging with local authority chief executives was particularly designed to secure an 'unbiased' view of how tourism is currently perceived within local authorities, and the role local authorities see themselves as playing in the future delivery of local tourism policy. Despite pressures on tourism budgets, the overwhelming majority of chief executives endorse local authorities financially supporting local tourism. Whilst clearly in difficult financial times, it was also found that just over half of chief executives argued that tourism budgets should not be limited or fixed. Just under a third did, however it was clear from additional comments volunteered by chief executives' of their 'support' for tourism. Respondents gave a clear impression of an 'equity' that they perceived between tourism and other local authority services. The overall perception from chief executive comments was that local authority decisions should not be based on whether a department has statutory or non-statutory status, but on overall priorities or policies of the authority. The chief executive stage of the research was also designed to gauge an understanding of local policy intention for future support for local tourism. However, comments from several chief executives made specific reference to current financial pressures, with one chief executive reporting the recent decision that their local authority could no longer financially support tourism. This suggests this local authority does not envisage the financial picture getting better in the near future and it being a case of 'riding out the storm' until things improve. Rather, this authority has taken the decision to cease financially supporting tourism altogether. Whilst this does not suggest a 'tidal force' of disengagement with tourism, it does serve to highlight a situation of some local authorities ceasing financial support.

Almost 90% of respondents to the questionnaire reported budgetary allocations of either less than or equal to last year, the majority less than. These figures are indicative of the current financial environment within local authorities, and budget reductions were found to be more evident in the urban areas. During the interviews managers were asked where they felt the main pressure on their departments was coming from. In almost all cases financial pressure was the initial pressure identified. For some cities, reductions in tourism budgets have been up to 40%. In some of the

interviews managers, where content to discuss specific figures with the interviewer on the understanding that such figures were not quoted or attributed. Clearly those wishes have been respected. However the interviews have revealed the significant amounts (in some cases many hundreds of thousands of pounds) in reductions that some tourism departments have faced or are facing. One manager reported that their department will be losing almost £1 million of funding over a three-year period. Reductions in tourism budgets generally appeared to be more intense in the urban areas. Several managers in the urban areas described scenarios where the local authority was prioritising expenditure on certain service areas, such as education. This is where, for a number of managers, as a non-statutory function of local authority provision may be disadvantaged. The need for greater financial efficiency (or the need to make finances go further) was raised by a number of respondents during the interviews.

The literature has suggests that more defined business planning, incorporating the use of objectives, targets and strategic planning has become a feature of management of the public services in England (Robinson, 2004; Joyce, 2008). However, Law (1993) has argued that strategic planning for tourism in the cities demonstrated more of an 'ad-hoc' nature, and was only limited to a handful of places. This study has found that more defined business planning in the form of strategic development of tourism is now common. Almost 60% of the cities are involved with strategically developing local tourism, with others reporting that they are currently in the process of finalising a forthcoming tourism strategy. The most common aspects of tourism strategies were the inclusion of specific objectives or specific targets. These were closely followed by local tourism strategies having a 'mission statement', recent trends analysis (or similar commentary) and the identification of performance indicators. Whilst during the RDA period, there has been pressure for tourism to be promoted at the sub-regional level, the data in this study has identified the majority of tourism strategies being published at the local level. Whilst it was found the most common timeframe for reviewing strategic objectives was every year, during the interviews a number of respondents argued that they have to report (statistically) against targets in local authority performance management systems at least yearly but updated, in a number of cases, monthly.

Additional to more defined business planning, this study has found strong evidence of evaluation, accountability and performance management impacting local tourism management. Henkel (1991, p.9) has argued that public sector management in Britain has been immersed in an 'evaluative' culture (Henkel, 1991, p.9). This study has found local tourism management also immersed in an strongly 'evaluative' culture. 15 different types of evaluative indices used to evaluate tourism in the cities. There was a strong feeling that 'evaluation', and the processes of evaluation, grew significantly under Labour. One manager argued that *'Under the Labour administration the amount of red tape was ridiculous so we all collectively spent an enormous amount time and energy evaluating the impact of what we were doing rather than actually doing it'*. Additionally, more emphasis on accountability was also a strong theme, one manager summing up changes during the Labour administration *'How to measure and be accountable has changed a lot over the last 10 years...you have to be able to measure everything now much more than 10 years ago'*. The data also suggests that performance management has become a significant element of local tourism management. This study found that the cities use 10 different types of performance indicator. The most common are linked to the 'volume and value' of tourism, whilst others included TIC (visits or enquiries), coach visits, bed occupancy figures, and web-related figures. Some managers reported that performance indicators for tourism formed part of a 'bank' of local authority performance indicators which all managers within the authority had to report on. During the interviews, managers comments seemed to suggest that tourism had been accepted into the mainstream of local authority activity in their areas. One example is a rural area where the manager reported that targets are set and reported on to the local authority as an integral part of all their local authority's performance system *'they [performance figures] are taken to chief executive's corporate management team within the council and they are reviewed and discussed as part of the entire council management team'*. This same manager in a rural area commented on the recent introduction of a performance management system in their authority *'for at least the last 5 years there's a performance management system that we are part of'*. Whilst the questionnaire was designed to generate a picture of the management of local tourism using the framework highlighted in chapter

3, the interviews also provided other evidence of managerialism pressure on tourism managers. Managers were clearly under pressure to demonstrate greater efficiency or improved value for money. Several comments from managers included

*'we are doing the same number of tasks but there is pressure to produce more with less staff'*

*'we are doing things with half the size of the team'*

*'although we've been reduced in numbers quite substantially, I think we do a lot more for our money now'*

It was clear from the interviews that reductions in both staffing and levels of service are being experienced across the breadth of tourism departments in the cities. Due to financial cuts, one manager explained that their strategy was to try to maintain what they describe as core services, such as tourism information services, but with reduce staffing levels and reduced opening hours. This manager described this as a 'hollowing out'. They argued that a 'hollowing out' best described the situation because, in their words, *'basically the stuff you can see is still there - websites campaigns and tourist information centres - however what was inside it, trying to make some sense of it, has mostly gone and not likely to come back I think'*. Almost every manager during interview specifically referred to significant losses of staff, managers commenting that voluntary redundancy opportunities offered by their local authorities had been taken up by some staff within their departments. For those managers this has presented significant problems as those posts were deleted. One manager reported that all new positions are 'casual' positions.

How has managerialism impacted the role of the tourism manager on a more personal level? During the pilot study, the respondent argued that tourism manager posts were being enhanced to include other responsibility. Evidence for this was found in this study. Respondents reported various rationalisation processes within their local authorities. These included tourism departments being enhanced to include other services, or tourism manager's posts being enhanced to include other responsibility.

When a manager was asked if they saw themselves as now doing the job of two managers, the respondent commented '*I would say three*'. Another manager commented that '*we lost two managers post and one admin post so I have to pick up all of those bits*'. A manager in a rural area reported that in the last two years, they had inherited additional responsibility for a local theatre and the Town Hall. Clearly such enhanced roles include additional responsibility or additional workload or both. A manager specifically referred to how their workload had increased, but had made the decision that the amount of weekend working required for their job was unsustainable and had made a conscious decision to reduce the amount of weekend working undertaken. During the interviews and number of managers make comments concerning remuneration (or lack of) compared to their contractual status, but those comments will remain confidential and not reported. However a comment made by one manager summarises comments made by others '*they are expecting me to take a lot more work for a lot less money relatively speaking*'.

In summary, the primary data was collected during a period after Labour had left government, and during when a re-alignment of the public sector support for tourism (during the earlier stages of the coalition government) was occurring. Labour's 'Third way' had claimed an 'agnostic' stance towards the 'superiority of the private sector', arguing that 'traditional values' should be the guide to decision-making not ideology (Flynn, 2007). However, Flynn (2007) argues that Labour policies often pushed managers in the public sector towards working with the private sector or outsourcing services anyway. However, Labour presented this as a pragmatic approach to 'modernisation' and not something ideologically driven. Labour rhetoric had been careful to distinguish itself from the 'privatisation/marketisation' associated with the Conservatives (Flynn, 2007). It has been seen that during the interviews, respondents may have specifically made reference to the word 'managerialism' or cited ways in which their working practices or working environment had changed which were representative of the managerial paradigm identified in the framework. In a single comment a manager, in discussing the local authority environment in which their tourism department operated, highlighted almost all of the significant elements of the managerial framework '*now we are very driven by performance indicators (performance management), 'about proving what you are doing*' (evaluation and

performance management), *'your outcomes and outputs'* (strategic management), *'how can we deliver the service in a different way in order to achieve all of the objectives'* (strategic management, evaluation, performance management), *'but maybe not incurring all of the costs'* (cost-efficiency). Therefore, analysis of the data from the triangulation of questionnaires and interviews, using the framework identified in chapter 3, has presented evidence that the significant driving forces that characterised the managerial state during the Conservative administration (1979-1997) has also impacted local tourism management during the Labour administration. The following part of the chapter will discuss the notion of 'enabling' in the context of local tourism management

## **8.2 Enabling**

Post-2010, the transition from a Labour to a Conservative/Liberal Democratic government has seen tourism impacted by a rapid move from a period of what VisitEngland (2012) has described as 'high public investment' to 'a more challenging financial environment'.

Government policy for 'less government' and more private sector participation in local tourism development in the tourism arena has been made clear (Penrose, 2011). This politically is consistent with the 'enabling' philosophy promoted during the 1979-1997 Conservative government of 'less' government and more private sector involvement (Thomas, 2009). The new emerging tourism bodies in the localities are to be more 'highly focused, industry-led partnerships between tourism firms and government' (p.8). Therefore, emphasis on partnership working in the new arrangements between the LEPs and the new Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) has been heavily stressed (Visit Britain, 2010a; Penrose, 2011). A criticism of DMOs during the Labour period had been their over-emphasis on tourism marketing to the detriment of the wider 'tourism management' responsibility (Penrose, 2011). However Coalition tourism policy has advocated that DMOs should be responsible for local management of tourism and not just marketing (Penrose, 2011). This issue raised strong views within the interviews. Respondents argued that sub-regionalisation

had led to the separation of marketing from other tourism development functions, and this had had negative effect in the local areas because local authorities found it difficult to support non-marketing functions due to budgets cuts. However, respondents questioned the ability of the emerging partnerships to financially support other functions other than marketing whilst tourism budgets within local authorities continued to be cut.

The government's vision for a 're-balancing' the economy towards the private sector, has set a course for the tourism sector taking more 'responsibility for its own future' (Penrose, 2011, p.19), and which includes 'weaning the [tourism] industry off public subsidy' (Penrose, 2011, p.20). Penrose (2011) has argued that the tourism industry was particularly dependent on public funds, but this is 'unaffordable and unacceptable' and the 'taxpayer should not be expected to pay for marketing for a large and successful sector of the economy' (p.19). This is a significant turn from that of the previous government. During the Labour government, the tourism sector benefitted from significant investment via Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). Whilst the RDAs have been abolished by the Coalition government, some finance via the new Regional Growth Fund initiative would appear to offer one means by which tourism partnerships may access support funding. However, historically local authorities have predominately been the major actors and financial contributors to tourism partnerships (Palmer, 2009). Nevertheless, the government has made it clear that in the new DMO arrangements, the private sector would be expected to contribute a greater proportion of DMO costs. The government wishes to see DMOs 'less reliant on public funds' (Penrose 2011, p.24), although Penrose (2011, p.25) has highlighted that local authorities will need to 'have enough cash to match fund the private sector'. To this end, the government states that in order to assist local authorities local authority funding formulae will change to reflect the numbers of visitors to each area. The government argues that this will help areas where the visitor economy 'is strong' (p.25), but makes no reference to the situation in destinations which may not be 'strong'. Whilst the government is encouraging local authorities to 'match fund' private sector moneys, tourism policy also clearly states ambition for the tourism sector to be 'weaned off' public sector financial support and to 'organise and fund its own collective marketing in the future' (p.19).

The data also revealed a number of unexpected findings concerning local authority financial support for tourism. One is the variation in tourism budget allocations across both the urban and rural categories. In one case, a rural city is supporting local tourism more in financial terms than 11 of their urban counterparts. Additionally, 3 rural cities are allocating more to tourism than 8 of their urban counterparts, and 1 rural city is allocating more to tourism than 6 of their urban counterparts. It was found that size of the city is not a determining factor of allocation of tourism funding, with significant variations in financial allocations across the range of cities, and in some cases amongst cities of very similar size. A rural city with a tourism budget in excess of £500,000 and a population significantly below the 180,000 cut off point for urban classification allocates more to tourism than 73% of the urban areas. In another case of two cities of similar population size, one city allocates more than ten times the financial allocation than the other. Nevertheless, tourism remains a non-statutory responsibility of local authorities and Flynn (2007) has highlighted a particular problem for non-statutory services during difficult financial times 'during times of spending cuts those services that are not by described...by statute will be cut first' (p.59). Despite support for tourism by local authority chief executives in this study financial pressures, and pressures on local authority budgets were clearly evident. One chief executive, whilst arguing that local authorities should support tourism and reporting that their authority currently does financially support tourism, reported that their authority had made the recent decision to 'phase out' financial support for tourism. The reason given was that in such difficult financial circumstances, politically the local authority could not financially support tourism, whilst it did not financially support other business sectors. A respondent in a rural area also provided a particularly insightful comment, which again serves to highlight difficulties in terms of 'perception' of local authorities financing tourism '*Our citizen surveys always show locals wanting us to spend less on tourism*'. These examples serve to highlight difficult political scenarios those local authorities supporting tourism currently face in justifying support for tourism to the local electorate. During the tourism manager stage of the study, at least one manager reported that their authority had taken the decision to withdraw from funding tourism and others reported that anecdotally they had heard of similar scenarios in destinations across the country. A respondents reported that some local authorities were giving their tourism departments three years to secure additional

funding before local authority withdraws support. Data in this study does not suggest that this constitutes a 'tidal force' of local authority disengagement with tourism, however some respondents did report very low or no financial support for local tourism. A manager in an urban city reported that it allocates no financial resources to support tourism. Two lowest budgets (above zero) were found in the rural cities; £10,000, £30,000. However, a tourism budget of £40,000 was reported in an urban area. Therefore, the four lowest allocated budgets were to be found in two urban and two rural areas if the zero allocation is included. These allocations would appear to be very small amounts to allocate for tourism marketing. In the rural areas it may be argued that it is proportionate to the size of the area. However, £40,000 would appear to be a very small amount to allocate for promoting tourism in an urban area. Some respondents also reported that their authorities have plans to reduce their financial support for tourism to zero. Therefore, data from this research suggests that, at best, local authority tourism budgets are being reduced, and at worst some tourism departments are being given a 'three year window' before budgets are reduced to zero.

In the face of such financial pictures, Coalition policy towards a 're-balancing' of the economy towards more private sector involvement, brings with it potential consequences for the new tourism partnership arrangements in the local areas. Policy for 'weaning off' (Penrose, 2011, p. 20) the tourism industry from public subsidy could spell danger for the emerging collaborative partnerships, if the local tourism industry are not able to make up shortfalls in reductions in public sector funding. The argument made by respondents has been that if local authorities are encouraged to disengage from tourism, the less likely they are to be to financially support tourism. There has been an argument made strongly by managers that DMOs are not sustainable without public sector funding. However, the literature highlights that the private sector may not always have a strong record of financially contributing to tourism partnerships. Long's (2000) research highlighted problems in engaging private sector organisations in an urban tourism partnership in London. An inability to secure large-scale national tourism organisations in the partnership membership, was seen as creating a particular weakness in the sustainability of the collaboration. In the North of England, Caffyn's (2000) research

found that engaging support from private sector tourism businesses, particularly the smaller enterprises, was problematic throughout the whole of the lifespan of a rural tourism partnership. The number of partners in a collaboration and the financial contributions made by partners, impacts levels of funds available for the partnership to operate, and allocate to initiatives (Caffyn, 2000). Thus increases or decreases in contributions can lead to 'knock-on' effects on the partnership's resources. The government recognise that tourism is different to other industries in that the tourism industry has a very high proportion of SMEs (Penrose, 2011). However, being small businesses may also impact the capability of the local industry to fund the emerging partnerships. This study supports views in the literature which caution against overly optimistic expectations of private sector engagement in tourism partnerships (Caffyn, 2000; Long, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Respondents in this study were not overly optimistic for ambitions for increased involvement of private sector tourism businesses in their areas being realised. Reasons varied. In some cases managers argued that existing partnerships led by the local authorities already contained the majority of local tourism businesses, and therefore securing higher levels of membership would be very difficult. Other respondents argued it would be difficult to further engage the private sector because their local tourism industry, as well as comprising mostly small enterprises, was also relatively small in overall numbers. Thus this did not present significant scope for increased involvement.

Additionally, the data found public sector representatives sceptical with regard to the financial ability of the private sector in their areas to 'make up' any 'shortfall' associated with reduction in public sector funding. A manager of long-standing experience in public sector tourism management, argued that the private sector would agree in principle to a policy of less involvement of the public sector, but they argued that it would be very unlikely that funding provided by the public sector would then be replaced by the private sector. As this manager commented *'The private sector will say 'that's great, that's fantastic we want to control this because we think in the public sector is not the right place to be', but they will never make up the shortfall that is currently there in terms of public sector funding'*. A chief executive in an urban area supported such views arguing *'the private sector have traditionally failed to provide the level [of funds] needed'*. It

was argued that in the larger urban places, the private sector may include members of large hotel chains or airports who may provide larger funds. However, respondents again referred to the situation that in most tourism destinations the majority of tourism organisations are SMEs and argued that small businesses do not have significant resources to contribute to local marketing partnerships. A manager argued that a small local hotel within their local partnership currently contributing £6-700 a year to the local partnership may be able to increase this £800 but, in the words of this respondent *'that's not going to change the world'*. Therefore, managers were of the opinion that funding pressures on local authorities and difficulty local businesses have in financially contributing to local partnerships will place significant pressures on the sustainability of the new tourism partnerships. Several respondents argued that DMOs are, in fact, not sustainable without public sector financial support. Respondents in this study, all of whom are currently involved in some form of local partnership arrangements, had strong reservations concerning the ability of the private sector to play a more significant part in funding tourism partnerships. Therefore, this research questions the extent that a 'rebalancing' of the funding of tourism partnerships can occur in terms of funding local tourism. With current reductions in local authority budgets, it is by no means apparent at this point when the tourism sector may be able to deliver the government's aspirations and in the future fund its own collective marketing.

As well as funding, governance is also a critical issue for the emerging tourism partnerships. An evolving body of theory of collaboration in tourism argues that partnership working and co-operation between partners may bring a number of benefits including 'political independence' (Bramwell and Lane, 2000), 'dynamism', or a sense of urgency, in progressing projects (Law, 2002), enhanced opportunity for problem-solving brought about through a number of organisations resolving problems together (Vernon et al, 2005), and efficiencies through 'pooling' of partner resources (Cochrane, 2009). However, policy seeking a reduction in public sector involvement in the emerging tourism bodies raises questions concerning the governance of tourism partnerships. Partnerships can experience difficulties, including the issue of balance of power amongst stakeholders (Hall, 2000; Benz and Furst, 2002). Benz and Furst (2002) have argued that private sector stakeholders in collaborative partnerships tend

to veer towards commercial preferences, whereas public sector stakeholders are predisposed towards 'cooperative orientations' and the 'public interest' (Elliot, 1997). A number of commentators have argued that whilst private sector involvement in partnerships is critical, such partnerships should always be public sector led. Law (2002, p.37) has asked 'what contribution can a businessman knowledgeable about one sector of the economy make to the running of a complex city or economy?'. Government policy has sought the emerging tourism bodies to be 'industry-led' (Penrose, 2011, p.21). However, the literature has argued that if a partnership is simply a foil for a reduction of local authority influence and power, there will almost certainly be implications for the governance of such arrangements (Hutchinson and Foley 1994). Whilst a local authority involvement in such partnerships may provide a 'democratic legitimacy', it may also promote the value of the partnerships outputs to the wider area. Therefore, as Lawless and Ramsden (1990) have argued, a change in balance of power between public and private sector collaborators in partnerships can impact the motivations of the partnership. Hutchinson and Foley (1994) cite an example of a partnership in an English city, which moved from governance emphasising a 'public sector-driven ethos' to one where key leadership strategies were being dominated by the motivations of the private sector. Therefore, Thomas and Morpeth (2009) argue that 'systemic imbalances' of power between stakeholders can impact the leadership of such arrangements. It is for this reason that Cochrane (2009) has argued that the role of the public sector in tourism partnerships is critical in the leadership context.

But by participating in collaborative partnerships, this may involve the public sector having to 'let go' of some or all of its leadership responsibility (Heeley, 2001). An issue for collaborative partnerships is that larger groups or stronger individuals may wield disproportionate influence in decision-making or resource allocation (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Respondents argued that sub-regionalism had reduced the power of local authorities in the local tourism picture. The BRA (2005) have referred to this as 'emasculating' local authorities. Whilst the argument had been that sub-regionalism could offer local authorities opportunity to save money and increase coverage by buying into sub-regional promotional campaigns, managers argued that the focus of DMOs on sub-regional brands had not favoured the cities in general, and

had not led to the required promotion of the city area. One manager reported that development of the sub-regional 'brand' had meant that the city either had to either 'sit' under this new 'brand' or choose to market the city itself. Therefore generally managers felt that the cities were under-represented despite arguing that their cities had, in their views, existing 'strong' brands. Respondents did not see why the 'sub-regional' and 'city' brands could not exist together, however this had not transpired as the case. However the reasons given were usually the power of the DMO to set the local agenda. Therefore, against a current backdrop of pressure to extend private sector involvement in tourism (Penrose, 2011) respondents expressed concern where 'enabling' local tourism meant extending the role of the private sector in the emerging tourism bodies. Comments centred on two main themes; leadership and the public interest. The literature has argued that collaborative partnerships need public sector leadership since a strategic view 'can only be the remit of the public sector' (Cochrane, 2009, p.73). This view was supported by respondents who argued that the majority of tourism businesses in their areas wished for strong public sector leadership of local tourism. The private sector in their areas was predominately small businesses, and who looked to the public sector to coordinate and lead the local tourism businesses as a 'coherent' group. A manager equated the public sector as a 'mechanism' capable of amalgamating the local tourism industry. Elsewhere it was argued that a local authority leading a local partnership gave the partnership a 'legitimacy' that the private sector would wish to 'buy into'.

Strong concerns were expressed in relation to the motivations of the private sector and the effect of policy of creating industry-led partnerships in the localities. Such concerns were predominately in relation to balancing the interests of both partnership members and the 'public interest'. Involvement of the public sector in collaborative arrangements seeks to ensure that benefits of partnerships serve both public and private sector interests (Elliot, 1997; Bramwell and Lane, 2000). A significant part of protecting the public interest is maintaining a balance between conflicting demands of stakeholders in the partnership (Elliot, 1997). There was strong feeling amongst public sector representatives of the responsibility to ensure that the needs of smaller organisations were not 'lost' in conflicting stakeholder demands bound within the memberships of the larger local partnerships. As one manager argued '*the local*

*authority needs to be there to look after the 'little people'*. A sense of 'community' was portrayed with respondents clearly motivated that economic benefits of tourism benefit the whole community. However, respondents were concerned that if policy for tourism partnerships to be 'private sector-led' resulted in a change in balance in the governance of local tourism partnerships, then the motivations of local partnerships may change. Strong views were expressed that in such cases the 'holistic' view or 'community' ethos promoted by the public sector may be negatively affected. The word 'holistic' was used by several managers in the context of the public sector having a 'holistic' or community ethos. Conversely, respondents perceived that the private sector may not act in a 'holistic' manner in that the consideration of the wider community may not be a priority, a manager arguing that *'the private sector don't have a holistic view...they are very 'singular'*. Therefore, there was a strong feeling that if the public sector were to become less involved in tourism partnerships, the private sector may not as strongly support the community or 'public interest' principles. A manager's comment was quite brief *'They [the private sector] would look after themselves'*. This manager compared the motivations of the public and private sectors *'the private sector, by its very nature, will do what is best for its particular kind of organisation...we [the local authority] have got an overview of the whole picture...we look at the bigger picture...our day-to-day work isn't dependent on whether we make money at the end of it...we do what we do for the good of the whole area'*. Chief executives expressed similar views. The majority of chief executives arguing that local tourism promotion should not be left solely to the private sector, with 80% of chief executives in the urban areas arguing that local tourism promotion should be left solely to the private sector. Comments from chief executives supported tourism manager views with regard to the public sector responsibility towards the needs of the whole area. A chief executive in a urban area referred to a local authority's *'duty to promote well-being of residents'* and another arguing that local authority's responsibility is to *'ensure that the needs of the whole destination...are represented and considered in the management of tourism'*.

Doubts have been raised in this study concerning the ability of local tourism businesses in the localities to contribute to shortfalls in tourism marketing funds, created by any reduction in public sector funding. Therefore, if local authority

contributions were to reduce and private sector contributions are unable to be increased, clearly potentially a gap may appear in partnership funding which is likely to have significant implications both for the creation and sustainability of the emerging tourism partnerships. Reduction in local authority financial contribution to local partnerships may also impact the level of influence local authorities may have in emerging local partnerships. It has been argued earlier that by participating in collaborative partnerships, local authorities may have to 'let go' of some or all of their leadership responsibility (Heeley, 2001). However, an issue for collaborative partnerships is that larger groups or stronger individuals may wield disproportionate influence in decision-making or resource allocation (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Respondents had argued that sub-regionalism reduced the power of local authorities in the local tourism picture. With tourism policy for the private sector having the 'majority power' (Penrose, 2011, p.24) in the emerging tourism partnerships, this raises a question concerning the motivation for local partnerships to maintain the public interest. It was of major concern to respondents in this study, that if the private sector having the 'majority power' in emerging tourism partnerships negatively impacted the public interest. This research suggests that if the emerging 'industry-led' local partnerships were to witness the public sector becoming less influential in the partnership arrangements, a 'pluralistic' local tourism policy environment may be difficult to maintain. This may result in the motivation of local partnerships moving from having 'pluralistic' objectives towards more 'exclusive' needs of the local industry (Hutchinson and Foley, 1994).

## **CHAPTER 9: CONCLUDING REMARKS AND CONTRIBUTION**

### **9.0 Concluding remarks**

Whilst the Coalition Government has highlighted the importance of tourism to the English economy (Cameron, 2010; Penrose, 2011) government policy has made it clear that the emerging local tourism partnerships are to be 'industry-led'. A focus on giving the 'majority power' (Penrose, 2011, p.24) to the private sector is reminiscent of the 'enabling' philosophy promoted by the Conservatives during the Margaret Thatcher regime.

The two of the more striking aspects of government policy for the emerging tourism bodies relate to funding, and the requirement for them to be 'industry-led'. Policy for public sector funding for tourism has taken a significant turn from that of the previous government. During the Labour government, the tourism sector benefitted from significant financial investment via Regional Development Agencies (RDAs). Whilst the RDAs have been abolished, some finance via the new Regional Growth Fund initiative would appear to offer one means by which tourism partnerships may access support funding. Nevertheless, Visit England have recognised what they have described as tourism moving from 'high public investment' to 'a more challenging financial environment'. However, tourism remains a non-statutory responsibility of local authorities. The recession and austerity measures are placing significant financial pressure on both local authorities and local tourism businesses. This research suggests that, at best, local authority tourism budgets are being reduced

and, at worst, some tourism departments are being given a 'three year window' before tourism budgets are reduced to zero. Views amongst respondents was that the funding picture for tourism within local authorities is likely to 'get worse', and that more reductions to tourism budgets are likely. But whilst the government is pressing for a reduction in public sector financial support for tourism, and at the same time placing more emphasis on private sector contribution, the literature also highlights that the private sector may not always have a strong record of financially contributing to tourism partnerships. Concerns were clearly expressed with regard to the ability of local tourism businesses to 'increasingly fund' (Penrose, 2011, p.21) the new arrangements. Findings in this study support the view that local tourism businesses can find it difficult to financially contribute to tourism partnerships. Whilst the government has recognised that the tourism industry is predominately an industry mostly of small businesses (Penrose, 2011), this study strongly suggests that those small tourism businesses, for a number of reasons, find it difficult to raise funds towards contributing to tourism partnerships. So, whilst the government is arguing that tourism is a successful industry (Penrose, 2011) it is shifting the emphasis on funding to tourism businesses. However, this study questions the ability of local tourism businesses to contribute to any shortfalls in tourism marketing funds created by reduction in public sector funding. If local authority contributions do reduce and private sector contributions are unable to be increased, clearly potentially a gap may appear in partnership funding which is likely to have significant implications for the sustainability of the emerging tourism partnerships. This scenario has been noted before (Caffyn, 2000) where partnerships can spend a significant amount of their time trying to raise funds to sustain the organisation, rather than focus on the partnership's strategic objectives. This clearly is a danger for the emerging partnerships, and it is not apparent at this point how the tourism sector may be able to deliver the government's aspirations and in the future 'fund its own collective marketing' (Penrose, 2011, p.19).

Whilst policy discourse so far has stressed government ambition for tourism to be 'industry-led' with a 're-balancing' the economy towards the private sector' (Cable and Pickles, 2010), this research has found concern relating to the new local arrangements having the 'majority of power...[resting]...with the private and third

sector' (Penrose, 2011, p. 24). The literature has argued that changes in balances of power in collaborative partnerships can affect the motivations of the partnership. This study suggests that policy requiring the majority of power resting with the private sector is likely to have consequences for the governance of the emerging local tourism partnerships. An issue for collaborative partnerships is that larger groups or stronger individuals may wield disproportionate influence in decision-making or resource allocation (Bramwell and Lane, 2000; Cochrane, 2009). Therefore, an issue for the emerging local bodies is securing an appropriate balance in power amongst stakeholders (Hutchinson and Foley, 1994; Cochrane, 2009; Thomas and Morpeth, 2009). Concern amongst public sector representatives was expressed with regard to how the balance of power emerges in the new local partnerships and, more so, if any reduction of public sector 'influence' ensues. This study has suggested that sub-regionalism reduced the power of local authorities in the local tourism picture. The power of the DMOs to set the local agenda, saw local authority influence in DMOs reduced. It has been argued that this movement of power to the sub-regional level negatively impacted the cities who were under-represented in sub-regional promotional activity. Against a backdrop of pressure to extend private sector involvement in tourism (Penrose, 2011) respondents expressed concern at policy where 'enabling' local tourism meant extending the role of the private sector in the emerging tourism bodies. The private sector in their area was predominately small businesses, and who looked to the local authority to 'protect' them. The argument was made strongly that in 'industry-led' partnerships 'vested interests' may come to the fore, and that 'community' or 'public interest' principles promoted by the public sector may be reduced. This research suggests that if the emerging 'industry-led' local partnerships were to witness the public sector becoming less influential in the tourism policy community, a 'pluralistic' local tourism policy environment may be difficult to maintain. Such may result in the motivation of local partnerships emphasising needs of the local industry.

'Enabling' local tourism in the new policy environment will see focus at the local level on the private sector having the 'majority power' (Penrose, 2011, p.24) in the emerging tourism partnerships. However, doubts have been raised in this study from within the public sector, concerning the ability of local tourism businesses tourism

being able to deliver the government's policy of taking more 'responsibility for [their] own future' (Penrose, 2011, p.19) whilst at the same time protecting the public interest. It is concluded that a 're-balancing' the economy towards more private sector involvement, also brings with it potential consequences if local tourism businesses are unable to 'increasingly fund' the new arrangements, and the new tourism bodies are unable to establish a 'pluralistic' tourism policy environment in their areas. With evident reductions in local authority budgets, it is legitimate to question the scope of funding that the emerging DMOs will have at their disposal, and thus their ability to deliver local ambitions for tourism development. Therefore, the new tourism partnerships will require careful structuring and management. However, their financial futures will inevitably hinge on the value that the private sector places on the local tourism arrangement, and their ability to maintain the public interest will depend on striking an appropriate balance of power amongst all stakeholders within the partnership.

## **9.1 Contribution**

This study has made a contribution to understanding the picture of local tourism management in England, and the wider tourism policy environment. The investigation has carefully tried to bridge the two areas of academic rigour and current professional practice.

The argument made at the start of this study is that tourism has become increasingly embraced by English local areas as an important strand of policy for developing and diversifying local economies. The significant change in scale and character of tourism has become a clear reflection of the ambition of local authorities in those areas seeking to attract new visitor markets. However, the tourism policy environment is also an area which suffers from a neglect of empirical research (Hall and Page, 2003; Kerr, 2003; Krutwaysho and Bramwell, 2010). Krutwaysho and Bramwell (2010) have argued that tourism research has tended to focus more on individual organisational contexts. This has led to a situation where research concerning the dynamic (the 'game' (Kingdom, 1991)) between central government and 'actors' in the policy

environment is relatively unexplored. Therefore a weakness in tourism policy research is analysis of the relationship between central government and actors impacted by government policy.

This study has sought to understand the picture evolving in the tourism policy environment since the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition government came to power. Limitations are acknowledged in two areas. First, it is acknowledged that the findings of this study are based on data from only a sub-sector (the cities) and not the wider body of English local authorities. However, this thesis has argued that the cities are a significant and critically important part of the fabric of England and English tourism. Therefore, this study has sought to contribute to knowledge and develop existing thinking in relation to the important area of tourism management through an analysis of the English cities as a 'case'. This work has extended knowledge of tourism, by seeking to understand more fully the English 'city-tourism' phenomena which, as argued in earlier chapters, does not simply extend to the larger or tourist-historic cities. By the inclusion of the smaller cities in England, this research has provided a previously unknown perspective on city-tourism in England. In doing this, this study has found new knowledge concerning the effect of the managerial paradigm on public sector management in tourism. It is argued that the methodology employed and participation of respondents has ensured the validity of the data. This has been achieved by securing the perspectives of senior managers in local authorities, and which has included local authority chief executives. The combination of views from chief executives and tourism managers has provided a unique perspective on the emerging picture concerning local tourism development and makes an important and significant contribution to knowledge of the current picture. However, it is also acknowledged that the sample size, particularly the interviews, was not a 'large' sample size. However, the interviews provided a substantial amount of 'qualitative' data which have significantly assisted in painting a vivid picture of the current scenario in local tourism management. Therefore, a significant contribution this research makes is understanding of the current picture emerging in England, analysed within the theoretical framework established in chapter 3. The public sector tourism landscape has been constantly evolving during the course of this research. With the primary research being conducted during a period where new tourism partnerships are starting

to emerge, this research has provided a unique perspective of the challenges local authorities currently face in the local tourism environment. Dramatic changes in the picture of local tourism management has occurred so recently, that the research strategy undertaken was modified at the last (interview) stage of the research by seeking respondents' views concerning how they envisaged the future. This has been a positive development as it has enriched the data, and given a greater understanding of the current tourism picture. Therefore, the importance of the contribution this research makes is that whilst it has secured a deeper understanding of the effects of the 'managerial state' on local tourism policy, it has also secured a unique perspective concerning the rapid changes impacting public sector management of tourism.

## **9.2 Recommendations**

The study set out to understand the impact of the 'managerial paradigm' on local tourism management. However, the change of government in 2010 has set in motion a series of events which have had an extremely significant effect on the public sector management of tourism in England, effects of which this study has tried to capture.

This research has presented a snapshot of the perceptions of the study respondents at the time of the data collection, and the circumstances prevailing at that time. However, the picture concerning local tourism management is in a state of transition (Visit Britain, 2012), with new local tourism partnerships emerging. The research strategy was modified prior to the interviews, in order to facilitate discussion concerning how respondents saw the future. What was clearly found during the interviews was great uncertainty amongst respondents. During the pilot study, the respondent was concerned with the way that they perceived tourism at the local level had been 'marginalised' by regionalisation. The respondent warned the researcher that when undertaking the interviews to 'be prepared' as the local tourism environment was nothing 'like when you and I were managing local tourism'. During the interviews managers expressed great uncertainty concerning the future and how public sector management, particularly at the local level, will evolve over the next 2-3 years. Respondents articulated an air of 'frustration' with the current picture. One respondent

commenting 'God knows' and another 'the forward horizon is exceptionally bleak', gives some indication of the tone of the interviews. Therefore, the main findings of the research suggest difficult times ahead for local authority engagement with tourism. It is clear that substantial change is underway, and a number of managers asked to remain in contact in order that the findings from this study may be shared with them. Looking forward, this thesis may provide a springboard for more research into this area. With the development of LEPs and the emerging local tourism partnerships, research concerning the structure, funding and governance of the emerging local tourism partnerships could map their development and provide important insights into the new local arrangements. Therefore, a recommendation is that more and substantial 'in-depth' research with a wider sample group is undertaken, possible in conjunction with Visit Britain or professional organisations such as TMI, in order to understand in more detail the emerging local tourism partnerships.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1:	Anonymised e-mail from chief executive
Appendix 2:	Questionnaire sent to tourism managers
Appendix 3:	Questions for tourism managers (interview themes)
Appendix 4:	Participant Information Sheet
Appendix 5:	Example of coded Interview transcript (pilot study)
Appendix 6:	Interview Coding scheme
Appendix 7:	List of Local Tourism Manager Interviews

## Appendix 1 Anonymised e-mail from chief executive

**From:**

**Sent:** 24 August 2012 16:50

**To:** Burns, Steve

**Subject:** RE: Tourism in your city region

Steve – you're welcome – I'm jesting of course – no more than 4 minutes and every best wishes with your PhD.

**From:** Burns, Steve [<mailto:S.D.Burns@ljmu.ac.uk>]

**Sent:** 24 August 2012 16:48

**To:**

**Subject:** RE: Tourism in your city region

Hi xxxxx

Thank you very much indeed for responding.

The PhD is about local authorities and their current support for tourism in this very difficult climate. As with any PhD it will be published as a PhD document, but I am expecting to also write some individual papers around some of the themes in the study e.g tourist taxes which whilst Labour had no appetite to explore (after the Lyons report was published) Lyons also found during consultation some interest in the local authorities for pursuing such.

So will gladly forward any papers to you - sorry if it was the longest 2 minutes and thanks for sticking with it !!!

Have a lovely bank holiday weekend and with very best wishes. Steve

**From:**

**Sent:** 24 August 2012 16:38

**To:** Burns, Steve

**Subject:** RE: Tourism in your city region

Steve – the Council recently took the view that it could no longer support this sector (to the tune of nearly £500k pa) when it doesn't support any other key sector in this way. The Council took the decision that it would phase it's funding out whilst at the same time establishing a company (DMO) made up of industry reps that could attract and spend funding as it determined was necessary. My answers below should therefore be seen in that context. Regards.

PS longest 2 minutes of my life! Hope this assists and would be interested to see the results of your work.

**From:**

**Sent:** 23 August 2012 10:16

**To:**

**Subject:** FW: Tourism in your city region

**From:** Burns, Steve [[mailto: S.D.Burns@ljmu.ac.uk](mailto:S.D.Burns@ljmu.ac.uk)]

**Sent:** 15 August 2012 16:37

**Subject:** Tourism in your city region

Dear Chief Executive

I am aware that you receive many e-mails each day, but I promise that this will respectfully ask for a maximum of two minutes of your time !

At Liverpool John Moores University we are conducting a national survey of the local authorities across the wider group of English city regions with regard to support for tourism in their areas. With prevailing pressures on local authorities, the study seeks chief executives' views with regard to how chief executives perceive their authorities' role in local tourism. Tourism Officers will be consulted at a later stage.

Below are 8 questions which would only take a very short time to answer. They relate to key issues which are impacting local authorities, and almost all require simple yes /no answers. The simplest and quickest way would be to go into 'reply' and answer yes or no next to the question and then 'send'. You are very welcome to add any comments should you wish. All responses will be treated as anonymous.

Thank you very much indeed for your time. I may be contacted at any time at the e-mail address or phone number below for clarification. If you would like to know the outcomes of the research please let me know.

Yours sincerely

Steve Burns

	Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure	of
<b>Steve Burns</b> MA MTMI MTS Senior Lecturer in Tourism Management Programme Leader MA Tourism and Leisure Management Development		

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t: 00 44 (0)151 231 5257 e: [S.D.Burns@ljamu.ac.uk](mailto:S.D.Burns@ljamu.ac.uk)

w: [www.ljamu.ac.uk](http://www.ljamu.ac.uk)

1. With prevailing pressures on local authorities, in your view should local authorities financially support tourism? Y – but not to the extent it has in the past.

1a If not, should funding for tourism marketing be the sole responsibility of the private sector? ultimately y – but the Council is supporting it's DMO during the transitional phase.

2. Does your local authority financially support tourism development in your city/area ? y

2a if yes, could you please state your authority's tourism budget this year – circa £25k capital for DMO website development and marginal revenue costs for remaining TIC function (say £20k pa) – we are exploring ways of reducing these to zero with income generation and partner involvement. We also have a member of staff in the economic development team with a strategic responsibility for tourism alongside other key sectors in our District such as high value manufacturing; horticulture and marine – say £10k pa and I as a director have a Directorship on the Board of our DMO.

3. Do you think that in collaborative partnerships involved in tourism promotion, private sector financial contributions should

- a) be less than public sector contributions ? n
- b) be more than public sector contributions ? y
- c) match public sector contributions ? n

4. Do you think that local authority tourism budgets should be strictly limited or even fixed each year in order to try to reduce pressures on local authorities y

5. Do you think that there is now a strong case that finance for tourism promotion should be raised from local visitor taxes and not from local authority funds ? Not sure – I do not know enough about this proposal to comment at present. It is certainly an option that should be

explored as I believe it is clear that LA funds will not exist to the scale that they have in the past.

6. Do you think that there is greater pressure now for providing value for money from tourism budgets than say

10 years ago ? n

5 years ago ? y

2 years ago ? y

7. If your local authority supports tourism development, is it through a department within the council n

7a If not, who is the organisation to whom your authority tasks this responsibility ? Visit xxxxxxx (a limited company set up by CDC for this purpose)

7b If yes, is there a main reason why tourism is promoted through a department within the authority ? (rather than, say, a collaborative destination marketing organisation)

7c if yes - who is the head of tourism in your authority ?

8. Do you think there is now a strong case for local authorities to concentrate on core non-discretionary functions, such as education, and leave the promotion of tourism locally to the private sector ? y

Thank you very much for your time, any additional comments are welcomed.

## Appendix 2 Copy of questionnaire sent to tourism managers



### Tourism in English Cities

Thank you very much indeed for helping with this study.  
No individuals will be identified in any part of the study.

<b>1</b>	<b>About your city.</b>		
1a	What is the name of your city ?		
1b	It is often difficult to categorise cities, but in your view which of the following would best describe your city ? <i>(Please tick more than one box if applicable)</i>		
	Metropolitan tourism city <input type="checkbox"/>	Urban tourism city <input type="checkbox"/>	A tourist-historic city <input type="checkbox"/>
	A rural tourism destination <input type="checkbox"/>	A developing tourism destination <input type="checkbox"/>	
	None of these <input type="checkbox"/> <i>(Please see below)</i>	Not really a tourist centre <input type="checkbox"/>	
	If none of these how would you describe your city ? .....		
<b>2</b>	<b>Strategically developing tourism</b>		
2a	Is there currently a tourism strategy or similar plan running for developing or promoting tourism in your city <i>(NB If the following questions to this section are more easily answered by supplying a copy of the strategy please feel free to forward a copy or email address where it is found)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	If yes, does it identify		
	i. a mission statement	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	ii. specific <i>objectives</i> (or key actions or tasks)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	iii. specific <i>targets</i> to be achieved during the lifetime of the strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	iv. a SWOT (or other situational) analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	v. an analysis (or commentary) of recent trends	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	vi. an action plan ?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	vii. performance indicators	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
b	If yes, is it a strategy produced by the local authority or a wider body such as a county or regional organisation ? <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> County/sub-regional level <input type="checkbox"/> Regional		
	If it is a strategy produced by the local authority which does work in tangent with another body, such as a county council or regional organisation, are responsibilities specifically allocated in the strategies to different organisations or partners ? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A		
	If yes to 2a, how long does the strategy run for ? ..... years. From..... to .....		
	Are the key strategic objectives reviewed every year <input type="checkbox"/> every 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> more than every 2 years <input type="checkbox"/>		
	If no to 2a is there a strategy currently being formulated ? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
<b>3</b>	<b>Your city council and financing tourism.</b>		

a	Does your city council(s) allocate financial resources to tourism ?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
b	If yes, how much does your city council(s) allocate in total promoting tourism ? (total tourism budget inc salaries etc)	£
	Is this more than <input type="checkbox"/> less than <input type="checkbox"/> or equal <input type="checkbox"/> to last year ?	
<b>4</b>	<b>Which tourism 'services' does your city local authority directly provide ?</b>	
a	Tourism marketing and/or promotion Does your city local authority promote tourism through a department within the city council ?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
	If yes, what is its title ?	
	If yes, which directorate or department does it report to ?	
	If your city local authority uses an external agency to promote tourism what is the name of that company?	
	If your local authority uses an external agency to promote tourism has that happened in the last <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years <input type="checkbox"/> more than 5 years ago	
	If your local authority uses an external agency to promote tourism is it as a client /contractor agreement ? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
	If yes, does the contractor have identified 'performance' targets to meet ? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
	If yes, how often is 'performance' measured against targets ?	
b	Other tourism services	
	Special events <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	PR <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
	Provision of attractions (e.g museums) <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Market research <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
	Tourist information centres <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	Tourism skills or training <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
	Others (please list if applicable)..... ..... .....	
<b>5</b>	<b>Evaluating tourism in your destination</b>	
a	Could you please identify how much tourism is worth to your city. £.....	
b	How many FTEs does this support ? .....	
c	What evaluative (volume/value) indices do you use ? (please tick)	
	Total number of visits <input type="checkbox"/> <b>P</b>	Total number of domestic visits <input type="checkbox"/>
	Total number day visits <input type="checkbox"/>	Total number of overnight stays <input type="checkbox"/>
	Overall visitor spend <input type="checkbox"/>	Visitor spend per day visitor <input type="checkbox"/>
	Tourism value to local GDP <input type="checkbox"/>	Employment supported/provided <input type="checkbox"/>
	Others <input type="checkbox"/> Please state.....	
d	Do you evaluate the performance of tourism in your destination	
	i. Against performance indicators set locally	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no

	ii. Against performance indicators set nationally	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	iii. Benchmarking with other similar destinations	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	iv. Against performance objectives in our strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
	v. Other ways (please state.....)	<input type="checkbox"/> yes	<input type="checkbox"/> no
e	What Performance indicators do you use ? ( please also see f below)		
f	If you use any of the indices in 5c as 'performance indicators' please could you write 'P' on them (in the box – example given). Any others please (for example 'net spend per head of population' or 'overall tourism 'value' factor or 'Council spend v overall value of tourism') <i>please write</i> .....		
<b>6</b>	<b>The future</b>		
6a	Do you think that in the future tourism promotion will feature less at the local authority level and more at the regional or sub-regional level ? <input type="checkbox"/> yes regional <input type="checkbox"/> yes sub-regional <input type="checkbox"/> no		
	If yes, do you think this will happen mostly in the next 2-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> or 10+ <input type="checkbox"/> years ?		
6b	Do you think that in the future some of the funding for tourism promotion in English destinations may come from visitor taxes ? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
	If yes, do you think this will happen in the next 2-5 <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 <input type="checkbox"/> or 10+ <input type="checkbox"/> years ?		
	In your view is this the most appropriate way to raise new funds ? <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no		
<b>7</b>	<b>Contact. If I could contact you further, could you please indicate through an e-mail address or contact phone number below. Many thanks.</b>		
	Name:	e-mail address or phone number:	
Please return by e-mail if possible by <b>20<sup>th</sup> December 2012</b> please to <a href="mailto:s.d.burns@ljmu.ac.uk">s.d.burns@ljmu.ac.uk</a> With very many thanks: Steve Burns Senior Lecturer in Tourism Management Liverpool John Moores University IM Marsh Campus Barkhill Road Aigburth Liverpool L17 6BD			

## **Appendix 3 Questions for tourism managers (interview themes)**

### **1. Background**

#### **Their department**

- What is their department's title
- Is it part of a bigger department
- Who do they 'report' to

#### **Their role in the local authority**

- Their job title
- Their main role (in the local authority)
- Who do they directly report to
- How many staff are in their department
- How long have they been doing that particular job.
- How long in tourism management

### **2. Local authorities and the local authority role in tourism**

#### **The wider picture (across Britain)**

- How do they perceive the current picture concerning local authorities and tourism
- How is the picture changing nationally
- What do they see as the main role for local authorities in tourism development.
- With the demise of the RDAs where do you they think tourism promotion will reside at the local/sub regional level in the future

#### **The local picture and their city**

- What is the current picture re region/sub regional arrangement
- A number of local authorities have externalised their tourism promotion, particularly in the bigger cities. Has this happened in their city. Why do they think that is so
- Would this be a good move in this happened in their area ?? why
- What are the advantages of collaborative partnerships for tourism marketing
- Are there disadvantages ?
- What do they see as the main role for their local authority in tourism development.

- The local authority used to be perceived as the pivotal figure in local tourism development, adopting a 'leadership' role. Is this still so ? Is it changing or has changed ?
- How are funding pressures affecting funding initiatives ? Collaborations ?

### **3. Managing local tourism**

- What is their role
- Has their role changed recently How
- What are the main pressures on the LA 'tourism' department
- Are there greater pressures for target setting and accountability
- Is there pressure to work 'smarter'
- Are there pressures to be more 'managerial'
- Does the tourism department have to justify its existence more ? How ?
- Is being a discretionary service impacting on local tourism
- In other places tourism budgets seem to be at standstill or less than previous year. Are tourism budgets here less this year than last ?
- Is that a sign of the recession or do you think there is different reason for this ? Why ?
- Are there any additional pressures on tourism budgets than other LA service areas ?
- Do you think that an introduction of tourist taxes would help ?

### **4. Perceptions of tourism locally**

- How do local people in your area perceive tourism
- Do you think local people appreciate the value of tourism to your area

### **5. The Future**

- How do they see the future in terms of the national picture
- How do they see the future in terms of the local picture

## Appendix 4 Participant Information Sheet (interviews)



### **Name of researcher:**

Steve Burns, Deputy Centre Leader, Centre For Tourism, Events and Food Studies, Liverpool John Moores University.

### **Director of Studies:**

Professor David Huddart, Director of Research, Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure, Liverpool John Moores University

### **Purpose of the Study**

You are being asked to participate in a PhD research investigation which aims to assess recent changes in the involvement of local authorities with tourism. More specifically, the study is concerned with understanding the impacts of policy, both nationally and locally, on public sector management of tourism. If you wish for any more information concerning with regard to the research please just ask at any point during the interview.

### **Procedures**

Thank you for agreeing to this short semi-structured interview. You are also being asked for your permission to record the interview. This is solely in order that the views of respondents are captured accurately. No individual participants or their local authorities are identified and all discussions are private and confidential.

Your contribution to the study is both appreciated and valued. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions or ask for clarification at any time.

By signing below you agree to participate in the study and understand the procedures for this part of the study.

Name.....Signature.....Date.....

## Appendix 5 Example of coded interview transcript (pilot study)

(questions are marked in bold italic, interviewee in standard print.

For code: see appendix 6.

Line	Researcher/participant	Code	Notes
1	<b><i>Is the emphasis of local authorities being</i></b>		
2	<b><i>involved in tourism development changing ?</i></b>		
3			
4	When I started over 20 years ago, the Tourism	1	Informed – 20 years
5	industry had a four-tier structure and local	2	experience.
6	authorities had a specific role within that structure	3,4	Reference to the
7			'national' picture.
8	1. National Tourist boards – responsible for	4	Responsibility of
9	generating overseas profile and visitors		different players in the
10			system explained
11	2. Regional Tourist Boards (RTBs) –		
12	responsible for raising the profile of, and		
13	business into, their region.		
14			
15	3. Local Authorities (LAs) – responsible for	3/4/5/	Detailed understanding
16	raising profile of their authority area to	6	of how LAs fitted into
17	generate income into their businesses, and	11	the structure
18	providing visitor information ie running		
19	Tourism Information Centres (TICs) – at that	17	'Bed-rock' suggests
20	time, LAs were the bed-rock which supported		foundation/supporting
21	the TIC network. At that time, many of the		role critical to the
22	people responsible for Tourism were either		system
23	Economic Development Officers or, more		Suggests a situation
24	likely, Leisure Officers who had had Tourism		where tourism is
25	tagged on to their job titles and didn't have		maybe an unknown
26	any real understanding of what benefits	6/11/	and local authorities
27	tourism could actually deliver. Working in	21	were still unsure of
28	Tourism was really seen as a 'bit of a jolly'	7	really how to proceed.
29	and especially a means of promoting the LA's		'Bit of a jolly' suggests
30	museums and leisure facilities.		unprofessional in some
31			way
32	4. Individual businesses – the majority of the		
33	industry! Ranging from small privately-run	18	Demarcation between
34	B&Bs or restaurants to large commercial	3	the big businesses and
35	attractions. While the major attractions were		the smaller ones (of
36	at that point fairly professionally run, many of	3	whom are the majority
37	the small businesses really had little idea		of the industry)
38	about the need to deliver a quality customer		
39	experience – but they expected the LA to	18	Whilst a perception of
40	generate business for them through the local		tourism being a bit of a
41	Visitor Guide and TIC. For many years the	11	jolly prevailed,
42	LAs then worked with their local businesses		acceptance of the LA,
43	to make them more professional, improve the		and the need to be
			'more professional in
			the bigger picture

44	quality of their product and therefore generate		clearly	being
45	more economic benefit into the LA area.		recognised by the LA	
46				
47	This four-tier structure operated with varying	2		
48	degrees of success depending upon your	27	RDAs created by the	
49	destination, until the government introduced	8	incoming Labour	
50	Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and		government in 1997.	
51	decided that future Government funding would be		Lead to eventual	
52	via the RDAs not the RTBs.		closing of most if not all	
53			of the RTBs	
54	The RDAs then looked at setting up Destination			
55	Management Partnerships (DMPs) for the main	9	managerialism	
56	marketing brands in their area rather than working	20/	suggested inasmuch	
57	with the individual LA areas ie the Lake District	12	that 'main brands'	
58	rather than Cumbria, or the Peak District rather		promoted at the	
59	than Derbyshire. LAs were then expected to put		expense of others and	
60	their funding into the local DMPs rather than		bigger territories being	
61	promoting their own areas on the assumption that	10	covered by same	
62	any economic benefit would roll-down. For some		number of	
63	areas this worked, for lesser known areas it often	11	organisations. Why is	
64	didn't.		this not working for the	
65			lesser known areas ?	
66	During this period, there were increasing financial	12	Financial pressure.	
67	pressure on LAs so actually just giving some	10	Funding commitment	
68	funding to the local DMP and not having to have		still apparent, but is	
69	to fund a specific Tourism Officer or run a TIC,	20	releasing funds to a	
70	was often seen as an easy option, LA funding	26	DMP an 'easy option' ?	
71	could then be given to statutory necessities such	13	Reasons ??	
72	as Housing, Education and Social Services.		Is this a pattern	
73			repeated elsewhere ?	
74	At that point, the DMPs were seen as being the	14		
75	'experts' in Tourism and the LAs were just multi-		Why were DMPs the	
76	functional organisations. When I left [authority		experts ?	
77	name omitted] and we were interviewing for my		Is this perception a	
78	replacement, we were disappointed with the		perception nationally ?	
79	number and quality of candidates who applied. I		Why ?	
80	worked in a city that was on the up with increasing	27		
81	visitor numbers, however the perception was that	15/	Increase in local visitor	
82	LA tourism jobs were under threat and the only	14	numbers yet LA	
83	places to work were DMPs or RDAs.		tourism seen as an	
84			uncertain future	
85	Then the government changed and RDAs were	8		
86	abolished, and many of the DMPs also	16	Conservative Lib-Dem	
87	disappeared. Unfortunately, by this time, the LAs		alliance from 2010.	
88	were under even more budgetary pressures and	12	Further budgetary	
89	any funding they had previously had for Tourism	10	pressure. Further	
90	activities had now disappeared. Tourism and	16	reduction in resources.	
91	Economic Development are not statutory functions	13		
92	so LAs do not have to do them. Most LAs are not		Non-statutory status	
93	now in the position of being able to do what they		mentioned.	
94	did 20 years ago so Tourism/TIC functions and	26	'Not have to do them'	
95	support for local businesses are suffering. Many		is a key issue for non-	
95	LAs have closed their TICs, and Tourism Officer's	16	statutory services	

96	jobs have been diversified to include Inward		
96	Investment, City Centre Management, Arts,		Tones of
97	Events, Leisure, Markets, etc.	19	managerialism ?
98			
99	<b>What direct impact has this had locally?</b>		
100			
101	I had always seen the role of my Tourism and TIC	1/3/6	Economic
102	staff as being to generate economic benefits for	11/	development role for
103	businesses in the city by encouraging and helping	12/	tourism compared to
104	visitors to come and spend their money here. As	18	leisure (line 23).
105	the word 'Tourism' doesn't necessarily reflect this,	7	Suggests alternative
106	I preferred to refer to our role as Visitor	18	title used to gain
107	Development.		political acceptance
108			
109	The work of the Unit broke down into 4 areas:	1	
110			
111	1. Marketing and promotion – working in	22	
112	partnership with local businesses and regional or		
113	national agencies.		
114			
115	2. Product development – either physical product	18	Partnership
116	such as hotels, attractions, eateries through	23	development.
117	working with planners and developers, or events,		
118	packages working with business partners. Our		
119	most successful package was the Football		
120	Weekends established in partnership with our		
121	(then!) Premier League Football club, local hotels	28	
122	and a local Travel Agent.		
123			
124	3. Business support and development – this is	18	Tourism managers role
125	about trying to drive up the quality of the product	17/11	as a complex role
126	and services available to customers. So for		suggested requiring a
127	example, we introduced a successful training	18/	number of managerial
128	scheme for front-line staff which we offered to all	28	skills
129	businesses.		
130			
131	4. Running a high-quality TIC to help and	18	High quality suggests
132	encourage visitors but also to fulfil a role for our	23	professionalism
133	local community eg information provision, holiday		
134	brochures and travel bookings.		
135			
136	In my city, we had built up a team of 15	28	'Built up' suggest
137	experienced Tourism Marketing and Tourist		development and
138	Information staff.		acceptance of tourism
139			within the local
140	Over the last few years, this team has been	27/	authority and politically.
141	reduced, several people having taken voluntary	31	Redundancy
142	redundancy. However, the city is fortunate in that		mentioned again
143	there is still a small Tourism team and a city TIC,		reduction in service
144	although the TIC staff have had to diversify into		team numbers. Tones
145	offering other services such as tours of local	19	of managerialism in
146	attractions in order to justify their existence.		'justify their existence'
147			

148	Another area near us has seen their TIC close	16	Redundancy
149	and the whole of the 12-strong Tourism/TIC staff		mentioned again.
150	being made redundant apart from one person who	31	Severe reduction, all of
151	now covers both Tourism and Arts.		a team being made
152			redundant. Tones of
153			managerialism – ‘one
154			person doing two jobs’
155			
156	This situation is effectively putting the	26/	Suggests a
157	responsibility for marketing and information	24	reinstatement of the
158	provision back onto the local Tourism businesses.		scenario from a
159	In one major Tourism destination that I know, the		number of years ago,
160	private sector have had to take over the funding		however this time the
161	and running of the local TIC.		PS is running TICs not
162			the LAs. Private sector
163			taking over suggests
164	<b>Therefore are local tourism departments in</b>		an clear importance
165	<b>danger ?</b>		placed on the service
166			provided
167	Absolutely. Tourism is not a statutory function and	13	
168	LAs are strapped for cash. You cannot undertake	12	Non-statutory status of
169	destination marketing or business support without	1	tourism mentioned
170	at least one member of staff and a budget of some		again. Alludes to a
171	kind. Over recent years, many people responsible		picture where tourism
172	for Tourism or Inward Investment have spent most	7	in becoming financially
173	of their time bidding for external funding		unsupported.
174	(depending upon what their area was eligible for)		Bidding for funding for
175	to undertake specific projects under but even this		projects suggests a
176	funding is now drying up.	12	fragile position where
177			securing such funding
178			can mean the survival
179			of the department
180	When I started, there was a national TIC network	2	Structure mentioned
181	and structure. RTBs helped maintain this at a		again.
182	regional level by organising Regional TIC	5	Complex role of the
183	Managers meetings, plus staff training, mystery	6	tourism manager.
184	visits, annual reviews etc and other things like		Compare line 183 to
185	Blue Badge guide training. The local TIC network		line160. From public
186	was mainly funded and run by LAs. There was		sector back to private
187	also the national accommodation accreditation		sector provision
188	system – AA, RAC, ETB graded – and this was		
189	something that linked TICs to their local		
190	accommodation providers even if it was only for		
191	TIC staff to listen to providers complaints about		
192	their ‘inspections’!		
193			
194	When RTBs were superceded by RDAs, the	14	DMPs set up to only
195	RDAs generally only wanted to deal with the		being involved with
196	promotional side of things, and this attitude		marketing/promotion
197	permeated down to the DMPs which were reliant		RDA power
198	mainly on the RDAs for their funding and therefore		
199	had to follow the same lines. So keeping TICs	18	
200	alive and continuing to support for the national TIC	12	
	network mainly fell to increasingly cash-strapped		

201	LAs. So things started to change. Some TICs	16	Private sector support
202	closed, some had to have private sector support		needed. Echoes of
203	to continue, possibly by being amalgamated into		post-Fordism here?
204	existing attractions.		
205			
206	Regional meetings disappeared and TIC staff felt	26	Refers to my role as
207	increasingly isolated. If you remember the Cities		Chair of GBC during
208	TIC Managers network that you and I helped		the 1990s.
209	establish – this was welcomed by the Managers		
210	as a support network as they had little contact with		
211	other counterparts.		
212			
213	Also, some of the TIC functions changed as		
214	technology developed and people started to use	25	Echoes of post-
215	the internet to get their information and book their		Fordism here?
216	accommodation. So TIC footfall and numbers of		
217	bed-bookings declined. Again, some LAs used	10/	
218	this as an argument to reduce TIC funding and	12/	Echoes of post-
219	staffing. Then the accommodation accreditation	26	Fordism here?
220	schemes got undermined by an age of Trip-		
221	Advisor.		
222			
223	My impression now, and you would need to check		
224	this with people still in the workplace, is that the	2/16	Suggests national
225	TIC network has pretty much gone as have many		network has gone – a
225	individual TICs. What the impact of this change is,		major impact
226	if anything, I don't know.		
227			
228	<b><i>It is looking like the bigger cities have been</i></b>		
229	<b><i>externalising their tourism marketing.</i></b>		
231			
231	Yes, many have combined all facets of marketing	22	Tones of
233	their city under one umbrella organisation –so		managerialism here ?
234	Tourism and Inward Investment marketing, plus		
235	bidding for major events and events organisations		
236	are done together. This is fine for cities which can		
237	fund it as they have a finite and manageable		Suggests the larger
238	product, but it is much more difficult for small		cities.
239	businesses in large rural areas to come up with an		What is the rural
240	organisation like this.		situation re: DMPs ?
241			
242	<b><i>Therefore, what is the current situation</i></b>		
243	<b><i>concerning tourism marketing ?</i></b>		
244			
245	There currently appears to be little left in the way	26	Suggests structure
246	of structure between the individual tourism		Breaking up
247	businesses and the main Enjoy England/Visit		
248	Britain organisations. Some areas seem to have		
249	DMPs but many don't, some LAs or cities still	16	Suggest a disco-
250	have their own organisations but most don't. The	26	ordination or fractured
251	LAs used to provide the essential links between	3/5	picture now.
252	the different levels, but I don't think they now have	12/	
253	the resources to do that – but you need to talk to	26	Ask

254	people still in LA employment to verify this view.		
255			
256	<b>Is it about local perceptions and priorities ? A</b>		
257	<b>recent survey of residents in a local authority</b>		
258	<b>area rated tourism 20<sup>th</sup> out of a list of 21</b>		
259	<b>services local residents rated as most</b>		
260	<b>important. Is this because residents are being</b>		
261	<b>asked to choose between priorities such as</b>		
262	<b>education and social services ?</b>		
263			
264	Yes and this is what's happening. Tourism is not a	13	Non-statutory status
265	statutory function and is often grouped with the	7/	mentioned again.
266	arts and libraries in 'have your say'	21	
267	questionnaires. People obviously vote for the		
268	services that they feel are needed, especially		Politics of discretionary
269	Health and Education...then when they see their	15/	status at the local level
270	TICs and libraries closing down they object but	16	
271	then it's too late.		
272			
273	<b>Have tourism departments had to be more</b>		
274	<b>'managerial?'</b>		
275			
276	Yes – on the assumption that there is still a	15	
277	Tourism Manager – they have had to become very		
278	professional and dedicated in approach. They	10/	'If there is still a
279	don't have much in the way of LA funding so they	12	Tourism Manager
280	have to work with a variety of private sector	22	suggests critical
281	partners in order to be able to undertake		change to be
282	marketing and product development activities.		investigated further
283	Much of a Tourism Managers job is now about	22	
284	maximising partnership working.		
285			
286	<b>What do you think is the future for local</b>		
287	<b>authority tourism departments ?</b>		
288			
289	I can only answer this question from		
290	afar...however, I do still try and keep up with		
291	what's happening. Personally, I think that the	26	
292	Tourism industry is in a worse state than it was 20		worse state than 20
293	years ago because then there was at least an		years ago
294	established structure. Now, as far as I can see, at		
295	an LA level there is little capacity for supporting		
296	Tourism activities. If I was a private individual		
297	operating a small Tourism business in a currently		
298	very difficult climate, I would not be sure where my		
299	support might come from. In theory, I would like to		
300	think that my LA would be able to help me		
	but.....		
	<b>Thank you very much</b>		

## Appendix 6 Interview coding scheme

1. Experience/understanding of destination management/promotion
2. Structure with regard to the national picture
3. The role of LAs
4. Responsibility recognised
5. Place of LAs within the national tourism 'structure'
6. Role of tourism within the LA structure
7. Negative or neutral perception of tourism
8. Influence of national government policy
9. 'Branding' suggests a developing sophistication
10. Tourism funding
11. Tourism as an economic function
12. 'Cuts', reduction or pressure on funding
13. Pressure related to non-statutory status
14. Other organisations seen as the 'experts'
15. Suggests under threat
16. Completely disappeared, closed or finished in some way
17. Support Politically
18. Suggests an important role
19. Suggests a development role
20. Tones of managerialism ?
21. Common good
22. Lack of understanding politically
23. Partnership working
24. Role in relation to local community/residents
25. Return in some way to a previous position
26. Post-Fordism influence ?
27. Suggests a reduction or retraction in some way
28. Enhancement, improvement or success in some way
29. Tension
30. Duplication
31. Reduction in staffing or redundancy
32. Uncertainty

## **Appendix 7 List of tourism manager interviews**

- Interviewee A Manager, urban area, midlands
- Interviewee B Manager, rural area, south of England
- Interviewee C Manager, rural area, midlands
- Interviewee D Manager urban area, midlands
- Interviewee E Manager, rural area, north of England
- Interviewee F Manager, urban area, north of England
- Interviewee G Manager, rural area, south of England
- Interviewee H Manager, rural area, north of England
- Interviewee I Manager, urban area, south of England
- Interviewee J Manager, urban area, north of England